



**GOVERNING AT  
THE CROSSROADS  
ISTANBUL 2012**

# GOVERNING AT THE CROSSROADS

## ISTANBUL 2012



MASTER: GOVERNING THE LARGE  
METROPOLIS

Study Trip:  
09/01-15/01/2012





Photo: Caroline Guillet

## Preface

Thomas Aguilera, Adrian Favell,  
Brigitte Fouilland and Tommaso Vitale

Our Masters in “Governing the Large Metropolis” is a programme built on comparative urban sociology, comparative urban policy and the study of urban governance. The first semester concentrates on the main body of theory and core literature in a number of disciplines, while the second and third semesters are devoted to more in-depth regional studies and urban policy specialization in substantive fields. Studying the governance mode of a large metropolis, however, is impossible without fieldwork. For this reason, between the first and the second semester, students and faculty organize a field trip to a large metropolis, typically outside of Western Europe.

The study trip offers students a concrete case study. The intense days of research thus include encounters and meetings with very different kinds of urban actors, as well as the physical encounter with huge and seemingly confusing urban sprawls. In 2010 we went to Cairo, only a few weeks before the beginning of the protests that would lead to the first revolution of the “Arab Spring”. For the next fieldtrip, in January 2012, a second destination was sought in the Mediterranean region. It was not a difficult decision. Turkey has risen fast on everyone's agenda as a location of some of the most dramatic political, social and economic change in the region. Its largest city, Istanbul, has re-

emerged as the epicentre of geo-political and economic trends that make it a paradigmatic global metropolis of the 21st century. For numerous reasons, then, the fieldtrip focused on metropolitan governance in this spectacular cosmopolitan city on the Bosphorus, that links Asia and Europe.

Our days started early, at 8 am with a briefing meeting. We then set out, travelling around the city to meet public and private actors, to see infrastructures and regeneration programs, and to collect photos, maps and data. Our days were also structured by research seminars and workshops at various Istanbul universities and public institutions. Students were encouraged to ask questions and gather as much information as possible, from everyone they met. “How is Istanbul governed?”; “Who governs, for what results?”; “What is governed and what is not governed?”; “Who is governed, and who is not, in Istanbul?”. As young professionals in training, they engaged in writing activities during and after the trip. They penned field notes from their direct observation of urban dynamics, individual essays on what had surprised them, and the present report.

Our intensive and demanding Masters programme prepares students for careers as advisers, consultants, project managers, and

applied researchers. Being aware of the difficulties in implementing urban policies we provide the students with practical meetings and encounters to give them hands-on experience of the importance of listening to very different voices, and of mapping the struggles and controversy around urban development programs. We pay attention to cultural policy, migrants and migration, urban regeneration of downtowns, financing and branding, transparency and accountability, citizens participation, risk governance, planning and property development, area-based projects, water sanitation and the geopolitical implications of energy (in this case, the politics behind the construction of oil and gas pipes in the region).

All these issues were touched upon in the fieldtrip. We were not looking for simple, ready-made recipes. We seek to prepare students to face difficult dilemmas and confront complex environments where contention among political parties and interest groups is strongly present. We look at policy and governance innovation and failures to learn from experience. We do not trust “good governance” rhetoric; Istanbul is both an empirical exemplar and a metaphor for some of the most important metropolization dynamics seen around the world in global mega-cities, for better and for worse.

***Thomas Aguilera, Adrian Favell, Brigitte Fouilland and Tommaso Vitale***

*This report is dedicated to Camille Barberet, who was one of the student participants in the fieldtrip. During the trip, all of us benefitted from her friendship, intelligence and perspicacity. She is very sadly missed.*



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## Foreword

Christian Josef Pollok, Lucie Billaud,  
Caroline Guillet & Emanuele Wright

Photo: Cindy Niño

From January 9 to January 15, 2012, the first year students of the GLM (Governing the Large Metropolis) master program of Sciences Po, accompanied by Prof. Tommaso Vitale, Prof. Brigitte Fouilland, Prof. Adrian Favell and PhD Candidate Thomas Aguilera, went to Istanbul with one question in mind: How is this city governed?

This study trip constitutes a pragmatic approach to what has been developed academically during the first term. The purpose was to enable students to apply several of the concepts that had been introduced during the first term on an actual case, such as the impact of globalization on urban trends, the relationships between state and city and the governance it implies. The trip consisted of lectures in both universities and private institutions. The purpose of these meetings was to interpret the various discourses in order to create an academic report on the governance of Istanbul.

The choice of Istanbul as a case-study is not fortuitous. Located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, Istanbul metropolitan area,

more than 13 millions of urban dwellers, is a changing city.

Governance issues, such as housing, water management, and immigration policy are sometimes highly contested and require the involvement of a variety of actors. This is what makes Istanbul complex and fascinating. With the academic purpose of trying to understand the governance of Istanbul, we made our way through the tight, steep streets, and with this report we



Photo: John-Arthur Palmer



# Introduction

Photo: Caroline Guillet

Given its centuries-old depictions of bridging “East” and “West”, Istanbul always seemed to have been a city at the crossroads. By giving birth to the multiple intersections of the “Occidental” with the “Oriental,” it has always been a place of incessant movement, economic transit and cultural encounter – a dynamic that still shapes contemporary imaginations and practices of life within this large metropolis situated at the Bosphorus. Yet, besides the clichés this narrative might evoke, Istanbul seems to be at the crossroads once again as it is taking center stage within an emergent geography of political, economic and cultural flows circulating from all around the world and through the city’s realm, remaking its metropolitan shape and demarcations.

This current round of urban globalization, then, poses both opportunity and constraint, as it comprises both the pressures on and possibilities for urban development. The mainly informal and uncoordinated pattern of urbanization that gained momentum in the 1960s has transformed Istanbul into a densely populated urban space with a

action – both for policy-makers and societal actors at various scales of operation.

“Governing at the Crossroads” is a preliminary exploration of contemporary urban development(s) and the role of public action in Istanbul. The report is the collective result of the snapshots taken during an intensive field trip to the metropolis. Besides its function as a methodological exercise for understanding urban governance in general, it is meant to gain and share first-hand insights on how contemporary Istanbul works. At the heart of this heuristic question lies the role of governing, i.e. the dynamic interplay between policies and politics. Who are the key actors involved in this complex process? How do they align and realign and mobilize resources? What is the role of the institutional design in structuring these sometimes conflictive, sometimes cooperative relationships and interactions occurring both along formal and informal lines? Equally crucial of our concern are the impacts of this dynamic interplay. What are the outcomes – intended or unintended – of the ways in which Istanbul is governed? As



resources are scarce and capacities unequally distributed, where do these effects and externalities crystallize and concentrate? Who are the groups that bear them the most? And finally, what are their, or are there, possibilities and capabilities to react to, resist, and contest certain trajectories of urban development currently pursued?

This report doesn't claim to answer any of these questions in a comprehensive manner. On the contrary it raises even more questions than those listed above. The field trip and the report were guided by a pluralism of perspectives that did not try to capture the motions of urban governance and development in Istanbul by a single and coherent "frame", but by a heterogeneous set of analytic "shots", serving as contrasting entry points to specific issues related to the weaving of the urban fabric in Istanbul.

The chapters that follow reflect this pluralist approach, both in shape and content. They resulted from our many encounters, meetings, (formal and informal) discussions with different actors and observers from the political, social, economic, and cultural spheres in and of Istanbul. The reach of the topics and issues span various scales from the abstract, macro-historical and transnational to the most concrete, micro-instantaneous and local. Yet, to give these diverse sections a necessary bit of coherence and concision they are aligned around three themes, disassembling our main question in an analytic way to finally arrive at our concluding section containing our essential findings, open questions and an outlook for potential future considerations on urban governance and development in Istanbul.

*Architectures of Power* as the first thematic section centers upon the formal and informal dimensions of the urban political

system and the more or less visible demarcations along which the relations between the governing and the governed disarticulate and are being re-articulated through the dynamic interplay of policy and politics. The importance of party politics at different levels, the challenge of planning the city, as well as the demographics of Istanbul's (increasingly immigrant) population are portrayed as crucial entry points for the production and reproduction of power relationships in the city.

Producing the city means generating economic growth, which, as in many others cities, tends to occur increasingly in finance-, information- and culture-based industries. Having been re-orienting its economic profile towards tourism, mass events, and financial transactions, Istanbul was the European Capital of Culture in 2010 and is aspiring to become a regional capital of finance, as well. *Benchmarking City* tries to capture Istanbul's globalizing drive, the actors involved, and their related ramifications for the material and symbolic environment of the city.

In section three the contributions are scaling-down to the neighborhood level and look at the articulation of state-society relations in a more concrete way. How are the major development tracks cutting through different districts, quarters, and neighborhoods in Istanbul? How are the politics of cultural heritage and urban renewal affecting local inhabitants and vested interests? What are the difficulties in providing services and infrastructure to different parts of the city, and what are the political dimensions of apparently purely technical issues and questions?

*Christian Josef Pollok*



## An Overview of Development Pressures Affecting the City of Istanbul

Date: January 9, 2012

Speakers: Başak Demires Özkul (Bartlett School of Planning, University College London), Irem Ayranci (Istanbul Technical University, Department of Urban and Regional Planning) and Serdar Kaya (ibid.)

*The first thematic section centers upon our very first encounter on January 9th with Başak Özkul, and gives an overview of some of the main challenges Istanbul faces today.*

This presentation took place in the lecture hall of the Taşkışla Campus, which is situated just ten minutes from Taksim square by foot. On our way, we passed by the Kemal Atatürk Cultural Center and the Atatürk Library, two modernist landmarks of state-led public urban development. The Taşkışla Campus houses the Faculty of Architecture, the Institute of Social Sciences and the Fine Arts Department. It used to be a military barracks in the Ottoman era and today is one of the most renowned historical buildings in Istanbul. However, its slightly run-down classicist façade stands in This

presentation took place in the lecture hall of the Taşkışla Campus, which is situated just ten minutes from Taksim square by foot. On our way, we passed by the Kemal Atatürk Cultural Center and the Atatürk Library, two modernist landmarks of state-led public urban development. The Taşkışla Campus houses the Faculty of Architecture, the Institute of Social Sciences and the Fine Arts Department. It used to be a military barracks in the Ottoman era and today is one of the most renowned historical buildings in Istanbul. However, its slightly run-down classicist façade stands in stark contrast with the Hyatt Regency (formerly Grand Hyatt) Istanbul Hotel across the street. The Hyatt Regency is just one of the several top-ranking international hotels that can be found in the area. Even if it claims to reflect “the spirit and the culture of the city”<sup>1</sup>, as we were told during the presentation, the construction of the Grand Hyatt and its recent renovation were highly contentious issues: They may be quoted as major examples of Istanbul’s neo-liberal turn in urban planning, namely the concerted co-operation of international enterprises with municipal and federal actors when it comes to assigning the future development of the city’s prime premises.

The presentation itself was a general introduction to the urban development of Istanbul, addressing three main domains,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. <http://www.istanbul.grand.hyatt.com/hyatt/hotels/index.jsp>. Last visit on 17. 01. 2012

Serdar Kaya, Irem Ayranci and Başak Demires Özkul



namely demographic, political and economic aspects. Moreover, Mrs. Özkul introduced the notion of three major constraints impeding the city's rampant growth, stressing physical and historical-cultural factors as well as natural hazards.

In this context, she discussed a vast forest area north of Istanbul, which is vital for the whole urban ecosystem and has been under preservation for a long time. However, there are growing tensions due to the ongoing expansion specifically towards that area. Besides, the city is built on two peninsulas, and therefore has been forced to grow in a linear way. This leads to transportation problems as traffic relies heavily on several main axes in an east-west direction. The city is also a UNESCO heritage site. Recently, several archaeological sites have been discovered while working on the extension of the underground traffic infrastructure. Finally, Istanbul faces a considerable earthquake risk, which is crucial in the context of urban renewal projects.

Concerning demographic pressure, it has to be said that the enormous growth of the city has led to an increasing amount of informal settlements which currently account for 70% of the whole housing stock. However, they are mostly well-developed, possessing electricity, running water, and even Internet connection. Istanbul is divided into different districts, which form local municipalities organized under the larger metropolitan

municipality. However, changing patterns of urban settlement have led to administrative challenges: In recent years, some neighborhoods have become so densely populated that they have been split up in order to keep them governable - for example in Büyükçekmece, Gaziosmanpaşa and Ümraniye. Likewise, while in the 1920s most of the population used to live in the ancient quarters around Fatih and Galata, nowadays many people inhabit newly-built neighborhoods distant from the historical center.

Economically speaking, Istanbul has been a city mainly based on manufacturing. Today, production is still strong, but the service sector is booming and by now equally as important. In any case, Istanbul is by far the most important local economy in all of Turkey. This dynamic has caused a continuous migration from all over the country, which explains the fact that nowadays, people born in Istanbul are a minority. The rural exodus also leads to a disruption of historical continuities and constantly changing local identities, which is used by political parties applying populist strategies.

Addressing the issue of politics, it has to be said that Istanbul plays an important role in national politics, even if it is not the country's capital. Istanbul has been governed by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan since 1994, way before the AKP won the national elections in 2007. The metropolis can therefore be described as an AKP stronghold. However, there are tensions between the ruling party and the opposition on different administrative levels which, in combination with various institutional redundancies, make urban governance an intricate issue.

As the city continues a pattern of immense growth, Istanbul is undergoing a large number of urban renewal projects - some of

which consist of destroying old buildings and constructing new ones in the same place. According to Mrs. Özkul, these schemes of “urban transformation” do not take into account the social aspects of urban renewal, as they only focus upon aspects of physical appearance. A major problem is also the velocity of Istanbul’s urban growth, which seems to be uncontrollable and does not leave a lot of time for information diffusion and public debate.



and debates, as well as the rule of law, play a major role.

The central government is in charge of housing (through a public agency called TOKI), which leaves the district municipalities with little power resources. Moreover, the enormously influential construction sector forms some kind of a growth alliance with various public authorities. In combination with venturesome financing schemes, these factors result in a pattern of unbridled urban growth in which infrastructure follows real estate development instead of vice-versa. Democratic participation is also hindered by the fact that government agencies withhold information concerning planning decisions.

Finally, the scholars insist that in Istanbul, it is not the law that comes first, but rather the local realities that make the law adapt to them. This is important to keep in mind when talking about informal settlements and their legalization and integration into official urban structures. It shows that the city is also governed in a different way than other major cities, where official agreements

Concerning our research interest of how Istanbul is being governed, these preliminary remarks open up a broad range of inquiry: Which governmental tier has a say in urban development? What is the relationship between the metropolitan and the national government? How can we conceive of the role culture plays in urban governance? Is Istanbul a “Growth Machine” for the national economy? What about civil society’s influence on urban development? Who will provide the new facilities and infrastructures to cater for the rapidly growing population? And what happens to local minorities as Istanbul sets out to become a Global City? Even though it is hardly possible to find definite answers, these questions may serve as a valuable point of departure for our further investigations.

*Claudio Altenhain & Isabelle Steichen*



## Chapter I: Architecture of Power

Photo: Cindy Nino

*The distribution of power is a key element to grasp the way Istanbul's governance is organized. But one needs to go deeper than a mere diagram of competences; some relations are not formal, yet, they are crucial. This is what we came across during our meeting with the IMP (Istanbul Metropolitan Planning), which was created as a "mediator", facilitating meetings among decision-makers. This example embodies the coordination problem that such a large metropolis has to deal with, because power is distributed between the municipal authorities, the governorate and the national government. To this architecture have to be added more political actors, such as NGOs and international organizations, which intervene in the assistance to international migrants and refugees for example. Another perspective to take into account while trying to unpack power relations in Istanbul is the role of AKP, as it has been underlined in a presentation at the Şehir University. The main feature that arises from these different analyses is of crucial importance at the national level, all the more that Prime Minister Erdogan is the former mayor of Istanbul.*

### Strategic Planning in the Metropolitan Region of Istanbul: The Role and Challenges of Planning in the Metropolis of Istanbul

Istanbul Metropolitan Planning & Urban Design Center  
January 10, 2012

Created by the Metropolitan Municipality in 2004 in order "to [bring] an end to the problems of Istanbul"<sup>1</sup>, the IMP assumes a central role for the strategic vision of planning within the city. We met with Dr. Ulas Akin on January 10th to discuss the state of planning, the role of the IMP, and the challenges ahead for urban development in Istanbul.

#### *Position and Role of the IMP*

<sup>1</sup> Statement by the current mayor Kadir Topbaş, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (<http://www.ibb.gov.tr/en-US/Pages/Haber.aspx?NewsID=153>)

The creation of the IMP dates back to an initiative in 2004 by mayor Kadir Topbaş, who remains the head of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IMM), to improve coordination and cooperation between the various departments of the IMM. It was established with funding provided by a public-private partnership (PPP), called BİMTAŞ, serving as an affiliated enterprise to the IMM. The IMP operates as a platform, bringing together technical expertise with the help of architects, engineers, academics, and public officials.

Having been entrusted with the Istanbul Master Plan (2005-2010), the IMP is the central body of city planning. As it has no executive powers and a merely advisory function, the IMP has been labeled as a “defunct organization” in an urban governance system marked by populist politics, which tends to exclude technocratic expertise from decision-making processes.<sup>2</sup> Yet, as the IMP is in charge of producing plans and schemes at several scales for the metropolitan area of Istanbul, this intermediate body of around 400 experts performs an indispensable role for the long-term development of the city; with its expertise and knowledge it serves as a central node for ad-hoc cooperation and informal coordination between various

actors, involved in urban governance and the development framework of Istanbul.

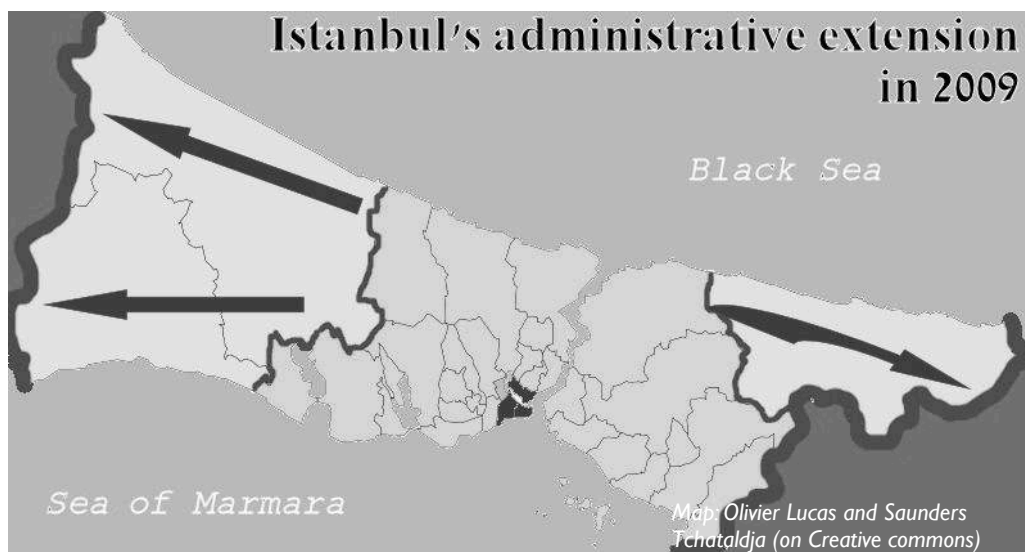
In Akin's words, the IMP serves as an informal solution to the complexity of the city - as a structural mechanism enabling and constraining different actors to meet, discuss, and negotiate planning-related issues. Yet, planning has several limitations in the case of Istanbul. “The process is important for learning and exchanging ideas, but the real thing is how to enable things,” says Dr. Akin. The IMP serves as a mediator and advisor but has no power on the decision-making side of policies. There has to be scientific and



technology-led decision support for the coordination of statutory plans and projects with a strategic approach to reach a balance between planning and livelihood.

### *Planning Istanbul*

In line with the restructuring of the governance system of Turkey and Istanbul



<sup>2</sup> See Gektürk et al. 2010: 16. Orienting Istanbul. Cultural Capital of Europe?

within the last two decades, the paradigm of urban planning is being transformed. According to Dr. Akin, the Metropolitan Municipality of Istanbul is reorganizing. He points out that the main issue around governance and planning is about cognition and comprehension, i.e. to understand what actors and concepts are being discussed and used. The main concepts used in Istanbul planning were inspired by French public administration, says Dr. Akin. This influence shaped the formal understanding of the public sector at the beginning of Istanbul planning. In recent decades, strong neo-liberalism brought new challenges to connect urban planning with the city's investment projects. The money derived from land speculation became a decisive factor in planning. There was a need to integrate plans with investment climates and the political agenda.

### *Governing Istanbul*

The two-tiered system of governance, between the local and national, is of central importance for planning the city. At the local level, the strongest figure is the mayor of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, who is directly elected by the city's population for a period of five years. The provision of healthcare, education, and some housing and transport issues are within a national framework of ministers based in Ankara. <sup>3</sup>

"The ministries' involvement in city affairs is coordinated by a governor, who is directly appointed by central government. Some central governmental bodies such as the Mass Housing Administration have direct links to the Prime Minister, while the Transport Ministry's involvement in Istanbul is coordinated by the Governor of Istanbul."<sup>4</sup>

Istanbul is arranged in 39 districts. Each district has an elected mayor and council. Each district government functions as a city within the city where the district mayors are a representation of local and central government. This structure is the outcome of the democratic and decentralizing changes happening since the 1980s.

### *Main Challenges of Planning*

Today's planning and policy-making is being challenged because "Istanbul is building everywhere and all the time," says Dr. Akin. There is also a bureaucratic tradition in the government that remains a strong constraint in this respect, and "physical planning requires decentralization," according to him. Furthermore, the private actors create tensions on the public agenda, making it difficult to find a balance between control and freedom. There is also a coordination and communication challenge between different actors and interests in the city.

***Christian Josef Pollok & Juan Manuel Restrepo***

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<sup>3</sup> Urban Age 2009: 26. Istanbul City of Intersections.

<sup>4</sup> ibid

## Immigration and Refugees in Istanbul, IOM and UNHCR

January 11, 2012

The IOM (International Organization for Migration) and UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), introduced by Helen Nilsson and Elif Selen Ay respectively, are two international organizations that work to protect and assist asylum seekers, refugees, and other international migrants. Helen Nilsson is the head of the Istanbul unit for IOM and Elif Selen Ay is a senior protection assistant at UNHCR.

Turkey ratified the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 Protocol on Refugees but, given its location, it asked for an additional paragraph known as the geographical limitation. In Turkey, an asylum seeker who obtains refugee status can only stay in Turkey if he/she comes from a country within the Council of Europe. If not, the

refugee has to be resettled in a third country - namely the US, Canada, or Australia. There are 25,429 people of concern to UNHCR Turkey, among them 10,900 asylum seekers

and 14,400 refugees. Because Turkey doesn't have a legal refugee system yet (although a law is currently being drafted), the UNHCR is responsible for processing the applications of asylum seekers. It is also UNHCR that decides to grant refugee status to an asylum seeker or not. This organization also ensures that asylum

seekers have access to basic human rights and, more broadly, to the asylum system. After processing an application, UNHCR tries to find a "durable solution" for every

IOM, Helen Nilsson



refugee. It can be through volunteer repatriation (though these cases are rare), local integration (which is not possible in most cases because of the geographical limitation), or most often, resettlement in a third country. Before the resettlement, refugees are sent to a satellite city that they do not choose and from which they cannot move out. Istanbul is not a satellite city, but the refugee population there is estimated to be around 2,000 because UNHCR doesn't provide financial support. In its Istanbul office, UNHCR mostly deals with disadvantaged groups such as unaccompanied minors.

The International Organization of Migration (IOM) was founded in 1951. It is an international agency (not part of the United Nations) which seeks to help migrants. Its mission is "migration for the benefit of all". It has 146 member states and has been present in Turkey since 1991 (1994 in Istanbul). IOM works in several fields in Turkey; providing assistance in refugee and migrant resettlement, assisted voluntary return (AVR), border management in order to fight human trafficking, and finally, providing technical cooperation on migration policy. In 2010, IOM gave assistance to 5,135 refugees, but its main field of work is AVR, which concerned 34,000 people last year. AVR started for

UNHCR, Elif Selen Ay



Photo: Arthur Crestani



denied asylum seekers but today, it is open to illegal migrants who don't have the means to return to their home countries. IOM intervenes to assist them by drafting a career project, accompanying them to the airport, and setting up a pick-up at the airport of arrival. In Istanbul, from November 2009 to April 2011, 786 people



*Informative poster for the helpline co-managed by IOM and the Turkish government. These posters encourage women that would be victims of human trafficking to contact the IOM. Victims of human trafficking principally come from ethnic minorities in Turkey or from Russian-speaking countries, former USSR or satellite countries. Therefore, the posters are written in Turkish and also often in Russian. The telephone line helped rescue 166 people in 2009*

were assisted. The countries of Turkmenistan, Mongolia, Pakistan and Afghanistan account for 87% of these AVR cases. The IOM also raises awareness about the positive side of migration through art exhibitions, conferences, film screenings, and seminars in its Istanbul unit. It is also committed to countering the trafficking of human beings and providing training for refugees, two missions that were developed and explained in detail by Elina Sideroua and Ali Ramadan, two staff members of IOM.

Indeed, IOM dedicates a large part of its time to countering human trafficking which is defined as the “recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion” and any kind of children’s exploitation, with or without the use of force. Practically, it means that IOM does not only participate in research to collect data on human trafficking, but it also launches important campaigns to help the migrants know about the possibility of being helped, thanks to a special telephone line owned by the Turkish government and managed by IOM. In 2010, this line helped rescue 166 people and 792 people in total were assisted in escaping human-trafficking organizations.

IOM Turkey has also created three shelters, one of which is in Istanbul.

The aim of these shelters is to offer a place for people to stay while they are in the process of being legally recognized as victims of human trafficking, to make sure that traffickers do not have access to them and cannot pressure them. They also provide medical and legal assistance. IOM works closely with the local government, one of its main partners, to provide this service.

I O M f o c u s e s o n international as well as national cooperation to fight human trafficking.

One example of international cooperation is the AUSCO program, in which IOM gives a five-day orientation to migrants resettling in Australia. This program, financed by the Australian government, prepares migrants to deal with administrative requirements and includes an in-depth presentation of Australian culture and the services there to assist them. Refugees transiting through Turkey are mainly from Iran, Iraq, and Palestine. Most of them are educated (high school degree). This program is supposed to give them the keys to integrate into their new environment, despite linguistic or religious differences.

The issue of international migration represents a challenge for Istanbul: the different aspects of the phenomenon (legal, humanitarian) and the cooperation between different actors (international organizations, local and central government) have to be taken into account. Facing what is, to a large extent, an international, transitory type of migration issue, mainly due to the geographical limitation, the local governance of Istanbul appears relatively powerless in front of other actors in this multi-layered governance system.

*Elise Gilliot & Lucie Billaud*

## Religion and Politics in Contemporary Turkey

January 10, 2012

Ferhat Kentel, Sociologist at Şehir University

Sehir University visit was kindly organized by Prof. Nurullah Ardic. There we met Sociologist Ferhat Kentel, with whom we met on Tuesday, January 10, presented a different way of understanding Turkey's recent political developments. Indeed, AKP's take-over of political leadership has raised a number of questions, both domestically and at the international level. Namely, the relationship between religion and politics has changed, shaking Turkey's founding principle: secularism. Kentel, in order to grasp these changes as part of a long-term trend, offers a very specific framework of analysis, based on Norbert Elias' "civilizing process" on the one hand, and concepts from Michel de Certeau on the other. Elias provides us with a way to see the historical development of institution-building as instincts and desires are channeled by normative structures, in charge of expelling violence from society. De Certeau is also concerned with the relationship between power and society. In his words, power relations are defined in terms of "strategies" and "tactics". Strategies are used to describe macro-concepts - ideas and policies - involving several different actors. National economy is a strategy, as well as Istanbul's development. On the other hand, individuals do not have strategies, they use



Ferhat Kentel

tactics. They can only exercise a variety of practices that are regulated by strategies. There is always room for a form of bricolage, open windows that the individuals can jump into to create new modalities of action.

This framework, though highly theoretical, turns out to be his basis for analyzing Turkey's history throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. If the conflict between religion and politics has structured modern Turkey, we need to go back to the partition of the Ottoman Empire, a real trauma for the Turkish population. Immediately after the Treaty of Lausanne, Mustapha Kemal Atatürk launched an enormous campaign to promote a new Turkish identity, and push Islam back to the private sphere. Early reforms aimed at splitting up two different identities, the Turkish and the Islamic. The language reform changed the alphabet to move away from Arabic standards. There was even an attempt to translate the Muslim call to prayer into Turkish. For Turkey's new leadership, Western nationalism was the

model to apply, through authoritarian measures. The new narratives included only the Turkish nation, forgetting other narratives such as those of the Armenians, Greeks, and Muslims. It is under these circumstances

that Islam became an oppositional force, eager to fight back for its historical influence in the country.

Because of this oppositional role, Islam has become, throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a democratic place within the authoritarian Turkish Republic. Going back to de Certeau, the "strategy" of the Kemalist Republic was trying to impose new narratives, new ideas, and new prospects. However, ethnic and

religious minorities developed “tactics” to be able to, at first, practice religious cults. Then, these new communities managed to offer new modalities of being, within a secular republic, new spaces of expression and socializing. After several attempts, the Islamic movement, or rather its followers, peaked with its access to office in 2002.

*AKP Arrival to Power as the Culmination of the Muslim Push for Democracy*

Since 2002, the Justice and Development Party – AKP – has been the governing political force in Turkey. This center-right party advocates a mix of economic liberalism and Islamic-tainted moral and social conservatism.

Ferhat Kentel presented the accession of the party to power as the culmination of the Islamic Movement – or “moment”. It was brought on by the amalgamation of the individual and collective actions and “tactics” (to come back on Michel de Certeau’s approach) that created it. In his understanding, the AKP government is thus the product of the democratic process conducted against authoritarian republicanism. Resulting from a regime shift, this political landslide produced such a change that Kentel spoke about it in terms of a “bloodless revolution.”

Among the radical changes the AKP brought to Turkish society, the decrease of military influence was highlighted.

As the Islamic force opened a window for a more individually-oriented society, it paradoxically encouraged the development of a Turkish modernity, a “product of individual tactics.”

*The Thermidorian Metaphor*

Mr. Kentel compared the political period that started in 2002 to the Thermidorian bourgeois republic that proceeded Bonaparte’s coup during the French Revolution. Indeed, the hard republicans formerly in charge of the government have been replaced by a new, ascending social class - the quickly emerging bourgeoisie. He is very critical towards this new power circle, accusing them of using their political power according to their interests. He places the “capitalistic use of territory” at the epicenter of these corrupt practices. In the “capitalism adapted to Turkish territory” that President Erdoğan and his supporters are promoting, “price of the territory dominates everything else.”

For our host, TOKI (the housing organ of the Turkish federal government), by exercising its exclusive authority over planning matters, determines the new Turkish social order, as it holds seemingly unlimited power over the shape of Turkish cities and the daily environment of their citizens. Land use is what dominates politics of this expanding city and country.

***Benoit Mayaux and Lluís Pino***



*In 2010, Istanbul was designated as the European Capital of Culture, and in 2012, it has become the European Capital of Sport. These two examples, as well as the construction of a World Trade Center, near Atatürk Airport, where the municipality located the Istanbul development Agency, show the metropolis's strategy to become what Saskia Sassen would call a "global city". In this section, we will focus on the different layers of the global city approach: first, by looking at the economic aspect, then at the cultural side. We will finish by a report on the geopolitical role of Istanbul, and the way it fosters its role of a "city of intersection" (Yakış).*

## Istanbul Development Agency

Speaker: Onur Partal  
January 13, 2012

The Istanbul Development Agency (ISTKA) is located in the heart of the up-and-coming Dünya Ticaret Merkezi District, Istanbul's up and coming preferred business district. Housed in what one may see as the embodiment of Istanbul's vision for its continued growth and development, the three towers of the The World Trade Center



Istanbul Business Center stand tall and firm on the fast-changing skyline of the city. The Istanbul Development Agency (ISTKA) is an integral part of the development strategy of Turkey as the country shows commitment to the necessary adjustments and re-arrangements required to meet EU guidelines. Amongst the agencies vision, it seeks to promote economic activities while respecting the land and its natural resources by ensuring sustainable development and the effective use of resources. Turkey has 26 development agencies, each serving a province and ISTKA serving the region of Istanbul. These agencies have been established quite recently, with the first three pioneer agencies created in 2006 and ISTKA and the rest of the 26 agencies being finalised in 2009, and are all still in the early developmental stages. Each agency is tailored to serve the common purpose of coordinating the development of its district in the way each district needs. ISTKA was created by National government as an autonomous public agency and it is financially supported by central government and board members.

The agency is composed of eight seats which make up the administrative board. The board is represented by the most influential actors in Istanbul within the economic and political sectors respectively. The first five seats are permanently reserved for the respective positions while the last three members are elected by the development council every two years. Essentially, the final decision of which project to fund and how much resources to allocate to which project is exclusively an executive one and is highly political as the decision is taken by the board members (as even the three board members who are voted in are selected by the five permanent members). Thus, the agencies sole purpose is, through an intricate process of different forms participation, to suggest possible projects for development and to mediate between the executive members when it comes to decision making. ISTKA was developed to attempt to introduce more

transparency in the policy making and decision making processes in Istanbul. Their main function is to make proposals and submit them to the administrative board.

Increasingly, we are beginning to see a shift towards network forms of regional governance and urban governance as a whole which sets up complex, interwoven relationships across different scales and sectors. Within the already entangled relationships between public and private entities in Istanbul, the role of these development agencies needs to be questioned as the forming structure of this agency, and many others, essentially reproduce the power of the state. Regional development agencies have the strategic role of operating within these complex structures, working as mediators between actors. Following suit with such agencies as the IMF and TOKI, Turkey has created countless public “autonomous” bodies which essentially mediate between the government and the private sector.

#### *Funding*

In the last financial year, ISTKA received two and a half million lira to use for the development of companies within the outlined sectors, with the social integration sector having received the most support from the agency. The agency has a system in place for choosing which companies are proposed to the administrative board and potentially stand the chance of being chosen. The company carries out this support using “support tools” such as direct funding support. Up until now, the various agencies across Turkey have financially supported the tourism and environmental sector, agricultural and suburban development, social development, SMEs, economic development, and small-scale infrastructure projects. As the development agency is growing, It is beginning to support other aspects of development within Istanbul such as promotion of technology, creativity, and innovation as can be seen with it’s decision to support a research and development

project titled “Environmental and Energy-Friendly Istanbul” which aims to solve energy storage and usage problems in Istanbul.

#### *Project selection*

The participatory device can be seen within the project selection process where experts from relevant sector are gathered in a room and asked to evaluate and grade the projects up for selection by filling out a form prepared by the agency. The agency assembles a list of all projects that qualify and recommends projects to the board. At this stage, the board members deliberate on the projects and choose which projects to fund.

#### *The Istanbul Regional Plan 2010 – 2013*

ISTKA took part in developing Istanbul's regional plan by following a pre-conceived process which began with a stakeholder analysis (SWOT) and was followed by a situational analysis and search conferences where key players from throughout the region would convene (around 300 people). Workshops with local experts were then held to deliberate on a view for the development of Istanbul. A consensus conference was held and The Istanbul Regional plan was implemented in 2010.

The regional plan is to be implemented in two ways - with technical and financial tools. The agency handles the technical aspects of the implementation of the plan with funds they received from the central government and from the eight members of the board.

The regional plan has currently been designed to last until 2013, at which point the agency plans to coordinate its planning with EU standards more closely. The issues of co-ordination amongst planning agencies in Istanbul is one the agency does recognise and further more the lack of reliable and up to date empirical data is one impediment for this agency.

#### *How does ISTKA contribute to the governance of Istanbul?*

The ISTKA development agency provides another link between local actors and international investors. One could observe that while relevant to dealing with public officials, the ISTKA agency had only a few, sometimes no links and exchanges with other planning agencies, such as the Istanbul Metropolitan Planning Office (IMP). The agency is another sector within the region of Istanbul which is currently not sufficiently connected with other agencies working on planning and development within the city, adding to the chaotic development of Istanbul. ISTKA is an agency whose true identity remains elusive as public and private funding moves through this “public autonomous body” to be fairly redistributed. When unpacking how ISTKA contributes to the governance of Istanbul, one is reminded that Turkey has a unitary state where the central government is a dominant actor in the sense of scheduling and implementing the activities. The broader political-institutional context of region and RDA formation is something to mention for these development agencies.

***Charlotte Lafitte & Nonjabulo Zondi***

## Istanbul as a Global Capital of Culture: The Redevelopment Project of Istanbul 2010

SALT Galata near Galata Tower

Speaker: Mr. Korhan Gümüş, former  
director of the Agency for Istanbul 2010  
January 11, 2012

*To conclude our third day of activities, Korhan Gümüş presented a critical assessment of the centralized public management model in Turkey through an analysis of the developments of the 2010 European Capital of Culture project. As the former director of the Agency for Istanbul 2010, Mr. Gümüş was involved in the bidding for Istanbul to be the European Capital of Culture in 2010.*

### *Overview of the Issue of Cultural Policy in Istanbul Since the 1900s*

Mr. Gümüş initiated his presentation with a recapitulation of the main aspects of the history of modernization in Istanbul. As he emphasized, the city was already part of the global industrial network before the formation of the Turkish Republic in 1923. Modernization started with the Ottomans during the course of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century through the industrialization of a series of public services. Different forms of transport – ships, railroads, and tramways – were improved, connecting different areas of Istanbul and actually composing a real metropolitan space. Electricity plants and gas industries were built in strategic locations and water distribution was finally expanded throughout the city, engendering a transformation that encompassed tradition and established habits of social life since the *hammams* had lost their centrality in the everyday life of city dwellers.

In this context of transformation, the management of the city was, in Gümüş' words, marked by "organizations of engineers"; more precisely, the model of public management existing in Turkey was discernible by a technocratic manner to deliver services, and these were provided in sectorial, fragmented ways. In public spaces, it consisted of spectacles, monuments, and the protection of cultural patrimony. Nonetheless, culture was isolated in neoclassical space - in other words, defined exclusively as culture.

According to Mr. Gümüş, this was a common problem of management noticeable in different cities across Europe: the public subject as a technocratic subject, composed by several fragmented organizations and the central government, which represented politics *de facto*. Consequently, the management of cities became something



secondary. Local governments focused mostly in technical projects of architecture and beautification. The modernization of communities of minorities in Istanbul was neglected and, as a consequence, they lost their functional capacity. By maintaining a technocratic and centralized approach, the state kept city management as a technical service, which presented several challenges for the management of cultural spaces in such a political context.

### *Aim and Purpose of the 2010 Redevelopment Project*

As a counterpoint to this established technocratic tradition of local management, the initiatives of Mr. Gümüş and his organization in Istanbul started to follow the project trends of cultural capital in Europe as early as 1997. Introducing culture as not only an isolated object/service but as a strategic instrument, NGOs in general started working on projects of cultural capital, picking up innovative projects such as:

(1) The renewal of the Armenian Church, in the heart of the historical peninsula, which was empty for one century. The Armenian community was not capable of maintaining the space as a functional church and it quickly became a space for refugees and for production. The goal of the project was to recreate it as a common space for the Armenian minority, and the church was renewed and inaugurated in the beginning of 2012.

(2) The Mayor Synagogue, located in the Hasköy district of Beyoğlu – an area which has about 20 similar synagogues and was once the center of the Jewish community. It serves today as a space for workshops and exhibitions, including Serge Spitzers' September 2009 installation titled *Molecular Istanbul*.

(3) The Jewish Cemetery, which was restored and celebrated as a space of memory for the Jewish community. The public authority wanted to construct major buildings in the cemetery area and Mr. Gümüş and his organization, through a ten-year negotiation, managed to convince the authorities to preserve and renew the space.

(4) The Atatürk Cultural Center, which serves as an opera for the city. The building is an example of early Republican architecture that had been left to deteriorate. Instead of tearing it down, Mr. Gümüş' organization undertook the

renovation of the site with funding from the government. However, a lawsuit is currently preventing the project from progressing.

*The **European Capital of Culture** is chosen every year by the European Commission (EU) as to "provide living proof of the richness and diversity of European cultures". The initiative started in 1985 and today is considered to be one of the most prominent and esteemed cultural events in the continent. Over the course of nearly three decades, more than 40 cities have been selected as European Capitals of Culture. The designation of the European Capital of Culture is largely based on the city's plan for the coming year; the program needs to be exceptional and fit a series of criteria determined by the European Commission. In 2010, three European cities were nominated capitals of culture: Istanbul, Essen and Pécs. More than 9,500 events and 588 projects were completed during 2010 in Istanbul, including festivals, concerts, exhibitions, films, and publications.*

As Mr. Gümüş explained, one of the main projects of Istanbul 2010 remains the construction of a metro – Marmaray – linking the European and Asian sides of the city through the Bosphorus. This infrastructure project would create one of the biggest commuting platforms in the world. However, this project was brought to a halt by the discovery of the archeological remains of a Byzantine harbor dating back to the fourth century. More broadly, the Marmaray project underwent three crises. More than mere obstacles for the project to overcome, these crises led the authorities to develop innovative ways of implementing urban policies.

Thirty years ago, the metro system was designed as a "classic" transportation project – the kind Turkey has grown accustomed to since the nineteenth century. But this approach does not entirely fit the current environment of Istanbul, notably because of its historical heritage, hence the emergence of a first crisis. The excavation of the harbor was a major surprise to everyone, and it reminded current decision-makers that the history of Istanbul did not





start with Ottoman conquest. The city was once the capital of the Roman Empire, and the harbor connected Constantinople to its economic partners around the Mediterranean Sea. The transportation project allowed many Istanbul residents to rediscover a part of the city's history that was not promoted by the government. The scientific analyses carried out on the archeological items also revealed that the Black Sea was once a fresh water lake and that the Bosphorus Strait did not always exist.

The second crisis took place soon after the first construction works started. The authorities realized that such an important project couldn't be implemented in a traditional way from a single organization centralizing all tasks. The top-down approach originally adopted proved inefficient and instead, a strategic approach involving different actors became necessary. A program defining the priorities and the management of the project was designed and an international architectural competition was organized. Finally, the citizen's participation was not considered in the initial project, which brought about the third crisis. The inhabitants of the affected neighborhoods did not figure into the design

of the policy. Some initiatives were taken but did not prove very successful due to the under-representation of minorities and lower class citizens in Turkish politics.

These three crises challenged the authorities' traditional way of going about urban policies. Innovations in terms of implementation, including more involvement of the local and international communities so as to avoid the government's conventional approach to culture, must be developed if future projects are to be successful in Istanbul.

### *Shortcomings of the Project*

If Mr. Gümüş did not explicitly list these innovations, he regrets the lack of creativity with which the project was handled.

According to Mr. Gümüş, the Istanbul 2010 renovation project, though initially quite promising, was not a real success. The branding of Istanbul as the European Capital of Culture was used by the central government for political ends and prestige, even though the initial project developed by Mr. Gümüş was a local initiative that sought support from the municipality and local NGOs. The central government quickly became involved. In 2007, it permitted the project to begin but with legal limitations. It defined a budget and linked the project to the prime minister and the Agency for Istanbul 2010 lost its autonomy. Even the Istanbul municipality was pushed aside. Because of these political manipulations, there were not any new innovations in terms of cultural capital building and renovation projects.

### *Luis-Felipe Lopes & John-Arthur Palmer*

## The Geopolitical Role of Istanbul

Speaker: Dr. Yaşar Yakiş, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey  
January 10, 2012

*Dr. Yaşar Yakiş is a former minister of foreign affairs in Turkey and a founding member of the current ruling party; the Justice and Development Party (AKP). He is also the chair of the European Union Harmonization Committee of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. The presentation he prepared for our class focused on the current status of Turkey in the world, and its political and socio-economic role. According to him, Turkey shows real importance both in terms of soft and hard power, meaning Turkey has already fulfilled the requirements of "smart power". Istanbul is the real epicenter of the world: placing a compass on it and extending it to London gives a circle of places that have had some of the most important conflicts in the world such as frozen conflicts in Chechnya and Transnistria, and other conflicts in Iraq, Palestine, North-Africa, Europe (most notably the Balkans) and the Middle East. Istanbul is also the gatekeeper of the only seaway between the Black Sea and the warm seas (Marmara Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, with ice-free harbors). Turkey is also a subject to several pipeline plans and existing pipelines already make Turkey an important oil and gas hub. This geographical location and the economic parameters of Turkey are of utmost importance regarding the governance of the country. The effects of these factors are highly significant in Istanbul as it is the financial capital of Turkey and the main indicator of the Turkish economy.*

### *Geographic Location and Strategic Importance*

Istanbul is located in northwestern Turkey within the Marmara region on a total area of 5,343 square kilometers. It is divided by the

Bosphorus, which connects the Black Sea and the Marmara Sea. The city is divided into a European side, which contains the city's historic and economic center, and an Asian-Anatolian side. It is built in a perfect strategic location as it is easily defendable, has an ideal climate, and has very rich and generous natural endowments. Due to the equal proximity to two large continents and markets, Istanbul can be considered as the center of the world. The strategic control of the Bosphorus Strait, the strategic location of straddling two important continents, and acting as a gateway to the hot climates and warm Black and Marmara seas has allowed Istanbul to be considered as a prosperous city throughout history.

There are several major political and economic trends that make Istanbul very important. A first important source of power is Istanbul's role in trade and investment, which makes it the largest contributor to the Turkish economy. Istanbul is a geographical center of capital and goods flows that stretches both east and west. Turkey is located between the EU, Turkey's dominant trade and investment partner, and connects it with emerging Asian countries, which, in the modern geo-political map, have become increasingly important. There has been a dramatic increase in Turkish foreign direct investments abroad. By 2007, Turkey's FDI abroad was at \$12.2 billion USD. The same year, inward FDI was at \$146 billion USD, which is thirteen times higher than FDI inflows in 1990. Such dramatic increases in capital flows across and within the region have led to Istanbul's increased development capacity, shifting its orientation towards industries, manufacturing and more important financial and service industries. Istanbul policy makers expect the city to become a new Dubai or Beirut in the coming years.

The second important trend is that Istanbul plays a very important role in modern energy geopolitics. Historically, energy commodities have been considered as instruments of political pressure. Under the

global market economy, suppliers compete in the market and energy-producing countries can use energy as regulative instruments. Therefore, control and access to energy resources is considered as an important part of geopolitical considerations. Nowadays, the Bosphorus is an important corridor for transportation of oil from the Middle East to the Western hemisphere. It is also an important corridor of gas transportation and is often conceptualized as an “energy road”. The Turkish government’s strategic aim is to make the country into an energy hub by offering a transit route for gas suppliers from the Middle East and Caspian Basin as an alternative to the existing routes from Russia, Algeria and Norway. The construction of new pipelines will allow Turkey to gain political influence in Europe and in the region due to ownership of key infrastructure routes. There are a number of pipeline projects being considered, all of which would increase Turkey’s geopolitical influence in the region. The first proposal is the Interconnector-Turkey-Greece-Italy pipeline, which would bring gas from Azerbaijan to Europe. The second is a much more ambitious project, the Nabucco gas pipeline, which would transport fuel from Turkey, through the Balkans, to Austria. As global consumption of energy continues to rise, competition over access to resources increases, and more attention is being given to the protection of energy supply routes, Turkey has the opportunity to gain substantially by becoming the new transit route of Eurasian gas and oil.

The third trend is that since the Ottoman Empire, Istanbul has been a place of intersection for various cultures, religions, and ethnic groups. From the time of the Byzantine Empire up to the present day, it was the center of Eastern Christianity with the first largest churches built within the city walls. Istanbul has also been considered a center for Islamic culture with numerous mosques and palaces decorated according to Islamic norms. Moreover, there is an increasing inflow and outflow of people,

creating impressive bi-modality between Europe and Asia. It is a city of intersections where East meets West.

Finally, Turkey is located close to the Middle Eastern region, which for a long period of history, has been in a near constant state of conflict and war. Turkey’s geographical proximity of to the region, membership in NATO, large army, and membership position in the Montreux Convention has made it an important ally for countries engaged in conflicts. The Montreux Convention Regarding the Regime of the Straits was an agreement made in 1936 that gives Turkey control over the Bosphorus Straits and the Dardanelles and regulates military activity on the seas of the region. Thus, Turkey is considered an important strategic partner for the United States in the Middle East because Turkey is an important corridor of army supplies and a route for NATO fleets.



Moreover, the Montreux Convention gives Turkey the power to control which ships are allowed to go through the Bosphorus and which are not. Militarily speaking, Turkey, and especially Istanbul, is an important strategic point for the U.S.’s successful operations not only in the Middle East, but throughout the Eurasian continent.

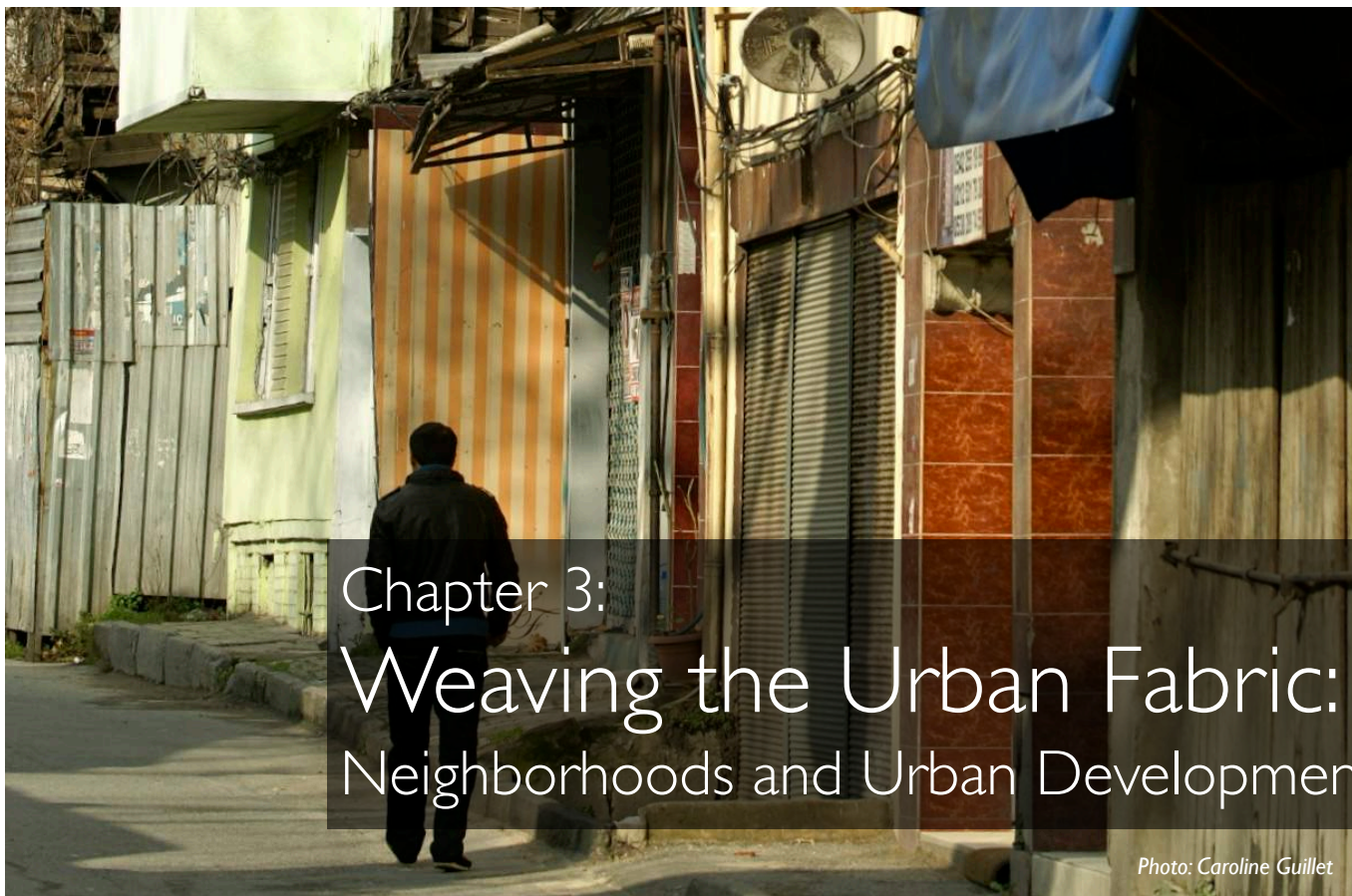
*Turkey’s Foreign Relations and Governance*  
Concerning Turkish-European relations, Dr. Yakiş is of the opinion that Turkey should use the accession process to ameliorate its conditions, as it has been doing since 2004. Turkey’s application to accede to the

European Union was made on 14 April 1987. Since 1995 Turkey has had a Customs Union agreement with the EU and in 2005 Turkey started accession negotiations with the EU, which slowed down since 2006. Although Turkey could give a different international landscape to the EU, nothing specific can be said yet on the topic of EU integration. Perhaps in the future, a different Turkey will join a different EU. As for Turkish public opinion on the subject, it is notable that they find the EU accession less attractive now than before (given the current crisis in the Union and Turkey's outstanding economic performance). Regarding foreign relations outside the EU, he elaborated upon the stability of Turkish-Russian relations thanks to significant investments in Russia by Turkish companies after the Cold War. Furthermore, he described that Turkey, due to its complicated Ottoman legacy, has been able to forge closer relationships with such countries as Azerbaijan, Georgia and the states of the Balkans. On relations between central and local government, he emphasized that Istanbul's importance in relation to Ankara is growing, namely because Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was formerly the city's mayor. He also noted that the ruling party has a strong (2/3) majority in the Parliament.

### *Conclusions*

Turkey plays a very important role in the region. Due to its political and economic weight, Turkey has also managed to exploit the concept of smart power. Leaning on Joseph Nye's definition Yakiş described smart power as "the ability to combine hard and soft power into a winning strategy". As for hard power in terms of military and political weight, Turkey's importance stems from its geographic location - being on the transit road between the world's largest oil and gas reserve and one of its biggest consumers (the EU). Defined as an emerging market economy (by the IMF), it has the world's 15th largest GDP-PPP, and its yearly economic growth is around 10%. Its location at the intersection of cultures and continents also bring it tremendous leverage in international relations. Istanbul's economic power can be linked to the economic growth of Turkey and the increasing being a veritable melting pot of cultures, Turkey successfully uses soft power as well in its politics. All of these factors taken together strongly influence the mode of government in Turkey, especially the role of the central government in Istanbul - arguably the country's most important city.

***Arslan Bissembayev & Anna Győry***



## Chapter 3: Weaving the Urban Fabric: Neighborhoods and Urban Development

Photo: Caroline Guillet

*As we made our way through the city, some abandoned buildings in ruin caught our eye, and revealed themselves to be a highly prevalent issue in Istanbul. As in many other metropolises, housing is a major concern, but in Istanbul urban redevelopment projects are central to the politics of the city, as we saw in the report on the IMP. Moreover, they are closely linked to immigration issues, as some projects directly affect cosmopolitan neighborhoods and communities such as the Roma people. Communities and cultures are thus another contentious topic, that we will explore through the visit of a community center and a Greek School. Is Istanbul as cosmopolitan as it tried to portray itself to be? Networks, in a more literal sense, will be the last focus of this section, as it will be devoted to water management. All these different aspects of urban development put an emphasis on the central role of national government and the crucial role played by AKP in the governance of Istanbul.*

### Urban Development in a Globalizing Informal City

İstanbul Şehir Üniversitesi (Altunizade  
campus)  
January 10, 2012

This conference took place at Şehir University, a four-year-old social sciences institute with an international scope. “Şehir”,

means “city” in Turkish. The two lecturers were Professor Murat Güvenç, head of the Urban Studies Research Center, and Eda Yücesoy, from the Department of Sociology. The lecture provided an historical perspective of the urban development process from 1900 until today, with a particular focus on the evolution of informality in the city. Istanbul’s recent history can be roughly divided into four periods, during which four different “Istanbuls” have taken shape.

## Housing and Urban Redevelopment Projects



Photo: Caroline Guillet

### *The Glory of the Early XXth Century*

In 1900, Istanbul appeared as a very modern city and the capital of a prestigious empire. Technological achievements such as the provision of electricity, the construction of a tramway line, and the increased availability of public water transformed Istanbul as the showcase of the Ottoman Empire. Simultaneously, the financial complex of the city developed quickly and Istanbul experienced massive processes of accumulation of capital. At that time, Istanbul used to be a very cosmopolitan city with an important mix of Jewish, Greek, Armenian and Turkish Muslim communities.

### *Between the Two World Wars: The Decline.*

After the dismantlement of the Ottoman Empire, Istanbul entered a dark period. The city lost its prestige, as Ankara became the new political capital of the Republic of Turkey. The amount of commercial activities shrunk and many investors left the city. In parallel, the quality and quantity of public facilities decreased. Even the population declined; Istanbul's population collapsed

from one million inhabitants in 1900, to 700,000 by 1930. The cosmopolitan character of the city was simultaneously affected since Armenian and Greek communities started leaving Istanbul. However, this period corresponded to the beginning of an era of "radical modernity." More and more apartments were built and city dwellers massively shifted from traditional Ottoman houses to more modern types of apartments in which they started experiencing brand new lifestyles.

### *After 1945: Continuous Growth and Rise of the Informal City*

After World War II, Turkey received massive financial support from the United States through the Marshall Plan. Americans notably provided thousands of tractors for agriculture. The intrusion of such new agricultural technologies generated inactivity, and many peasants had to move to the city. At the same time, the Turkish authorities launched an era of developmentalism during which huge investments in industry were made in Turkish cities and, more particularly, in Istanbul. These policies caused a radical long-term alteration of urban space and since the 1950s, Istanbul has experienced massive, continuous urban growth.

However, the city did not sprawl in the same way that American cities did. On the contrary, the growth took place at the core of the city and central neighborhoods became more and more condensed. In parallel, the provision of facilities and public services remained rather poor. Hence, informal activities appeared as an alternative answer to the degradation of the quality of life. Buildings were illegally occupied, a vast system of shared taxis was organized to cope with the absence of an efficient public transportation network, and informal street vendors became determinant actors in the delivery of goods to citizens. The informal economy appeared, at that time, as an inventive strategy to survive in Istanbul.

## Since the 1980s: The Rise of the Global (formal) City

Istanbul – today a city of 13 million – has completely entered the globalized era not only because international exchanges with other world cities keep increasing, but also because major urban trends observable in other metropolises seem to be taking shape in Istanbul as well. For instance, gated communities are mushrooming on the outskirts of the city and public policies appear increasingly influenced by neo-liberalism. Also, Istanbul is currently experiencing a process of deindustrialization since service activities are now largely prevalent in the economy; Istanbul is often qualified as a “third sector city”.

In the process of globalization, formality has taken the upper-hand over informality. Noticeably, shared taxis do not exist anymore and the city is now equipped with a much stronger public transportation system. As for informal street vendors, they can barely be seen in the streets while malls have been flourishing. However, though these former patterns of informality have vanished, other forms of informality reinvent themselves (under the shape of illegal employment for instance).

As regularization tends to become the norm, the informal housing stock has been almost entirely regularized since the 80s. Building rights have been granted to former squatter settlements. Many buildings are also being destroyed, which generate massive displacements of populations to new types of housing, mainly managed by private companies. Sometimes, legal and political barriers prevent these enterprises from succeeding. In such cases, TOKI, a public planning institution created in 1990, plays a determinant role in the validation of urban schemes. Interestingly, TOKI benefits from an autonomous status within the structure of the central government. At times, this very particular status (halfway between a



private company and a public agency) renders the planning and management activities operated by the authority hardly accountable.

Alongside this phenomenon of regularization, entry into the global era corresponds with a phenomenon of peripherization. Indeed, the recent development of Istanbul introduced deep changes in the geography of the metropolis. An important sprawl of the city over more than 100km is noticeable at present, which contrasts greatly with the earlier concentrations of the population, wealth, and activities in the city center. While more than 1.2 million old, unoccupied apartments can be found in Istanbul’s central areas, the main trend in the shape of Istanbul’s contemporary urban fabric seems to be the construction of towers at the periphery. Professor Murat Güvenç shared his concern regarding the fact that the Turkish authorities might be making the same mistakes that France did in the 60s, while

referring to the massive construction of collective social housing (the HLMs, “Habitations à Loyers Modérés”) that occurred in France during that period. He then opposed this consideration to the short-term economic advantages implied by such gigantic construction policies.

Still, modern Istanbul tends to preserve, and even to some extent, enhance social and spatial divisions. Istanbul could be considered as a divided city, spatially organized alongside highways which constitute “city walls between the well-off and the others.” Indeed, most of the areas located near the Bosphorus still experience an important concentration of wealthy and educated people while others have to settle at the periphery of the city. Nevertheless, even though dividing lines are still clearly visible between educated and non-educated populations, and even if most service activities are still based in the city center next to the Bosphorus, it is worth noting that the social geography of this area is changing. A progressive replacement of “white collars” (top socio-professional groups) by “blue collars” (middle and more popular classes) seems to be underway.

The construction of gated communities further from the city center appears as another new pattern of urban segregation. However, this phenomenon does not seem to correspond with a voluntary strategy of secession of the upper and middle classes, who sometimes have to dwell far from the city center for mere material and budgetary

reasons. Indeed, gated communities concern various types of city dwellers and Professor Murat Güvenç connected the phenomenon of enclosure of the urban space to what he identifies as a growing fear of crime.

All kinds of apartment blocks – “including the HLM type of housing” – tend nowadays to be planned and built more or less on the schemes of gated communities (with surrounding walls and locked gates equipped with codes) in order to create the feeling of safe environments.

### *Conclusion*

To conclude, the recent evolution of Istanbul - largely tinged with the influence of globalization - has brought two main novelties to the organization of the city. Firstly, the informal economy seems much less influential today - or at least much less visible - than it used to be. Secondly, the geographic borders of the city have dramatically expanded. Nonetheless, despite an undeniable urban metamorphosis in process, Istanbul remains shaped and organized by ancient socio-spatial schemes, though renewed in their forms, such as illegal employment and social segregation.

***Hugo Ribadeau Dumas & Lucie Perez***



## Restoring Fener-Balat: History, Authority and Identity at Glance

Speaker: Başak Demires Özkul,  
Researcher, Center for Advanced Spatial  
Analysis (CASA) Bartlett School of  
Planning, University College London

### *Introduction to the Project*

The Fener-Balat restoration project was a neighborhood project conducted on the historical peninsula from the mid-1990s to 2008 which aimed to restore houses in the area to revive their original character and to improve the neighborhood's social, cultural, and economic status. Kicked off after Istanbul's 1996 Habitat Conference, the project became a joint venture between the EU, the Turkish government, and the Fatih municipality (one of the 39 districts of Istanbul which comprises among its 15 areas Fener and Balat, cf. chapter on Strategic Planning in the Metropolitan Region of Istanbul for more detailed information). The EU, which initially replaced UNESCO as leader of the project thanks to its financial power, provided most of the seven million euros that funded the project and that were mostly allocated to housing renovations (four million euros) while the rest was allocated to the construction of social centers, the renovation of the marketplace, and the recycling scheme.

### *History of the Area*

Ethnic diversity accounts for the rich identity, as well as for the cultural and social wealth of Fener-Balat. During the Ottoman time and until the first post-World War II decades, Jews, Greeks, and Armenians lived together in the neighborhood, explaining the massive presence of synagogues, orthodox churches and other religious institutions. Greek and Jewish shopkeepers were replaced by Turkish and Kurdish immigrants from the Black Sea in the 1960s. Likewise,

national economic migrants (mostly single men) from rural areas searching for economic opportunities in Istanbul started occupying the area due to the proximity of the dynamic neighborhood of Eminönü. As quality of housing was slightly better in Balat, a first wave of migrants preferred to settle there before a second wave moved into Fener.

### *The Project in Details*

As mentioned above, beyond the physical appearance of the buildings, improving the income of residents and creating an agreeable environment for current inhabitants was the underlying goal of the project. By 2008, the area had become more livable with more daily-life amenities. The project included road improvements, historical building renovations and building a social center.

Road improvements carried out by the Fatih municipality started before buildings were integrated into the renovation process in 1998 (the windows notably show the renovation). As far as the residential part of the renovation was concerned, the four million euros that were allocated were distributed after a selection process that aimed at differentiating buildings according to their architectural value. In choosing the buildings, two criteria were used: the historical value of the building and agreements with the owners of the buildings. Turkish private contractors conducted the renovations in collaboration with municipalities, and together they suggested color schemes and renovation choices to the private owners who still had the final word in the decision. Very symbolic of the intentions of the project was the requirement for the owners of renovated buildings not to sell the housing lot for five years in order to prevent the gentrification of the area. The social center was set up in one of the renovated historic buildings. The purpose of the construction of the social center was also to improve the socioeconomic status of the area. The EU notably wanted a center of this kind to

benefit the neighborhood, and most importantly to provide education to children (such as computer literacy classes).

### *Controversies and Issues*

The renovation project created a lot of tensions and issues around the nature of the renovations and the way they were conducted, revealing stakes urban governance is facing in Istanbul.

### Modern vs. Tradition

One of the most controversial issues was where the renovations' priority had to be placed: actual lives of real inhabitants that emphasize modern facilities of the building or historical/anthropological values that underline traditional features of the building? Some of the actual inhabitants, mostly renters, leaned more towards improving facilities and installing modern conveniences. Also, only the buildings that contained local identity (i.e. traditional features) were preserved and the other, comparably modern buildings without any historical values were torn down; they were replaced by "historical" buildings built anew with local characteristics.



Picture 1: The building in the middle, because of its historical features, is going to be restored whereas the building on the right (gray one) is projected to be torn down as it does not have any historical value.

### Government's intervention to private ownership and autonomy

Some of the owners did not want to change the existing structures, preferring to leave the entire building as it was since some of them contained beautiful interior decorations and paintings. However, due to the official institutions' dominant power in these projects, the wishes or intentions of the owners had to be compromised within the rules and regulations given by the authorities. The debate over the nature of the renovation was amplified by the media coverage of the renovation projects, and thanks to the media pressure, the original character of some houses were kept and middle class Istanbulites acquired some of them. These contentious moments are visually symbolized by the protest messages left by locals on their windows (see picture below) : "Evime Dokun Ma!" ("Don't touch my house").



Picture 2: « Evime Dokun Ma... ! » poster on the yellow building clearly shows the citizens' resistance against the government led restoration project.

On the other hand, some people from the area were trying to mobilize themselves to contribute to their neighborhood. Money raised by a community foundation in the area for instance is spent in the same

neighborhood by its members in order to improve its socio-economic status.

#### Increasing value of the area

In an attempt to prevent speculative investments or gentrification, as previously mentioned above, the owners of the renovated buildings are not allowed to sell their properties for five years. However, nothing has been done to restrain potentially rising rents as the renovation projects of this area increase the properties' values; as a result, most of the renovation projects benefited the owners of the renovated buildings, whereas the 60-70% of the renters (i.e. actual inhabitants) would face the rising rents which were not being controlled by the institutions (according to the researcher Mrs. Özkul).

#### Excessive power of the Turkish state government

A central issue of the renovation project was the allocation of authority, which was mainly done by the Turkish state government. It decided which area to renovate, and which private agencies would take over the individual cases. Furthermore, the state government kept making new legislation that changed authority allocation and complicated the administrative and responsibility issues linked to the project. For example, 20% of the renovations were initially the responsibility of the Fatih municipality as a part of a national law that deals with renovations of historical neighborhoods. However, a new national law nullified the district plans of Fatih and the district municipality had to redo the plans in accordance to the new rules and regulations. Almost everything is being managed and controlled by the state government: the local municipality barely has any rights and could not sign any document on its own. Its excessive power and the lack of transparency created issues like the delay of the renovation, as the project had been going on for nearly ten years (1998-2007), unreached objectives (which according to our guide Mrs Başak Demires Ozkul may be explained by disappearance of funds), as

initially 500 buildings were concerned while only 200 buildings are now included in the project, and questions in the decision making processes such as how the government chose the buildings or who undertook the project highlights the problems of the monopolization of authority.

#### Abandoned buildings: Where are the owners?

Vacant and abandoned buildings in poor condition stand in Fener-Balat as a result of the migration out of Turkey of the original owners (Greeks, Armenians, and Jews) who left without selling their properties. These buildings still belong to these people whom the government cannot trace. This was and still is a big issue as the different actors involved cannot touch nor renovate these buildings. Finally, it is also a sensitive diplomatic issue considering the ties between Turkey and Armenia, which prevent the government from seizing the buildings.

#### *Conclusion*

The guided tour in Fener-Balat revealed some key governance issues in Istanbul. It notably showcases how the multiplicity of actors involved in such a project can create specific issues which might challenge its implementation. Delegation of authority and power was in this perspective a key aspect as problems of transparency, overlapping and identification of responsibilities, and delays progressively emerged. The strong intrusion of the Turkish central government created tensions and conflicts symbolized by the resistance of the locals, who also face threats of gentrification and rising rents due to the increasing value of the area. In the process of this project, one can observe the state government's direct involvement and strong interest in preserving historical characteristics of the area. In this respect, this could be considered as another example that implies the problematic imbalance of power in governing Istanbul.

***Loic Daudey & Ihnji Jon***

## Presentation and Discussion of the Kumkapi District

Speaker: Fabio Solomoni, researcher  
January 11, 2012

*To understand the latest transformation of Istanbul, it is highly interesting to adopt a population movement's perspective, notably because of the emigration phenomenon to Turkey as well as that of internal migration, which started in the early 1950s with the urbanization process and expanded in the 80s and 90s when Istanbul became a settlement place for refugees.*



Fabio Solomoni

### Recent History of Kumkapi and Tarlabası : Two Neighborhoods that are Regularly Associated

Initially, the two areas were inhabited by Greek and Armenian migrants who eventually migrated elsewhere - the Greeks mostly returning back to their motherland. The 1950s then marked the beginning of internal migration in Turkey due to the urbanization process of the country, turning Kumkapi and Tarlabası into places for migrants and refugees. The patriarch holds an importance place in these two neighborhoods, as there is an extremely

pious Armenian community living there, represented by religious schools and Armenian associations. The Armenian diaspora is an important local community despite ethnic controversies.

Both areas also display Ottoman heritage with the presence of Turkish baths (disappearing with the construction of water pipes), and traces of the multicultural aspect of the empire (e.g Bulgarian shops and businesses).

### Differences between Kumkapi and Tarlabası

The differences between Kumkapi and Tarlabası lie in their respective geographical settings. Kumkapi is located in the historical city, that is to say, close to industrial and commercial areas. Because of the Turkish economy becoming export-oriented after the 70s, Kumkapi benefited from a spillover effect, unlike Tarlabası, as the former is close to Aksarai and Laleli.

Kumkapi is a place marked by international migration, and receives many Turkish migrants from central Anatolia. It has also recently become a place of settlement for internal migration flows of Kurdish people (end of the 90s), triggering a flourishing in the building of shoe and clothing factories. Kumkapi remained largely residential until the 1970s and was transformed into a production/commercial zone afterwards, whereas Tarlabası remained residential. The Greek and Armenian buildings and settlements were progressively abandoned in the district.

Kumkapi slowly became a multifunctional neighborhood, thanks to industry, but also to the huge internal migration flows - notably from the Kurdish region in the 1980s. While having a look at Kumkapi's buildings, there is a clear "stratography" that can be observed through the successive waves of migrations. Functions of the neighborhoods can be clearly identified, as architecture depends on certain periods and also reflects

an ethnic mapping of places and activities in the neighborhood.

The toponymy of the place is a revealing element. From Bulgarian to Kurdish names, the influences of migration are pervasive in place-naming. Other global trends such as globalization introduced the popular use of Italian names by clothing and shoe shops and factories as Turkish customers and producers saw them as a guarantee of good quality and sales.

#### *Transformation of Kumkapi:*

##### *A Place of Labor and Commerce*

Beginning in the 1980s, Kumkapi underwent massive transformations to become an area of touristic interest. This was mainly due to the location of Kumkapi and its proximity to other major touristic neighborhoods of Istanbul. As far as urban shape is concerned, Kumkapi has seen a change in building designs as well. Today, Kumkapi is a productive trade center, a residential area, as well as a place for refugees. Parts of Kumkapi are quite well known, as they contain some of the most popular fish restaurants and disco bars in Istanbul, which attract important flows of visitors.

By the 1990s, pensions and hostels were established for international migrants - migrants from Asia and the Middle East transiting through Istanbul before continuing their journey westward. Kumkapi was, by then, the center of the organization of journeys to Italy and other Mediterranean countries in the EU. In the late 1990s, in addition to transit migrants, labor migrants from the former USSR and, more particularly, women settled there. The last flow of migrants observed are those coming from Turkmenistan.

##### *A Place of Transitory/Permanent Residences*

Kumkapi is not only a land of migration characterized by labor/business opportunities. Indeed, the late 90s showed that Kumkapi was not only a transit destination but also a destination for labor migrants from the former Soviet Republic, as well as businessmen from Russia (traders)

migrating for “suitcase-trade” purposes, calling for an informal market economy. A few profiles of migrants can be drawn such as Armenian women with young children and migrants from the former Soviet Union.

Kumkapi is also a place for fault residences (unlike Tarlabası) and forced residences (jails, detention centers, etc.). Undocumented migrants caught by the Istanbul police force are placed in a detention center, situated in the middle of the Kumkapi district, which was established in 2007 in an old Armenian school.

Regarding the involvement of the municipality in the integration of these residents, the municipality does launch initiatives for integration of the lower-classes and international migrants such as shelters, schools and community associations as well as professional insertion aids; these, nonetheless, target only documented migrants, missing a great part of the population in Kumkapi but more importantly, in Tarlabası. The general attitude in Istanbul and in Turkey is to encourage and help skilled migrants, while labor migrants are not assisted/welcomed, even though the country still needs national and or international labor migrants, particularly in the construction sector.

##### *A Place of Entertainment and Leisure*

The last transformation observed shows a new functional change through the process of gentrification, as Kumkapi is a strategic location for building infrastructure for tourism. Urban planning is giving a greater importance to Kumkapi in the realm of tourism, triggering a very dynamic real estate market as people try to restore, build, and sell hotels and create a sort of migrant entrepreneurship.

The real estate mechanisms (extremely vivid) are already in action. Interestingly, and contrary to what we had seen and heard about other neighborhoods, older buildings are preserved and renovated. Migrant entrepreneurship is already catching gentrification’s benefits; the introduction of festivals such as the Balik (“Fish”) Festival is

attracting tourists. In the real estate market, what is particularly striking is the intervention of the Armenian diaspora buying renovated buildings in the neighborhood as a re-appropriation process of the place. The symbols of previous migrations are present and important: Kumkapi is seen as a “sponge” - a “liminal area” where people are safe.

Kumkapi’s settlement patterns approach those of Southern Europe with the same patterns of labor migration, an abandoned city center, cheap housing opportunities, fast-changing and progressive gentrification. The programs led by the municipality revolve around the welfare of migrants and refugees who represent a big part of Kumkapi’s population. Municipality policies are also translated into a pressure to move factories to other industrial areas, triggering tax policy and property rights issues.

Kumkapi is a place of invisibility, where tacit agreements are in place with authorities despite an omnipresent state. It makes the area a complex neighborhood and, to some extent, a paradoxical one. The transformation pushed by the state, real estate developers, and tourism is resisted, though not head-on.

Contrary to Tarlabası, the district has managed to remain dynamic, with the mixing of Istanbulites and migrants, businesses and residences. In a new era of urban development, Kumkapi is a microcosm of Istanbul which reflects various and intricate levels of governance, and where all actors have a hold on different facets of governing power.

***Léonie Claezman & Clélia Hardy***



Photo: Cindy Nino

## Cosmopolitan City and the Role of Culture(s)



Nese Erdilek

Photo: Arthur Crestani

## Tarlabası Community Center

Speaker: Ms. Neşe Erdilek, Administrative Coordinator, Center for Migration Research, Istanbul Bilgi University  
January 11, 2012

*On the January 11, 2012 we met with people at the Tarlabası Community Center to discuss immigration and trafficking in, to, and through Istanbul. Tarlabası is a neighborhood bordering the Bosphorus that has long been associated with Kurdish and Roma immigrant communities.*

*Brief Overview of Migration History in Turkey*  
The formation of the Republic of Turkey has largely been based on migration, with one third of the Turkish population originating from outside the country. This phenomenon has largely inspired demographic changes to

the city of Istanbul over the past few decades. In the last century of the Ottoman Empire, Istanbul had an equal population on both the Anatolian and European sides of the Bosphorus. Due to the strategic importance of the city at the cross-roads of three continents, specific events in the region can be clearly identified as having sparked changes to the city's urban fabric. The Balkan Wars, for one, spurred mass Muslim migration, with a subsequent Greek-Orthodox exodus of around 400,000 people. 1989 saw a period of migration from Yugoslavia, and in 1991, the First Gulf War brought a significant Iraqi migration north. It is for these reasons, among others, that Istanbul can be seen as having fallen victim to the volatile geopolitical climate of the regions it borders through different phases of contemporary history.

The 1980s saw the widespread implementation of neo-liberal policies by the central government, and these encouraged mass rural-urban migration as thousands pursued increased job opportunities. This phenomenon, brought on by a loss of jobs in the agricultural sector as a result of improved technology, coincided with unrest and forced migration in the southeast of the country, specifically with Kurdish minorities. Today, there is a mix of both transit and internal migration in Turkey, although it can be said that it predominantly takes place for security reasons.

*Focus on the Tarlabası Area*



Land use from a socioeconomic perspective in the Tarlabaşı area has shifted drastically since the 1850s, when the neighborhood was used predominantly as a residential area for the employees of various diplomatic missions present in Istanbul. As political bodies were shifted to Ankara, and the period from the 1940s to the 1960s saw an increase in migration for economic reasons, the neighborhood began a progressive make-over as a migrant area. Males, originally from rural areas, shared rooms instead of families inhabiting lavish apartments, as had previously been the case. Although this was a gradual development, expulsions on behalf of both Greece and Turkey can be seen as having sped up the process.

In the 1980s, Tarlabaşı's racial make-up began to include a significant number of Kurdish people as well. Today, partially as a result of government discrimination towards this ethnic group, the neighborhood is largely associated with organized crime, unemployment, and domestic violence by the media, although gentrification beginning in the mid-1980's has slowly begun to change this reputation. This bad image is definitely not helping. However, the government's interest is behind this - it wants these people out of the region. There is, thus, a political purpose to this image. The center is actually trying to break the association between crime and Tarlabaşı. A boulevard slicing the area in two was constructed, with the neighborhoods upper-side now being associated more-so with business and tourism.

### *About the Center*

The Tarlabaşı Community Center opened in September 2006 in the Tarlabaşı neighborhood in Beyoğlu. Initially, it was a European Union project but it ended in 2007. It is also supported by the Istanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi. It established itself as an association, which means that it is now receiving donations and grants. The center also tried to develop local funds from Turkey, but that initiative has not worked that well. In fact, the most important support is coming from the U.S., but also from Sweden. The center had two projects within the framework of the European Capital of Culture. There are also donations from research visitors as well as people in Turkey, but not on a regular basis. The center is functioning mainly thanks to international support. It is receiving gifts from the U.S. but is not giving any goods. It is indeed not a charity. Its main role is to provide assistance to people with migration backgrounds and is mostly working with children, women and youth. These children, women and youth coming to the center are generally Kurdish or Roma. Undocumented migrants are afraid of getting caught.

The center proposes educational activities for children and youth, as well as social activities such as art workshops, creative drama workshops, and rhythm and music workshops. There are also activities for adults like reading and writing courses, English language courses, handicraft courses, and meetings on health, child-parent relations, and domestic violence. In fact, the center is a place where people can express themselves and, most importantly, develop self-respect and confidence. In 2010, Istanbul was the European Capital of Culture and within this framework, the center developed projects with women such as hand drawing and painting workshops in the street. What's more, in early 2011, the first Children Rights Congress took place in Turkey and two children from the center presented papers.



The center is providing opportunities to its members to perform on stage during festivals in the context of certain courses they have taken during the year such as music and drama. The center has around eighty active members and also counts international volunteers, most notably through an Erasmus partnership. It is planning to open conversation classes for males because male migrants are the least participative in the life of the center.

The center has tried to integrate with the community living in the Tarlabası area and is now largely accepted. The center is trying to stand at equal distance from political parties and as a registered association; it is working within legal boundaries.

***Suzanne Chatelier & Felix Attard***

## Visit of the Karaköy Greek Primary School

Speakers: Korhan Gümüş, Architect and former Director of the Agency for Istanbul 2010; Mrs. Mere, Head of Karaköy Foundation; Mr. Gonsar, Volunteer  
January 14, 2012

The city of Istanbul has made use of its cosmopolitan history and image to defend its vivid culture and heterogeneous heritage. At the confluence of Europe and Asia, it has hosted diasporas of different religions and origins since the establishment of the Byzantine Empire. We visited the Karaköy Greek primary school in order to



understand how these diasporas contribute to the governance of the city, and how they interact and negotiate with the local authorities to gain autonomy. The example of the Greek community is highly indicative of the history of ethnic minorities since the advent of modern Turkey. Following the relative demise of the nationalist and secular discourse of the modern State on the Turkish unity, contemporary Istanbul is facing again the issue of integration and cultural representation of this long-established community. This special case offered us an entry point into the political problems encountered by minorities in the

management of urban space.

We were introduced to the school and the staff of the Karaköy Foundation by Mr. Khoran Gumus, whom we had already met three days earlier. We first stood in the main hall, a large, empty room that was designed to host performances and other cultural



events. The austerity of the building contrasted with its size, and the balustrade that went all around the room made it quite impressive. We then proceeded to the upper floors, through the old stairway to one of the few rooms still furnished. Through the open doors one could see beds that must have been those of the pupils, evocative of an old boarding school. The severity of the statue of Atatürk, in the corridor, was rather unsettling, especially with the many Turkish flags placed around it.

The Karaköy Greek primary school was built in 1910 on Kemeraltı Caddesi, in the neighborhood of Galata-Karaköy. This central neighborhood has been characterized by early industrial development and affluence, not far from Taksim Square, Galata and Sultanahmet (cf. map). At this time, the neighborhood was cosmopolitan and hosted Armenian and Greek populations, including numerous community schools and Orthodox churches. This school was constructed by the Greek

community to provide education to Orthodox Turkish children of Greek origin.

In the early 20th Century, the Greek community in Istanbul amounted to about 300,000 people, out of 1,100,000 inhabitants. They were the biggest minority of the city, but after the Greco-Turkish War (1919-1922) and the Lausanne Treaty (1923), the Greek population in Istanbul decreased dramatically to 100,000. The Treaty created the legal framework for the exchange of the respective diasporas between both countries, resulting in consequent migration. Nowadays, only 1,500 Greek nationals live in the city.

The anti-Greek riots of 1955 resulted in another wave of emigration and in 1956 renovation projects such as street widening destroyed the majority of the community buildings of the neighborhood. The school remained a very important place for the Greek community, as it had also become a cultural and social center. Festivals and celebrations were organized in the atrium, where a theatre had been built in 1955. In the 1960s, a community kitchen was incorporated to the school, providing food for the poorest people of the neighborhood. The year 1964 was another turning point for the minority, with the renegation of the 1930 Greek-Turkish Ankara Convention and the following expulsion of 12,000 ethnic Greeks. The administrative records of this year kept track of 260 students enrolled in the kindergarten or the primary school.

The school had a very good reputation and was embedded in an influential network that still exists today. After a period of closure between 1990 and 2000, it resumed its activities again until 2007 as a primary school. Since then, no classes have been given due to lack of Greek students and teachers.

Following the ratification of the Lausanne Treaty, the ethnic and religious minorities were given the right to manage their own buildings such as schools, churches and orphanages. However, though the Karaköy Foundation has the legal capacity to manage the school, it is the Turkish State that enjoys

the property of the three buildings that compose it. The State also collects the revenues of the four shops incorporated in the school. In 2010, Turkey was condemned by the European Court of Human Rights and forced to return the school to the Foundation. A decision over its ownership is expected in February 2012.

The candidacy for the title of European Capital of Culture in 2010 opened room for the minorities of Istanbul to express and drive cultural projects, with the approval of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The city made use of its cosmopolitan image to valorize its historical legacy, collaborating with NGOs and foundations. This renewal is largely dependent upon the actions of private bodies members of the civil society. The approval of the projects by the State has given back to the communities the right to actually restore their historical and architectural heritage so far. This is the first concretization of the legal framework for minorities in Istanbul.

The current objective of the Foundation is to transform the school into a Greek cultural center, of which the city is currently lacking. The project of re-opening classes still exists, but depends on the 'de-migration' process, if the Turkish people of Greek origins that emigrated to Greece eventually come back. These projects include the creation of a museum that would be a research institute on Greek culture in Turkey, or of an art gallery. The Foundation also plans to host the Design and Architecture Biennale in 2012. The Foundation is currently in search of sponsors and partnerships, since it does not receive any public funding. It is also fully engaged in the resolution of the legal issue of the property of the building. More generally, the Foundation deplores the lack of political and administrative representation of the minorities in the municipality and the central government. That, said Khoran Gumus, is contradictory with the history of Greeks and Armenians formerly occupying high positions in the

government of the Ottoman Empire and of the city of Istanbul.

In a broader perspective, the case of the School illustrated the issues of management and property of space between ethnic minorities and the different levels of the Turkish administration. These communities do not necessarily coordinate directly with the municipal authority but are more engaged into direct negotiation with the national State. This status quo has been challenged by the greater integration of Turkey into the European legal system, with the subsequent recognition and extension of the rights of minorities. This has indirectly favored the development of private initiatives taken by NGOs and associations. The reflection shall be extended to the Kurdish and Armenian communities. The city of Istanbul is now the field for lower – grassroots- and higher –European- levels of political and legal action to develop and coordinate.

***Caroline Bouniol de Gineste & Arthur Crestani***



## Cultural Policies and Neighborhood Development

Speaker : Miss Asena Günal  
Location : Depo  
January 12, 2012



This meeting started with a brief introduction presenting Depo. Miss Asena Günal presented the cultural center as a space for contemporary art exhibitions and for critical debates and exchanges in the city center of Istanbul. The center's aim is to develop regional projects and collaborative works between artists of the region, bringing together Istanbul's and other tradition's artistic themes. According to Miss Günal, Depo appears as the first attempt in Turkey to focus on regional collaborations between Turkey and its neighboring countries in the Caucasus, the Middle East and the Balkans. The cultural center is the result of an initiative of Anadolu Kültür, a non-profit organization focusing on the field of culture. Since its establishment, this entity has enhanced cross-cultural collaboration and art circulation throughout Turkey and the region.

The speaker also quickly described the location of Depo which is located in Tophane. There is a high level of gentrification in this central area of Istanbul; it is also the neighborhood which concentrates most of the art production of the metropolis. The building is a former

tobacco warehouse, used as such until the 1950s. In 2008, renovations were carried out preserving the original features of the building. Since 2009, the ancient four-story building with high ceilings and wooden floors has been used as a cultural center displaying art practices. Tophane is a very mixed neighborhood where art centers have to co-exist with traditional and conservative people who criticize the modernization and the liberalization of the neighborhood through this growing artistic activity. For instance, Depo sells beer and sometimes organizes debates with the LGBT community, which creates tensions in the neighborhood. This resulted most drastically in an attack on the center on September 21st, 2010 by 40 people armed with sticks and gas.

Our speaker then introduced the activities of the cultural center in more detail. Its artistic program is composed of exhibitions and documentary screenings. Discussion series, including workshops, conferences, and lectures on art and its relation with different subjects are regularly held in the cultural center. Depo also publishes an e-journal titled *Red Thread*. The cultural center collaborates with museums, in particular the Istanbul Museum of Modern Art.

Miss Günal also emphasized the political and social commitment of the artistic production displayed by the center. Indeed, Depo addresses the implications of politically and socially-engaged art practices; the artists selected by the center are always engaged in raising awareness concerning chaotic urban issues in Istanbul. For instance, the exhibition currently displayed on the second floor of the building is composed of photos of Roma people, taken by Roma kids living in Istanbul. These photographs question the exclusion of the Roma community in the city; their houses are replaced by housing developments for upper-middle classes that they cannot afford and the Roma are forced to find houses away from the city. More generally, Miss Günal explained that human rights, social exclusion, and ecology issues

are ubiquitous in contemporary artistic practices in Istanbul.

After this introduction, the speaker launched a 10-minute extract from a documentary on the city of Istanbul: Ecümenopolis. This excerpt displayed contemporary urban challenges in Istanbul, particular around the issue of housing. The documentary specifically highlighted the contrast between gated communities and highly insecure communities.

Most of the meeting with Miss Günal actually took the form of an interview by focusing on students questions. For her, there is no Turkish artist who is not involved in a kind of activism through his/her art. Artists are usually very committed to current events because there are lots of issues to be solved and there is always something going on. Besides artists, scholars, students, and activists are also part of public engagement that aims at forcing the government to stop controversial policies such as those around housing. Even if the government does not seem to address these claims, activism becomes more and more powerful in Istanbul. However, the art community does not receive any pressure from the government. According to Miss Günal, the pressure is coming more from nationalist people or from the neighborhood. The newspaper, *Akit* (formerly known as *Vakit*) also puts pressure on *Depo*: it is often against some exhibitions (especially ones criticizing political Islam), and it once obliged the community to modify such an exhibition.

Our speaker believed there to be a risk of extreme cultural concentration in Istanbul. She explained that everything cultural takes place in Taksim. Besides, most artists live in the city center of Istanbul. According to her, there is no space for art to develop independently in Turkey today; many galleries concentrate in one particular area, not only in Istanbul but also in the country. Moreover, most of the cultural places in Istanbul are located in areas of consumption

- there is almost no independent artistic place, as art is mostly displayed in foundations funded by capital or in small commercial galleries. Günal recognized that the very presence of the cultural center in the central and very dynamic neighborhood of Tophane is part of a gentrifying process. The municipality, however, welcomes the cultural center in this area because it brings some cultural capital.

According to Miss Günal, there is no religious contemporary art but some artists use religious symbols in their work, mostly Islamist symbols. There are some works that criticize Islamism but these are more general criticisms of the politicization of Islam than a claim against the religion itself.

There is no democratization of the culture in Turkey since capital is still a barrier against that: if an artist is not marketable, he or she cannot exhibit his or her work. Furthermore, the government does not give any financial support for contemporary art, as it concentrates its budget around traditional art, cinema, or theater.

Even if Asena Günal focused her discourse on the activities of the cultural center, we were eventually able to sketch out some features of the current governance of Istanbul at the end of the meeting. Observing the kind of artworks displayed in the center, we grasped the main concerns of Turkish artists, revealing their opinion on the management of various urban issues in Istanbul. For example, the photos taken by Roma kids of the Roma community implicitly refer to the housing policy at stake in Istanbul. Because of the improvement of some neighborhoods and the rise in the price of rents, the upper-middle class is progressively replacing the working class and migrants who used to live in central areas of Istanbul and who are now limited to moving to the outskirts of the city. This reality, conveyed by several photos, reveals the massive displacement taking place in Istanbul concerning housing. We understood that the gentrification process is intensifying

in Istanbul through this spatial segregation; it seems more and more difficult to find places mixing people from different socio-economic backgrounds. We also learnt that Istanbul does not really support the development of a form of art that would be socially committed, politically engaged or that would simply be less traditional than the traditional form of art that one can meet in Istanbul.

The minimal influence of Turkish artists on social and political life can be related to the absence of governmental support to non-traditional forms of art. Istanbul's lack of a solid modern and contemporary culture reveals something about the way art is considered by the government in the metropolis.

***Joana Olier & Juliette Le Pannérer***

## Case Study: The Governance of Water



### Report on Water Regulation and Conflicts in the Istanbul Metropolitan Region: Past, Present and Future

Speaker: Dr. Ahmet Saatçi  
January 12, 2012

*This conference was led by Dr. Ahmet Saatçi who is the chair and a professor of Environmental Engineering at Marmara University. The topic of the conference was "Istanbul's Water Supply-Past, Present and the Future".*

Prof. Saatçi began by projecting the population increase of Istanbul, which is presently around 14 million people, but which could jump to around 50 million people by 2050. This would have a direct impact on the water supply in the city. On January 6, 2012 alone, for example, 2,165,000 m<sup>3</sup> of water was consumed in Istanbul.

Historically, the Romans had superior techniques for water provision. Emperor Hadrian (117-138 AD) brought water from

Figure 1. Valens Aqueduct



Figure 1. Yerebaran Cistern



locations close to the castle walls. Emperor Valens constructed two aqueducts (refer to Figure 1 above) to bring water from Halkalı to Beyazid between 364-378 AD. There were cisterns (refer to Figure 2 above) that were the water collecting plants for the city.

The water rates in Istanbul (as of January 1, 2012) vary for different sectors and are most expensive for industries and construction sites \$3.70 USD, followed by offices (\$3.60 USD), housing construction sites (\$2.20 USD), and domestic use and municipalities (\$1.70 USD). Naturally, water rates for villages are the cheapest (0.40 - 1.10 TL)

Presently, there are around eleven water reservoirs (refer to Figure 2 below) scattered throughout Istanbul from which the city fulfills its water requirements. The



water reservoir in the northwestern part of the city supplies water to the European side of Istanbul, where approximately 60% of the population of Istanbul resides. There are three pipelines underneath the Bosphorus that transport water from the Anatolian side to the European side. The water reservoir in the southern part of the European side is polluted due to construction and habitation around the reservoir. There are five water treatment plants (refer to Figure 3 below) that make the water ready for its final consumption by the users. What is intriguing is that an independent water policy for Istanbul managed by the local authorities is missing. The water policy in Istanbul is guided by the national water policy for the entire Turkish state.

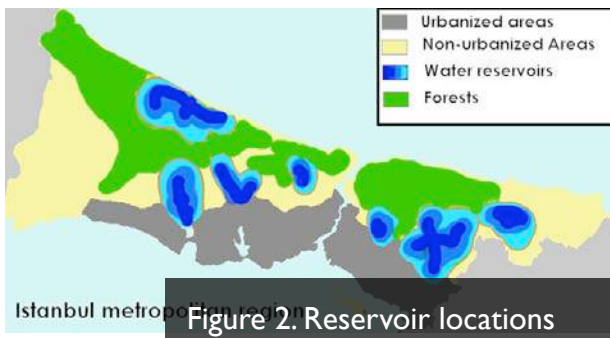
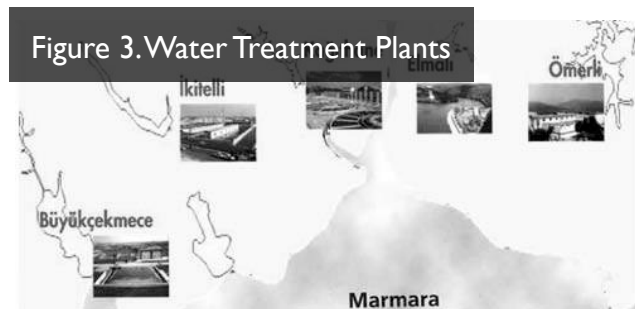


Figure 2. Reservoir locations

Considering the future of Istanbul, the Melen Project seeks to provide pipelines to fulfill the future water supply that will be needed in Istanbul. A 187km long pipeline, 2,500mm in diameter is being built to supply water from the far eastern side of Istanbul to the European side. The first phase of the Melen Project will cost about \$1.18 billion USD. Two credit packages (totaling around \$900 million USD) were obtained from Japan for the project. The project is designed to supply 268 million m<sup>3</sup> of water by the end of the first stage and 1,117 billion m<sup>3</sup>/yr of water by the end of the third stage (the water demand for Istanbul is projected to be year 3 million m<sup>3</sup>/d 2040 until the end of 2040).

Desalination plants are seen as a costly technology for the future due to two important factors. Firstly, they are more expensive than the extraction of water from

the already-existing water reservoirs. Secondly, there is a problem of oil pollution in the seas



nearby Istanbul due to a very high movement of ships in the region. Pollution in Ömerli Reservoir

Recently, there has been a problem of pollution in the Ömerli reservoir (refer to Figure 3 above) on the Anatolian side of Istanbul. This is a watershed zone with a total surface area of 621 km<sup>2</sup>. The reservoir capacity is 387 million m<sup>3</sup>. The yearly renewal capacity of the reservoir is 220 million m<sup>3</sup>/year. reservoir plays a crucial role in the ambitious Melen project.

The area around the reservoir, however, has witnessed several developmental activities in the form of illegal settlements and constructions. Wastewater produced in the region has flowed into the reservoir. This has led to an eutrophication process, which will lead to an increase in algae growth in the next two years. The old algae in the reservoir have begun to die during the winter season due to low temperatures, settling down at the bottom of the reservoir. This has led to the creation of an anaerobic zone at the bottom, which affects the intake in the water treatment plant from this reservoir. Thus, the water plant began extracting water from the middle part of the reservoir. Paşaköy waste water treatment plant was constructed to solve this problem of reservoir pollution.

The discussion on this issue revealed the subtleties of management of water resources and politics and conflicts around water issues. Though Dr. Saatçi is the

Ahmet Saatçi



“technical expert” behind the water policies, he has served as much more than that in recent water policy issues. The curbing of pollution in the reservoir required not just technical solutions of building waste water plants, but also evacuating the adjacent areas of the illegal settlements.

Since this very solution posed serious threats of politicization of the issue, the government of Turkey forwarded the “expert” in the form of Dr. Saatçi to explain the situation to the people in those settlements. Evidently, the role of professor Saatçi was much more than merely being a technical expert. At the same time, being an engineer and professor gives

him more legitimacy in the eyes of people concerned about water issues to talk over water issues, than a representative of a political party.

In response to the question of water privatization issues, Dr. Saatçi responded that water privatization is a crucial and debatable issue in Turkey. Private water companies are in-charge of waste water treatment plants, for example. The government, however, can take over water quality assurance from the waste water treatment plants and simple water treatment plants. Regarding the coordination of water policy in Turkey, there are various actors that are involved in water management including the Turkish Institute of Water, Ministry of Water, Ministry of Agriculture, and Meteorological Department, among others. From time to time the mayor of Istanbul and different NGOs launch various awareness programs for water conservation to reduce the risk of exhausting Istanbul’s water supply. There are also financial incentives given by the municipalities like a \$2TL discount for saving a certain amount of water. The water conference concluded with a visit to a waste water treatment plant.

***Jusmeet Singh***

## Visit to Paşaköy Advanced Biological Wastewater Treatment Plant

Speaker: Dr. Mehmet Emre Baştopçu  
January 12, 2012

On January 12th we visited the Paşaköy Advanced Biological Wastewater Treatment Plant, one of several wastewater treatment plants in Istanbul. Located on the eastern part of Istanbul near the Riva Stream, the plant was constructed in 2000 in order to prevent untreated sewage from reaching the Ömerli watershed - one of the most important sources of potable water in the metropolis. With a capacity of 100,000 m<sup>3</sup>/day, the Paşaköy plant treats wastewater collected from four main districts surrounding the Ömerli watershed region - Sancaktepe, Sultanbeyli, Alemdağ and Sultançiftliği. Indeed, as we had seen earlier in the conference of Dr. Ahmet Saatçi at the Turkish Water Institute, the last decade has seen a striking and fast increase of illegal settlements located on the borders of the Ömerli watershed's streams. The construction of the Paşaköy plant was aimed, in part, at tackling the environmental consequences of this social problem.

Wastewater treatment in Istanbul differs from the rest of the country in the sense that here, plants are public owned but the water treatment is an outsourced service. All potable water treatment plants and wastewater treatment ones, are owned by the Istanbul Water and Sewage Administration (ISKI). ISKI was established in 1981 and has an independent budget that comes from the sale of potable water. The agency is also responsible for decisions concerning investments in the sector and construction of new plants, the operation and management of wastewater plants has been delegated to a private company, KUZU Group, since 2003. This outsourcing seeks to optimize costs and time by employing capable people to manage wastewater plants. KUZU is in charge of selecting and

training personnel to operate all 21 wastewater treatment plants in the metropolitan region. Furthermore, as we learned from our visit, this partnership is



the first of its kind in Turkey and regards only wastewater management. Thus, ISKI is still the only operator when it comes to potable water treatment and distribution in Istanbul.

The general manager, Dr. Mehmet Emre Baştopçu and his team (who are part of the KUZU Group) received us at the Paşaköy plant. The private company that is responsible for the operation of all wastewater management in the metropolis also deals with construction investments - especially in the housing sector - and was involved in the accomplishment of phase two investments in Paşaköy. Dr. Baştopçu then continued by explaining how wastewater was treated in the plant by underlining the differences in the functioning of this plant compared to others. Paşaköy is one of the three so called "Advanced Biological Treatment Plants" in Istanbul whose treatment processes are based on biological nutrient removal. In such plants, chemical products are left out of

the treatment process and replaced by a series of mechanical and biological processes. The advantage of such a method is that environmental impacts are reduced and the treated water can be reused in irrigation and is sold by ISKI for agricultural purposes, as underlined by Dr. Baştıopçu. Likewise, the plant counts other ecological initiatives such as the production of its own electricity by thermal gas energy - whose heat can equally be used in the drying process within the treatment process - and the selling of dried sludge to cement factories that use it as an input to produce bio-cement.

Once the technical explanation regarding the operation of the plant had ended, we entered into a session of questions that were more focused on the public-private cooperation in wastewater treatment in Istanbul. We were especially interested in assessing how decisions were made regarding water treatment and if there were accountability mechanisms towards the municipality. Dr. Baştıopçu explained that ISKI and the municipality are in charge of all decisions concerning further investments or changes in wastewater treatment and management, though KUZU Group can play an advisory and expertise role in decision-making. Normally, any change is decided by consensus between the municipality, ISKI, and KUZU Group. The private company can point out the necessity of new investments - as it has done in the past - but only the city hall can decide if investments will be made or not. For example, the second phase investments on the Paşaköy plant were suggested by KUZU in 2004-2005 and realized by the municipality in 2007. However, we might highlight that even though ISKI is a municipal body, it has the autonomy to employ its own personnel and make its own investments. ISKI was

established in 1981 and has an independent budget that comes from the sale of potable water.

Another important issue that arose during this open session of questions was related to the profitability of water treatment and supply. As explained by Dr. Baştıopçu, ISKI does make a profit by selling water and this money is used by the municipality to subsidize other projects - both in the water sector and in other types of investments. One example is the subsidization of metro works funded through ISKI profits. A third speaker, a social sciences specialist on water conflicts in Istanbul, added that we have to keep in mind that other agencies of the municipality do not make a profit, and are actually losing money, so it is important to count on other sources of income besides taxes. Additionally, they emphasized that privatization of the water supply is a very delicate subject and that the Istanbul municipality is not considering, for the moment, the outsourcing of potable water treatment services. The KUZU representative agreed on this point and underlined that KUZU Group was not



dealing with potable water nor making a profit from it.

We visited, then, the plant accompanied by Professor Dr. Ahmet Saatçı and guided by Dr. Mehmet Emre Baştıopçu, who brought with

him part of his team. Our visit was limited to the initial and final phases of treatment; we could then see both the initial and the final products of wastewater treatment and compare the enormous difference in terms of smell, color and cleanliness. We also got some more information about the biological processes of treatment, which depend on the action of certain bacteria, as we passed by the large tanks where sludge was separated from the water. Subsequently, we went to a potable water treatment plant – owned and managed exclusively by ISKI – where we could witness several stages of the treatment process. Here we could also see the Ömerli reservoir and some long pipes that bring water from the Riva stream as well as part of the Melen System which will bring water from the Melen reservoir situated 187 kilometers away in order to increase Istanbul's water supply in the next years.

After these visits to the city's water facilities, one thing stands out: the complexity concerning the water management and service delivering in Istanbul. This is manifested, first, in the variety of actors involved in the decision-making and the water supply of the city, among which we can mention the municipality, its independent water agency (ISKI), the private company responsible of the functioning of the plants (the KUZU Group) and the various experts indirectly entangled in decision-making regarding water supply management and investments in the field. Such a complexity must also be taken into account when one considers the types of contracts and institutional design involving these actors, for instance, the outsourced model employed by the KUZU Group.

***Nathalie Badaoui Choumar***



## Discussing Urban Governance

Kadir Has University  
January 13, 2012

On our visit to Kadir Has Üniversitesi (KHU), the urban governance of Istanbul was the center of analysis and discussion. KHU is a private university located in the neighborhood of Cibali, near the Golden Horn, founded in 1997 by philanthropist Kadir Has. The discussion was held in one of the buildings of KHU's modern campus, an impressive architectural space that was formerly the Tekel Cibali Cigarette Factory, reformed from 1998 to 2002. Additionally, the Istanbul Study Center (ISC) was founded by KHU in 2009 in order to encourage and promote an interdisciplinary approach to urban studies in Istanbul. The speakers were all reputed Turkish professors, actively involved in the ISC. The objective of this meeting was not only to gather more

information, but also to test our understanding of the metropolis and the information acquired throughout our study trip. The format of our meeting consisted of short presentations from the speakers, followed by an open debate with the students, who were encouraged not only to ask questions, but to also try to formulate their own hypotheses about Istanbul's governance. With different perspectives from each speaker, some of the main topics debated were political participation, Istanbul as a global city, and the issue of cultural heritage.

The first lecturer was Professor Levent Sosyal, an art historian and Assistant Dean of the Faculty of Communications at KHU and Director of the Administrative Staff of ISC. By framing Istanbul as a global city, Professor Sosyal offered a presentation examining urban issues and paradigms such as gentrification, homogenization of the city, the civilizing process, privatization, urban growth and development, the spectacle city, and political participation. Professor Pelin

Tan, a sociologist and faculty member of the Department of New Media in KHU, focused her presentation on spatial, social, and political issues related to contemporary art in Istanbul. An Associate Professor of the Graduate Program in Preservation of Cultural Heritage, architect Professor Yonca Erkan presented the issues of conservation and heritage of the changing metropolis of Istanbul. The last speech was given by Prof. Zuhul Ulusoy, Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts, who discussed the governance model of the city of Izmir in comparison with Istanbul. With a considerably smaller population than Istanbul, Izmir still remains still one of the most populous cities of Turkey, located in the south-western part of Anatolia and with approximately 3.9 million inhabitants.

#### *The Question of Political Participation*

One of the most significant topics that permeated all discussions was the necessity of more political participation and active citizenship in Istanbul. All speakers agreed about the importance of providing formal channels of democratic participation in the governance of the metropolis. It was emphasized that the current existence of a top-down approach fixed by the local administration and the central government materialized in institutions such as TOKI. Through the debate, it could be inferred that the central government (i.e. the ruling party) considered itself legitimated by the population to design public policies and change legal frameworks according to its own political vision. One could argue that Istanbul's governance model is characterized by a regime of experts, lacking formal, deliberative, democratic channels. Thus, Istanbul's heterogeneous social fabric doesn't have much voice in the current institutionalized policy-making process. Another interesting point regarding public participation concerns the role of the Chamber of Architects, framed in the meeting as an important political voice and with legal resources to act as a gatekeeper between different opposition movements and the government. Furthermore, the new

governance model that is being implemented in Izmir was argued as a positive reference for Istanbul. As mentioned by Professor Ulusoy, one could consider that one of the purposes of Izmir's new governance project is to create and promote democratic platforms that share policy issues with the population, increase public awareness, and encourage public



participation. However, all speakers discussed the great challenge of utilizing such defined formal legal platforms of democratic public participation in a huge metropolis such as Istanbul.

#### *Istanbul as a Global City*

The rise of Istanbul as a "global city" is strongly emphasized by the city's authorities and, to some extent, by its population. Posters claiming that Istanbul was a "world city" could be seen in Taksim Square in the 1990s and expressed this idea for the first time. How a city presents itself is highly influential for the agenda setting of its authorities. Indeed, many world events were organized to support this idea and prove to the rest of the world that Istanbul is a place that counts. Tourism was promoted, shopping festivals were organized, and the city attracted urban designers in order to launch big projects such as the famous project by Zaha Hadid. More recently, the Turkish prime minister supported other large-scale projects that are likely to have a huge impact on the city, such as the building of a third bridge across the Bosphorus, the development of two cities on each side of the river, and the digging of a channel on the west side of the Bosphorus.

The dynamics that are leading Istanbul to become a global city have to be put into perspective as this trend can be observed worldwide. What is notable about Istanbul is the relative privatization of the executive branch of the city's authorities. In this regard, the mayor can be seen as the CEO of the city, rather than a mere official. This process is particularly visible in the field of culture, an element that has become highly private. Istanbul is now a global, cultural hub, but in the last 15 years, the institutions that have emerged have been overwhelmingly private. Artists are not benefiting from public funds, and spaces of exhibition are generally privately owned.

#### *The Question of Cultural Heritage*

It was emphasized that Istanbul has the will to become a global and modern city. This context raises the question of the preservation of heritage. Prof. Yonca Erkan stressed this important dimension of urban governance in her discussion. This issue is all the more important as the city of Istanbul contains elements of history that can be traced back to prehistoric times, and that are often discovered after new construction works begin. The transportation projects in Istanbul, with the notable examples of the Marmaray, the Eurasia tunnel, the Golden Horn Metro, and the third bridge are huge challenges for the preservation of the city's heritage. However, this question is not limited to such big-scale projects, and local urban renewal projects also present unanswered questions regarding historical legacies. In a more diffuse way, Istanbul's silhouette is also at risk, and the loss of its historical aspect represents a great loss in terms of heritage preservation.

The question of heritage is dependent on a few key elements that construct this notion. First of all, the notion of preservation of heritage is not a given one for societies; Istanbul's inhabitants are not "naturally" inclined to protect and preserve the history of their city. Such a premise implies that strong legislation is called for when it comes

to heritage preservation, whether from Istanbul authorities or from the Turkish government. In this perspective, studying the legal framework that was first introduced in the middle of the 19th century and its evolution is fundamental.

The third element of construction that impacts heritage policies is related to global financial interests. In Istanbul, the core of the city is more valuable than its periphery, thus creating tensions between heritage conservation and development of new buildings. Finally, a fourth element is essential to understanding the problem of heritage in the city: the role of nature, and more precisely the role of earthquakes. The seismic risk present at Istanbul's geographic location creates challenges for the city and offers a strong argument for those who are in favor of urban renewal projects, disregarding the importance of the city's patrimony.

The speakers approached different aspects of urban governance in Turkey, but all of them emphasized the pace of the growth and the challenges it brings to Istanbul. The study of Izmir was, in this regard, a way to contrast this amazing and hardly governable urban development with a model based on popular participation and sustainability.

The issues of heritage preservation, political participation and cultural democratization all seem to be in tension with the rapid growth of the city. The example of culture seems to be a striking one, since this object is part of the globalization process and undergoes important transformations, but at the same time raises issues when it comes to its accessibility for the Istanbul middle and lower classes. The speakers entered into several themes that urban researchers should continue to take into consideration. The challenges and opportunities raised by urban transformations in Istanbul are deeply embedded in the city's history, but seem to also follow more general patterns that can be observed in other global cities.

***Morgan Mouton and Cristiano Penna***



## Today's Istanbul :The Major Issues of Contemporary Urbanism

Speaker: Jean François Pérouse, IFEA/  
Galatasaray University  
January 12, 2012

Throughout his speech, Mr. Pérouse insisted on the current focus of Istanbul's leaders and policy makers to master and organize the ever-increasing urban growth in the city. To face the latest urban issues at stake in Istanbul, the focus of the authorities are organized around the "urban regeneration" of the city, which is organized around six main issues: management of urban growth, resolution of the dramatic housing issue, restoration of historical sites, transformation of the production system, protection of the environment, and the realization of an integrated and combined transportation network. Under these six main categories, other issues are clearly at stake, especially when it comes to the governance of Istanbul city. The legalization of the developed sites (struggle against informal settlement), but also the development and improvement of disaster management (mainly anti-seismic measures) are the focus of many interest groups, lobbyists, and the media in the Turkish metropolis, and are the source of many scandals. With the final goal of changing the city into a "clean metropolis", they orientate their policies towards more and more commerce and services, especially developing around tourism activities, instead of focusing on manufacture and heavy industries.

Now that Istanbul as a metropolis is approaching a relative peak in its demographic growth, it seems natural that the authorities of the metropolitan region would have to worry about how to control and regulate the physical growth of the city. One main concern of the authorities is

focused on housing and, more importantly, on the expansion of the housing accommodation possibilities to the largest amount of people working in Istanbul. Surely, thanks to the role of TOKI in this matter, it is not difficult for the municipality to build new buildings or rehabilitate former illegal settlements and legalize them.



Nevertheless, the high rate of vacancy in existing accommodation facilities is quite stunning, revealing a discrepancy between the needs of the Istanbul population and the offers made by public and private companies. Moreover, it seems that certain "social housing politics" (consisting mainly of giving the priority to housing ownership) put forward by the government and encouraged by TOKI will not last for long. With the recent rise of the interest rate on loans, Turkish households now hesitate before investing their money to become owners, risking chronic, long-term debt. Concerning the general issue of the restoration and regeneration of historical neighborhoods, Istanbul authorities have orientated themselves towards recognition of the greatness and importance of such sites in recent decades. In 1985, UNESCO declared the historical zones of Istanbul to be part of the World Cultural Heritage. Since then, the authorities have focused on the restoration of these historical parts of the town, sometimes turning the neighborhoods into the best areas for gentrification processes to take place. Following cultural

and artistic centers, Turkish or foreign, Istanbul's city center is re-populating itself. When it comes to production areas, one can observe that big changes have occurred in the last few decades in the Istanbul region – the number one export-oriented Turkish region. Since the 1960s, industrialization activities have been relocated from the city's close suburbs and pushed further away in the east and west of Istanbul. The appearance of huge facilities (Olympic Stadium, etc.) and foreign commercial centers (Carrefour, Ikea) has helped orient the city's economic activities towards the expansion of the service sector.

The last two issues urban Istanbul faces today can be linked to each other: the protection of the environment and the transportation issue. Surely, when it comes to the environment and urban space, one needs to consider the sustainability of the city itself and of course, the sustainability of its resources. Living under the constant threat of earthquakes, the Istanbul region should consider even more carefully the issue of quantity, quality, and accessibility to its water resources, for instance. Forests and green areas in the north of the city (not yet urbanized) are precious to Istanbul's environmental well being. Additionally, the city's authorities have yet to completely resolve the issue of solid waste management, accumulating in rubbish dumps in the suburbs.

These environmental worries are directly linked with the transportation management issue that Istanbul authorities are currently facing. The ever-growing demography pushes them towards building more roads and bridges (e.g. the famous Marmaray third bridge project), but the environmental concerns should not be forgotten when it comes to the increase of the transportation network. By encouraging multi-modal transportation, tram development, and underwater tunnels, the municipality has expanded its efforts to propose alternatives to intense road transportation –apart from the Marmaray project.

Istanbul is a rising city with much ambition and potential but consistently faces urban realities from which it cannot escape. The governance of the Turkish metropolis is strongly linked with the resolution of the issues evoked here, particularly involving the metropolitan municipality as well as a few Turkish companies. Istanbul's next challenge will certainly be to clarify the notion of public goods and public action in order to reach spatial and social justice, continuity, and sustainability in the city.

***Camille Barberet***



## Conclusion: The Role of AKP and the Relationship Between Local and National Governments

Photo: Cindy Nino

Governing at the crossroads means dealing with the complexities of Istanbul's pattern of urbanization, its political and economic opening, as well as the repertoire of cultural re-invention that it has created. It is about making decisions and choices in an uncertain and "liquid" environment, where the ramifications and consequences for the city and its inhabitants cannot easily be foreseen. Yet, as the analytical fragments of this report sought to hint at, there are discernible contours and dynamics – structural features – of the ways in which the metropolis is governed and how this bundle of processes impacts its trajectories of development.

The predominant role of the ruling party – both at the metropolitan level of Istanbul, as well as at the national one in Turkey – is certainly a sweeping feature. The rise of the AK party and the (almost) hegemonic position it claims since its landslide victory in the national elections for the third time in 2011 has meant a re-centralization of decision-making in Istanbul by successfully

appealing to populist and liberalist interests. Yet, the "Justice & Development" party – with its origins as an Islam-based social movement, its "neo-communitarianist" discourse and its aspirations of a renascent Ottoman grandeur – is difficult to grasp and remains poorly understood.

Related to this is the "benchmarking drive" and the attempts and strategies to position Istanbul in the league of "global cities". Liberalization and privatization are just two aspects of the trajectory that is transforming the city into a center of symbolic capital. Spearheaded by non-state actors and private entrepreneurs, the commodification of urban space, fabric, and experience in Istanbul is both a major strategy and a consequence.

Moreover, this tendency is based on and affects the restructuring of the urban economy along financial and cultural assets. While the financialization of the city (real estate, investment and speculation) seems to be a clear aspect of the globalizing city frame, the role of culture is more ambiguous.

Culture in Istanbul is not merely about business opportunities but also about changing ways of life and shifting relations of power. Thus, the meanings and uses of culture disarticulate into distinct forms of politics: the politics of memory; cultural heritage; cultural expression; and even consumption. Accordingly, the interplay of cultural policies and politics is hotly debated and strongly contested.

As stated before, this report has clear limitations. The fragmentary selection of some of the pressing issues concerning urban development and governance offers only preliminary insights on how the metropolis of Istanbul works. In this vein, many equally important aspects couldn't be highlighted and discussed.

Be it the tendencies of public and private security and the role of national and local security forces, such as the police and the military – important actors within the historical experience of Istanbul; be it the role of religion, both as an everyday life practice of city dwellers and a form of social organization and cultural representation; or, be it the role of the legal system, judicial institutions and the uses of the rule of law.

All these elements have to be taken into account for understanding how Istanbul is governed; all of these elements have to be regarded as crucial for the turns and directions of urban development in Istanbul.

*Christian Josef Pollok*



Photo: Caroline Guillet

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*Istanbul is 'confined to Istanbul' alone.*

*Viewed from the sea,  
the city extends as far as the identifiable contours of the land;  
as far as the observable motions of the sea from ashore  
can reach –*

*It is Sultan (both) over land and sea,  
With its heart  
beating in the Bosphorus.*

*Everything else is afar,  
(everything else)  
is far away from Istanbul...*

*'Istanbulreigen' ('Dance of Istanbul') by Sema Kaygusuz  
(published in 'lettre internationale', spring 2010)  
Freely Translated from German by Christian Josef Pollok*

