

GOVERNING ON A TIGHTROPE

ISTANBUL 2013



GOVERNING ON A TIGHTROPE

ISTANBUL 2013

MASTER GOVERNING THE LARGE METROPOLIS

ISTANBUL STUDY TRIP REPORT

07.01.2013 - 12.01.2013



SciencesPo.

CONTENTS

Foreword	1
Introduction	3
Chapter 1: Istanbul’s Growth Race	4
Turkey and Istanbul: Between Reality and Aspiration.....	6
World-Class Projects for a World-Class City	8
Tourism Industry and Shopping	10
Impressions	12
Chapter 2: Istanbul’s Cultural Policies	16
Economic Development and Culture Promotion Policies	18
Politics of Istanbul’s Cultural Diversity	20
Cultural Politics and Social Development	22
Portfolio	24
Chapter 3: The “Invisible” Istanbul	28
Persisting Informality: Invisible In Discourse, Visible In Space?	30
Governing the City’s Spatiality	32
Financing Istanbul	34
Conclusion	36
Credits	38

FOREWORD

*Adrian Favell, Brigitte Fouilland,
Patrick Le Galès and Régine Serra*

Photo: Yang Chen

The Sciences Po Masters in Governing the Large Metropolis (GLM) is an ambitious programme that brings together comparative urban sociology, urban policy and the study of urban governance, while preparing students for careers in cities, the public sector, international organisations and research. During the first semester of the first year, there is an emphasis on theory and core literature across a number of disciplines; in the second and third, students focus on more in-depth regional studies and urban policy fields. There is, however, at Sciences Po a strong emphasis on empirical knowledge and the importance of fieldwork. For this reason, between the first and second semester, a field trip to a large metropolis, typically outside of Western Europe, is organised.

The city is a concrete case study. During several intense days of research, students meet with all kinds of urban actors, as well as experiencing the physical encounter with huge and seemingly confusing urban sprawl.

In late 2010, the first field trip of this kind,

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”. In January 2012, we chose Istanbul, a city that has become a key reference in all discussions of geopolitical change in the Mediterranean, with the dramatic economic rise of Turkey. The students produced a report on this visit, “Governing at the Crossroads”, which is still available from the GLM website.

From January 7th to 12th, 2013, the 43 first year students of this year’s incoming GLM, accompanied by four professors (Adrian Favell, Brigitte Fouilland, Patrick Le Galès and Régine Serra) visited the city of Istanbul again. Once again, we approached the city with one of the central theoretical problems posed by urban studies at the heart of the current GLM master’s programme: How big cities are governed? By whom and how? But we also came to see what is changing in the Istanbul urban landscape. The report here is the result.

During an intensive week, students had the opportunity to meet many actors of this

paradigmatic metropolis of “intersections” of more than 13 million people between Europe and Asia, between the Mediterranean Sea and the Caucasus, between Christian, Secular and Islamic worlds. The students had the chance to listen and to exchange actively with urban and regional planners, academics, associations, representatives of local communities as well as economic actors and high officials. They were also sent out into the streets to look for evidence about the city less visible in these representations.

During the Fall Semester 2012, an Istanbul-focused lecture series was organized, in order for students to get familiar with Istanbul city and be prepared for the trip. The fieldtrip also built on a conference entitled “Istanbul: 21st Century Model of the Global City?” during October 2012 at Sciences Po. This discussed Istanbul as a case, with the working idea that, in order to understand contemporary dynamics in Istanbul, it is no longer enough to roll out standard neo-liberal/global city hypotheses, but that the case of Istanbul requires re-thinking in the context of the changing role of governance and the state in non-Western global metropolises of the twenty first century. The idea was to discuss with a number of key experts on Istanbul to present their amassed data and visions of the city, in the light of the broader question, of whether what is being witnessed in Istanbul can be generalised as an urban dynamic archetypal of other new global metropolises outside the Western world. The field trip and this polished, professional report are thus also part of a developing research programme on Istanbul and Turkey at Sciences Po.

The GLM programme is academically rigorous, but as this report also illustrates, it provides substantive experience of great relevance to a range of careers in urban contexts. Students must match theory to reality, ideal policy to the messiness of implementation. The voices we encounter during the field trip are varied and often dissonant. All aspects

of the city - cultural policy, migration and mobility, urban regeneration, financing and branding, transparency and accounting, citizen participation, risk governance, planning and property development, infrastructural, energy resources, waste management - are considered. Answers are never simple. We prepare students to face difficult dilemmas, and complex environments where contention and political strife is almost always present. We look at innovation as well as policy failure. “Good governance” has to be more than just rhetoric. Istanbul seeks to be “world class”, but is it living up to the projects and representations that its advocates present to the world? Our GLM field trip encounters these issues close up, generating new ideas about urban dynamics, particular to this city, but also seen in some of the fastest moving mega-cities around the world today.

Governing on a Tight Rope is the culmination of efforts from the 43 students participating in this field trip. Contents and views expressed in the following pages are their sole responsibility.

INTRODUCTION

The Istanbul field trip, which took place in January 2013, provided us the opportunity to see in action urban governance, the subject of our studies. As *Governing the Large Metropolis* students, we were eager to raise, through an *in situ* case study, the sensitive issues surrounding Istanbul's governance that we had gleaned from an academic perspective during our first semester of our masters programme. Meetings and conferences with key stakeholders in, for instance, the water and housing sectors, were unique opportunities to challenge discourses and confront the complex interactions that shape a city's identity, social structures, economic orientations, and even physical forms.

Istanbul is indeed a city of interactions, always depicted as the perfect example of a crossroad where the East meets the West and cultures come together, resulting in a heterogeneous patchwork of identities. However, we tried to move beyond this collective imaginary. We focused on decision-making processes, on the mechanisms of urban policies implementation, and we tried to highlight discrepancies in actors' discourses and visions in order to achieve a finer picture of the actual urban dynamics at work in contemporary Istanbul.

In 2013, the AKP and Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government celebrated 10 years in power. It was a decade marked by major economic and political reforms, economic successes, and the re-establishment of Turkey as a regional power. The importance of the Turkish voice in diplomatic relations is in that sense particularly striking. No less striking is the remarkable rise in urban living standards and the increased purchasing power of the upper middle-classes. One cannot understand

these changes without looking at the deep transformations undergone by Istanbul. This city, whose population increased from 1 million inhabitants to 15 million over the last 50 years, remains more than ever at the heart of the Turkish economy and diplomacy, giving impetus and taking leadership over the whole nation. On the other hand, in 2013 Turkey stands 10 years before the 100th anniversary of the foundation of the Republic. Istanbul is intended to achieve major infrastructure developments by the 2023 deadline and has set up ambitious targets, for a *world-class* city positioning itself as a major hub within a global cities network. How could such aspirations not disrupt the city's social and cultural dynamics and the way Istanbul is experienced?

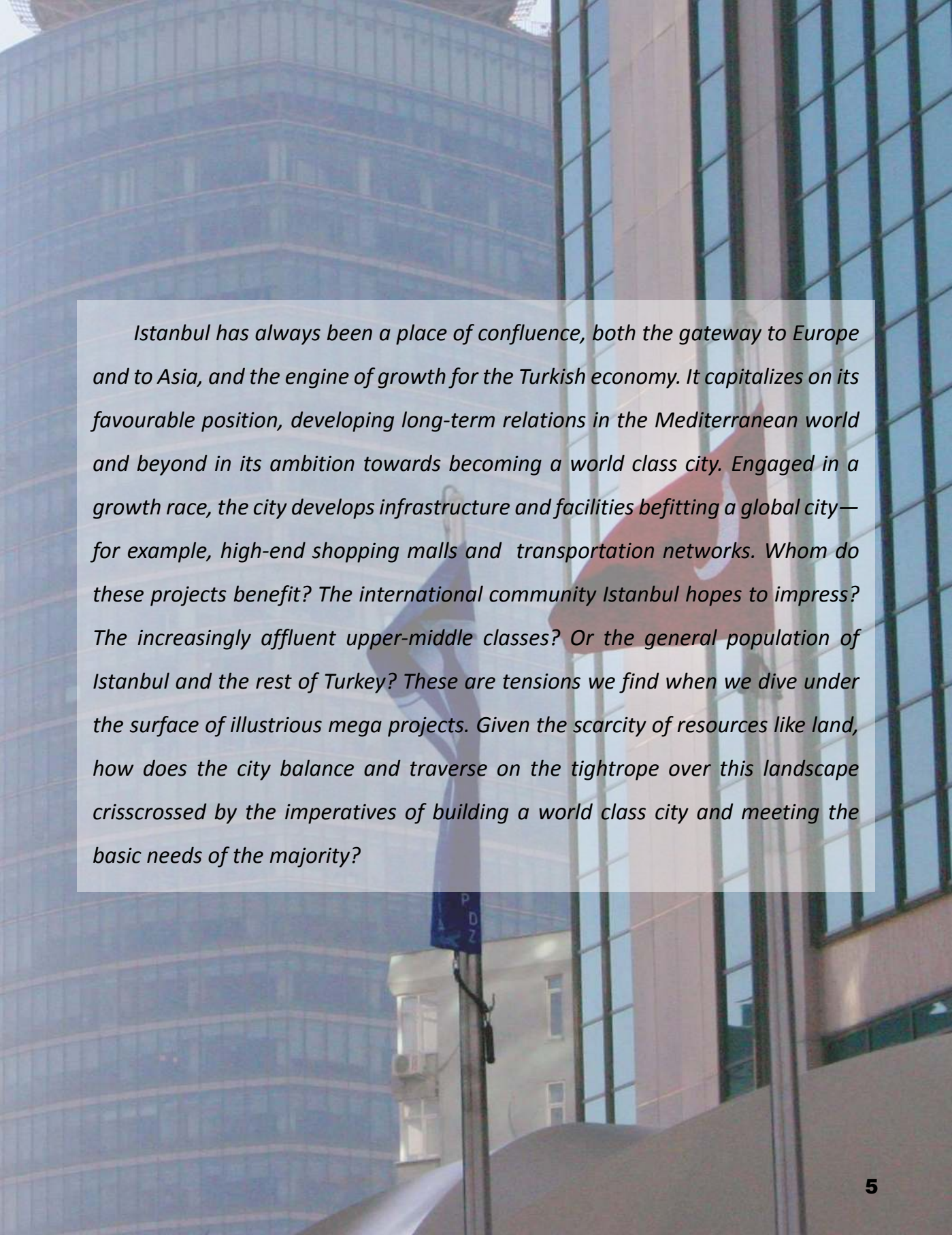
So, where does Istanbul stand today? How is it governed and what still remains ungoverned? How to assess the city's evolutions when it covers such a diversity of issues and conflicting goals? In Part I, Istanbul's Growth Race, we analyzed the economic choices and orientations, the bases of Istanbul's stunning economic performances, as well as the way its urban planning reflects its ambitions on the international stage. Part II is dedicated to the challenges and ambiguities surrounding cultural policies, the tensions brought by the rapid transformation of the city's social and spatial structures, and its effect on identities. Finally, Part III uncovers persisting informality and highlights the hidden mechanisms of governance, from finance to infrastructure management.

With this report, we tried to put into perspective the main issues at stake in today's governance of Istanbul that we saw during the study trip. We also hope to share something more: beyond analysis of the tightrope walk that is urban governance, to provide our readers with a sense of the Istanbul *spirit*.



CHAPTER I ISTANBUL'S GROWTH RACE

Photo: Adrien Priss

A photograph of a modern glass skyscraper with a Turkish flag and a blue flag on poles in the foreground. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent white box.

Istanbul has always been a place of confluence, both the gateway to Europe and to Asia, and the engine of growth for the Turkish economy. It capitalizes on its favourable position, developing long-term relations in the Mediterranean world and beyond in its ambition towards becoming a world class city. Engaged in a growth race, the city develops infrastructure and facilities befitting a global city—for example, high-end shopping malls and transportation networks. Whom do these projects benefit? The international community Istanbul hopes to impress? The increasingly affluent upper-middle classes? Or the general population of Istanbul and the rest of Turkey? These are tensions we find when we dive under the surface of illustrious mega projects. Given the scarcity of resources like land, how does the city balance and traverse on the tightrope over this landscape crisscrossed by the imperatives of building a world class city and meeting the basic needs of the majority?

TURKEY AND ISTANBUL: BETWEEN REALITY AND ASPIRATIONS

*Chenzi Yiyang, Gabriela Mercurio,
Irene Garcia, Quentin Batréau*



Turkey's aspirations to be anchored in the West is evident since the founding of the Republic in 1923 and became even more so after the end of the Cold War, when Turkey's regional and global ambitions were on the rise. Turkey's NATO membership and bid for EU membership clearly epitomize this reality.

Today, the veto of some powers has stalled negotiation talks with Turkey, and it is straining the ability. On the one hand, the negotiation talks with the EU seem to have stalled, which is leading Turkey to be more and more indifferent towards the project. On the other hand, Turkey has been deploying a more assertive foreign policy since the AKP took power in 2003, which places emphasis on economic growth and good relations with neighboring countries, resulting in closer relations with its Arab neighbors and thus elevating its

profile in the Arab World.

While the Arab Spring has brought further opportunities for the country to elevate its profile in the region, the shifting away from the EU project has increased uncertainty over Turkey's future evolution, facing the country with a key question: what kind of model does Turkey want to be? The answer has important implications.

In the past, in order to approach the western notion of "modernity" and be accepted into the EU, Turkey has made great efforts to converge with EU standards, which changed profoundly its legal, economic and political structures. Today, the veto of some powers has stalled negotiation talks with Turkey is straining the ability of the EU to influence the country. What is, therefore, driving Turkey's transformation?

Global competitiveness is certainly one of them, of which Istanbul is the main beneficiary. The national government has positioned Istanbul to be in competition with cities such as Moscow and Dubai to become a regional financial hub in the mid-term. It is imperative to attract Asian and Middle Eastern investors. In this sense, both Turkey and Istanbul are profiting from the Arab Spring by enhancing their political and economic influence in the region. In order to establish strong ties, the country's strategy has been that of showing what differentiates Turkey from Western countries. This conforms to a discourse that emphasized Islamic solidarity, similarities and historical relations that approximate those between Turkey and the region¹. However, a strategy of economic growth to showcase the country's potential has overshadowed the country's efforts to undertake deep structural changes.

Along with changes in its political direction, Turkey has also experienced deep economic changes and, despite national efforts to dilute regional dependence on Istanbul and to reduce the existing inequalities in terms of economic development, Istanbul remains the main actor leading the economic development of the country

With nearly 15 million inhabitants, a strategic location connecting Asia and Europe, geographical advantages (the Bosphorus and moderate climate) and a qualified labor force, Istanbul has an economy that accounts for 27% of national GDP, 38% of total industrial output and 40% of tax revenues². Istanbul also dominates foreign trade, accounting for 50.6 % of overall national trade, of which imports represent 53% and exports 47%³.

Among the main sectors driving international competitiveness are business and finance, which represent 23% of Istanbul's GDP⁴. This is not only due to the fact that all private banks' headquarters are located in Istanbul but also due to the importance of Istanbul's Stock Exchange, the largest in Turkey, and, according to S&P Global Indices, the 6th most profitable in 2010⁵.

Trade and tourism (18.3%) is another leading sector, being followed by manufacturing (17.9%) and textile and clothing. In fact, the latter is a highly important sector both in Turkey, ranked 4th largest clothing exporter globally, as well as in Istanbul, where most of the national textile companies are located. Finally, the transportation sector (17.7%) also deserves credit. Istanbul is the center of Turkey's air transport industry, with 43 million passengers flying to and from Istanbul's airports annually⁶.

Yet, like in politics, the country encounters some economic challenges. The increasing competition from Asian countries is forcing Istanbul to rethink its economic assets and shift towards higher-value-added activities such as pharmaceuticals and to a lesser extent electronics⁷.

Its ambition to become globally competitive has made Turkey, and consequently Istanbul, increasingly dependent on foreign - and not so reliable- capital, which reveals a shortage of domestic savings⁸ and its vulnerability towards global economic fluctuations. In addition, although privatization has rocketed over the last decade and is playing a significant role

in the economic growth of Istanbul since the 1980s, it is still an ongoing process. Actors such as the centralized government and national-owned enterprises are still playing important roles in the various fields and these are challenges Istanbul faces when pursuing greater privatization and dynamic economic growth.

Some of the consequences are reflected on the labor market, with some features instilling social instability such as large share of informal economy, volatile unemployment and high income inequality. In addition, the intense concentration of economic activity in Istanbul has acted as a national pole of attraction, placing strong pressure on its infrastructure and its increasingly, and already highly, informal housing sector.

If the national government wants to ensure Istanbul's global competitiveness, strategic thinking is needed to tackle the existing challenges in the political and economic domains. Istanbul's strengths in the economic domain cannot be questioned. But, its weaknesses cannot be underestimated either. Economic and social development needs to be balanced in the same way the multiple identities of the city need to find a clear and defined model leading both Istanbul and Turkey towards becoming the global actors they aspire to be.

Notes:

1. Gumuscu, S. (2012). "Turkey's Reactions to the Arab Spring." *Yale Journal of International Affairs*, May.
2. OECD (2008) *OECD Territorial Reviews: Istanbul, Turkey*.
3. Istanbul Economic Development Agency (2011) *Republic of Turkey*. Available from: <http://www.istka.org.tr/Portals/iska/images/istdev.pdf>
4. Istanbul Economic Development Agency (2011) *Republic of Turkey*. Available from: <http://www.istka.org.tr/Portals/iska/images/istdev.pdf>
5. Deger, C. and Kumral, N. (2008). "The Strategies and Policies for Economic Competitiveness in the Istanbul Metropolitan Region." Egen University.
6. Istanbul Economic Development Agency (2011) *Republic of Turkey*. Available from: <http://www.istka.org.tr/Portals/iska/images/istdev.pdf>
7. OECD (2008) *OECD Territorial Reviews: Istanbul, Turkey*.
8. *The Economist* (2012, Apr 07) "Istanbul and Bears."

WORLD-CLASS PROJECTS FOR A WORLD-CLASS CITY

*Alexandra Lichá, Clarisse Pham,
Alice Sutra Del Galy, Marion Waller*

Considering its strategic location as a city between Europe and Asia and its position as an economic hub and a political centre, Istanbul has taken up the challenge of competitiveness: its leaders want to make the city climb even higher in international rankings in economic terms and intend to do so by strongly promoting mobility and fluidity in all interactions of the city at local, regional, and international scales. Can world-class projects made to boost the city attractiveness, such as the development of the transportation network, prove successful?

Why “Istanbul: A World-Class City”?

The expansion and reshaping of Istanbul has been enabled by its strategic geographical location and the economic growth it is experiencing: The centrality of the city, especially in the Eurasian region, helped Turkish Airlines increase its activity and claim to be the best European airlines in recent years. In this context, new urban infrastructural needs are emerging. In order to facilitate the administrative framework of the urban area, the jurisdiction of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality were extended to the entire Istanbul Province in 2004. This process illustrates the necessity of a more appropriate legal and institutional environment to facilitate the implementation of new infrastructures.

The large area of the city requires massive projects in transportation and connectivity. Thus, efforts are dedicated to the development of such infrastructures and to sustaining the unity of the city. The project for a third bridge over the Bosphorus is one of the most striking examples. Moreover, symbolic and emblematic projects such as stadiums



and mosques strengthen Istanbul’s dominant cultural role and attractiveness at the national level.

Istanbul also tries to improve its governance standards in order to match them with European Union requirements on one hand and on the other so as to become a model for environmental and resources management. Thus, water quality regulation does not only aim to reach EU norms, but also to establish stricter ones.

How “Istanbul: A World-Class City”?

In order to reach all the goals expressed above, Istanbul has no choice but to implement world-class projects. As mentioned in the introduction, today’s large metropolises’ local governments all face the same dilemma: how to integrate rather than isolate the mega projects in the city’s general planning? That is to say, how to relate each project to the others so that they all complement the others within one master plan to make Istanbul a world-class city, instead of letting the different public and private agencies and developers build the city without an authority to coordinate the projects. The main concern of Istanbul authorities is to make the city more “fluid”: large transportation projects are currently undertaken.

The representative of the Agence Française du Développement (AFD) explained that a new metro line (Kadıköy-Kartal) is under construction

and receives financing from numerous international agencies (including the AFD). This line, the longest ever in Istanbul, is expected to dramatically reduce traffic jams on the Anatolian side. Istanbul's nature means any transportation project a mega project: underwater infrastructures and bridges have to be built, historical patrimony has to be respected; the high costs resulting from these require international involvement.

Regarding mobility, the city faces some coordination challenges: authorities in charge of transportation are often not the same as the ones designing master plans. And yet, nothing needs to be more integrated within the city than transportation. Second, so as to become a leading financial hub, Istanbul plans on concentrating financial activities in one particular area, as many other metropolises have done. The Istanbul Development Agency (ITSKA) managers said that the International Finance Centre is currently the most important project in Istanbul: it stems from a long-term strategy by the central government and brings together many actors from both the public and private sectors. This new centre will focus on Islamic Finance to directly compete regionally with Dubai. The other city against which to compete, as quoted by ITSKA managers, is Moscow; but in the long-term, Istanbul is clearly establishing itself as a global competitor against any large metropolis

World-class projects concern all policy sectors, notably culture. As the European Capital of Culture in 2010, Istanbul embarked on several highly visible initiatives:

As explained by Jean-François Pérouse (Observatoire Urbain), the Turkish Prime Minister has directly drawn a parallel between Istanbul as the European culture capital and Istanbul as a leading global hub. Since becoming a world-class city often means raising living standards, huge housing mega projects are being implemented. First, there is a strong will for renovating old buildings to mitigate seismic risks: this implies very large scale construction works. Second, some "new cities" are being erected

by the national agency TOKI, contributing to a complete redefinition of Istanbul's territory. Also, considering the sharp increase in the number of inhabitants, utilities service networks have to be extended: a "fluid" world-class city cannot fall short of water!

Behind all these aspects lies the question of financing: first, the city needs international financing; second, development agencies strongly encourage the private sector to initiate large projects aligned with the vision of public authorities. The main challenge regarding all these projects seemed to be one of governance: knowing the multiplicity of plans and authorities regulating the city, is it better to manage everything from above or to let initiatives set themselves up and then aggregate them?

Conclusion

Istanbul appears to manage these projects within a global vision. Although the master plan does not encompass all the existing urban projects, the major undertakings have a clear orientation under the monitoring of the ITSKA and the municipality: to make Istanbul a city accessible to the world from without and within. The world-class city builds itself by building an environment for better living standards, which translates into world-class consumption centres. To what extent will Istanbul raise to become a "world-class" city while maintaining its specific identities, remains to seen.



TOURISM INDUSTRY AND SHOPPING

*Andrés Melendro, Clément Martinez,
Monica Eden Wynter, Unnati Pant*

Everywhere in Istanbul, spaces dedicated to shopping are expanding, following the increasing number of tourists every year. The aim is to attract international visitors by adopting standards found in every global city. However, we should not exclusively associate shopping with tourism. In a rapidly developing country like Turkey and in a city with a rather high income per capita like Istanbul, internal demand is also rising. Malls are not only to attract tourists, but also to respond to local demand. The development of shopping facilities comes with several questions regarding the protection of historical monuments in the city. Modernization and beautification risk a loss in authenticity.

Building World Class City Facilities

As the Istanbul Development Agency puts it, the city wants to preserve its heritage, which results from “consecutive empires whose several extraordinary historic layers can be observed simultaneously”. Therefore, attractive spots are abundant and protected; but what about the infrastructures required to host, transport and offer shopping sites to the tourists? Concerning shopping, the current trend is towards the development of shopping malls, housing international brands that can be found in every large city and not towards the replication of the Bazaar model. A good example is the Kanyon mall in the Levent business district, where one cannot say whether he still is in Istanbul or in just any modern large metropolis.

Shopping streets with international brands and mall-like facilities (parking, CCTV) are also becoming more common in upper-class areas like the Kadikoy district on the Anatolian side.



This type of facilities is seen as a means for not falling behind western cities. At the same time, it is perceived as a threat by shop owners in the Grand Bazaar, one of the city’s most famous spots, currently struggling to modernize its ageing physical and electrical structures. There is an underlying tension between the need to meet international standards of a major commercial hub in terms of infrastructure, security, points of reference, and the need to preserve the authenticity of the city that charms tourists.

Concerning tourism facilities, a third airport will be built in the Terkos lake area with a projected capacity of 100 million passengers, three times the current capacity of Ataturk’s airport. In the hotel sector, even when more than 8 million people visited Istanbul, the occupancy rate reached only 41% in 2011, showing how the city still has the capacity to host many more tourists. These two conditions are crucial comparative advantages when competing for mega events, like FIFA U-20 World Cup that will take place in Turkey in 2013.

Transportation projects serve both tourists and locals, but some forms of transportation are mostly for touristic use. This is the case of the ferries that links both continents and Kadiköy - Moda Historic Tram, which encircles the main shops and restaurants. On the other hand, the Marmaray project will make this transcontinental commute way faster for locals, but is not likely to attract many tourists.

Conserving Yesterday While Adapting Today: the Precarious Art of Valance

The many transformations Istanbul is undergoing have produced several dichotomies that make the city intriguing and attractive for people from varied backgrounds and interests. It bears witness to some of the world's most glorious civilizations and still carries their heritage and their legacies. As a result, Istanbul has been able to attract several million visitors each year.

People come to Istanbul to understand how centuries of traditions have coexisted with fast-paced modernity; they come to see a blend of Eastern and Western cultures and lifestyles, and the balance between Islam and secularism.

The newer developments prioritizing high-end hotels, malls and skyscrapers run the risk of compromising the historical outline of the city. The race for competing in the international scene can result in the city losing its authentic flavor, thereby making it "one of many". But at the same time, the city needs to be able to attract the jet-setting crowd of business tourists who stop by at any city for a short period of time and demand world-class

comfort and amenities. It also has to provide for the new purchasing power of its wealthy population and internal tourists who seek international brands and high-end shopping in their own backyard. The main challenge then is to balance all the facilities of a world-class city while maintaining an authentic environment.

It cannot be denied that Istanbul is striving to preserve the historical heart of the city that has been its identity since its inception. Despite the overwhelming number of changes, it is attempting to balance the contradictions resulting from the formation of its newest identity. One cannot fully understand Istanbul without understanding the nuances.

Conclusion

So far, Istanbul's ability to attract tourists from all over the world has been outstanding. Through the main avenues, landmarks and squares, one observes diverse nationalities. The activities and attractions offered are appealing to different age groups, and travelers looking for different kinds of experiences. The issue of individual safety and low criminality further add value to the image of a city that is expanding its tourism industry. However, the issue of sustainability must never be kept out of focus, whether in social, economic or environmental terms.

The shopping industry, which is highly linked to tourism, must also meet short, medium and long term strategic goals in order to achieve the ambitious development standards the city is aiming for. Derived from the pursuit of sustainability, the issue of maintaining the authenticity of the culture, history and attractiveness of the city is primal. Istanbul has made enormous efforts to create an image of a highly attractive city for world-class tourism. However, the incarnation of this image is a challenging task that can only be met by thinking about sustainability and finding the right balance between the familiarity of international standards, and the preservation of authenticity, which makes Istanbul such an appealing destination.



Photo: Yang Chen

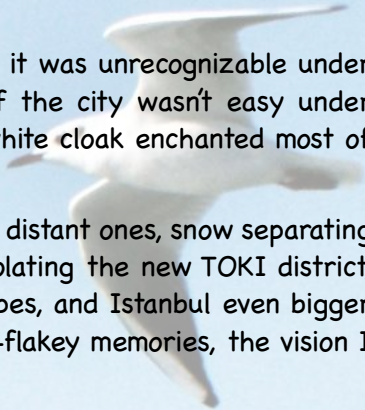
IMPRESSIONS

Peppered with familiar brands of multinational stores, the first time at Istiklal Street seemed like a walk down memory lane. For a student of the urban world like me, the dark patches of abandoned buildings like Rüya Sineması were however more conspicuous than the gleaming Demirören shopping mall. Later, Google confirmed that what I had seen was not merely a figment of my imagination; others had also documented the gentrification story from MANGO paying up 54 million TKL for a municipal property to protests over closing of local cinemas like Alkazar and Emek. But the more time I spent on that 2km stretch, the more I realized that one story alone could not capture the experiences of the 2 million people that traversed it every day.

One particular group of street users that fascinated me worked at the bars in the side streets branching out of Istiklal. Here is a typology I could come up with from a limited sample of 5 nights of bar-hopping: (a) Male (I did not come across a single woman who worked either as bartender, DJ, security or PR agent ushering customers from the street), (b) young, (c) Turkish-speaking with functional English, (d) many were born outside Istanbul e.g. Muş, Malatya (Kurdish origins) or Hendek, Sakarya, (e) some were laptop-literate (to play music), and (f) and not all were alcohol consumers. What was most striking was the informal network of relationships sustained on the street as evident from at least 2 occasions when 2 different bar employees walked us to a bar, stopping to wave at about 8-10 neighbours on the way. In short, a non-elite group with significant exposure to a global culture and high stakes in Istanbul's agenda for city imaging.

Unlike the Global City paradigm which limits the experience of globalization to a dual society constituted by a rich managerial class and a poor servicing class, this observation activated a millefeuille image of the city. As Istanbul moulds itself for tourism, its transformation carries opportunities for people across the spectrum, even the barmen of Istiklal who do not have much capital to invest. At the same time, the city in flux could as easily put the very same fortunes at risk, as in the case of the now derelict cinemas. A polarized view of winners and losers did not seem insightful to capture how a globalizing city expands and constrains opportunity structures. A starting point would be to explore socio-economic mobility paths of a group like the barmen of Istiklal, only one of the many unexplored layers that make up the urban mille feuille.

-Manka Bajaj



Although I'd never been to Istanbul, I daresay it was unrecognizable under the snow. Observing the incredible shape of the city wasn't easy under these conditions... But I reckon this thick persistent white cloak enchanted most of the landscapes we admired.

Snow transforming the distant hills into even more distant ones, snow separating high rises even more than they actually are, snow isolating the new TOKI district, but pleasing all its youngsters. Lunar Siberian landscapes, and Istanbul even bigger than it usually is: this is, among plenty of other snow-flakey memories, the vision I bear in mind when thinking of Istanbul.

-Claire Lot

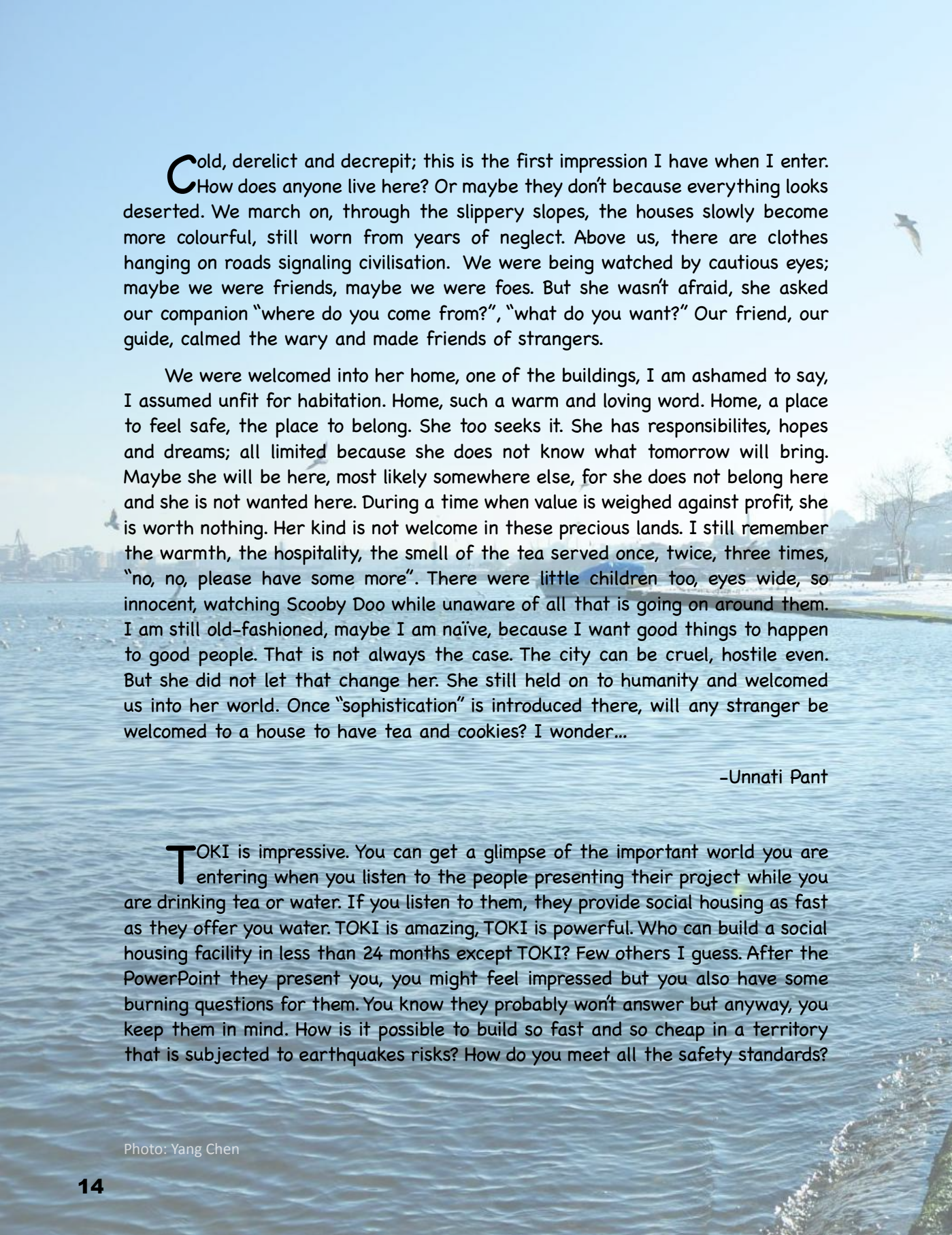
Portraying these days in Istanbul is speaking about snow. The snow hiding, highlighting, transforming the features of the urban world. The snow underlining or undermining the discourses. All this whiteness was both a revelator and window-dressing. An impediment and a creator of opportunities.

When we went for a walk in the poor area of Tarlabasi, we get warned about rubbish on the streets, kids running everywhere around white people, and one described to us a lively area, with women sitting on stairs and talking all day long, idle men smoking in front of their shops, neighbors walking around...The snow covered all of it, emptied the streets, dye in white trash and lanes. The snow created blossoms of pristine flowers on dead trees and transformed barbwire into twinkling tinsel.

At the same time, this white blanket emphasized some features of the district. These almost empty streets, steep and icy, contrasted with the crowded and clean Istiklal. Covered with snow, all the old houses slated for destruction seemed to be harrowing ghosts of a now dead area. But snowflakes and freezing wind also opened for us the door of the house of a Turkish family where we warmed up with tea and shared for a few hours intimacy and smiles with another reality.

Portraying these days in Istanbul is speaking about snow. Speaking about smiles engraved in the asphalt, sahlelep and slithering on the pavement. Speaking about this imperious whiteness, which was a case for this city, subliming its contrasts and our wonders.

-Heliabel Bomstein



Cold, derelict and decrepit; this is the first impression I have when I enter. How does anyone live here? Or maybe they don't because everything looks deserted. We march on, through the slippery slopes, the houses slowly become more colourful, still worn from years of neglect. Above us, there are clothes hanging on roads signaling civilisation. We were being watched by cautious eyes; maybe we were friends, maybe we were foes. But she wasn't afraid, she asked our companion "where do you come from?", "what do you want?" Our friend, our guide, calmed the wary and made friends of strangers.

We were welcomed into her home, one of the buildings, I am ashamed to say, I assumed unfit for habitation. Home, such a warm and loving word. Home, a place to feel safe, the place to belong. She too seeks it. She has responsibilities, hopes and dreams; all limited because she does not know what tomorrow will bring. Maybe she will be here, most likely somewhere else, for she does not belong here and she is not wanted here. During a time when value is weighed against profit, she is worth nothing. Her kind is not welcome in these precious lands. I still remember the warmth, the hospitality, the smell of the tea served once, twice, three times, "no, no, please have some more". There were little children too, eyes wide, so innocent, watching Scooby Doo while unaware of all that is going on around them. I am still old-fashioned, maybe I am naïve, because I want good things to happen to good people. That is not always the case. The city can be cruel, hostile even. But she did not let that change her. She still held on to humanity and welcomed us into her world. Once "sophistication" is introduced there, will any stranger be welcomed to a house to have tea and cookies? I wonder...

-Unnati Pant

TOKI is impressive. You can get a glimpse of the important world you are entering when you listen to the people presenting their project while you are drinking tea or water. If you listen to them, they provide social housing as fast as they offer you water. TOKI is amazing, TOKI is powerful. Who can build a social housing facility in less than 24 months except TOKI? Few others I guess. After the PowerPoint they present you, you might feel impressed but you also have some burning questions for them. You know they probably won't answer but anyway, you keep them in mind. How is it possible to build so fast and so cheap in a territory that is subjected to earthquakes risks? How do you meet all the safety standards?

IMPRESSIONS

TOKI is nice. TOKI builds you a gym and a supermarket next to your residential unit. So why would you care about earthquake protection? When they answer you that the safety standards are met, you smile and thank them for their answer. That is the way you have to behave when you're a visitor. At the end, you won't ask them questions about environmental protection, because you assume that the priority for the Turkish government is to provide social housing to as many people as possible. You leave TOKI hoping that these social residential neighbourhood built so fast won't follow the path of "Les Grands Ensembles" built all around Paris.

-Clément Martinez

As with most of our group, I've been quite impressed by the Tokiworld, rendered even stranger by the snow: a dream of politicians and technocrats with some science-fiction extravagances, as seen from the TOKI signs everywhere. Would have been good to get inside one of the apartment and talk to the inhabitants. One of them by the way came to Ariane and I and asked what we were doing there: "TOKI", we said. "Ah ok, you're kind of engineers", and the guy withdrew.


One of the other visits I really appreciated was the ethnographic exploration of the Tarlabasi neighbourhood. For having really enjoyed exploring the neighbourhood of La Goutte d'Or for our Qualitative Research class, this one presented many similarities. Clear boundaries, such as big roads, that clearly separate it from wealthier neighbourhoods such as Taksim; a traditional migrant population that changed over time, from Greeks to Kurdish people; and rather poor inhabitants step by step pushed outside by the gentrification process that is bringing students looking for cheap accommodations. The visit would not have been the same probably without the help of Belgin, a Turkish doctoral candidate, and this unexpected meeting with this old grandma that brought us into her hidden house, where we discovered the small world of this family coming from the South East of Turkey. Luck or not, it was the second time in two days that we were invited into a Turkish family home to share conversation around a cup of tea.

- Thibault Pilsudski



CHAPTER 2 ISTANBUL'S CULTURAL POLICIES

Photo: Yang Chen



For many of us, this field trip was our first visit to Istanbul. Apart from visiting various institutions involved in city governance, we caught glimpses of the beautiful Bosphorus River, dwelled in the majesty of the Blue Mosque, and savoured the alluring scents of the Spice Market. We were both tourists and students of Istanbul. This dual points of view prompted us to explore where and how cultural heritage—that which inspires tourists—complements economic, political and social development goals. Istanbul’s cultural landscape is a culmination of history and identities—some more valued than the rest. We found that cultural policies in Istanbul serves economic and political goals, enmeshing elements of Ottoman heritage and European modernisation. Balancing between the narrowly defined cultural heritage desired by the city and the diversity that actually exists, has Istanbul leaned too far towards the former at the risk of losing the latter—that which ironically makes Istanbul attractive and intriguing to visitors?

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURE PROMOTION POLICIES

Luc Aldon, Manka Bajaj, Ariane Romano

“**O**bjects seem to be reflected from an enchanted sleep”, wrote the Turkish poet Ahmet Hamdi Tanpinar. What is it about this object: Istanbul?

“A vision of a city conserving its cultural, historical and natural heritage, choosing high value added economic activities, raising living standards continuously.”¹ The manifold world class projects and the avowed will to attract more tourists to Istanbul as previously discussed intrinsically links economic development to cultural promotion. Professor Levent Soysal’s application of Norbert Elias’s framework locates the commodification of culture in Istanbul within a “civilizing process, colloquially called Europeanization”².

“Istanbul’s new look would not have been possible had the country’s government not been so determined to prove its Western credentials.”

Rana Farooqar; Newsweek 2005, August 28

Global City: Seeking New Geographies

In our discussion at Kadir Has University, we learnt that Prime Minister Mr. Erdogan who had not visited Europe in the last two years was doing the rounds in Africa. Last year, the number of Iranian businesses set up in Istanbul jumped by 30% recording the highest number while the Lebanese topped in terms of amount of foreign investment³. While Turkey’s enthusiasm to join the European Union has come under speculation in the aftermath of the financial crisis, the future for economic cooperation in other geographies is growing, especially with neighbours who could fuel Turkey through a global energy crunch.

When the spotlight is focused on Westernization of Istanbul’s culture, parallel trends remain in the shadow. Accompanying places and events like Fransiz Solak (French street) and Jazz festivals are new mosque projects like the Taksim Cumhuriyet Camisi which will soon etch a new mark on the European face of the city. The morphology of the cityscape can thus not be read merely as an adoption of western symbols; as affirmed by the decision of the Council of the State in 2009 to demolish Dubai Towers which stood awkwardly in the city skyline. Playing up on its location at the crossroads of the East and the West can be read as Istanbul’s search for uniqueness, a standard strategy for city imaging.

“In Istanbul (...), the buzz is that almost all architects of world renown are most eager to place one of their trademark buildings there.”

Levent Soysal - Orienting Istanbul: Cultural Capital?

Cultural Promotion: Leverage for Growth?

Dr. Asu Aksoy helped us understand how the process brings together a “coalition of self-interests involving Islamic communities, secular elites, large capital, small and conservative business interests, and so-called bourgeois bohemians”⁴. The promotion of a hybrid culture allows for convergence of interests of an array of actors (Ottoman nostalgia of the ruling party, AKP; or prestige value for the “Rockfellers of Turkey”⁵ like the Sabancı and the Koç families). Sometimes however, these varied agendas collide, as in the Yenikapi Metro station where UNESCO wanted to stop construction following the discovery of archaeological remains. Nevertheless, state authorities continue at full speed within the law number 5366 *Kentsel Dönüşüm Yasası*⁵, with the watergate project at Atatürk Boulevard. The core of the conflict is the opposition between the preservation of cultural assets and potential urban growth strategies.

Tarlabaşı: Selectivity in Heritage Displays

Tarlabaşı is another polemical example, a mixed neighbourhood with Kurdish migrants from South East Turkey, gypsies and African migrants. The framing of it as a derelict neighbourhood by the Municipality⁶ legitimizes more planification against off-the-frame cultural narratives. At the Istanbul's Urban Observatory, Dr. Pérous confirmed Dr. Asu Aksoy's earlier comments made during a pre-trip seminar in November 2012 on the revival of the Ottoman inheritance being the cultural focus of the AKP agenda - making a clear distinction between which heritage should and should not be preserved.

The Metropolitan Municipality and semi-private actors like TOKI are economically interested in the renewal of Tarlabaşı. Strategically located, near the Taksim area, the renewal aims to spur gentrification and to attract more wealth to the area. Economic development in the past years has spurred consumerism to higher levels. During our visit, we clearly saw the willingness of TOKI to destroy the neighbourhood and build it anew. The large advertisement panels exhibiting blonde models walking in sparkling streets displayed TOKI's ambition for creative destruction, seeking cultural legitimacy in Stanbuliots imaginary to claim the modern land over the old.

As the focus on economically profitable cultural displays steams the urban growth machine and blows away other "displays", the modernist vision of the state has come in contradiction with that of financing institutions such as Agence Française de Développement (AFD) or UNESCO. Unlike the Turkish government who probably does not consider Tarlabaşı or other such neighbourhoods as cultural spaces at all, AFD seeks to preserve their cultural legacy, defending a renovation approach rather than renewal. Indeed, building anew implies brushing away rich infrastructural and immaterial cultural inheritance.

Collinear Conclusions

So how do we make sense of our ethnographic flanerie in the Kadıköy district or on Bagdad Avenue? Everything we see in Istanbul cannot be explained by an unrelenting ambition to become a global city. The city is after all not an object, but composed of multiple actors each of whom has their own agendas. When these interests come in conflict, as is the case when protectors of heritage contest state entrepreneurialism, culture is not necessarily "a key tool in the armory of place promotion"⁷. Indeed it even becomes an obstacle in the growth race.

It is also interesting to contemplate that it may be an illusion that Istanbul is languishing on the periphery of the global city network, desperate to modernize itself on western terms. Parallel and contradictory policies like retaining the ban on head scarves in Turkish institutions while banning alcohol in rock concerts have raised questions about the agenda of the AKP: Islamic or liberal? The puzzle may not be so confusing if we were not trained to think of the two as incompatible.

What is after all cultural modernity? A Muslim woman buying a Burberry veil in the Kanyon mall of the golden horn or veil-less women drinking with friends in an open space on the Anatolian side? If images of the future are framed by the economic development discourses and economic interlocutors in a civilizing process logic, part of the Istanbul consumerist cultural evolution is to be found somewhere in the reflexion of these window-shoppers.

Notes:

1. Istanbul Development Agency (ISTKA). 2010-2013 Istanbul Regional Plan. "The Vision", p. 4
2. Soysal, L. (2010). "Future(s) of the city: Istanbul for the new century." In D. Göktürk, L. Soysal & I. Türeli (Eds.), *Orienteering Istanbul: Cultural Capital of Europe?* Routledge.
3. Hurriyet Daily News (2013, Feb 04). "Istanbul loses its foreign investment lure in 2012."
4. Aksoy, Asu (2009). "Istanbul's Choice: Openness." Urban Age (LSE's Cities Programme), p. 5
5. Ibid. 2
6. *Hurriyet Daily News* (2010, May 13). "Istanbul's Tarlabaşı neighborhood not keen on gentrification."
7. Cochrane, Allan (2007). *Understanding Urban Policy: A critical Approach*. Blackwell Publishing, p. 104

POLITICS OF ISTANBUL'S CULTURAL DIVERSITY

*Camille Bonazzi, Irena Badalová,
Delphine Hennegrave, Martin Baierl*

The city of Istanbul places “culture” at the heart of its transformation into a global city. Cultural promotion is deeply linked to economic development. However, in order to understand cultural promotion, one must not overlook its political dimensions. Political interests and considerations are driving forces behind all current cultural policies, which can be divided into three main categories: heritage preservation, the making of a “design city” and the fostering of the “spectacle city” (Levent Soysal)¹.

I An Official Will to Make Islamic and Ottoman Heritage More Visible

a) The political role of culture

In Istanbul, culture is a highly politicised issue and we can observe promotion of several projects since the Justice and Development Party (AKP) took power. These projects aim to display the image of a modern, dynamic and Islamic society and include a plan to build two mosques, one of which will stand on Taksim Square - a touristic centre of the city. According to an article published in Today's Zaman news, the government argues that the Muslim population has grown significantly in this area. This project remains highly controversial due to the significance of Taksim square as one of the centers of tourist activities. It illustrates how cultural projects are centred on the Muslim cultural heritage creation and preservation.

Even though the image of Islamic identity might be promoted by political actors, this vision is far from being a promotion driven by the central state. In her article “*L’islamisme turc à l’épreuve du pouvoir municipal*”², Elise Massicard conversely argues that the AKP gave more space to the district mayors to act on their own policies - a relative

decentralisation when compared with the previous government led by the Islamist Welfare Party (RP). Nevertheless, “the government is embracing Istanbul’s imperial past, when the Ottoman Empire sprawled across three continents”³. Thus, it can be said that the general policies of the AKP municipalities tend to favour some heritage, especially the Ottoman culture, over others. During our meeting with Tansel Kaya, chairman of the foreign affairs committee of Fatih, he himself acknowledged that mosques are more likely to be renovated than other historical buildings associated with Istanbul’s Byzantine, Armenian or Greek heritage, implying that on the level of municipalities, the emphasis may also lie on projects promoting Islamic culture.

b) Culture as tool for the promotion of the city

Cultural policies are also an instrument to encourage tourism and are thus a symbolic tool for the promotion of the city. Tourism is used for city branding, hailing Istanbul as a global city but also as a bridge between two continents and cultures as the very logo chosen for Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Europe underlines. Jean François Pérouse argued that the official discourse, of the PM himself, openly equated the promotion of culture and Istanbul as a global city. Yet that form of commodification of culture is not without controversies. He highlighted the harsh criticism against the lack of coordination of projects at the municipal level and the approaches to define the identity of Istanbul for the events for the 2010 European Capital of Culture.

II Drawbacks and Limits of Istanbul’s Cultural Policies

a) Cultural promotion by private actors and its limits

Many actors are involved in financing cultural projects. Public financing through ITSKA, the development agency, only began in 2012, when 2.5 million Turkish liras were spent - a small amount compared to other subsidized

areas. The main sources of funding are banks, private universities and corporate families whose investments are highly selective.

Private actors have indeed gained a crucial role in Istanbul's cultural policy. Their activities range from sponsoring exhibitions, festivals or spectacles, to financing museum projects. The Eczacıbaşı Group, via İstanbul Kültür Sanat Vakfı, launched Istanbul Modern, the first entirely private modern art museum in the city. Creating new venues for culture and inspired by cultural landmarks such as the Museum of Modern Art in New York or the Tate Modern in London, these private initiatives aim at giving Istanbul the appearance of an explicitly modern metropolis. Santral Istanbul, a cultural project aimed at transforming a former power plant into industrial heritage site and art museum, underlines the drawbacks and limits of such private cultural sponsoring and financing in a context of absent public funding.

b) The opposition between industrial heritage and cultural heritage: the case of Santral Istanbul

The Santral Istanbul project is striking manifestation of the limited vision of culture fostered by the current government. The project included an art gallery, university facilities and industrial museum. The absence of funds, especially public support, prevented it from materialising. The university itself could only survive thanks to Laureate International University buying it over as Professor Asu Aksoy pointed out during the field visit. Similarly, the absence of industrial heritage funds (as opposed to cultural heritage funds), hinders the revitalisation of such sites. Thus, even if projects have goals related to public interest such as science, art and education, the lack of both public and private support highlights the limitations of the current cultural policies in Istanbul. Santral also highlights the limited independence of private actors, in the sense that the most powerful ones act in line with the government, be it because of similar political



Photo: Margot Delafoulhouze

ideology or because of economic or political incentives to align with the government .

The two issues mentioned above lead to some observers commenting that Istanbul is neglecting its multicultural past up to the point where it is, according to Betül Tanbay (member of the lobby group Taksim platform), almost “robbed of its soul”⁴.

Conclusion

Istanbul is evolving—there is indeed an explicit cultural policy and yet it is not fully encompassing and democratic. In that sense, it reflects the enormous dominance of the AKP and certain powerful interest groups within the Turkish society. This raises the question to what extent Istanbul's culture is currently undergoing a process of homogenization.

Notes:

1. Soysal, L. (2010). Future(s) of the city: Istanbul for the new century. In D. Göktürk, L. Soysal & I. Türeli (Eds.), *Orienteering Istanbul: Cultural Capital of Europe? Routledge*.
2. Massicard, Elise: “L’islamisme turc à l’épreuve du pouvoir municipal” (“Turkish Islamism confronted by municipal power”) in *Critique Internationale* n°42, January-March 2009, p. 21-38.
3. Robinson, M. (2012, Dec 02). Prime minister erdogan wants to build turke'ys biggest mosque in istanbul. Reuters.
4. *The Economist* (2012, Dec 01). Under attack: How mosques and other new buildings may damage one of europe's finest cities.

CULTURAL POLITICS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT:

A Cultural Map of Identities and Contestation in Istanbul

*Claire Lot, Clémentine Proby,
Gustavo Caicedo, Jean Claude Yawili*

Thinking about Istanbul in terms of cultural politics and policies means focusing on the role of the hegemonic AKP, which is currently trying to bring new values into Istanbul, and the potential challenges to these values.

A few observations about AKP's ideology: it combines religious and conservative values and a neoliberal modern agenda. This certainly explains why Asu Aksoy claimed (conference in Sciences-Po Paris in December 2012) that the AKP was walking on a tight (cultural) rope: the party is confronted with a very secularized society and does not know how to accommodate religious values and a neoliberal ideology.

Another key component of Istanbul's cultural policies, related to the modernization of its image, is the cultural penetration of Western standards, especially the EU's. It must be acknowledged that most of Istanbul's prospects are "implicitly and explicitly connected to Turkey's membership in the EU" (Gokturk, 2010¹) – especially when Istanbul became the European capital of culture in 2010.

Given the contradictions between conservatism and a global orientation, how do cultural identities challenge these cultural politics and policies?

Urban "Neoliberalism from the Sky"

To remain in power, the AKP has defined a clearly growth-oriented agenda which also shapes its cultural policies.

The issue of urban renewal gave rise to contestation not only among the secular and

educated classes, but also, and most importantly, by displaced populations. These regeneration projects indeed target primarily poor neighbourhoods where migrants and minorities are concentrated.

During our neighbourhood visits, the example of Tarlabası showed how identities are mapped in Istanbul and illustrated the socio-economic disparities existing in Istanbul. We witnessed an area that mostly accommodated decrepit houses and lower-class internal migrants such as Kurdish families. Following its decay after the 1964 deportation of non-Muslims and the 1984 construction of a boulevard at its heart, Tarlabası was cut off from the "social and economic flow of Taksim" (New York Times, 2012²). As the surrounding neighbourhoods gentrified progressively, Tarlabası was increasingly "ghettoized", accommodating displaced Kurds, illegal immigrants and marginalized groups.

The destruction of the Sulukule district as part of a urban renewal project is another case of AKP's controversial policy. Situated in the centre of Istanbul, Sulukule was historically home to an old Roma community, settled there permanently. 3400 Roma people were evicted in the name of modernization and safety since the area isn't earthquakeproof. Private developers in partnership with the Fatih municipality built new houses where the old settlement used to be, selling these houses at 10 times the price paid to the former inhabitants. It was then clearly impossible for them to afford living in their old neighbourhood. The destruction of minority communities damages the historical uniqueness of Istanbul and is also an irreversible turn taken against the diversity of identities in general.

A "City of Migrants"

Although Istanbul can be considered a "city of migrants", with two thirds of its population born elsewhere, there is still a discriminating discourse and apprehension of migrants who are generally drawn to Istanbul for economic

reasons. The “provincialization” of Istanbul has raised much concern, arousing debates around the issue of migration. Depicting the Anatolian migrant as a culturally backward individual³, this discourse among the dominant classes also makes him responsible of all the city’s burdens. An April 2005 report for the National Security Council thus claimed a close link between the rise of urban violence and the recent immigration waves originating from internal Kurdish regions⁴.

An Embryonic Civil Society

Mobilization against gentrification exists, but if we take social development as a whole in Istanbul, it is difficult to talk about a powerful civil society. It remains fragile because the actions of different organizations and, in particular, the actions of NGOs are insufficiently coordinated.

The role of women in civil society is a good indicator of this fragility. Feminist movements are growing, but the Islamic trend driven by the AKP’s will to moralize society and the primacy of a traditional vision of the family are also gaining ground. This might affect women’s socioeconomic independence and their agency.

Moreover, the mobilization of civil society through the expression of different identities is impeded by a will to create a uniform Istanbul identity. The “(backward) migratory threat” still pervades political discourses and the government is regularly trying to limit the arrival of migrants,

although it is politically and technically infeasible⁵. The idea of a top-down citizenship that would coexist with - or absorb? - other identities is prominent. This is strongly related to a nationalist discourse distinguishing between those who belong to the nation and those who do not, in a “Turkish vs minorities” scheme (Mills⁶, 2006). Indeed, this Turkish, and more specific Istanbul identity fosters a nostalgic discourse on Turkish culture. This translates into the urban fabric through the Ottomanization of facades - in Sulukule, for example, where new Ottoman houses were built - and of new mosques, such as the planned Çamlica mosque.

Conclusion

Drawing a cultural map of identities and contestation in Istanbul proves difficult given the cultural diversity of the city on the one hand and the cultural politics and policies on the other hand. Both have contradictory interests and follow their own ambiguous paths. Mobilization of cultural identities is gaining ground but lacks organization and articulation, thus impeding the power of civil society; the AKP struggles to define its cultural objectives, hesitating between modernity and tradition.

Notes:

1. GOKTURK (2010), *Orienting Istanbul: Cultural Capital of Europe?*, Routledge, 2010
2. Jessica Bourque (2012, July 04) “Poor but Proud Istanbul Neighborhood Faces Gentrification” *The New York Times*.
3. Pérouse, 2007, “1: Istanbul, entre Paris et Dubaï : mise en conformité « internationale », nettoyage et résistances”, *Villes internationales*, La Découverte, p. 31-62
4. Pérouse, 2007, “1: Istanbul, entre Paris et Dubaï : mise en conformité « internationale », nettoyage et résistances”, *Villes internationales*, La Découverte, p. 31-62
5. Pérouse, 2007, “1: Istanbul, entre Paris et Dubaï : mise en conformité « internationale », nettoyage et résistances”, *Villes internationales*, La Découverte, p. 31-62
6. Mills, (2006) “Reading Narratives in City Landscapes: Cultural Identity in Istanbul”, *The Geographical Review*, July 2005



Photo: Clément Martinez

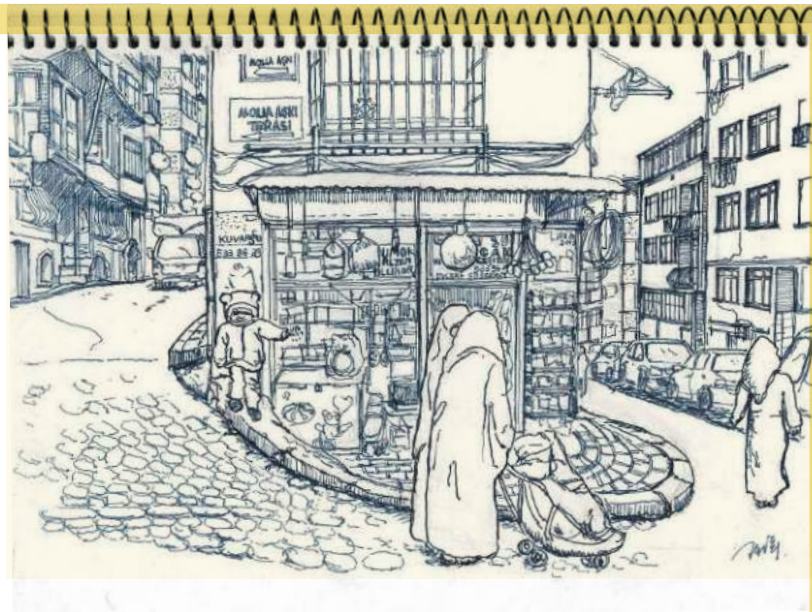
PORTFOLIO



Students on Their Way
Photo: Yang Chen



A Muslim Family's Trip out
Photo: Yang Chen



Daily Life in Fener Balat
Sketch: Yang Chen

Marching on Galata Bridge
Photo: Clémentine Aymard






Family in Snow Yang Chen
Sans Titre Lucas Morin



Photo: Clément Martinez

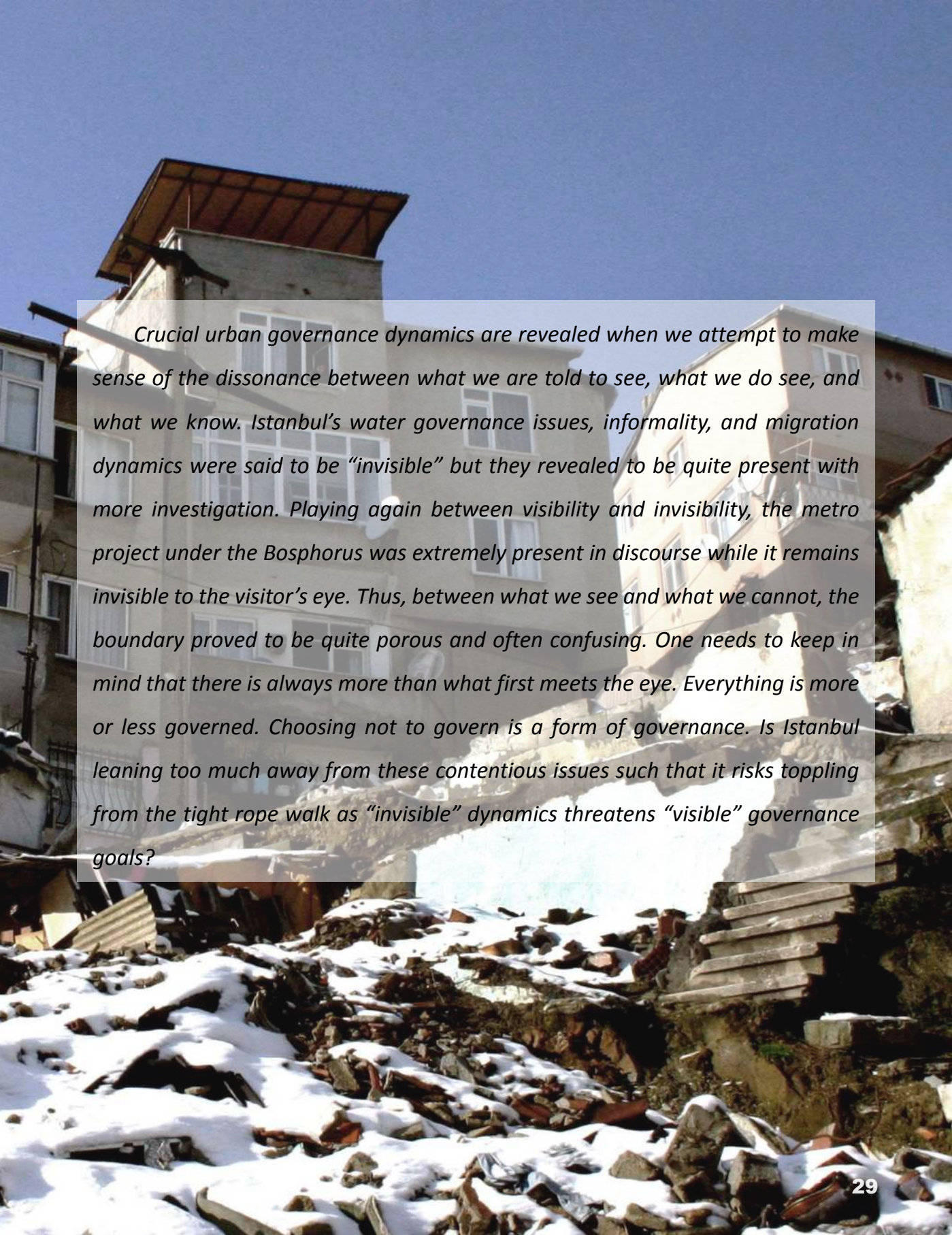




CHAPTER 3

THE “INVISIBLE” ISTANBUL

Photo: Adrien Priss



Crucial urban governance dynamics are revealed when we attempt to make sense of the dissonance between what we are told to see, what we do see, and what we know. Istanbul's water governance issues, informality, and migration dynamics were said to be "invisible" but they revealed to be quite present with more investigation. Playing again between visibility and invisibility, the metro project under the Bosphorus was extremely present in discourse while it remains invisible to the visitor's eye. Thus, between what we see and what we cannot, the boundary proved to be quite porous and often confusing. One needs to keep in mind that there is always more than what first meets the eye. Everything is more or less governed. Choosing not to govern is a form of governance. Is Istanbul leaning too much away from these contentious issues such that it risks toppling from the tight rope walk as "invisible" dynamics threatens "visible" governance goals?

PERSISTING INFORMALITY: INVISIBLE IN DISCOURSE, VISIBLE IN SPACE?

Cyprien Butin, Grégoire Ledoux,
Juliette Lamandé, Jules Le Gaudu

While the aim of the study trip was to meet and understand the role of “formal” actors in the functioning of Istanbul, the visits of neighborhoods we did allowed us to grasp some of the less regulated aspects of the city and in particular, the existence of “gecekondu”, the importance of migrations from both inside and outside Turkey, and the persistence of the black market in the city’s economy. At first glance, there seems to be a will to make this informality invisible in a narrative of Istanbul as an emerging “world-class city”. From there comes the need to evaluate and analyze the importance of informality, by trying to define the concept, its implication and its impact in relation to policies of urban renewal.

Informal Settlements in Istanbul

Informal settlements are the most obvious form of informality in Istanbul, if not the main one. They are symbolized by the *gecekondu*, those houses literally “built in one night” by migrants who could not afford legal housing. The government’s attitude towards them was and remains complex and de facto variable. Indeed, on the one hand the state policy provides public services and utilities to them – through roads’ pavement, access to electricity and water networks etc. – but on the other hand, it keeps the possibility of eviction. Populations may therefore be displaced, for multiple reasons: earthquake risk, building of a shopping mall or upgrading of a neighborhood. In that matter, the role of TOKİ (the Turkish public housing agency)’s officers is not clear: though they promote the building of new housings to replace the *gecekondu*, their relocation programs appears at first sight to solely

integrate dwellers who own property certificates and proof of formal employment. This goes in the assumption that eviction always creates frictions, sometimes resistances. For instance, according to Prof. Pérouse¹, in 2007, the authorities stepped back after the inhabitants rose against the destruction of their homes in the district of *Ertugrul Gazi*. But such events appear to be quite limited. Closely linked to the issue of informal settlements, the informal economy embodies another dimension of informality in Istanbul.

Informal Economy

During our stay, we became aware of Istanbul decision-makers’ aim to conceal informal activities, particularly in touristic areas. Mr. Tansal Kaya, elected representative of *Fatih* in Istanbul explained to us his municipality’s recent policy to remove street vendors, considering that they were disturbing touristic activities. In the districts of *Fener* and *Balat*, we learned that an urban renewal project has been criticized for relocating informal activities – essentially textile and craft industry



Photo: Margot Delafoulhouze

– to the outskirts of the city. In the meantime, Istanbul informal activities do persist, but in a more discreet way. While visiting the district of *Kumcapi* and its informal bag-manufacturing sector, we were taught that the informal sector were allowed as long as they remained invisible. Similarly, we noticed that the suitcase trade in the district of *Laleli* still exists in the southern part of the area, although the authorities have been trying to get rid of it for several years. Overall, we came to the conclusion that informal activities, while being dissimulated by different means, remains an integral part of Istanbul’s cityscape. In a way, migration trends in Istanbul underline the same process.

Migration Trends

Traditionally referred to as an emigration country (especially to West Germany), Turkey, is also for a long time a country of immigration and asylum for nationals of Middle-Eastern countries – Syria and Iraq today – and Africa. According to official statistics², there were in 2000 about 1.3 million of foreign-born residents in Turkey. This migration phenomenon at the international scale has to be added to the internal migrations, essentially from the East to the West of the country and in particular, to the economic capital Istanbul. In 2010-2011, the rate of net migration to the city was of about 9% i.e. 120,000 newcomers. Yet, there is rejection of some categories of both internal and foreign immigrants. According to Pérouse Jean-François Jean François³, the formers are perceived by locals as having a backward and reactionary culture which prevents them to be integrated. Except for some very limited categories – such as Syrian refugees today on behalf of Muslim charity for instance – the latters are facing many difficulties. Some are undocumented and are likely to be sent to detention centers, notably in the neighborhood of *Kumcapi* where we met migrants from ex-USSR and Western Africa. Nevertheless, being in Istanbul does not prevent migrants to find their way in the city: during our visit we actually noticed

small shops with their front window written in Cyrillic alphabet, call shops which were run by Senegalese people and, even, an association of migrants in the neighborhood of Sultan Mehmet.

Conclusion

All in all, we could not but acknowledge that there is a clear will to “sell [Istanbul] in an coveted international market”⁴ as a world-class city by reducing the importance of the “informal” sector. However, though at a macro level informality is not particularly visible, at a more micro-level, many neighborhoods still appear as places for informal economic exchanges and for the establishment of illegal settlements, but also as shelters for immigrants, both from within the country and from abroad. These elements appear at least as integrated to the functioning of the city as institutional actors and their dynamics.

Notes:

1. Pérouse, J.-F. (2007), *“Istanbul, Entre Paris Et Dubaï : Mise En Conformité «Internationale»*
2. Turkish Statistical Institute. Website: www.turkstat.gov.tr
3. Pérouse, J.-F. (2007), *“Istanbul, Entre Paris Et Dubaï : Mise En Conformité «Internationale»*
4. Pérouse, J.-F. (2007), *“Istanbul, Entre Paris Et Dubaï : Mise En Conformité «Internationale»*, p. 31



Photo: Yang Chen

GOVERNING THE CITY'S SPATIALITY:

Istanbul's Visible and "Invisible" Networks

Heliabel Bomstein, Roxanne Le Failler, Lauranne Gallet, Margot Delafoulhouze

Istanbul's territory is characterized by both the Bosphorus strait and hills - laying in a seismic area. Considering its spatially uneven demographic development - asymmetry between the European and the Asian sides - great challenges are raised in terms of service delivery and more broadly networks governance. This has to be understood within the context of the city's administrative configuration and international ambitions. How is the public sector organizing the management of those territorially embedded issues?

Istanbul's networks aim at visibly or invisibly connecting all areas of the city. The governance of the metropolis as a whole is rendered complex by a sharp administrative fragmentation since the management of spatiality is shared among many institutional levels. Services such as cleaning and maintenance, as well as tax collection, are the responsibility of each of the 39 district councils, while the metropolitan council - headed by the metropolitan mayor - is in charge of transportation, waste management and large-scale utilities. One of Istanbul's peculiarities is that the municipality creates and owns companies for the delivery of public goods and maintenance of public networks, the profit of which remains publicly owned. This system enhances a professional management of public services and networks, hence efficiency.

Although efficient, this system of governance crystallizes a lack of coordination among the various actors involved. To solve this, numerous Master Plans are designed, aiming at promoting the sprawl of the metropolis so as to show its

power. However, they seldom are put into practice in the 39 districts, especially because the metropolitan council often allows exemptions. Nevertheless, ISTKA insisted on the formulation of a Regional Plan for Istanbul in the vein of the National Plan to 2023. It remains that although the law ranks the numerous plans (the latter adding with the TOKI plan, water plan, among others); crucial aspects of the city's networks and spatiality are administered independently, which does not facilitate the governance of the metropolis.

Experienced by inhabitants, tourists and daily migrants, the transportation system is a particularly visible network, hence a pressing concern in terms of urban governance. In Istanbul, this issue became one of the main problems, due to the city's demographic and spatial growth. There is indeed a problematic insufficiency and inefficiency of the public transportation system and its infrastructures. It is also badly coordinated: the means of transportation are diverse (bus, tramway and subway lines, ferry...) but the various companies in charge are not working together, thus encouraging a very high use of cars, fostering huge traffic jams. For instance, people spend between 50 and 70 minutes in the transports to get to their work place.

The coordination problem is also relevant between the public authorities in charge of transportation planning and those in charge of urban planning, as underlined by J F Pérouse. Initiatives have been encouraged to face this pressing issue and new projects focusing on three main axes of development are on the urban agenda: the extension of the existing subway line, the building of a third Bosphorus bridge and the Marmaray project, which aims at constructing an undersea rail tunnel under the Bosphorus; as well as modernising suburban rail lines. These project are financed mainly by the Ministry of Transportation in partnership with Turkish firms and few foreign firms (France, Japan, Netherlands).

However, the future of Istanbul's transportation system is still far from being

unconstrained: developing the infrastructures will not solve the coordination problems and the planned projects are likely to be confronted to impediments. Indeed, the building of new transportation networks have to cope with the very high probability of finding excavations sites. The three projects have suffered a lot of criticism related to these issues and the Marmaray project have already been delayed.

Some vital networks cross and nurture the city although they are barely noticed by citizens. Their invisibility could be a temptation for minimizing their importance while their management remains a primordial governance issue mixing political and technical concerns. The exponentially growing population of Istanbul is demanding for more and more resources, as it is the case for water. It comes from lakes located around the city - from the Black Sea coast to the inner Anatolian lands - in which rain water is concentrated. For several years, the municipal authorities became increasingly aware of the necessity to protect them since the potentiality of a shortage is worrying. The surrounding area of those lakes is strictly controlled. However some illegal settlements and the waste they produce are threatening those reservoirs as they already polluted some. The crucial issue of finding new water sources led the Turkish government to look at Bulgarian rivers with particular interest.

The use of water as well as its pricing are differentiated in Turkey according to the status and the activity of the users. Private consumption not represent more than 2% of the total use while the irrigation takes 83% of the share and 15% are used by industries. Indeed, the pricing system of water is a topic not to be neglected as the fares citizens pay increase every year. The pricing recently turned into a “pay what you use” system which, according to officials, should generate a decrease of the water consumption. The Ministry of Water generates a 4 millions Turkish Lyras benefit per day and the opportunities to invest this public money in the water system or in the new subway project

are still under discussion. Since 1987, Turkey is conforming its national regulation to the European one. Therefore, water management, as well as other network management, is a continuously evolving issue influenced by social, economic, political and legal changes.

In sum, Istanbul’s spatiality is a very challenging governmental issue. Utilities have to be provided to an ever growing population in a territory that simultaneously is one of the oldest, is at risk and has a constraining geography. Considering that 2023 will be a crucial anniversary, plans are to be implemented in a coordinated manner in order to enhance the city’s governability.



Photo: Clément Martinez

■ FINANCING ISTANBUL

*Clémentine Aymard, Hanaline Brel,
Thibault Pilsudski*

Photo: Lucas Morin

I. Public Resources and Mechanisms

Due to the increased population concentration, demand for municipal services in metropolitan areas is rising. The national scheme of redistribution, with cities providing resources for the rural areas through tax mechanisms was put into question. The central government intervened to alleviate the investment burden. Hence, in 2011, the cost of construction of some metro lines has been transferred to the Ministry of Transport.

The development agency of Istanbul was created in this shift towards more national support. The ITSKA (Istanbul Kalkinma Ajansi) is a public body under the authority of the Minister of Development, enforcing the Regional Plan that is promoting effective allocation of resources and coordination of institutions in order to increase the impact of regional development efforts and attract investments to Istanbul. Financed by the central and the local governments (including the Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber of Industry), it offers grants to projects following the strategic objectives set by the planning

department. Some municipally-owned companies also receive subsidies to cover capital expenditures.

Istanbul's administration receives a share of the revenue collected by district municipalities such as property and waste management taxes. The municipality also undertakes borrowing. In 2011, the payback absorbed 4.5% of the operating revenue. The municipality eliminated its existing short-term debts except borrowings from Iller Bank, a State owned development and investment bank.

II. The City's Strategy to Attract Resources

According to the OECD report about Istanbul, the city is receiving foreign investment primarily in the banking sector, an aspect that was difficult to apprehend during field studies. But then the main investments go for real estate and construction project. The municipality had originally a lot of land, especially in the centre, which have then been sold through public private partnership for

building offices, new residential areas for middle and upper class or commercial activities. The process had benefited from some changes from the government and the municipality facilitating use of property — for instance the Act 4916 from July 2004 is making easier for foreigner the acquisition of property — but also from evolution of the Stambuliot society which has change its consumption habits. The field study in Kanyon Mall and revealed a sterilized and secured environment characteristic of Worldwide and supposedly “Western” standards that can be found from Malaysia to the United States going through Emirates. This environment was going further than the Mall as it was bordered by “American suburbs” style residences using private companies and showing luxury cars.

In two other neighbourhoods, at different scale we could see signs of gentrification that are both results of the opening of the city to foreign investment and at the same time encouraging new investments. In Kadıköy, the internationalization of the neighbourhood could be noticed through up-scale cafés and restaurants with names and menus drawing on international cuisines or pop culture references like Japanese manga. In Tarlabaşı, historic neighbourhood of immigrants as is La Goutte d’Or in Paris, is also changing to leave space, according to the huge posters that advertise for the future neighbourhood, to a new population much more internationalized and beneficiary of the new investment.

III. The Question of the Islamic Finance

The Islamic Finance can be considered as a very old mechanism: its development started, indeed, between the 8th and 12th centuries. It has obviously known evolutions throughout years, but the very substance stayed the same: inspired by the Sharia law, the Islamic Finance is an attempt to adapt finance/the necessity of having a financial system to Islamic values (its main principles are the refusal of floating payments, of specific interests/fees related to money loans or again: the

interdiction to invest in goods and services that could be considered by Islam as sinful). The oldness of such a system does not mean, however, that it has always been perfectly institutionalized: as a matter of fact, related institutions and banks were truly developed at the beginning of the 20th century. Its actual, significant introduction in some countries’ economy only began within the past decades... and happens to currently raise important questions and debates.

According to major members of organisms like the Istanbul’s Development Agency (ISTKA), making Istanbul a global financial center is one of Turkey’s most important projects – and such a goal, in their (favorable) opinion still, is likely to be reached in parallel of an increase of Islamic Finance’s place within the city’s economical system. Yet, in the meantime, several finance experts tend to argue that the expression “Islamic Finance” is in fact relatively meaningless in Turkey, and more of a “jargon” than a true and sustainable process; Istanbul’s financial system still follows, “obviously”, a profitable logic. Also, while Turkish partisans of Islamic Finance express strong hopes that Istanbul will soon be able to compete with Dubai in terms of Islamic Finance, the doubtful side opposes again to such beliefs: currently – and probably for a long time – Malaysia is Dubai’s only real competitor in this field.

Such a difference between the points of view/forecasts of several Istanbul’s capital actors and finance experts is doubly interesting. First: because these antagonistic visions represent very accurately the two sides of the debate currently going on about Islamic finances. Second, because of all the previous points we developed: this “opinion gap” could be one of the multiple expressions of the kind of tensions Istanbul is currently dealing with. That is: the palpable hesitation between several traditional values it is still strongly attached to and a strong, often competing desire to fully develop its economic potential.

CONCLUSION:

WHAT HOLDS FORTH IN THE 2023 VISION?



Photo: Yang Chen

We visited Istanbul in January 2013 as it stood 10 years away from its 2023 “worldwide metropolis” vision and the 100th anniversary of the Turkish Republic. The transformation plan has been ongoing for years but we have now entered the final stretch. The period running up to the anniversary will be as much an occasion to celebrate as to examine how far Turkey has climbed and to what extent Istanbul has become a multicultural and successful megacity.

Some may look at the developments of Istanbul in the next 10 years as a series of fast-paced changes, while others may look at it as a long process held back by inertia and dominance. Our investigations show that reflections vary depending on which issue one focuses on. This suggests an Istanbul evolving at different speeds in various directions as it approaches its 2023 centennial.

In Chapter I Istanbul’s Growth Race, we investigated differences between reality and aspirations for a world class city and tourism. Istanbul has ambitions on the international

stage, and aims to perform better in international rankings; it has developed a coherent strategy and intends to tackle mobility and fluidity issues. The strategy is in a sense highly similar to that of any other city with “global city” aspirations. And just like any other city, this growth race is not a continuous phenomenon and we observe some stretch marks which may—or may not—become serious issues in the coming years. This requires one to consider what is being privileged in the 2023 strategy and the risks on Istanbul’s authenticity and soul caused by the standardization process of tourism and development. Also, an investigation into the consequences of a potential internal dichotomy between modern Istanbul and more modest neighbourhoods is needed.

In Chapter II Istanbul’s Cultural Policies, we investigated the cultural contestations involved in presenting an Istanbul heritage. Cultural diversity is in tension with cultural politics and policies dominated by the AKP and other interest groups. This is evident in the destruction of Sulukule, developments in Tarlabaşı, promotion of Santral Istanbul, and the

paucity of Anatolian heritage preservation. We found that cultural promotion is aligned with urban growth strategies of the entrepreneurial Istanbul Metropolitan Government. Yet, we found that the AKP, with its particular ideology, struggles to define its cultural objectives and hesitates between modernity and tradition. Meanwhile, we found that the mobilization of cultural identities is gaining ground. However, civil society lacks organization and articulation which impedes its power.

In Chapter III The “Invisible” Istanbul, we investigated the way which Istanbul plays with the observer’s senses with its visible and invisible characteristics. This week of study unveiled a number of “invisible” issues which appeared to be more or less governed by the city’s official bodies and more or less relegated to the past. While shedding light on evidence of growth and wealth, such as the progress of the city’s metro project, and promoting the city’s visible urban developments, the municipality and public agencies in charge of Istanbul’s urban governance on the other hand seem to us to be deciding the end of informal settlements a little too fast. Between what we could directly see, what we were told to see, and what only appeared through careful examination on our own, Istanbul clearly reveals its complexity. Public actors are becoming experts in promoting the image of a wealthy emerging metropolis which does not always reflect reality in its entirety.

Our January 2013 trip was a great opportunity to discover and analyse the emblematic Turkish city with 2023 in mind—the goal to which all public actors, and many private actors, are striving towards. Things were confusing at times during our stay as discourses and visits sometimes diverged from our previous image of the city. Understanding fluctuated between what we were told and what was not said, what we could, or could not, see and what we hypothesized. We were then led

to a specific mindset with which to understand this intriguing metropolis—the distinguishing of Visible and Invisible Istanbul.



Special Acknowledgements

Ahmet Saatçi *Turkish Water Institute*
 Asu Aksoy *Bilgi University*
 Ayşe Sema Kubat *Istanbul Technical University*
 Basak Demires Ozkul *Bartlett School of Planning*
 Belgin Gumru *Istanbul Technical University*
 Ceyda Sungur *Istanbul Technical University*
 Elise Massicard *Institut Français d'études Anatoliennes*
 Esin Paca Cengiz *Kadir Has University*
 Jean-François Pérouse *Institut Français d'études Anatoliennes*
 Levent Soysal *Kadir Has University*
 Kristen Biehl *University of Oxford*
 Murat Ülker *AFD Project*
 Mehmet Onur Partal *Istanbul Development Agency*
 Seday Aybar *Kadir Has University*
 Tansel Kaya *Foreign Affairs Committee for Fatih*
 Valérie Le Galcher Baron *General Consulate of France*
 Yavuk Çelik *TOKI*

Istanbul Development Agency
 Housing Development Administration of Turkey (TOKI)
 Istanbul Water and Sewerage Administration (ISKI)
 Turkish Water Institute (SUEN)

Special Thanks to

Basak Demires Ozkul

GLM Program Directors

Adrian Favell
 Brigitte Fouilland
 Patrick Le Galès
 Régine Serra

GLM Pedagogical Assistant

Catherine Bacheter



Photo: Yang Chen

Contributors

Adrien Priss
Alexandra Lichá
Alice Sutra Del Galy
Andrés Melendro
Ariane Romano
Camille Bonazzi
Chenzi Yiyang
Claire Aïtout
Claire Lot
Clarisse Pham
Clément Martinez
Clémentine Aymard
Clémentine Proby
Cyprien Butin
Delphine Hennegrave
Gabriela Mercurio
Grégoire Ledoux
Gustavo Caicedo
Hanaline Brel
Heliabel Bomstein
Irena Badalová
Irene Garcia

Lauranne Callet
Jean Claude Yawili
Juliette Lamandé
Jules Le Gaudu
Luc Aldon
Lucas Morin
Manka Bajaj
Margot Delafoulhouze
Marion Waller
Martin Baierl
Monica Eden Wynter
Olusoji Ajao
Peixin Lin
Quentin Batréau
Roxanne Le Failler
Raphaëlle Béguinel
Raphaëlle Roffo
Sye Yuet Loy
Thibault Pilsudski
Unnati Pant
Yang Chen

Editorial Board

Adrien Priss
Lucas Morin
Peixin Lin
Raphaëlle Béguinel
Raphaëlle Roffo
Sye Yuet Loy
Yang Chen



2013: Istanbul, the crossroad of East and West, is on track to becoming a global city, a national enterprise in the run-up to Turkey's 100th year of independence in 2023. In terms of urban governance, what has been done and what remains to be done? What is governed and what is not? *Governing on a Tight Rope* evaluates the balance between and intersection of economic and sociocultural policy aims. Chapter I, Istanbul's Growth Race, explores steps taken at the metropolitan level to achieve world city status. Chapter II, Istanbul's Cultural Policies, illustrates the tension between cultural policy as economically driven and as identity politics. Lastly, The "Invisible" Istanbul, reminds us that alongside visible growth and progress are areas that are left ungoverned and kept out of sight.

Governing on a Tight Rope is the culmination of efforts from students of the Masters Programme in Governing the Large Metropolis, Sciences Po, Paris, following a week-long field trip to Istanbul in January 2013.

