



European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

# Intergroup Relations and Intercultural Policies in Istanbul, Turkey

**Draft version, please do not quote.**

**– not yet peer reviewed, not yet accepted by the city –**



Author:

Wolfgang Bosswick

European Forum for Migration Studies (EFMS)

September 2009

© 2008 European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions  
Wyattville Road, Loughlinstown, Dublin 18, Ireland  
Telephone: + 353 1 2043100, Fax: + 353 1 2826456

## Table of Content

<b>Foreword.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2. Background information on Turkey .....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1. History of migration and composition of the migrant populations.....	6
2.2. National policy context .....	9
<b>3. Background information on Istanbul.....</b>	<b>11</b>
3.1. Brief description of Istanbul .....	11
3.2. Istanbul’s migrant population and its characteristics.....	12
<b>4. Local intercultural policies in general.....</b>	<b>16</b>
4.1. General approach towards ethnic and religious issues in the city .....	17
4.2. Issues, demands and interests.....	18
4.3. Institutionalised forms of relations and dialogue in the city.....	22
4.3.1. Muhktar system .....	22
4.3.2. City councils.....	23
4.3.3. Primary school.....	24
4.3.4. Contacts between the city and migrant associations .....	24
4.3.5. Activities and projects for improving intergroup relations .....	24
4.4. Relationship between different ethnic groups in Istanbul.....	26
4.5. Public communication.....	27
<b>5. Intergroup relations and radicalisation .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>6. Conclusion: Key challenges, lessons and learning for CLIP.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Interviewees .....</b>	<b>30</b>

## Table of Figures

<a href="#">Figure 1: Turkey: City and Village Population Size and Annual Growth Rate of Population 1927-2000 .....</a>	6
<a href="#">Figure 2: Turkey: Annual Growth Rate of Population 1990-2000, de facto Population..</a>	7
<a href="#">Figure 3: Annual Rate of Net-migration 1995-2000, de jure Population over 5 Years of Age .....</a>	7
<a href="#">Figure 4: Country of origin of migration flows into Turkey (2000).....</a>	9
<a href="#">Figure 5: Ratio of Istanbul-born Inhabitants (1990 Census) .....</a>	13
<a href="#">Figure 6: Provincial net-migration with Istanbul 1995-2000 in % of total net migration..</a>	13
<a href="#">Figure 7: 1990 Census, ratio of Kars-born inhabitants in Istanbul subdistricts.....</a>	14
<a href="#">Figure 8: 1990 Census, ratio of Giresun-born inhabitants in Istanbul subdistricts.....</a>	15
<a href="#">Figure 9: December 24, 1995, General Election of Representatives Percentage of Votes Attained by the HADEP .....</a>	16
<a href="#">Figure 9: Polish Roman Catholic Church at Polonezköy, Istanbul .....</a>	18
<a href="#">Figure 10: Priority expectation of Tarlabası residents from a local community centre ..</a>	21

## Foreword

European cities, in particular major cities with strong economies, attract migrants from rural or less developed areas as well as from all over the world. As a result, urban populations became increasingly heterogeneous in ethnic, cultural and religious terms. The multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious structures of urban society are, on the one hand, an opportunity for cities. On the other hand, heterogeneity challenges a city's ability to maintain peaceful and productive relations among the different segments of the population.

For this reason, cities have a genuine interest in successful local integration practices. Therefore, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (CoE), the City of Stuttgart and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions ('Eurofound') came together to form the European network of 'Cities for Local Integration Policies' (CLIP) for migrants. This network, launched in 2006, brings together about 30 European cities in a joint learning process: through the structured sharing of experiences, the network aims to enable local authorities as well as national and European policymakers to learn from each other and, thus, pursue more effective integration policies for migrants at a regional, national and European level. The learning process is accompanied by researchers from six academic research centres.<sup>1</sup>

The city of Istanbul joined the CLIP network at the beginning of this third module of CLIP. In 2008 (participation Brussels conference in April 2008 and Malmö December 2008) The researchers at the efms of the University of Bamberg are responsible for this first report on Istanbul.<sup>2</sup> Together with the contact person from the municipality of Istanbul (director EU Relations), Yaşar Karaca and Dr. Lütfi Özşahin, an enormous effort has been undertaken to collect the data for this report. Many officials from the municipality, Civil Society representatives and local experts in Istanbul were interviewed during the city visit in May 2009. They provided reports, statistics and comments for this report. Additionally, social partners, representatives of public institutions, migrant organisations, religious communities, province governorship and local district officers provided information and useful comments. I would like to thank all those who have cooperated in providing information and comments, and especially the municipality of Istanbul for supporting the field visit by providing contacts and local transportation.

Wolfgang Bosswick  
Bamberg, September 18, 2009

---

<sup>1</sup> The European forum for migration studies (efms) in Bamberg, the Institute for Urban and Regional Research (ISR) in Vienna, the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies (IMES) in Amsterdam, the Forum of International and European Research on Immigration (FIERI) in Turin, the Institute of International Studies in Wrocław and the Centre for Migration Policy Research (CMPR) in Swansea.

<sup>2</sup> The author – not the city – is responsible for the content of this report; the copyright remains with Eurofound: © European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2007, Wyattville Road, Loughlinstown, Dublin 18, Ireland.

## 1. Introduction

Cities are very heterogeneous with regard to the heritage, culture and religion of their citizens. The diverse structures of urban populations challenge the ability of municipalities to establish or maintain peaceful relations among the different segments of the population. In this third module of the CLIP project, we are interested in the relations between different groups in the city, in local policies established to deal with these groups, and in the way in which representatives of migrant associations, religious communities and NGOs assess the local activities.

The concept of ‘group’ used in this CLIP module is rather broad, since “the term ‘group’ basically has two different meanings in the social sciences: on the one hand it stands for stable structures of interaction among persons, on the other hand ‘group’ is understood as a social category that does not necessarily imply relations among the persons that are included in the category. National, ethnic or religious ‘groups’ in a city would be cases of such categories” (Heckmann 2008: 3-4). Hence, ‘intergroup relations’ deals with relations between ‘real groups’ such as the city administration, the city council, welfare organisations, migrant organisations, religious communities and the police, but also with social categories such as ‘the Turks from Ordu group’ or ‘the group of Christians’ etc.

For most Western European cities, the CLIP network in this module had a special focus on the relations to and dialogue with Muslim communities since the Islam is by far the largest ‘new’ religion in European countries of immigration, and that Muslims are perceived as particularly disconnected from ‘European life’. Compared to other migrant groups, in most cities there are higher rates of discrimination and more prejudices against and fears of Muslims. In cities which have only very small groups of Muslim immigrants – or, as in the case of Istanbul, Islam is the predominant religion – the research of this module looked instead on groups with a specific cultural background (such as Russians in Estonia or internal migrants from South-East Anatolia in Turkey). The rationale behind this choice has been the focus of CLIP research on *perceived challenges* for local policies on integration and social cohesion facing an increasing diverse population.

Led by these theoretical and political assumptions, the CLIP research group developed a questionnaire that has been filled out by city officials. The study at hand is based on the information collected by this questionnaire, on existing literature on this field as well as on interviews with local experts conducted by the researcher in spring 2009.

The municipality of Istanbul joined CLIP in the third module only; thus, basic work had to be done during the case study research whilst in other case studies researchers could rely upon information, contacts and knowledge already gathered during the previous two CLIP modules. Thus, this case study had only selective and limited access to potentially relevant information and differs for this reason from the other case studies of the third module.

## 2. Background information on Turkey

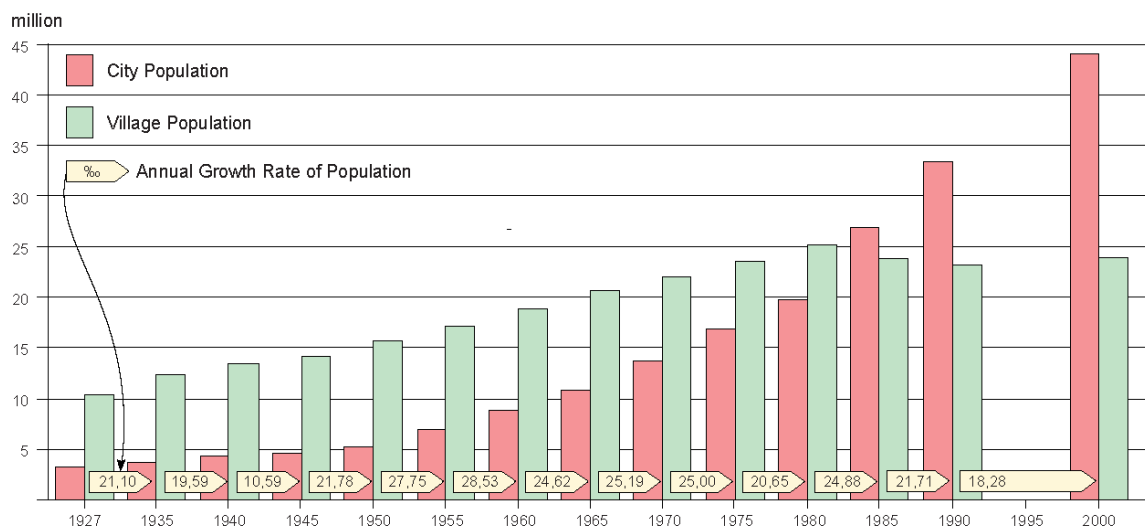
The following chapter provides general information about Turkey. The section describes the history of migration in Turkey and the consequent composition of the migrant population.

### 2.1. History of migration and composition of the migrant populations

By many Europeans, Turkey is seen as a country of origin of migrants. However, the Turkish Republic is not only a country of emigration: in addition to the emigration of Turkish citizens, an internal migration of the rural population from the eastern areas into cities, as well as the immigration of different population groups into the country are important phenomena. These components of migration movements in Turkey (emigration, internal migration, immigration) and the resulting migrant populations are outlined below.

At the beginning of the last century, the Turkish history of migration was strongly influenced by the downfall of the multi-ethnic and multi-religious Ottoman Empire, the Balkan war during the years 1912/13 and the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923. During the first 30 years of the 20th century a large number of Muslims immigrated into the Ottoman Empire and later into the Turkish Republic. At the same time, many Non-Muslims migrated into Greece. These were mainly Greek-orthodox groups. This population exchange mainly occurred due to political pressures and banishments. It was agreed in The Lausanne Population Exchange Agreement signed on 30 September 1923 “to start the compulsory exchange of Turkish nationals of Greek Orthodox religion living on Turkish soil and Greek nationals of Muslim religion settled on Greek soil starting from 1st of May 1923”. In accordance with this Agreement approximately 1.3 million ethnic Greeks were resettled into Greece and approximately 500,000 ethnic Turkish were resettled into Turkey in 1923.

*Figure 1: Turkey: City and Village Population  
Size and Annual Growth Rate of Population 1927-2000*



Data source: DIE/SIS, 2000 Genel Nüfus Sayımı, Nüfusun Sosyal ve Ekonomik Nitelikleri. Yay. No: 2759. Ankara: 2003., p. 45-46

Compiled 2009 by Harald Schüller

Figure 2: Turkey: Annual Growth Rate of Population 1990-2000, de facto Population

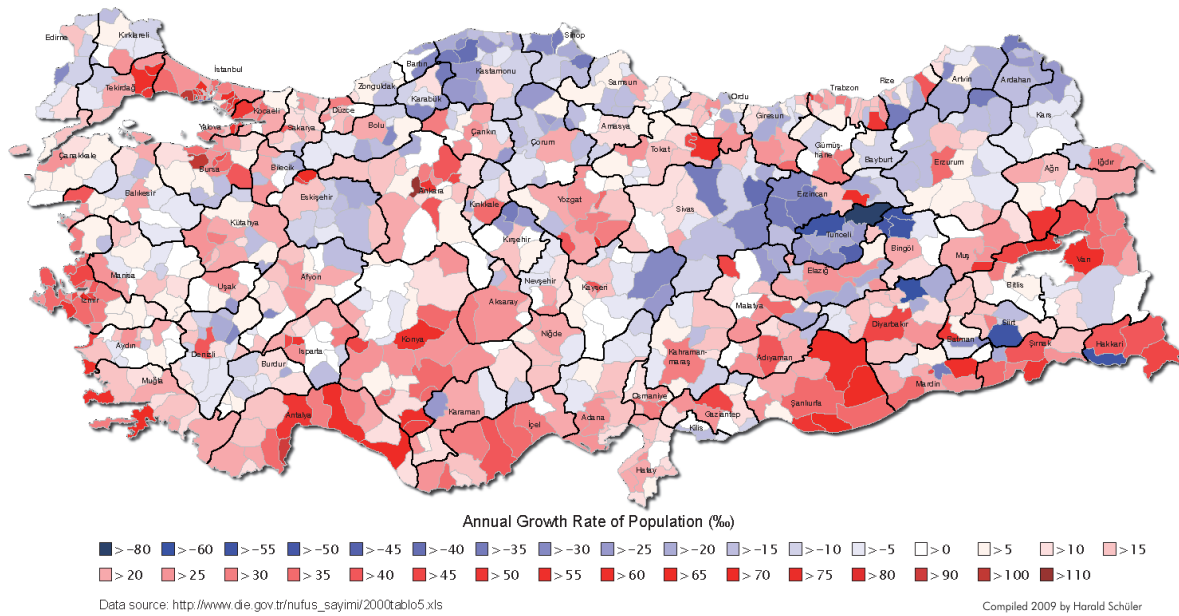
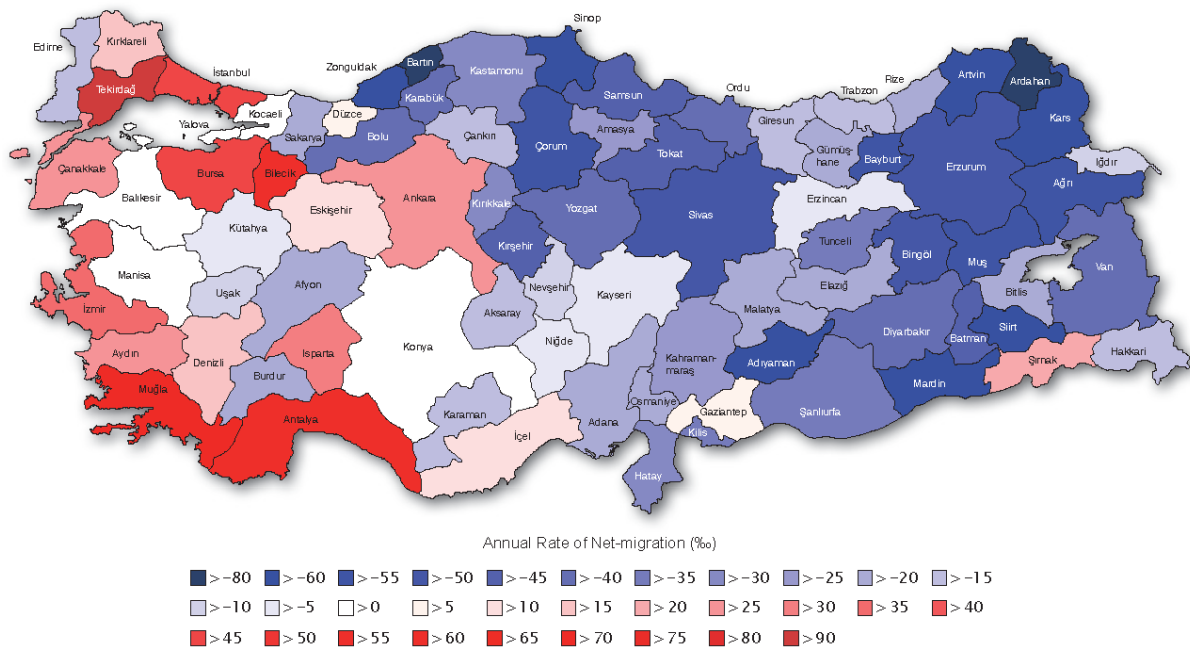


Figure 3: Annual Rate of Net-migration 1995-2000, de jure Population over 5 Years of Age



The second important component of the Turkish migration movements is the interior migration. The reasons for the migration into cities since the 1950s are, on the one hand, a rapid growth of the population, the mechanisation of agriculture with decreased labour demand, and the state of economic underdevelopment and poverty in the rural areas, and on the other hand a one-dimensional state economic policy, which aids the development of cities. The primary destinations for the rural population were Istanbul and surrounding areas, the Greater İzmir area, the capital city Ankara and the Greater Adana-Mersin.

Due to a significant housing shortage in the cities, gecekondus – irregular residential settlements being socially marginalized – were formed. Over time, the gecekondus were joined with the urban infrastructure; from the 1980s onwards some of these residential settlements evolved into modern suburbs.

During the years 1995 to 2000, nearly 4.8 million people (8% of the population) migrated between provinces. The demographic growth of Turkey's population decreased considerably from the fifties (the total fertility rate in 2000 has been 2.53, and projections predicted a further decline to the reproduction level of 2.1 until 2005). Notwithstanding the massive internal migration from rural areas into large cities since the fifties, the population in the rural areas remained quite stable (approx. 23.5 mio. in 1975 and 2000). However, the proportion of rural versus urban population decreased considerably from 60% to 35% in the same period. A significant internal migration from rural areas in South-East Anatolia to the cities in that region, but as well to Istanbul and other large cities in Western Turkey took place after 1990 due to the violent clashes with Kurdish separatists (Ozbudun 2000).

As part of the population census in the year 2000, the internal migrants were asked for the main motives for their migration. Family reasons were most frequently named (26%, proportionally greater for women), but employment opportunities (20%) and designation/appointment reasons (13%) were also significant. Since the population census in 2000, approximately one year after the Marmara and Düzce earthquake in 1999, it is thought that around 147,000 people migrated because of the earthquake.

From the establishment of Turkey in 1923 to 1997, more than 1.6 million immigrants came and settled in Turkey, more than half of them by the early 1950s. These immigrants were successfully assimilated into the "Turkish" national identity. The last major wave of immigration has about 300,000 Turks and Pomaks who were expelled from Bulgaria in 1989.

Towards the end of the 1970s Turkey also became a target country for migrants, especially for transit migrants on their way west, and for refugees and labour migrants. The annual immigration numbers for the early years of the millennium are estimated to be around 100,000 people for illegal workforce migration and around 150,000 people for the legal immigration. Another relevant group are EU member-state nationals engaged in professional activities are also settling in Turkey, particularly in Istanbul, as well as European retirees in some of the Mediterranean resorts. Their numbers are estimated at 100,000-120,000. Between the years 1995 and 2000, the largest group of immigrants (one third of the about 234,000 immigrants) came from Germany; most of these migrants are Turkish citizens or German citizens with a Turkish background. They are followed by migrants from Bulgaria (12%) and from the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (6%). The majority of migrants are between 20 and 39 years old; immigrant women tend to be younger than the immigrant men.

*Figure 4: Country of origin of migration flows into Turkey (2000)*

Source: compiled by efms based on data of TURKSTAT 2009

Turkey has a total population of around 70 million inhabitants. Between 1995 and 2000, the proportion of immigrants from abroad was, according to the population census of 2000, 0.38% of the total population. Other sources show the proportion of the population born abroad to be between 0.2% and 1.9%, the largest group being migrants of Bulgarian source with 481,000 people in Turkey, followed by German born Turks with 274,000 people.

The last census in Turkey took place on October 22, 2000, and the next one is scheduled for October 2010; thus, current demographic data are based on official flow recordings extrapolating the 2000 census results. Their reliability can be assessed after the results of the 2010 census will be published (2015/16). However, the scope of demographic data provided by TURKSTAT has been considerably widened, and current data from the population registry are available online (<http://tuikapp.tuik.gov.tr/adnksdagitapp/adnks.zul>). The data cover residence, age, sex, marital status, location of birth and educational level. Since the 1980, however, the language spoken in the family is not registered anymore, so any association to a group of regional heritage can be assessed only indirectly by location of birth. Apart from the various groups with a specific cultural and/or religious heritage - Abkhazians, Adjarians, Albanians, Arabs, Assyrians, Bosniaks, Circassians, Hamshenis, Kurds, Laz, Pomaks, Roma, Zazas, which are considered as Turkish nationals, three groups are officially recognized as minorities by the Treaty of Lausanne from 1920: the Armenians, Greeks and Jews. They have, however, no recent internal or international migration background and usually belong to established families being locally resident since generations, and are consequently not of interest for the discussions of this module.

## **2.2. National policy context**

The Ottoman Empire, the predecessor of the Turkish Republic, had a long history of emigration, immigration, and forced migration. During the last two centuries, the Ottoman Empire received refugees from the Habsburg Empire during nationalist upheavals in the 19th century, particularly Hungarians and Poles; the Russian defeat of the Circassians (Çerkezler) in the North Caucasus in 1864 led to an estimated one million Muslim refugees fleeing to the

Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire had a long-standing experience with managing a poly-ethnic society and hosted a diversity of groups with their own cultural and religious heritages, and languages.

The first constitution of the Turkish Republic in 1924 invented by Atatürk replaced the overarching identity of the “Osman” people by the people of Turkey (“Türkiye Ahalisi”), introducing an ethnic and religious framework for the poly-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-lingual heritage from the Osman (Ottoman) Empire. The later constitutions issued after the military coups – the one of 9.7.1961, and the one of 18.10.1982 – reinforced the notion of an assimilative Turkish citizenship; ethnic, religious or other similar criteria are disregarded. Thus, the Turkish concept of citizenship includes the ethnic groups related to the “non-Muslim” category of the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne (Jews, Armenians and Greeks) as Turks entitled to the full rights of citizens. However, the violent conflicts with Kurdish groups in the South-East cumulating at the beginning of the nineties nurtured worries about separatist tendencies and a disintegration of the Turkish Republic which historically had been envisioned by the Sèvres Treaty of 1920, being voided after the Turkish war for independence only by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923. A very controversial study (İHDK 2004) criticised the resulting narrow concept of minorities as defined in the Treaty of Lausanne, the confusion of recognising minority identities in Turkey with granting special rights for minorities, the equating of internal with external self-determination presuming secession tendencies, and the ignoring of specific ethnic and religious aspects of Turkish identity. This situation causes high sensitivity in issues of relations to groups with a different cultural, religious or language background; members of these groups are considered as Turkish citizens stemming from specific regions only, and further differentiation in the public sphere is highly problematic. In January 2009, however, a 24-hour TV channel in Kurdish language - TRT 6 – has been opened with support by the national government, a controversial step towards an acknowledgement of the diversity in the Turkish republic. Another relevant policy change in this respect is the reform of the legal provisions for registering an association which have been eased in June 14, 2004 as part of a general process of strengthening the civil society institutions in Turkey. Until then, associations were subject to a registration process at the local police directorates under direct control of the ministry of the interior. Since then, numerous local associations have been founded which are preserving their specific tradition by keeping alive the customs, costumes, culture and heritage of their members stemming from specific regions or even villages.

Another relevant policy change has been the reform process strengthening the local policy level which started in 1984 with the law 3030 introducing local municipalities with new responsibilities and resources; this process gathered new dynamics with the ratification of the European Charter of Local Self Government in 1993, and the public administration restructuring bills enacted by the Parliament between 2004 and 2006 (such as the Metropolitan Municipality Law, Municipality Law, Public Fiscal Management and Control Law and Special Provincial Administration Law). This new legal framework promoted the focus on partnerships of different stakeholders in the governing process, requiring the local government actors to cooperate with the private sector as well as civil society organizations, professional bodies and the universities. The new laws introduced participation channels such as city councils, expert participation in commissions, public opinion polls, requiring

preparation of strategic plans in a participative process and greater involvement of the muhtar in municipal matters. This process is most progressed in large metropolitan centres but is now also developing in other urban regions of Turkey; within the Local Agenda 21, participation strategies on the local level are promoted. They aim at securing stakeholders participation to commissions, setting up city councils as an umbrella platform for all stakeholders, securing citizens right to participate into decision-making, obligating participatory preparation of strategic plans, and support neighbourhood leaders in promoting voluntary participation.

The policy of reforming administrative structures and strengthening the local governance is an interesting example of a general policy which is highly relevant for specific inter-group relations at the local level. This is an alternative to specific policies and measures directed towards specific groups of the resident population; the latter approach carries the risk of emphasising group identities and contributing to inter-group conflicts by allegedly favouring specific groups. The new Turkish policy of strengthening the civil society and reforming local governance does not only prevent such negative side effects but contributes to the social cohesion of the local society as a whole as well.

### **3. Background information on Istanbul**

This chapter provides selected background information on the municipality of Istanbul. The first section gives a brief general description on the city (cf. section 3.1), and the second illustrates the composition and the characteristics of the local migrant population (cf. section 3.2).

#### **3.1. Brief description of Istanbul**

Istanbul is located in the north-west Marmara Region of Turkey. The southern Bosphorus divides the city on two continents - the western European portion of Istanbul, and the eastern Asian city districts. The municipality boundaries cover 1,830.92 km<sup>2</sup>, while the metropolitan region (Province of Istanbul) covers 6,220 km<sup>2</sup>. The northern areas towards the Black Sea coasts are covered by extensive forests, which are protected as natural resort. They serve as recreational areas and provide important water sources for metropolis.

At the end of 2008, in the province Istanbul 12.7 Mio residents have been legally registered. This amounts to 17.8% of the registered population of Turkey. In reality, the metropolitan area certainly had exceeded at this time already the 13 Mio level; factual residents in this metropolitan area used to exceed considerably the residents being legally registered.

Istanbul has been a primary destination for internal migration in Turkey already in 1935: 64.3% of all 1.1 million residents living outside of their province of origin were living in Istanbul. Today, the share of internal migrants moving to Istanbul is lower (approx. 20% in the period 1995-2000) since other regions of destination gained significance such as the Ankara and Izmir region, the southern coast with its booming tourism industry, and the growing urban centres in south east Turkey.

The majority of Istanbul's population belongs to Islam or closely related religious groups (i.e. the denominations Sunni, Shi'a and Alevites). Religious minorities include Greek Orthodox

and Armenian Christians, Catholic Levantines and Sephardic Jews. According to the 2000 census, there were 2,691 active mosques, 123 active churches and 26 active synagogues in Istanbul; as well as 109 Muslim cemeteries and 57 non-Muslim cemeteries. Some districts have sizeable populations of ethnic groups, such as Kumkapı (Armenians), the Balat (Jewish), the Fener (Greek), and some neighbourhoods in the Nişantaşı and Beyoğlu districts (Levantine). Figures of religious or ethnic affiliation of the Istanbul residents are not available; the census data provide only for place of birth as well as residence at the time of the previous census. In the 2000 census, migrants have been questioned for the first time on the reason for their migration.

### **3.2. Istanbul's migrant population and its characteristics**

The motives for the migration to Istanbul had been primarily employment opportunities (about one third of the respondents) and marriage with a partner being resident in Istanbul. The age group of 15-29 years is overrepresented among internal migrants to Istanbul, and it seems that the better opportunities for finding a job and founding a family are a relevant pull factor for internal migration. There is, however, also a significant out-migration to other urban centres in Turkey such as Ankara, Izmir and Adana, and – with negative migration balances – to the neighbouring provinces around the Marmara Sea and the tourist provinces Muğla and Antalya.

In important push factor to Istanbul has been the catastrophic earthquake at August 17, 1999 with its centre in İzmit: 13.1% of the approximately 147.000 people leaving the affected region migrated to İstanbul. Another push factor had been the clashes in south-east Turkey between the military and Kurdish insurgents during the early 90ies which triggered considerable population movements to the urban centres in this region, but also to Istanbul. Exact figures, however, are not available.

The ADNKS data base (ADNKS 2008) provides data about the location of the family foundation (registration of the family by the fathers of the interviewed persons); for people stemming from rural areas, this location is likely also the region of family origin; only for mobile elites (military, public servants and teachers), it may differ. When comparing the residence at the last census five years ago with the location of family registration by the father, it becomes visible that only 17% of the 2008 residents of Istanbul have no migration background of first or second generation. Main regions of origin are poor rural areas of the eastern Black sea coast and Central Anatolia (Sivas, Erzincan and Erzurum). Migrants from Southeast and Central Anatolia, often speaking Kurdish in the family, are also living in Istanbul.

Figure 5: Ratio of Istanbul-born Inhabitants (1990 Census)

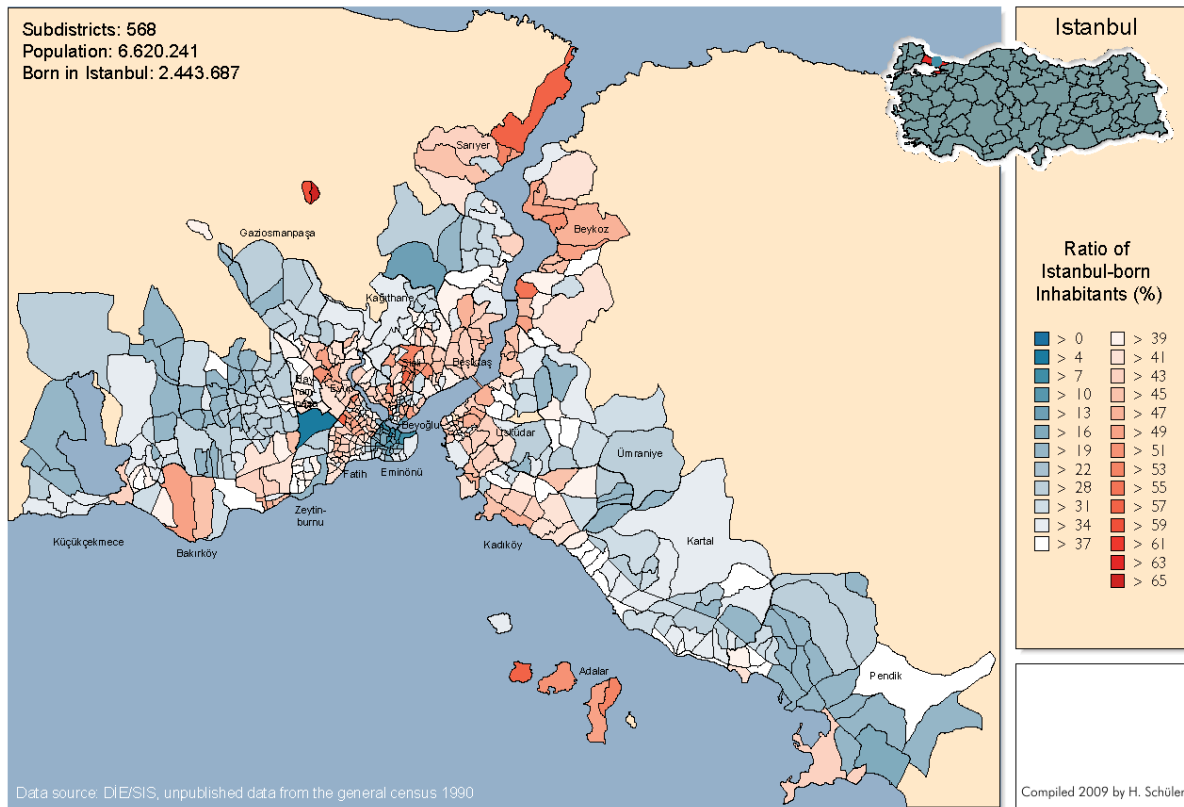
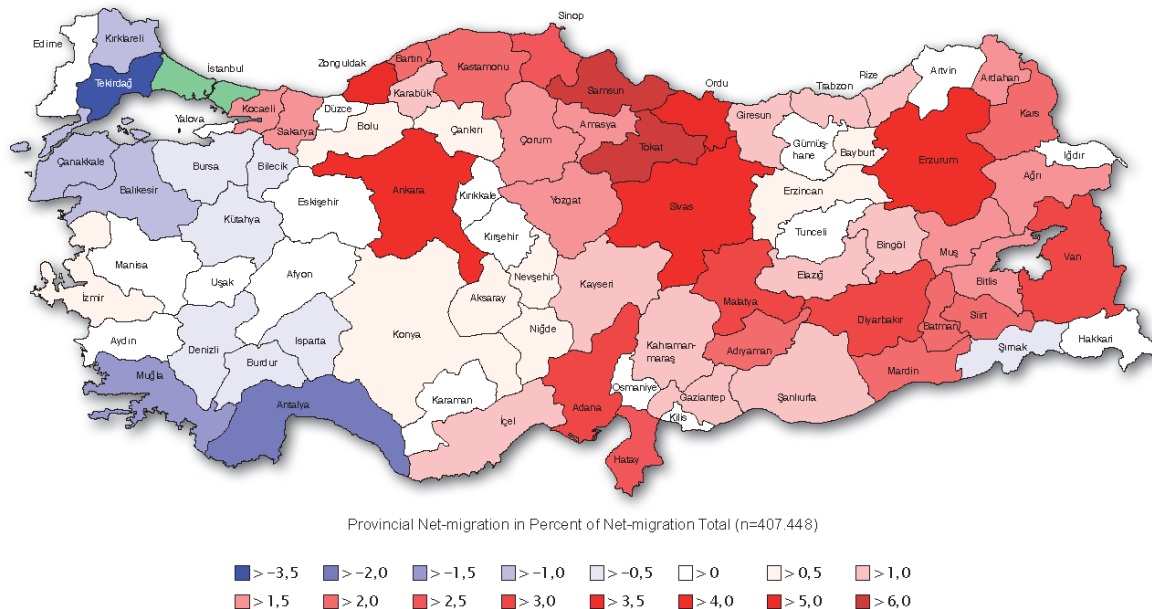


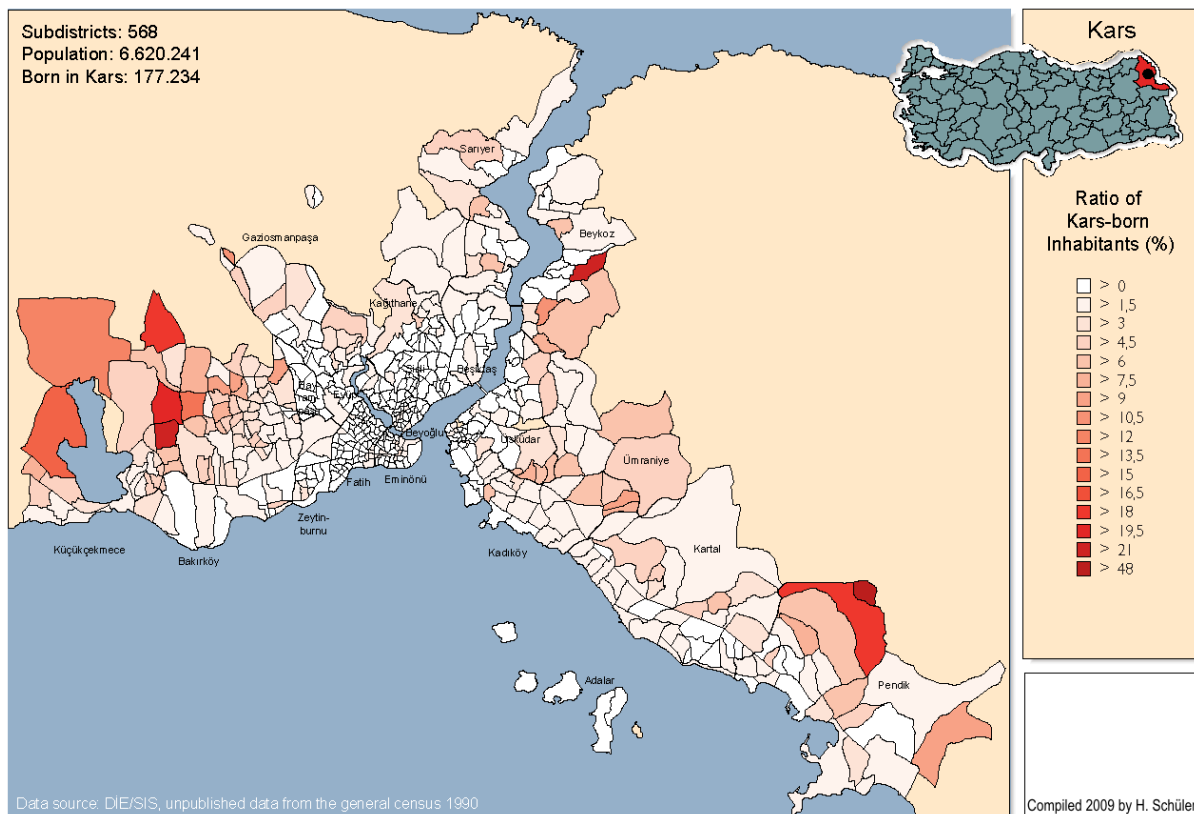
Figure 6: Provincial net-migration with Istanbul 1995-2000 in % of total net migration



For some rural regions, already a large share of their population has migrated to Istanbul, so their net migration figures declined in the 1995-2000 period; for example, the province of Erzincan had about 317,000 inhabitants in 2000 while about 177,000 residents of Istanbul named Erzincan as their place of birth.

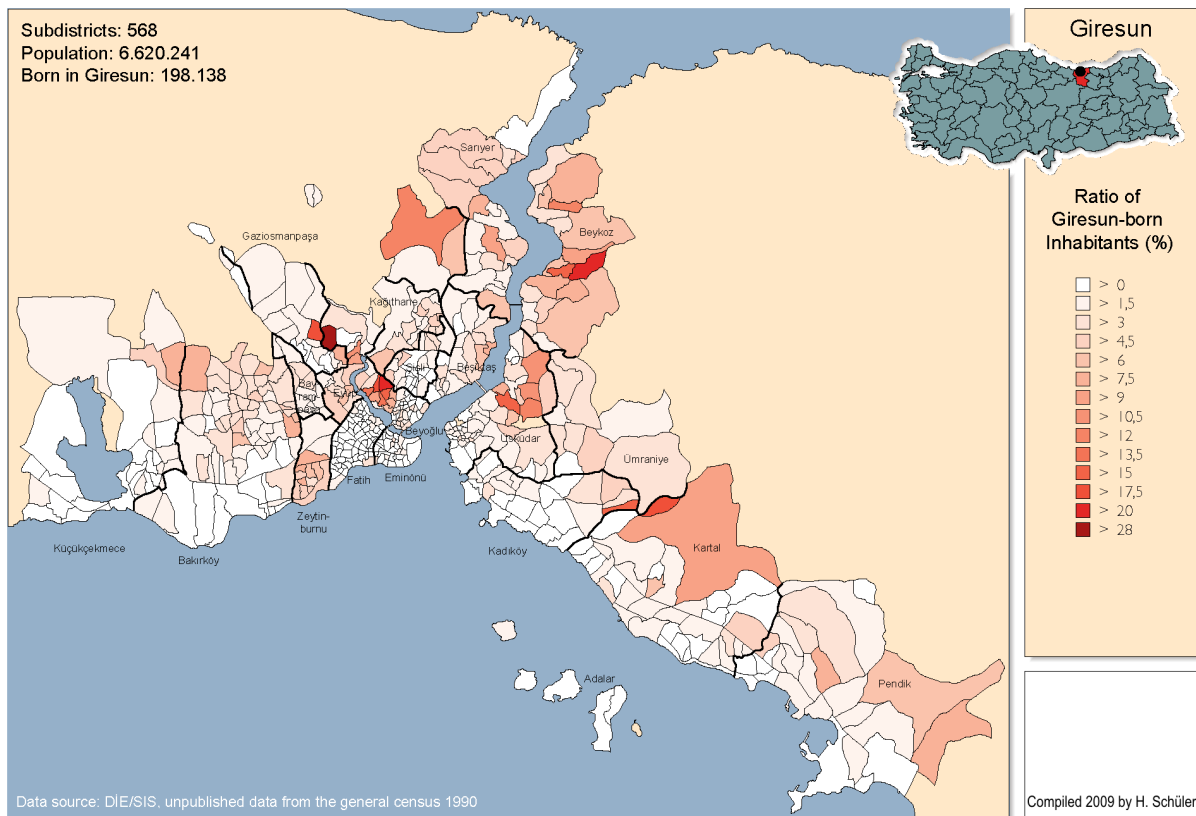
Experts interviewed during the field visit stated that chain migration and networks of compatriots from local areas of origin often forming quite segregated groups are a common phenomenon. In the official statistics published, any effects of these patterns are not visible since segregation patterns are much smaller than the 40 city districts with own mayors and administrations forming the municipality; thus, they come largely invisible in the statistics based on districts as a whole which are usually accessible only. However, in data from the 1990 census which have been gathered for a research project by Harald Schmidt at the level of the 568 subdistricts (Mahalle), these patterns of forming local colonies according the area of origin become visible when charted geographically.

Figure 7: 1990 Census, ratio of Kars-born inhabitants in Istanbul subdistricts



These concentrations of residents from a province in some neighbourhoods are indicators for networks of compatriots which, however, can exist also without significant spatial concentrations. In general, one can assume that the degree of relevance of such networks correlates with the characteristics of the region of origin: The less developed and poorer the region of origin is, the more such informal networks become relevant of the internal migrants as an important resource.

Figure 8: 1990 Census, ratio of Giresun-born inhabitants in Istanbul subdistricts



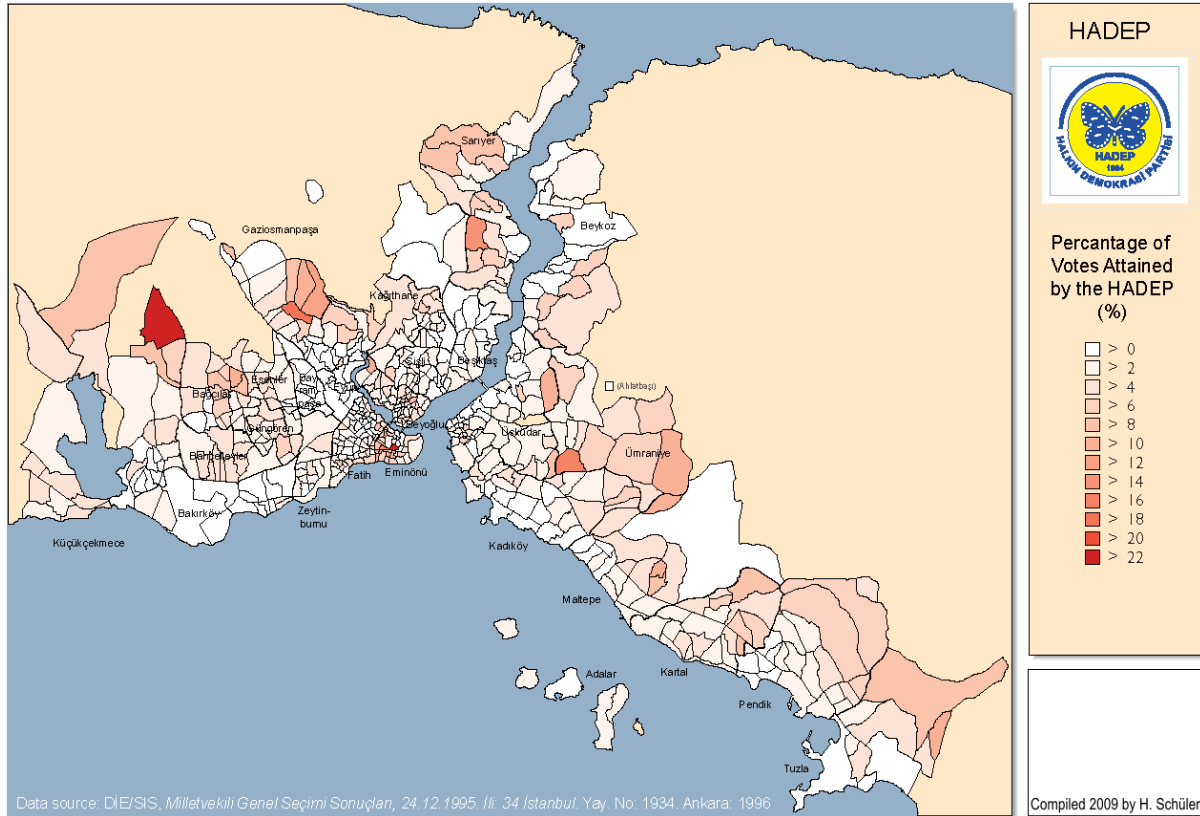
The two examples above show two different cases of Istanbul's immigration history: While residents born in Giresun migrated mainly during the period from the 1960 to 1980, and formed concentrations in growing neighbourhoods of this time, the later arriving people from Kars settled in new areas at the outskirts of Istanbul (figure 7).

There are indicators that such spatial patterns remain quite stable on the long run, and that the melting of these communities into the urban society requires an extensive period of time. For example, the migrants of Turkish ethnicity coming from the Balkans in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have been settled in Istanbul's Bayrampaşa district. In the 1990 census, this spatial concentration in Bayrampaşa is still present after several decades.

Information about spatial distribution of Turkish internal migrants stemming from Kurdish speaking areas in south east Turkey can be gathered only indirectly since language used in the family or cultural origin is not recorded in official statistics. A possibility for an approximation of the spatial distribution is the number of votes for secular Kurdish parties such as the People's Democracy Party (Halkin Demokrasi Partisi, HADEP) has been, a party which repeatedly faced accusations of Kurdish separatism. One can safely assume that votes for HADEP correlate with a Kurdish background. However, only a part of voters with Kurdish background are likely to vote for a secular and Kurdish ethnicity related party, a large part of this electorate prefers parties representing the political Islam, notably the Welfare (REFAH) party. The spatial voting patterns for the latter are, however, not suitable as an indicator for the spatial distribution of residents with Kurdish background since their electorate is to a large extent beyond this group. Thus, the distribution of HADEP votes given in figure 9 can provide only an approximation; it makes only the secular part of this group visible while the voters for political Islam with Kurdish background are not included.

However, as with other groups from specific provinces of origin, spatial concentrations of residents with Kurdish background are visible as well.

*Figure 9: December 24, 1995, General Election of Representatives  
Percentage of Votes Attained by the HADEP*



The total number of residents with a Kurdish background living in Istanbul can be estimated only, as well. Data about migrants from the provinces in south east Anatolia where most Kurdish groups are stemming from (Adıyaman, Ağrı, Batman, Bingöl, Bitlis, Hakkari, Mardin, Muş, Şanlıurfa, Siirt, Şırnak und Van) result in about 10% of Istanbul's population in 2008. Taking into account that not all of the migrants from these provinces consider themselves as being Kurds, and adding projections about migrants with Kurdish background from other provinces, one can safely assume an upper limit of about 8% of Istanbul residents having a Kurdish mother tongue background.

Estimations of the number of Alevits in Istanbul are even more difficult. Representatives from Alevit communities claim that about 20% of the Turkish population belong to their community, a figure which seems to be grossly overestimated. Reportedly, there are some districts with a high concentration of Alevits in Istanbul, sound figures, however, do not exist.

#### 4. Local intercultural policies in general

Until the introduction of metropolitan municipalities for large cities by the Greater Municipalities Act 3030 in June 27, 1984, the administrations also of large cities such as Ankara, Istanbul and İzmir had primarily to implement policies of the central government.

The new role of municipalities, a status which in addition to the three metropolitan areas has been given to another 12 larger cities until 2005, created an increasing leeway for local governments to formulate local policies. They became responsible for the provision of basic services or utilities such as water, sewage disposal, and transport. Greater municipality status gives prestige, money, political power, capacity for major projects, extra borrowing rights and rights for privileged administrative/organisational arrangements for the upper tier municipality. The 1984 Act provided also significant additional financial resources (like 5% the total tax revenue in the province) to greater municipalities.

In a bottom-up democratisation process at the local level, civil society representatives at the local level promoted a dynamic which expanded responsibilities of the local municipal government, and introduced stakeholders' participation regulations at the local level. An important role in this process played the Agenda 21 Programme, adopted by the UN Earth Summit (Habitat 2) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The Agenda 21 City Summit took place in Istanbul in 1996 and led to a greater emphasis on a division of powers between the central administration and local administrations. In late 1997, Turkey launched a project called "Promotion and Development of Local Agenda 21" encompassing an infrastructure modernisation policy in the 23 participating Turkish cities, especially in the health care and education sectors.

#### **4.1. General approach towards ethnic and religious issues in the city**

However, the traditional predominance of the central government represented directly or via the province governor remains to be a relevant factor, especially in sectors such as local police or education. The French positivism tradition of the Kemalist Turkey, as well as the related nation-building process under considerable external pressure resulted in a negation of ethnic differences and a rejection of the concept of ethnic minorities beyond those defined in the Treaty of Lausanne. As a consequence of both, the strong influence of the central government on local affairs as well as the assimilative and inclusive approach to diversity of groups being present in the urban society, there have been only very few examples on local policies dealing specifically with inter-group relations. In particular, ethnic and religious issues are dealt with an explicitly secular and ethnicity-blind attitude, considering all Turkish citizens officially as being equal. Specific policies and measures directed towards groups of a certain cultural or religious background would be highly problematic in this setting. The official policy is equal rights and opportunities for all Turkish citizens, regardless of their cultural heritage or religion; however, the concept of being a Turk tends to imply a certain idea of homogeneity related to Turkish language and Islam.

An interesting example for this general approach is the community of Polonezköy. It is a small village at the Asian side of Istanbul in a hilly forest area which has been founded in 1842 by Polish settlers with support by Adam Czartoryski, the head of the Hôtel Lambert Polish exile fraction in Paris after the failed Polish insurrection of 1830. His compatriot Michał Czajkowski, a Ukrainian Cossack nobleman has been sent to Turkey by Czartoryski to support Turkey against Russia. He converted to Islam and took the name Mehmet Sadık Paşa, organising the Ottoman Cossack Brigade fighting with Turkish troops against Russia in the Crimean War. The population of Polonezköy – at this time called Adampol – grew to several hundred Polish speaking people in the following decade, many of them being

deserters from the Russian troops. The village became famous among Istanbul's intellectuals during the 1920's due to the nice landscape, the Polish culture of its inhabitants featuring Polish folk music, dances and food; some of the frequent visitors built their weekend homes in Polonezköy in following years. Polonezköy maintained its Polish heritage, religion and language also after its residents became Turkish citizens in 1930; today, it is a weekend resort which is quite popular due to a TV soap opera series featuring wealthy Istanbul intellectuals in their Polonezköy weekend homes.

Figure 10: Polish Roman Catholic Church at Polonezköy, Istanbul



#### 4.2. Issues, demands and interests

At the level of the provincial governorship, international migration and its effects on the local intergroup relations is of increasing relevance. For example, a considerable Somali community of undocumented migrants grew in recent years in Istanbul. The city is described as an attractive destination for irregular migrants due to its job opportunities in the service sector, household services, construction, tourism and sex business. Officials state that apprehended illegal workers are sent to camps for deportation which exist in 7 Turkish cities; however, in practice often deportation is not possible due to lacking ID documents, and the capacity of the camps is overstretched (700 detainees versus a capacity of 300 inmates). A serious problem is seen in the situation of children of irregular migrants and their mothers; until the age of 6 they can live with their mothers in dedicated shelters, after becoming 6, the children are sheltered in orphanages. There are specific measures in these children homes (language training, vocational training and education), and the children can meet their

families once a week. Nevertheless, frequent problems of illegal work, delinquency and accidents as well as fraudulent marriages to gather a legal status are mentioned as problems.

The financial burden to the province government for sheltering and resettlement procedures is considerable; local officers are complaining about a plethora of problems in dealing with irregular migrants.

In contrast, the issues related to internal migration in Turkey are less challenging in recent years due to increased urbanisation in many regions of Turkey, and consequently diminishing numbers of internal migrants settling in Istanbul. There are occasionally complaints by the resident population about increasing numbers of internal migrants, but the authorities observe only a low degree of delinquency. In particular, among the long-term resident middleclass of Istanbul there exists a framing of internal migrants as “the others” invading the city.

Internal migrants are usually supported by networks of compatriots from their city or region of origin; they often receive economic support by their community, but cases of exploitation exist as well. The considerable segregation of groups of common origin in Istanbul’s districts are of advantage as providing a support network for new members of the community; the related spatial segregation is not seen as a problem but instead as a factor promoting an integration of the newcomers into the urban society.

Transit migrants are considered as a serious problem for internal migrants, since they are competing with them on the local labour markets, having an impact on labour conditions and wage level; Istanbul is attractive for transit migrants since it is easy to find a job and to hide. Transit migrants working illegally in Istanbul stem primarily from three origins: Eastern neighbours of Turkey, such as Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan (small business and self-employed), ex-Soviet countries citizens entering with a tourist visa and working temporarily during their visa period (cyclical movements due to visa requirements), migrants of Turkish descent from Bulgaria, Greece, Azerbaijan and Iran (Danış 2007, 15).

With regard to the self-identification of Istanbul’s residents, a common opinion states that there are very few real Istanbulites, autochthonous residents rooted in the city – in general, the city is made up by migrants. Another common sense opinion is that most of the residents organise themselves in groups with a joint migration origin, and that social interrelations tend to remain within the group. These notions are confirmed to a certain extent by an unpublished survey implemented by the Metropolitan administration during the Millennium project: about 70% of the interviewed residents considered themselves not as Istanbulites, but root their self-identity in primarily the district, or in the city or region of origin. About 30% did not like the city they are living in, and about 40% never visited historic sites of Istanbul.

Some of these groups are organised in registered associations which provide networking, resources and support for their compatriots as well as cultural events and perpetuation of the cultural heritage. An interesting example is the Dağıstanlılar Kültür Derneği, an association of Istanbul residents stemming from the Osman population in a mountain valley in the Caucasus (Dagestan). This group settled 1860 during the war with Czarist Russia in Balıkesir, a city in a mountain area 180km south-west of Istanbul, forming there a Dagestan community. During the 1950’s the entire community moved to Istanbul; today, only three families of the community are still living in Balıkesir. An important issue for such

associations are rooms for their activities; raising the rent for a meeting centre is a serious problem for most of the associations.

A recent development related to the segregation in Istanbul is the raise of gated communities at the outskirts of the city. The realties in these gated communities are often bought as an investment by wealthy families from remote regions in Turkey, and are used only temporarily by family members; in addition, there is a tendency of local middle-class in urban centres of east Anatolia not to move within their cities into better neighbourhoods upon improved financial situation, but to move to Istanbul or Izmir instead. Dealing with urban sprawl is an important issue for the municipality, especially with regard to forest areas and water resources towards the Black Sea coast north of Istanbul's centre. However, real estate developers usually interact with the municipal level which is often accompanied by conflicts between municipality and the local city district.

The segregation of groups with a precarious socio-economic status resulting in a mobility trap and concentration in pockets within the urban society seems to affect in particular the cohort of Kurdish immigrants who moved to Istanbul due to the 1993 clashes between PKK insurgents and the Turkish military. Their numbers are estimated to be between 300,000 and one million, and they show an hour-glass shape of their socioeconomic distribution: Wealthy families from the Kurdish regions took refuge in Istanbul, but the poorest segments of the rural population as well. The latter - although they have a legal status as Turkish citizens - are often living in similar socioeconomic conditions as illegal migrants in very poor neighbourhoods without opportunities to move out. These migrants arrived in urban settlements without any property. It is not only the lack of economic capital which results in disadvantaged positions; the feeling of complete loss and rootlessness, the inability to rely on any existing social, cultural and economic resource to make a new start in the urban centre is an even more severe handicap. In these sectors of population, family structures are often atomised, and very little collective mobilisation for improvements and their rights is present.

Consequences of the socio-economic situation in poor neighbourhoods are an important issue for the administration as well as for civil society organisations and representatives of these groups. This regards the neglect of children and the street children problem, issues of health, education, housing and neighbourhood safety. Most of the issues raised by specific groups of Istanbul residents are related to these subjects. A survey in the Tarlabası city district of central Istanbul, a poor neighbourhood with a large Kurdish and Roma population conducted by the nearby Bilgi University in 2006 (Şahin, B./Çağlayan, B. 2006) found the following most relevant issues the 436 respondents expected from a local community centre:

*Figure 11: Priority expectation of Tarlabaşı residents from a local community centre*

An issue mentioned by union members (Bem-Bir-Sen Union, public servants) is the support by the union for applicants to the entry test for employment as civil servant. Turkish law on civil servants No. 657 from 14.07.1965 regulates the employment policies for civil servants and clerks in the public sector; by this law, the access to positions in the public service is regulated by an official test for applicants (Kamu Personel Seçme Sınavı / KPSS). This test is conducted once a year by the same institution which implements the entry tests for university students. This institution (ÖSYM) is affiliated to the general administration of the universities, and the results achieved by the applicants (number of points) are a critical criterion for the selection of applicants for a vacant position in the public service. Different to the private sector where often the city of origin and the related group networks are an important factor for finding employment, calls for applicants have to be made gender-neutral and without specifying any maximum age; the origin of internal migrants with Turkish citizenship is not relevant for the application procedure. Only in cases of very specific qualifications required for a position, exceptions may be made; in all other cases, the selection of applicants is done according to the results of the entry test and the requirements of the position. Also leading positions within the administration are filled by internal migrants, i.e. the director of the Istanbul public cemeteries is an internal migrant from the east Black Sea coast. The union, however, is supporting applicants' family members in preparing for this test and is also organising transportation for handicapped applicants; the union considers the neutrality towards the origin of applicants as an important feature of the public sector which has to be defended.

Finally, the public cemeteries are an issue for both, the municipality as well as the various groups in Istanbul. There are 330 cemeteries, 65 of them for non-Muslim groups. Due to a

bilateral treaty with Romania, there is even one cemetery for Romanians and their descendants; Shia Muslim have also an own cemetery, and an own cemetery for atheists and non-religious deceased is currently discussed. The municipal funeral office is responsible for the entire procedure except for the washing of non-Muslim deceased. Private funeral homes are not allowed due to earlier experiences with exploitation of the bereaved; the municipal funeral office contracts private services i.e. for the tombstones, and controls the prices. Until 1994, the municipal funeral service charged fees, since then the services are covered by the municipality. The graves are used in two levels, upon application a single grave is provided; the graves remain for 30 years unchanged. Graveyards are usually segregated according to the city of origin, and the deceased are buried in a graveyard nearby the district they lived. In some squatter areas, also illegal graveyards do exist. The municipal funeral office has ten local offices in Istanbul which are processing the about 50.000 funerals per year; the family contacts one of the offices after a death certificate has been issued by a public health officer. The current mayor of the municipality, Kadir Topbaş, introduced a new programme in order to deal with the scarce room for graveyards in the city: The municipality covers the costs for transfer and funeral in the village of origin of the deceased. In 2008 under the new scheme, in 8.000 cases the families buried the deceased in the village of origin (40% of the funerals).

### **4.3. Institutionalised forms of relations and dialogue in the city**

This section provides an overview on the local political structure, their recent developments and its relevance for local intergroup relations.

The metropolitan society of Istanbul is in its vast majority formed by migration. Although most of the migrants are internal migrants with Turkish citizenship, their self-identification is related to the village or region of origin; these maintained relations to the social and cultural context from their origin is highly relevant for social networks and important issues such as housing, finding a job, solidarity with compatriots and cultural activities. In this respect, Istanbul is an extremely diverse metropolis, hosting a large number of groups who live side by side and interact among each other only punctually. There seems to be little interest among the various groups for any closer interaction or joint activities across the group boundaries. Under such circumstances, keeping a metropolis functioning and maintaining institutionalised relations among these groups is quite challenging.

#### **4.3.1. Muhtar system**

Muhtars are elected representatives of a local neighbourhood and form a parallel representation structure based on national regulations and acting independently from the municipal administration and the administrations of the districts of the municipality. The Muhtars are directly elected in their neighbourhoods of approx. 500-800 households and act as local contact person for legal and administrative matters, mediators and as representatives and speakers of the local neighbourhood. They report to the provincial government, but are also relevant contact persons for the municipality as well as for the city administrations of the various cities forming the municipality of Istanbul. Since there are strong indicators of spatial segregation among the various groups, one can assume that usually the elected Muhtar of a neighbourhood belongs to the dominant group in this area.

They are represented in the local city councils which have been installed by the new municipality law with the aim to strengthen participatory processes at the local level. They

play an important role in the local welfare system: They issue poverty certificates to families in need which enable the needy to receive benefits by the social welfare department of the municipality after a check of their situation in the neighbourhood by municipal officers. Muhtars are also involved in the distribution of support goods in poor neighbourhoods such as heating material, and they are in charge of registration of residents in the neighbourhood. When elected, a new Muhtar receives trainings by the provincial government, and there are also training programmes by the province government as well as by the national ministry of the interior for further training.

The interplay of the local level represented by the Muhtars and the local city administration on the one hand and the national and province government on the other has been characterised by an interviewee with the metaphor of a traditional family: The local level should represent the nurturing mother, and the state should represent the stringent father.

#### **4.3.2. City councils**

In the framework of the programme “*Implementing Local Agenda 21 in Turkey*”, the International Union of Local Authorities, Section for the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East Region started an initiative for increasing participation at the local level, improving local democratic processes and reforming local governance. An important institution of this programme are city councils which have been introduced by Article 76 of the new Law on Municipalities (No. 5393) enacted in July 2005 which requires the establishment of city councils in all municipalities. These city councils are city-wide participatory mechanisms and consist of the representatives of a wide spectrum of local partners, including ex officio members such as the Governor, Mayor and Parliamentarians of the respective province, elected local councillors and neighbourhood heads, and the designated representatives of foundations and associations, professional chambers, private sector organizations, trade unions, academic institutions, as well as the representatives of working groups and platforms for women, youth, elderly and children. In general, the central government and municipal representation constitute about one-third of the city councils, with the remaining two-thirds consists of NGOs. Depending on the size of the cities, membership to such councils range from 100 to 600 organizations. City Councils prepare and endorse their own working principles or statutes, and function accordingly. City councils currently function in around 50 partner cities in Turkey, and most cities forming the municipality of Istanbul have been the avant-garde in this process.

The city councils act as democratic platforms where development priorities and pressing problems of the city are identified and discussed. They are not a substitute for the municipal assembly nor a representative organ of civil society, but are based on partnership and active participation of local stakeholders, and are an implementation of primary participatory mechanisms. They aim at a paradigm shift supporting the civil society in being a locomotive of the city council, applying a decentralization strategy instead of an “get rid of” approach.

In Istanbul, they are organised on the district level and are accompanied by thematic committees on issues such as womens’ and youths’ situation which are created in a bottom up process. The local authorities support the activities and decisions of the City Council by including their decisions in their respective agendas; by recent law amendments, the cities are required to prepare city development plans in a participative process. In this process, city

councils are consulted and, although they have no legal mandate, they are influencing the local agendas.

A difficulty for this reform process is an occasional reluctance of established administrative structures with their centralistic traditions. For example the education system and the police are formally included into the process, but the practical implementation depends on political support by the central organisation which in some cases is difficult to achieve. However, as far as information in the framework of this field study could be gathered, the city councils indeed introduced new dynamics and participatory processes in local governance. An important factor for this process is its legitimation by the Law on Municipalities and the context of the general administrative reforms. However, they also provide an opportunity for the municipalities and the local civil society to increase the leeway for policies responding to local demands and issues. By involvement of the various groups present in city districts, these city councils have also the potential of improving local intergroup relations.

#### **4.3.3. Primary school**

The local schools report to the national ministry of education, there are several provisions for primary schools in neighbourhoods with a large share of internal migrants with speaking another language than Turkish in the family. In some cases of high concentration of a minority group, there are schools with specific Turkish language courses for the pupils who still have to acquire Turkish language; in all primary schools having pupils with language problems, there are Turkish language trainings.

Local police officers contact parents' associations at the local schools and cooperate with them in prevention of conflicts, petty crime, drug use and violence. Local police officers organise also recreation programmes for poor children in cooperation with the municipality and the city government, and are active as mediators in the neighbourhood.

#### **4.3.4. Contacts between the city and migrant associations**

Associations of groups stemming from a certain village or region are an important opportunity for these communities to organise a joint social life. They act usually in the private sphere only and try to avoid conflicts with other groups or visible political activities; in particular, they prefer not being visible as an ethnic minority organisation. The registration of associations is subject to a dedicated office reporting to the province governor which is also counselling the representatives of associations in legal and organisational matters. Parallel to these improvements in provincial and national governance, the municipality also aims at good relations to the various associations. Although there is no direct financial support, the local city or the municipality of Istanbul are supporting association by providing rooms for events or municipal busses for tours.

#### **4.3.5. Activities and projects for improving intergroup relations**

The municipal city planning policy considers the social dimensions of settlement patterns within the city and the related intergroup relations as an important dimension of the city development planning. It conducted a major study in Istanbul on the local housing and living standards with about 90.000 interviews and developed a database on demographic and social data including indicators of quality of life. The municipal city planning aims at implementing urban regeneration policies, in particular the relocation policies for families and small-scale

industries, without disrupting socio-economic ties and community relations, and with sufficient infrastructure to support the newly planned neighbourhoods. Mass production of low-income housing and specific mortgage programmes, like those implemented recently in other parts of Turkey, are necessary but insufficient component of these programmes; the municipal policy aims at upgrading and regulating squatter settlements in order to create a more solid base for local economic development strategies and social capital in these areas. With regards to the informal sector, an integrated approach aimed at the microeconomic inclusion of the so-called “moderately poor” could be realised through programmes aimed at adult education, school certification, labour training and the provision of childcare facilities.

At the same time, the municipal city development plans aim at a coordinated regional approach in the Marmara region since the economic and demographic integration of the entire region is strongly increasing. The Center for Istanbul Metropolitan Planning (IMP) developing these plans is a private company owned by the municipality and reports directly to the mayor of Istanbul.

In implementing such plans, realising a significant public participation is considered as quite difficult; experts asserted that the ongoing change of the decision making structures involves also a quite profound change in the administration culture.

In contrast to the top-down approach of the municipal city planning, there are also examples of a bottom-up development in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. One outstanding example is the Tarlabası Community Centre project. Tarlabası is a quite centrally located old city north of the Golden Horn with a considerable population of internal migrants from south east Anatolia, most of them rural population which has been uprooted at the beginning of the 90ies by the armed conflicts in their region between Kurdish partisans and the military. Roma form another significant group in Tarlabası, as well as irregular migrants and refugees from Iraq, Afghanistan and Lebanon. The area is quite run down, but has a stable socio-demographic structure; a large share of inhabitants are 2<sup>nd</sup> generation migrants with families staying in Tarlabası. The campus of the Bilgi University with its Migration Studies Center is located in Tarlabası, and the university has implemented several research projects on the situation of the inhabitants of the area. Supported by an EU funded project, the university founded a community center in the central neighbourhood of Tarlabası which offers a kindergarten, mentoring groups for school children, Turkish language courses for Kurdish school children and their mothers, adult education courses, women groups, arts and music courses, as well as counselling and mediation services for the local population. It involves Erasmus students of social work from other European universities who work for three to six months in the center during their studies at the Bilgi University. The community centre continued its activities after the end of the EU project with support by several NGO’s such as Turkish Education Volunteers Foundation, the local Rotary Club and some support from the municipality. In important aspect of the centre’s work is to improve the intergroup relations in Tarlabası.

Another example of a major project realised with EU funding is IGEP street children project. It combines direct social policy measures with strategic planning at the municipal and local level and involves two neighbourhoods, one in Ankara and one in Istanbul; further two districts in Izmir and Bursa are currently selected. In Istanbul, the social policy measures are implemented in the city of Sultanbeyli, a district of Istanbul with about 273,000 registered

inhabitants and an unknown number of non-registered residents; the district is one of the poorest in Istanbul, and is receiving the disadvantaged sectors of the internal migration of Istanbul. The project cooperates with ISMAM, a NGO caring for street children and drug addiction rehabilitation of young people. Part of the project which is currently in the process of setting up will be the creation of a street children centre in the Sultanbeyli district which offers services for the homeless street children in the district, mediates to the local Muhtars, the schools, the police as well as other local stake holders such as NGO's. Apart from the practical implementation of social work for the street children, the project aims in its strategic development part at capacity building at the municipal level: Training courses for professionals, development of a handbook for local social centres, coordination of local services in cooperation with municipal and district authorities.

#### **4.4. Relationship between different ethnic groups in Istanbul**

The metropolitan society of Istanbul has an enormous diversity. The daily practice of living side by side of many groups, and the opportunities provided by informal networks of residents with joint origin, segregated neighbourhoods and little social interaction between the communities, conflicts between groups are seldom visible. The dominating discourse of joint Turkish culture and the somehow covered ethnic differences contribute to this picture. However there are serious conflicts between groups on resources; one example is the deterioration of working conditions and wages in the lower sectors by the increased supply of transit migrants working illegally. But there are also inter-group conflicts which relate more to ethnicity and socio-cultural aspects. One example is the Tarlabaşı district, where many different socio-cultural and ethnic groups with diverse migration backgrounds come together. The coexistence of these different groups is often accompanied by conflicts. The groups tend usually to avoid getting in touch with each other. This social segregation is to a great extent related with prejudices and results occasionally in discriminatory, sometimes even violent behaviour against other groups. The group rejected most among Tarlabaşı residents are the Transvestites; this pattern can be found often in disadvantaged areas in which the population often adheres to very conservative positions with regard to marginal social groups. Kurds and Roma are the main groups of the Tarlabaşı population, and they are in continuous conflict with each other; both groups consider the existence of the other in Tarlabaşı as the main cause of problems. Prejudices about each other are prevalent and the groups show attitudes of avoiding close relationships with each other, in particular refusing inter-group marriages. Residents with a Black Sea origin are the most liked group among all respondents from a survey conducted in Tarlabaşı (Şahin, B./Çağlayan, B. 2006). More than 95% of all respondents claimed that they would like to talk to, do their shopping from and establish family relations with Black Sea people. The African migrants are less welcome than the Iraqi ones. The attitudes towards the Armenians are similar as to the Iraqis: about 75% of all respondents do not refuse contact or doing shopping with Armenians or Iraqis, but only one third would let their daughter marry an Armenian or Iraqi man.

The intergroup relations in the Tarlabaşı district show a pattern of strong social segregation among the various groups, even if the spatial distribution in the neighbourhoods seems to be less segregated as in most other Istanbul districts where less intergroup contacts in daily life are occurring due to the spatially segregated communities.

#### **4.5. Public communication**

In reaction to the results of the survey implemented by the municipality about the self-identification of Istanbul's residents and the attitudes towards the city as a whole, the municipality initiated in the context of the Millennium project a multilevel campaign in Istanbul called "Your's Istanbul". It aims at creating a notion of being an Istanbulite among the metropolitan population, promoting a self-identification with the city. The idea of the campaign is that immigrants own Istanbul also emotionally instead of Istanbul incorporating immigrants; the campaign targets immigrants as well as long term residents of Istanbul.

The campaign is implemented by advertisements featuring celebrities, by cultural events such as song contests, cultural contests in schools, organising trips to historical landmarks in Istanbul for school children from the outskirt districts, and by setting up a "Heritage Park" in Istanbul (Miniaturk) with models of Turkish cultural heritage landmarks.

In the context of Istanbul as the European Capital of Culture in 2010, a series of small projects contributing to the "Your's Istanbul" campaign are prepared. These projects target districts at the outskirts of Istanbul with a high percentage of recent immigrants. They will realize local events in these neighbourhoods organised by the intercultural department of the municipality in cooperation with the local district authorities, featuring artists from the European Union and Turkey. Other projects will organise courses with renowned photographers who in cooperation with local schools will implement workshops on photography, tutoring talented children and offering role models for an artist's approach to live with diversity among different groups. These projects will get prominent coverage by the local media, and are funded by the EU grant plus funds half from the central government and half from the municipality, raised by a 1% surcharge tax on gasoline.

The local media play also an important role by covering local issues of intergroup mediation; the preventive neighbourhood policing and the mediation activities of the local police in cases of conflicts which are frequently reported in reality TV coverage in the local media.

By these public communication strategies, the municipality tries to improve the intergroup relations in the metropolis and to support the raise of a collective identity in the hitherto highly segregated megacity.

With regard to the relevant group of Turkish residents with a Kurdish mother tongue, the decision of the national government to create a national 24-hour TV programme in Kurdish language which started in January 2009 (channel TRT 6), as well as to install in 2010 Kurdish language and literature departments in Istanbul University and Ankara University, is a relevant initiative also for the local intergroup relations with these groups in Istanbul.

### **5. Intergroup relations and radicalisation**

The issue of radicalisation, both among autochthonous residents as well as among ethnic groups of internal migrants is highly sensitive in the Turkish political setting. In addition,

during the times of the field visit in Istanbul, there has been elevated political tension with regard to Kurdish groups at the national level. For this reason, no reliable information could be gathered about the issues of radicalisation and policies of prevention in this area.

## **6. Conclusion: Key challenges, lessons and learning for CLIP**

Istanbul is a unique megacity at the junction of the European and the Asian continent in a geopolitical position and with an attractive prosperity which made the metropolis a preferred destination both for international as well as for internal migration. The city has a long history of diversity and has been for long time the capital of the pluriethnic Osman Empire. Its society is shaped to a unique degree by migrants; although most of its residents are Turkish citizens, there are strong cultural differences among the various groups present in the city.

In dealing with this enormous diversity, the metropolis bears a unique combination of traditional, historically rooted structures – such as the Muhtar system, as well as very recent developments of administrative reforms for participative governance in bottom-up processes initiated by the Local Agenda 21 and legislative changes. In addition, Istanbul is at the crossroads of international transit migration and belongs to the most relevant sending country of immigrants to many other European cities; the experiences with and practices of intergroup relations in Istanbul therefore are highly relevant for other European cities as well.

The municipality is implementing a broad scope of measures and policies to improve the local intergroup relations; in particular, the administrative reforms of the Local Agenda 21 project, the initiatives in the framework of the European Capital of Culture in 2010, and numerous projects and measures at the local level are highly relevant for the social cohesion of the megacity's population

Key challenges for the city of Istanbul are the transition from an extreme expansion period in which both, infrastructure as well as the functioning of the social fabric could hardly meet the demands created by massive immigration, towards a sustainable urban society which can guarantee peaceful intergroup relations and the well-being of its residents. This transition has to be managed at the same time while the paradigm of the secular assimilative political approach of the Kemalist Turkey with its roots in the French enlightenment and positivism is challenged by the social policy of Islam orientated movements and bottom-up processes of democratisation and local participatory governance reforms. These transitions are huge challenges, and innovative approaches employed in Istanbul as well as the specific resources – materially, socially and culturally – of the city could serve as a highly relevant example for other European cities which currently experience also major challenges and transitions related to migration and their diverse population. In particular, the legal and administrative reforms and their implementation in the framework of the Local Agenda 21 programme deem to be worthwhile to observe; experiences made by Istanbul in this process could be relevant for other European cities as well.

## Bibliography

- ADNKS (2008): Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu/Turkish Statistical Institute (ed.), *Adrese dayalı nüfus kayıt sistemi nüfus sayımı*, 2008. Yay. No: 3228. Ankara
- Danış, D. A. (2007): *Integration in Limbo. Iraqi, Afghan, Maghrebi and Iranian Migrants in Istanbul*. Galatasaray University, Sociology Dept., Istanbul.
- Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü/State Institute of Statistics (ed.), 20 Ekim 1985 *Genel Nüfus Sayımı; Nüfusun Sosyal ve Ekonomik Nitelikleri. İli: 34-İstanbul*. Yay. No. 1237. Ankara: 1987.
- Genel Nüfus Sayımı, 20.10.1985. *Nüfusun Sosyal ve Ekonomik Nitelikleri*. Yay. No: 1369. Ankara: 1989.
- Genel Nüfus Sayımı, 20.10.1985. *Daimi İkametgaha Göre İç Göçler*. Yay. No: 1381. Ankara: 1989.
- *1990 Genel Nüfus Sayımı. İdari Bölünüş*. Yay. No: 1457. Ankara: 1991.
- *Milletvekili Genel Seçimi Sonuçları, 20.10.1991. İli: 34-İstanbul*. Yay. 1511 (34). Ankara: 1992.
- *1990 Genel Nüfus Sayımı. Nüfusun Sosyal ve Ekonomik Nitelikleri. İli: 34-İstanbul*. Yay. No: 1604 (34). Ankara: 1993.
- *1990 Genel Nüfus Sayımı. Nüfusun Sosyal ve Ekonomik Nitelikleri*. Yay. No. 1616. Ankara: 1993.
- *The Population of Turkey, 1923-1994. Demographic Structure and Development. With Projections to the Mid-21st Century*. Yay. No: 1716. Ankara: 1995.
- *Türkiye Nüfusu, 1923-1994 Demografi Yapısı ve Gelişimi. 21. Yüzyıl Ortasına Kadar Projeksiyonlar*. Yay. No: 1839. Ankara: 1995.
- *Milletvekili Genel Seçimi Sonuçları, 24.12.1995. İli: 34 İstanbul*. Yay. No: 1934. Ankara: 1996.
- *1990 Genel Nüfus Sayımı, Daimi İkametgaha Göre İç Göçün Sosyal ve Ekonomik Nitelikleri*. Yay. No: 2069. Ankara: 1997.
- *2000 Genel Nüfus Sayımı, Nüfusun Sosyal ve Ekonomik Nitelikleri. İl 34-İstanbul*. Yay. No: 2732. Ankara: 2002.
- *2000 Genel Nüfus Sayımı, Nüfusun Sosyal ve Ekonomik Nitelikleri*. Yay. No: 2759. Ankara: 2003.
- *2000 Genel Nüfus Sayımı, Göç İstatistikleri*. Yay. No: 2976. Ankara: 2005.
- IHDK (2004): *Başbakanlık İnsan Hakları Danışma Kurulu "Azınlık Hakları ve Kültürel Haklar Çalışma Grubu" Raporu*. Oktober 2004.

Ozbudun, S. (2000): *Adi konulmayan 'olağanüstü göç'*, Bilim ve Siyaset, Fall, pp.46-57.

Şahin, B./Çağlayan, B. (2006): *Tarlabaşı Community Center - Field Study Report*. Istanbul Bilgi University

Schüler, Harald (2000): *Secularism and Ethnicity: Alevi and Social Democrats in Search of an Alliance*, in: Yerasimos, Stefanos, Günter Seufert, Karin Vorhoff (eds.), *Civil Society in the Grip of Nationalism*, Istanbul, Orient-Institut

## Interviewees

The field visits took place from May 3rd to 9th, 2009. The interviewed experts were the following:

*Açikel, Taner*, Istanbul Bükükşehir Belediyesi

*Akın, Ulaş* (MSc), Urban and Regional Planner

*Akyel, Osman*, IGEP Project

*Altıntaş, Mustafa*, Secretary Governor

*Avcı, Adem*, Director Municipal Cemetery

*Başaran, Metin*, Bem-Birsen-Sen-Memur-Sen Konfederasyonu

*Prof. Dr. Baz, Ibrahim*, IMP-Istanbul Metropolitan Planlama-Metropolitan planning and urban design center

*Çakmak, Volkan*, EU Relations Director of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality

*Çubuk, Murteza*, Bem-Birsen-Sen-Memur-Sen Konfederasyonu

*Daoudov, Murat*, Director - EU & International Relations Centre / Union of Municipalities of the Marmara Region

*Dohoda, Antoni*, History Museum of Polonezköy

*Emrealp, Sadun*, Yerel Gündem 21-Turkey Local Agenda 21 Program

*Eroğlu, Dincer*, EU Relations Director of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality

*Eronat, Ali*, IGEP Project

*Evrin, Ibrahim*, Deputy Secretary General

*Gelebek, Mehmet*, Bem-Birsen- Sen-Memur-Sen Konfederasyonu

*Prof. Dr. İçduygu, Ahmet*, Director, Migration Research Program (MiReKoc),

*Kala, Ömer Faruk*, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality

*Karaca, Yaşar*, EU Relations Director of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality

*Kocçtemiz, Önder*, Bem-Birsen- Sen-Memur-Sen Konfederasyonu

*Külekçiođlu, Gizem*, Istanbul Bilgi University

*Maeth, Hans*, IGEP Project

*Assoc. Prof. Ođurlu, Yücel*, Association of Balikesir (Irşadiyeler Derneđi)

*Öncü, Ayşe*, Sabancı University

*Özdemir, Kamil*, Youth Council

*Özgür, Sezen*, Kültür Merkezi 2010

*Dr. Özşahin, Lütfi*, Assistant Director of Libraries and Museum of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality

*Öztosun, Ezgi*, IGEP Project

*Öztürk, Serap*, IGEP Project

*Sülü, Hasan Hüseyin*, Metropolitan Municipality of Gaziantep

*Suntekin, Ceren*, Tarlabası Community Center Administrator

*Taşkesenliođlu, Zehra*, Zeytinburnu Municipality Local Development and EU Relations and Coordination Center

*Taşkin, Reşit*, Social services

*Tercan, Şafah Hengirmen (PhD)*, Metropolitan Municipality of Gaziantep

*Vilkosevski, Antoni*, Muhtar of Polonezköy