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NEW DIVERSITIES IN ISTANBUL: SETTING A RESEARCH AGENDA FOR STUDYING MIGRATION AND THE CITY

Kristen Biehl



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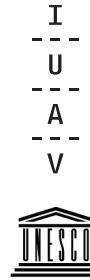
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In the recent decade, two particular and interrelated limitations have come to surface within the study of international migration. First, whether examining social networks, identities or cultural practices of migrants, there has been an inherent "ethnic bias", in the sense that ethnic groups have remained the primary unit of analysis (Glick Schiller et al. 2011; Vertovec, 2010). Second, the emphasis on transnational space and cross-border networks has come at the cost of avoiding examinations of migrants' relations to actually lived local urban "place." More specifically, while the tendency has been to study how migrants integrate to urban life in their new homes, the question of how migrants reshape the city remains understudied (Glick Schiller & Caglar, 2011). As a result of these critiques, it is possible to observe a new theoretical expansion in migration studies towards understanding the everyday dimensions of inhabiting multi-ethnic and multi-cultural urban settings that are being impacted by migration (Amin, 2002; Baumann, 1996; Glick-Schiller et al., 2011; Werbner, 2008; Wise and Valeyutham, 2009; Vertovec, 2010). Moreover, as the city gains new significance in studies of international migration, the need for engaging more critically with the different imaginaries and vocabularies underlying conceptualizations of the multicultural city has also come to surface (Cinar and Bender, 2007; Driessens et al., 2007; Huyssen, 2008; Keith, 2005; Mayaram, 2009; Oncu and Weyland, 1999).

In light of these changing theoretical paradigms within migration studies, this paper aims to highlight the relevance and timeliness of setting such a research agenda for the case of Istanbul. The first section provides a historical analysis of urban change in Istanbul over the past century, emphasizing in particular the impact that different migration movements have had in transforming the social, spatial and cultural imaginary of the city, and how these issues have been addressed by Turkish urbanists. The second section takes a closer look at the emerging field of international migration studies in Turkey to address if and how this research field engages with the urban dimension. The third section then explores how the question of multi-cultural co-existence has been studied in relation to Istanbul, particularly through conceptions of cosmopolitanism, which surfaces as an important descriptive aspect of the city whether in its absence or presence. After presenting these different yet complementary research fields, the paper concludes with an argument



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for locating dynamics around new and international migrations to Istanbul within the particular context of urban space, which as both real and imagined embodies layered and conflicted meanings about living with diversity in the past, present and future.

Migration and Urban Change: The case of Istanbul

For almost 16 centuries, from AD 330, the year when Constantine founded the Eastern Roman Empire, to 1923, the year when Ankara was declared capital of the new Turkish Republic, Istanbul enjoyed the privileges of being the imperial capital of both the Byzantine and the Ottoman Empires. Up until the early 20th century, as a part of its imperial legacy, Istanbul remained a truly multicultural centre through the great diversity of its ethnic, linguistic and religious composition. It had also flourished as an important international commercial centre, being positioned at the midst of various communication and trade networks. With these strengths, for many centuries Istanbul came to symbolize both imperialist and cosmopolitan grandeur.

However, while the city enjoyed its heyday during the 19th century, the Empire in itself had begun to deteriorate. Ottoman borders both in the West and the East were steadily shrinking as the rise of nationalism in Europe was rapidly affecting the various ethnic groups subsumed under the Empire. After being defeated in World War I, the Allied Members laid claims to what was left of the crumbling Empire. Eventually the French and British occupied Istanbul in November 1918, which led to the complete collapse of the Ottoman government. The Turkish War of Independence (1919-1923), fought under the command of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, led to the success of the Turkish Nationalist Movement to reclaim the remains of the Empire in Eastern Thrace, including Istanbul, and all of Anatolia. Then in October 1923, the Republic of Turkey was proclaimed, Ankara being declared its new capital and Atatürk being elected its first president.

The collapse of the Empire and the founding of the new nation had a heavy toll on the material, demographic, social and cultural life of Istanbul (Freely, 1996; Keyder, 1999; Kuban, 1996). The financial strength and trading capacity of the city vanished, due to the departure of the non-Muslim communities and minority groups who formed the commercial bourgeoisie of the city. The move to socialism in the neighbouring countries of modern day Turkey also had a considerable impact, blocking Istanbul's trading routes. Furthermore, the new nation-state of Turkey implemented three decades of inward economic growth that was controlled through the new capital of Ankara; hence Istanbul lost its centuries long standing as a centre for commerce.

Aside from these material impacts though, the 20th century also brought about significant changes in the symbolic conceptions of Istanbul. The declaration of Ankara as the new capital of the nation, which at the time was a provincial town, and in many ways the entire discourse of the new

nation-state seemed as if the Republic in itself was founded against traditional conceptions of Istanbul (Keyder, 2010; Oncu, 2007). The cosmopolitan and imperialist splendour of Istanbul was seen as the product of a decaying, corrupt Empire, entrenched in Islam and dominated by "foreigners". Ankara, on the other hand, the command centre of the Independence war, was located in the heart of Anatolia, where the ideologists of the new nation saw an authentic and pre-Islamic "Turkishness" rooted. Therefore, geographical location and the Republican values combined, Ankara came to represent the nation, secularism, modernity and progress. As pointed out by Keyder (2010: 178), this tension between Istanbul and Ankara lasted up until the 1980s when Turkey adopted a policy of economic opening and the old capital re-entered the scene as a globalizing city.

In the early years of Turkey's existence as a nation-state, Istanbul underwent a very serious population change as well. Undoubtedly, this transformation of Istanbul's population was only a small representation of the massive and mostly forced migration movements in the region caused by the nation-building efforts within the former territories of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey (Chatty, 2010; Kasaba, 2009; Tekeli, 1994). Among these, the most far-reaching movements were the deportation - and still contested genocide - of the Armenians during 1915/16 and the population shift between Turkey and Greece in 1923. These two events alone led to the departure of an estimated 2.5 to 3 million Anatolian Christians from their homelands. Several sources indicate that while at the start of World War I, one out of five persons in the territories belonging to Turkey today were Christian, by the mid 1920s, this had declined to one in forty (Icduygu, Toktas and Soner, 2008; Keyder, 1999). As the Christian population were forced to leave, they were replaced by large segments of the Muslim populations in the Balkans and Thrace, who had also been fleeing the nationalizing efforts in their places of origin. Throughout the 20th century it is estimated that approximately 1.7 million people from the former Ottoman lands of Bulgaria, Greece, Romania and Yugoslavia migrated to Turkey (Icduygu and Kirisci, 2009). This migration was overtly supported by the new state as well, through policies favouring "Turkish" and Muslim immigration from the former Ottoman territories.¹

For the most part, Istanbul had remained exempt from these migratory movements. For instance, the Greeks of Istanbul were excluded from the population exchange of 1923. However, if not forced to migrate, the remaining non-Muslim communities in Istanbul were certainly encouraged to do so because of "Turkification" policies and practices that implicitly targeted minorities and fed the growing hostility and mistrust felt towards them.² Severe ramifications of this changed sentiment came to surface during the events that is known as the Istanbul pogrom, which took place on 6-7 September 1955 and involved violent attacks on all minority properties across Istanbul. This event had a definitive impact on the

1. In 1934, the state adopted the Law on Settlement (Law 2510), which being the first and only major national law on immigration and settlement, explicitly favoured immigrants or refugees of 'Turkish descent/ethnicity and culture' to settle in Turkey. These groups were defined as 'muhacirs' (emigres) as opposed to 'gocmen' (migrants) and received several legal, economic and social benefits: they were easily granted citizenship, many were granted farmlands and houses for economic integration, and they were socially received as compatriots 'returning home' (Erder, 2000). This law also had an indirect effect on the non-Muslim minorities, as it closed strategic regions of the country to non-Muslim minority settlement, restricting them to urban areas (Icduygu, Toktas and Soner, 2007).

2. A campaign called "Citizen, Speak Turkish!" ran throughout the 1920s, which aimed at eliminating linguistic distinctions, hence discouraging minorities from speaking their mother tongue. In 1932 the Law on Activities and Professions in Turkey reserved for Turkish Citizens was passed which barred Greek citizens of Turkey residing in Istanbul from a series of trades and professions. Likewise, the Law on Capital Tax, introduced in 1942 in order to cover wartime expenses, charged five to 10 times more tax to religious minorities, and those unable to pay were sent to Labour camps. Through this law much of the minority property across Istanbul were either confiscated or changed hands. This law impacted the Jewish minority in particular, both materially and symbolically, due to the similarities it carried with events taking place in Europe at the time and led to a significant migration movement following the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948. Greek migration also continued steadily throughout the second half of the 20th century, due to the rising conflict between Turkey and Greece over Cyprus. For more detail on Istanbul's changing demography and the impact of Turkification policies, see Akar, 2000; Aktar, 2000; Alexandris, 1983; Bali, 1999; Demir & Akar, 1999; Shaw, 1979.

3. The event was supposedly provoked by a rumour that the Greeks had burned down the childhood home of Atatürk, located in Thessaloniki, Greece. Many at the time argued that the Greeks were to blame because of their repression of Turks in Cyprus. But the fact is that these angry attacks were orchestrated against non-Greek communities as well, and as a result a total of nearly 5500 homes, workplaces, churches, synagogues, schools and the like were greatly damaged. See Guven, 2006; Vryonis, 2005.

4. This migration was triggered by policies of both agricultural mechanization straining small-scale subsistence farming and of import-substituting industrialization creating growing demand for workers in industry (Karpat, 1976). According to census data in Turkey only 25 percent of the population lived in cities in 1950, after which there has been a steady increase, from 32 percent in 1960, to 44 percent in 1980 and to 65 percent in 2000. Data from the 2010 Address Based Population Registry system shows that in over half a century, the rural-urban population percentages of Turkey been completely reversed as the urban population of today stands over 75 percent. These data are available on the website of the Turkish Statistical Institute.
http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/PreTabl o.do?tb_id=39&ust_id=11 (Accessed December 2011).

migration of the remaining non-Muslim communities in Istanbul, especially the Greek Orthodox community.³ Furthermore, as tensions with Greece over Cyprus escalated in Turkey, in 1964 the government made the decision to expel all Greek citizens of Istanbul, which led to the near elimination of the population. Today the size of the Turkish Greek community is estimated to be around 1800 people, which is a stark contrast considering that at the turn of the 20th century this figure was more than 300,000 and represented one quarter of the city's population (Ors, 2006: 83).

Besides the departure of non-Muslim minorities, another turning point for Istanbul was the rather sudden and dramatic increase in the city's population starting in the 1950s, as a result of the rural to urban transformation taking place across the entire country.⁴ Istanbul had become the main target city as the developmentalist strategies of the time aimed for Istanbul to occupy the dominant position in the political economy of national development (Keyder, 2010: 180). The physical landscape of the city transformed dramatically as the incoming migrants appropriated public lands in the urban periphery and illegally constructed housing, leading to the formation of urban settlements called *gecekondu* (which literally translates as "placed (built) over night"). The Adnan Menderes government that had come to power through electoral populism in 1950 implicitly supported migration to Istanbul and the formation of these informal settlements, not only by overlooking their actual construction but also by undertaking urban development projects which aimed at connecting these settlements in the urban sprawl to the centrally located manufacturing sites. The construction of highways had been an explicit case, which coincidentally involved the destruction of many old Istanbul neighbourhoods that were the habitats of the remaining non-Muslim population (ibid.).

Besides these physical changes, the particular profile of the city's new population had a significant impact on the cultural imaginary of the city, as well. Despite the ethnic and religious diversity of Istanbul in the previous centuries, there was a perceived homogeneity of "urbanity" (Erder, 1999) in the city. After the 1950s however, the influx of poor immigrants from central and eastern Anatolia became the dominant element of the city, bringing about a supposed "peasantization" (ibid.) of its culture. Moreover, from being once an Imperial capital, Istanbul became redefined as a "third world metropolis" (Keyder and Oncu, 1994; Keyder, 1999) suffering from filth, disorder and gloom.

Since the mid-1980s however, this image has radically transformed due to another turning point in Istanbul's urban history led by the sudden shift to a market oriented growth strategy in Turkey. This has been the era, as stated by Keyder (2005: 130), when "land has finally become a commodity" and Istanbul has been progressively evolving in the direction of a truly "global city." The impact of this changed political-economic vision has been twofold.

Firstly, the *gecekondu* settlements, which had come to dominate the physical and political landscape of the city for over two decades, are no longer welcome and have become the contested sites of either demolition or renewal. This change of attitude has led to severe social and economic repercussions for the new internal migrants arriving in the city after the 1980s. In previous decades, in the absence of a formal welfare system the policy of implicitly allowing land occupations had served as a substituting informal mechanism (Keyder, 2005: 132). The settlements expanded based around kinship and regional networks, therefore, by being grounded in a socially constituted neighbourhood through house ownership, migrants were able to deploy traditional mechanisms of reciprocity for incorporation into employment markets and insurance against risk (Erder, 1999; Keyder, 2005). For new migrants to the city, the absence of such protective networks has been worsened by the changed employment conditions following the 1980s after which the possibility of obtaining secure jobs in the public and manufacturing sectors with formal benefits has greatly diminished. Moreover, new migrants have lost all political power as the populism of previous decades has now transformed into a politics of capital. As described by Keyder (2005: 130), this is the period of:

"... a new social and political imaginary that has been internalized by politicians and residents alike... hitherto seen as poor people without resources to find adequate shelter, the migrants are now regarded as invaders of public property and beneficiaries of unfair privilege".

This radical turn in the discourse on urban migration, when combined with the absence of formal social policy mechanisms and the inability of migrants to form neighbourhood based informal networks, has created the grounds for immense social exclusion (ibid.).

The changed nature and profile of migration to Istanbul, particularly after the 1990s, has served as another factor furthering this divide. Since 1984, the Turkish military forces have been in armed conflict with the Kurdish insurgent group called the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). The insurgency of the PKK is mainly located in the poorest Eastern and South Eastern regions of the country, which became subjected to emergency rule from 1987 to 2002. During the mid-1990s the conflict reached its peak in terms of violence and the military introduced new insurgency strategies involving the destruction and forced evacuation of villages, in order to deprive rebels of any potential support base.⁵ The great insecurity, gross human rights violations, economic hardships and forced evacuations of the emergency ruling in the Kurdish regions of the country led to a great escalation in migration to cities further West, and Istanbul in particular. In this sense, both an ethnic dimension and a changed motive driven by adverse political and economic conditions have characterized the migration to Istanbul of the 1990s (Celik, 2005; Kaya, 2009; Kirisci, 1998; Ozbay, 1997; Saracoglu, 2009).

5. There are contesting figures as to how many people were impacted by village evacuations. While state figures quote roughly 400,000, the estimate provided in human rights reports is between 2-4 million (See Celik, 2005: 140).

As explained above, processes of land commodification and policies against squatter settlements have severely hampered the urban integration prospects of incoming migrants, who have had to settle in as tenants in the crumbling neighbourhoods of the city and make a living through menial and informal jobs. Kurdish migrants have been particularly disadvantaged though, as they have been arriving in the city with little social and material capital. Due to the lower developmental conditions of their regions of origin, many have low educational credentials. The high rates of illiteracy and lack of Turkish proficiency among Kurdish women in particular is a noted feature (Kaya, 2009: 145). Moreover, because of the particular nature of their migration, Kurdish migrants have stood out as what Erder (1998) described as “villagers’ without villages”, which implies their inability to maintain or rely on networks formed in their places of origin that had been crucial for the survival of previous generations of migrants in Istanbul.

The second, and perhaps most visible impact of the changed economic and political vision following the 1980s has been a radical transformation of the urban physical space in line with the demands of becoming a “global city.” The structures required for attracting foreign investments and tourism, such as office and residence towers, five star hotels and sanitized heritage sites, and the spaces catering to the consumption needs of the expanding moneyed classes, such as malls, gated communities and gentrified neighbourhoods, have become an encroaching reality of the city (Aksoy, 2008; Bartu-Candan & Kulluoglu, 2008; Keyder, 1999; Oncu, 1997; Robins & Aksoy, 2000). As stated, the project of globalizing Istanbul’s physical landscape was first triggered by the neo-liberal transformation of the Turkish economy in the 1980s. Yet the insecure political and economic climate of the 1980s and 1990s, characterized by short-lived coalition governments, the Kurdish conflict, the disastrous earthquake of 1999 - which happened in the vicinity of Istanbul - and the economic crisis of 2001, had prevented its full realization. In 2002, however, this was to change dramatically after the Justice and Development Party (AKP), led by Recep Tayyip Erdogan who had been the mayor of Istanbul between 1994-1998, became the first party to win the majority vote in decades. This victory was to set in course the project of a successful transformation of Istanbul from a “globalizing” (Keyder, 1999) to “global city” (Keyder, 2010). Firstly, after decades of insecurity and conflict, the AKP government has succeeded in maintaining political and economic stability in the country to a large extent, which has played a significant role in attracting foreign investments. Secondly, urban regeneration has become a policy of the government, which has been realized through the founding of the semi-public Mass Housing Administration (TOKI) that is granted the right of appropriating public lands and building middle class housing (Bartu-Candan & Kulluoglu, 2008; Keyder, 2010). Besides these developments at the central level, the AKP government has also greatly enhanced the

administrative autonomy and financial strength granted to municipalities for the purpose of urban transformation (ibid.). These legal and administrative changes can be seen as a continuation of the globalizing vision set for Istanbul in the 80s. Arguably though, besides the intensified pace of these developments, what further distinguishes the period following 2002 is the reclaimed centrality of Istanbul in the narrative of the nation. But contrary to the imaginary that defined the nation against Istanbul at the turn of the 20th century, at the outset of the 21st, the old Imperial capital has become re-signified as the stage to demonstrate Turkey’s modernity and globalism (Aksoy, 2008: 217). In other words, Istanbul has returned to the scene as the main battleground over the contested meanings of Turkish identity.

As traced above, the narrative path of the city has been a windy one, with many stories of violence, exclusion and destruction hidden behind the corners of both glory and decline. Therefore, much of the socio-cultural research on Istanbul from the 1990s onwards has aimed at capturing these alternative stories regarding the city’s urban transformation. Ethnographic research has continued to deal with the question of how incoming internal migrants adapt to urban life, exploring the networks utilized (Erder, 1996; Isik & Pinariklioglu, 2001), as well as differences by gender (Erman, 1998) and ethnicity (Celik, 2005; Secor, 2004, 2007; Seufert 1997). Numerous studies have aimed at exposing the elitist tendencies behind discourses of the rural-urban cultural clash by examining how identities are made and contested in the city through emergent urban consumption cultures, such as arabesque music (Ozbek, 1996; Stokes, 1992), social commentary cartoons (Oncu, 1999), Islamic fashion (White, 1999), belly dancing (Potuoglu-Cook, 2010) and entertainment labour (Aytar, 2007). Others have explored the interconnections between these new identities and political mobilization in the city (Celik, 2005; Navaro-Yashin, 1999). Another subject has been the increasingly visible social and spatial fragmentation of the city (Kurtulus, 2005), along lines of class, such as through the rise of gated communities and modern housing estates (Aksoy, 2008; Bali, 2002; Bartu-Candan & Kulluoglu, 2008; Perouse & Danis, 2005; Oncu, 1997; Robins & Aksoy, 2000) and Kurdish ethnicity (Saracoglu, 2010; Kaya, 2009; Secor, 2004, 2007). These studies expose the complex links between the Republican modernizing vision, the neo-liberal transformation of the city and related marketing of identities, cultures and lifestyles, and exclusionary and pathologizing discourses.

New migrations to Turkey and the city

Istanbul’s historical transformation attests to the fact that migration, whether in terms of those it has taken or those it has brought, and whether forced or voluntary, is imprinted on every aspect of the material, social and cultural landscape of the city. The effects of these migrations in relation to Istanbul’s changing physicality, social divisions, culture and imaginary

6. Figures are obtainable through the websites of the Turkish Statistical Institute and the Ministry of Tourism.

7. Turkey is one of the few remaining countries in the world, which maintains the "geographical limitation clause" in the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees. What this implies is that Turkey grants refugee status only to refugees from Europe, while non-European refugees are only granted "temporary asylum" until a durable solution is found. In 2011, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Turkey has close to 22,000 asylum seekers and recognized refugees registered, which consists almost entirely of non-Europeans. The status of being a "temporary asylum seeker" involves many legal, social and economic uncertainties and positions these refugees in extremely precarious circumstances (See Biehl, 2009).

8. "Suitcase trading" is motivated by an effort to take advantage of the demand for, and supply of, various merchandise, as well as the differences in costs – including taxes, tariffs and transportation – between the country of origin and the country of destination. Although exact figures are unavailable, suitcase trade exports from Turkey to FSU countries were estimated to be around 40% of Turkey's total exports. After the currency crisis in Russia in August 1998, the introduction of import duties and tariffs as part of a new economic plan led to a steady decline in suitcase trading. Though there has been a sharp decrease since the 1990s, suitcase trading still continues and has diversified to include migrants from the former Soviet Republics to the East of Turkey, such as Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. (Yukseker, 2003).

have been studied in great depth, as in some of the examples stated in the previous section. However, since the 1990s in particular, a new form of migration, that of foreign nationals, has become an emergent reality of the city. Yet qualitative research on international migration to Turkey generally is only a recent interest. Moreover, very few studies exist which explore the inter-dynamics between these migrations and urban change.

Within international migration literature, Turkey has generally been known as a country of emigration due to the large-scale labour migration to Europe that began in the 1960s (Abadan-Unat, 2002). This was followed in later decades by family re-unification and asylum migration following the military coup and eruption of armed ethnic conflict in Turkey. In recent decades, labour emigration has also been channelled to the Middle East, Australia, the Russian Federation and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Today it is estimated that there are approximately 3.3 million Turkish nationals currently living abroad, of whom 2.7 million are in European countries (Icduygu and Kirisci, 2009).

Since the 80s, however, Turkey is being increasingly described as a country of immigration and transit (Erder, 2000; Icduygu, 2005; Kirisci, 2007). The liberalization of the economy involved not only international capital and commodities, but also arrivals in human form, such as foreign investors, bankers and traders. During this period it was also realized that the tourism industry carried major potential both in terms of creating employment and bringing in foreign currency necessary to maintain the balance of payments. Therefore, in recent decades the tourism sector has been a key component of the Turkish economic development strategy, leading to a massive growth in the number of foreigners arriving. In 1988, nearly 3.5 million tourists entered Turkey. This number increased to 10 million in the year 2000 and was over 28 million in 2010.⁶ Although the majority of these entries have been tourists on temporary visits, a significant number are also people who have come with the intention of staying or transiting to a third country (Ibid.).

Immigration to Turkey is generally categorized into four different types by motive for migration and legal standing of the migrants (Icduygu, 2003, 2005, 2008; Kirisci, 2007, 2008). Turkish speaking populations from the Balkans, Former Soviet Union and Middle East, highly skilled professionals and students, along with their dependants, are the main group of regularized migrants in Turkey granted residence and work permits. Turkey has become a major country of asylum given the geographical proximity to countries in the Balkans and Middle East, which have produced some of the greatest refugee flows in recent decades.⁷ Turkey is increasingly becoming a destination country for irregular migrant labour flows, as well. The practice of "suitcase trading"⁸, which peaked in the 90s and involved primarily citizens of the former Soviet Union, is described as first setting off these flows. Today, the number of migrants from these countries working irregularly in the

tourism, entertainment and domestic work sectors has increased significantly. Turkey's geographical location and terrain have also made it a country suitable as a transit zone between neighbouring source-countries of migration and the receiving countries of the EU.

The emerging field of studies on international migration to Turkey has tended to be divided along these lines of legal status, migration motive and country of origin, as well. Among the scholars working on so-called "regular" migrant groups in Turkey there is Parla (2007, 2011) who works with the ethnically Turkish Bulgarians, and Pusch (2004) and Kaiser (2007), on the German and EU nationals. The situation of refugee populations in Turkey is a subject that has been covered most extensively in numerous human rights reports,⁹ however in-depth ethnographic research remains limited. Published research includes Biehl (2009), who explores the interrelations between the asylum policy of Turkey and refugee subjectivities. Danis's (2006) study of Iraqis and Koser-Akcapar's (2004) work on Iranians may also be noted, however they employ analyses of mixed and transit migration due to the peculiar nature of asylum policies in Turkey. The scope of research produced on irregular labour migration to Turkey is much more extensive, though it has been limited to female migrations and tends to be divided along the lines of labour type. For example Yukseker (2004) has studied the Russian suitcase traders in Istanbul, Bloch (2003) and Gulcur & Ilkcaracan (2002) have written on sex workers from the Former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, while Akalin (2007) and Eder (2007) examine the case of Moldovan domestic workers. The study of transit migration appears to be growing in popularity as well, particularly in reference to the small yet growing African community in Istanbul, including the publications by Ozdil (2009) and Yukseker & Brewer (2011). Though these various studies have been categorized here by migration type, it is also important to note that these distinctions are not taken for granted. In fact some of these studies explicitly make a point about the fluidity in everyday practice between classifications such as regular and irregular, and forced and voluntary migrations - in the case of both refugee flows and trafficking (Biehl, 2009; Bloch, 2003; Danis & Parla, 2009; Gulcar & Ilkcaracan, 2002; Parla, 2007, 2011).

The research concerns and conceptual frames of these studies are various. Given the absence of formal integration mechanisms in Turkey, the question of how migrants actually meet housing, employment, health and social needs has puzzled a number of scholars. As with internal migration research in Turkey, these studies too are centred primarily on a network approach, exploring which informal networks are utilized (ethnic, religious, linguistic, etc.), for what purposes (employment, housing, etc.) and whether new ones formed. The comparative research undertaken by Danis, Perouse and Taraghi (2009) is a notable example, where they examine the different networking strategies of Iraqi, Afghan and Maghrebi migrants in Istanbul. Importantly, they also reveal how the means of incorporation is

9. See 'Unwelcome Guests: The Detention of Refugees in Turkey's 'Foreigners' Guesthouses', Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, Refugee Advocacy and Support Program (2008). Retrieved from <http://www.hyd.org.tr/?pid=610&keyword=detention> (Accessed December 2011). 'Stuck in a Revolving Door: Iraqis and Other Asylum Seekers and Migrants at the Greece/Turkey Entrance to the European Union'. And Human Rights Watch (2008). Retrieved from <http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2008/11/26/stuck-revolving-door-0> (Accessed December 2011)

shaped by particular migration histories of each group and their shared ethnic, religious and linguistic traits with the host population.

The highly precarious and uncertain condition of migrants and refugees in Turkey is another theme explored in numerous studies. For instance, the study of Danis et al. (2009) has described this situation as "integration in limbo", due to the fact of informal incorporation mechanisms being dependant on legal limitations and external factors, such as cooperation of the police and sectarian peace being maintained. Biehl (2009) has suggested that such uncertainty is even worsened in the case of refugees in Turkey due to the particular nature of Turkish asylum policies, which may in fact be interpreted as an implicit deterrence mechanism. Similarly, through their study of African transit migrants in Istanbul, Yukseker and Brewer (2011) highlight the irony in the expression "transit migrant", as EU's concern with this phenomenon and its consequent externalization and securitization of migration control have in fact contributed to Turkey's becoming an indefinite waiting room for such migrants. Marconi (2010) also provides a critical engagement with the term "transit migration", using the comparative cases of Istanbul and Tijuana to portray the vicious circle of invisibility created in relation to these migrants. Given these adverse circumstances, some researchers have explored migrants' coping strategies, such as in Ozdil (2008) who studies the role of new public spaces created by West African migrants in Istanbul, including call centres and restaurants, in enabling collective organization as a group and providing protection from repressive elements produced by local power holders.

Another research approach taken is concerned more with the discursive and interactive level, such as in Akalin's (2007) study of East European female domestic workers and their Turkish employees and Yukseker's (2004) study of female Russian suitcase traders and male Turkish shop owners. Both studies highlight the role played by the language of trust and intimacy in facilitating what appear from the outset as simple business transactions. In their comparative research on ethnically Turkish Iraqi and Bulgarian migrants, Danis and Parla (2009) carry this discursive examination to the level of the state. There have been previous studies undertaken reflecting the role that Turkish immigration policy and practice has played in determining who is included in and excluded from the nation (Cagaptay, 2003; Kirisci, 1999). Danis and Parla's study, though, adds great ethnographic and historic depth to understanding changes in the state's favouring hierarchies and conception of "Turkish origins." It further exposes how these processes are determined by both identity negotiations and foreign policy concerns of the state.

Most of the research studies noted above take place in Istanbul, strangely though, the city rarely appears in any of the analyses, except perhaps in Danis et al. (2009) who have highlighted some of the reasons why migrants are drawn particularly to Istanbul, including travelling

practicalities, informal employment opportunities, multiplicity of networks, civil society presence and the anonymity offered by crowds and diversity. But a critical understanding of how Istanbul, as a city with a distinctive urban history, and its particular localities play out in relation to the numerous issues addressed above, seems lacking. Hence when the burgeoning field of international migration research is examined in the case of Turkey, there appears to be an important research gap on the subject of locating the dynamic interaction between the transformations of urban spaces and immigrant experiences.

Cosmopolitanism and inter-ethnic encounters in the city

Like migration, cosmopolitanism too has been a defining element in the narrative of Istanbul, though it carries a much more anxious presence as the city bears the traces of both a successful recognition of differences and of their brutal rejection. Also, there appears to be many different idioms in which Istanbul's cosmopolitanism is spoken about and/or experienced. Hence both in its' everyday and imaginary forms, these distinct cosmopolitanisms appear central for interpreting the forces shaping multicultural co-existence in Istanbul.

One of the most popular forms of expressing Istanbul's cosmopolitanism, perhaps, is located in its absence and nostalgic remembrance. In other words, the city's cosmopolitanism is located in another time, the Ottoman period, when the non-Muslim communities existed peacefully in the city (Mills, 2006, 2008). Moreover, it is a memory of a time when common ties to place, neighbourliness and solidarity defied all religious and cultural differences (Mills, 2008: 383). This nostalgic form of cosmopolitanism has been especially common in recent years, as a new popular culture of nostalgic memory has emerged through the publication of fictional and autobiographical works, production of movies and television serials alluding to this multicultural past, as well as protection and restoration projects of minority houses in the historic neighborhoods of Istanbul. Most famous among the literary works, perhaps, has been the auto-biography of Orhan Pamuk (2008: 301), the Nobel-prize winning Turkish author, who has suggested that this loss of a cosmopolitan, glorious and wealthy past is so strong that it has become infused in all corners of the city, creating a melancholic sense called *hüzün*, which is felt by the entire city, and shared as an urban community, binding its people together.

Numerous scholars have problematized these nostalgic remembrances of Istanbul's cosmopolitan past for several reasons (Bali, 2002; Brink-Danan, 2011; Isin, 2010; Mills, 2006, 2008). Amy Mills's (2008) ethnographic study of the Kuzguncuk neighbourhood in Istanbul, one of the first Jewish settlements in the city, highlights how these nostalgic memories are in fact grounded in a disillusionment with the present moment characterized by both nationalist intolerance as well as social alienation, unfamiliarity and lost sense of locality-based belonging caused by the dramatic changes in

the demography, layout and pace of the city. In another article, Mills (2008) argues that it is also a selective remembrance, as the actual events leading to the ultimate disappearance of minority populations are rarely spoken about. She interprets this as a necessary silencing of minority perspectives that are threatening to the dominant national narrative of Turkishness, as they would expose the destructions caused in its making. This particular nostalgia is also reflective of the deep tension inherent in the constitution of Turkish modernity as being Western. For in these accounts, the imaginary "real" Istanbul, which is European, is located in minority places (Bali, 2002). In this narrative then, recent migrants to Istanbul remain outsiders and reminders of the non-European, hence "non-modern" face of Turkey (Mills, 2005).

Another crucial point is what Ors (2009: 116) describes as "nostalgia for a cosmopolitanism without reference", implying that the overarching feeling of nostalgia felt for the lost minority communities makes no reference to what exactly it is that made people, lifestyles and spaces cosmopolitan, hence making the concept devoid of any meaning. Through her ethnographic research on the Rum, the Greek Orthodox community of Istanbul, she argues that cosmopolitanism has come to mean different things in different times and spaces of the city, with class and religiosity also serving as variables.

The nostalgic remembrances of a lost diversity are problematic also because they refute the existence of "other" creative and dynamic diversities brought to Istanbul by its contemporary residents. It invokes an implicit hierarchy of cultures, reproducing the elite urbanism, which for decades defined rural migrants as traditional and uncultured (Stokes, 1992; Oncu, 1999). Isin (2010: 77) again critiques Pamuk for failing to take notice of this present diversity, arguing that not just *hüzün*, but *keyif*, a feeling of pleasure, can also be seen to define the spirit of the city. He argues that this is a sentiment infused in Istanbul by those who try their best to enjoy the city despite the heavy weight of suppression and hardship. But it is not just a simple mode of pleasure, he claims, it is also resistance, and a mode of trying to deal with the chaotic dynamism and intensity of the city by taking pleasure in it.

Besides not recognizing present and "other" diversities, nostalgic discourses also work in covering present political and economic injustices. A most obvious example of this is the gentrification projects underway in the old quarters of Istanbul (Bali, 2002), which are marketed for their minority histories and hence for "being the locations of the former true, European Istanbul – an emerging popular image of the city" (Mills, 2005: 445). Yet by claiming an image of cosmopolitanism through locality, the process of displacing the local communities, which due to the existing run-down status of the places tend to involve the most marginalized populations of Kurds, Roma and foreign migrants, is veiled (Behar & Islam, 2006; Kuyucu & Unsal, 2010).

Against these debates centred on Istanbul's supposed lost cosmopolitanism, discourses over a reclaimed cosmopolitanism also seem evident, which are situated in the backdrop of Istanbul's rapidly expanding cultural production. In this case too, the multiculturalism of the Ottoman capital remains the main point of reference. What is different, though, is the unspoiled unity suggested between this past and the present, manifested both through Istanbul's rich multicultural inheritance and creative contemporary arts scene (Oncu, 2008; Gokturk, Soysal & Tureli, 2010). Therefore, one might refer to this as "heritage and arts cosmopolitanism". Indeed, many of the critiques waged against the nostalgic forms can be asserted here too, as in the complete silences over the actual events and traumas transforming multicultural places and practices into monuments and heritage, in cosmopolitan heritage being restricted to the times and practices located in Ottoman history, in the emphasis on artistic cultural production while excluding actually existing cultural diversity in the city and veiling of gentrified displacements being undertaken in the name of celebrating Istanbul's cultural diversity and creativity. What is further distinguishable though, is that this "heritage and arts cosmopolitanism" exposes the contested meanings over what "national culture" means in Turkey in this global era.

In the recent decade, Istanbul's multicultural heritage has become like a catchphrase, while the bridge metaphor of Istanbul being the meeting point of East and West has almost become a cliché, repeated by city bureaucrats, social scientists and artists alike (Gokturk et al., 2010: 19). The ever-growing numbers of exhibitions, festivals and concerts celebrating religious difference, tolerance and multiculturalism in Istanbul have indeed provided the grounds for the rising popularity of this language. But it is also quite obviously interlinked with marketing and branding strategies utilized in the competition between "global cities" over attracting "investors, discerning tourists, curators of exhibits, real-estate developers, buyers of residences in "in" cities of the world, and sundry consumers of culture" (Keyder, 2010: 185). Gokturk et al (2010) expose this in the process of Istanbul being the European Capital of Culture in 2010, when financial resources were allocated predominantly into restoration projects, while cultural events set Istanbul as a stage to be watched but not taken part in. But either way, the project of marketing Istanbul as a global cosmopolitan city "has been an unarguable success" (Keyder, 2010: 184)

The rising popularity of this celebratory multiculturalism for marketing purposes is undeniable, but it is also most certainly a conflicted process as it involves the branding of the city as the Ottoman capital, which as Keyder notes is "the cosmopolitan capital city of an empire that the Turkish nation-state had carefully tried to leave in the shadows" (2010: 185). While it appears that consensus has been reached that Istanbul is reliving its multicultural Ottoman past, what aspect of that past is

emphasized remains disputed according to ideological and political interests, particularly of the secular elite and ascending Islamic movement. Both Bartu (1999) and Oncu (2008) present vivid portrayals of two such selective imaginaries framing the cultural events and the vision for the future of the city. On the one hand, the present moment is likened to the period of Ottoman modernization at the end of the 19th century, when the influence of Western liberalism had set in course an exciting period of intellectual freedoms, political emancipation, economic vitality and cultural creativity. On the other, the present is seen as the moment in which the Ottoman legacy of multiculturalism and harmonious cultural coexistence is revitalized, whose success had been grounded in Islamic tolerance. Therefore, the imaginary representation of the source of cosmopolitanism of different heritage sites across Istanbul, and hence their ownership (Bartu, 1999), remains deeply contested. The "memory turn" to Ottoman history then, has emerged as the battleground of what "national culture" and Istanbul's cosmopolitan legacy might mean and who owns it in the global era (Oncu, 2008: 237). In that sense, these contests over Istanbul's multicultural narrative, interlinking the past with a "global" present and future, "remain tied to nationalism in its core" (ibid.: 242).

Thus far, two forms of narrative cosmopolitanisms have been addressed, one in its nostalgic form, where cosmopolitanism is spoken only in terms of what it used to be with little reference to what the present is, and the other expressed through the visibility of heritage and arts, where the present is celebrated as a revival of an imaginary peaceful multicultural past, silencing the conflicts in-between, as well as in the present moment. Both narratives beg the questions then: is it possible, at the present moment, to speak of an actually lived cosmopolitanism in Istanbul? Or as Carkoglu and Keyman (2009: 162) ask, "to what extent is there tolerance, respect for identity, empathy and mutual trust in this once Imperial city that harboured a multi-faith, multicultural and cosmopolitan culture and life?". As political scientists, these authors are mostly concerned with the "normative necessity of living together" and wish to understand what state policy should be given the reality. Therefore, they do not actually set out to answer this question stated in the opening of their paper but instead point out to some quantitative studies, which examine the interrelations between social conditions (including religiosity, place of settlement, social capital) and empathetic, tolerant personalities and trust in the Turkish national contexts.

It should suffice to say that both the results of such studies and everyday political developments in Turkey reveal that in the present moment, cosmopolitan multicultural existence is far from a reality in the country as a whole. Against the celebratory discourses about Istanbul's (hence Turkey's) reclaimed global power and cosmopolitan spirit, Aksoy provides the example of the murder of prominent Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant

Dink in 2007, who was shot in broad day light in the middle of a busy commercial street in Istanbul, demonstrating that:

If there has been a certain opening up, diversification and reinterpretation of the mental maps of the citizens over the last two decades or so, this has also been accompanied by a parallel convergence of a range of reactionary positions, whose common denominator seems to be precisely the fear of openness ... Defensive and fearful responses to what are in fact 'complex, confusing and often highly contradictory implications of this ongoing neo-liberalization of urban political-economic space start slipping easily and seamlessly into an exclusionary language, to the rejection of difference and diversity and ultimately nationalistic fanaticism. (Aksoy, 2008: 218, 230)

The clashes between the celebratory official public cosmopolitanism and lived reality are portrayed vividly in the ethnographic work of Brink-Danan (2011) on Istanbul's Jewish community. She points to the paradox that while Turkish Jews join the state in publically proclaiming Turkey's hospitality and tolerance for difference through public performances attesting to their cosmopolitan knowledge of "foreign" languages and rituals, the marks of these differences are in actuality erased from everyday life. In light of this context, Brink-Danan (2011: 448) aptly argues, "Being a Jewish cosmopolitan means not only knowing about different ways of being, but knowing in which contexts one should (and should not) perform difference". In this sense, cosmopolitanism in the Turkish context can be seen as a performance of knowledge, of knowing when difference invites danger and when to censure the affective marks of private claims to being different.

Hence if the "heritage and arts cosmopolitanism" exposes the contested meanings over what "national culture" means in Turkey in this global era, these "dangerous cosmopolitanisms" (Brink-Danan, 2011) reveal the necessity of strategic knowledge of nationalism in Turkey. This is expressly portrayed in a study undertaken in Tarlabasi,¹⁰ a historic and central neighbourhood in Istanbul that today is home to a diverse range of marginalized ethnic and social groups (Kaya, 2009). In this study exploring the experiences of marginalized Kurdish migrants living in this locality, anecdotal evidence is provided on how the Roma community of Tarlabasi, being one of the other most stigmatized and socially excluded groups in Turkey, take on the prevailing discourses of Turkish nationalism and anti-Kurdishness. Similar experiences are sited with reference to Bulgarian Turkish migrants in shared workplaces, and the author concludes how this reflex might be interpreted as an effort by these excluded minority groups to feel part of the nation (ibid. 74-75, 156-161).

As described, whether examined in the domains of memory, contemporary representation or everyday lived reality, the study of cosmopolitanism appears central to an understanding of the contested meanings and spaces of Istanbul and the national at large. Yet again, a

10. Tarlabasi is located in the city centre district of Beyoglu and historically was a residential neighbourhood of non-Muslim minorities in Istanbul, primarily the Greek Rum. Today the Kurds and the Roma constitute the largest populations in this neighbourhood, alongside smaller communities of transsexuals and immigrants from West Africa.

critical understanding of how some of Istanbul's more recent inhabitants, international migrant groups, fit into the narrative of Istanbul's cosmopolitanism, hence Turkey's national culture seems lacking. In other words, given these variable and layered meanings of co-existence in Istanbul, the case of "new" migrations to the city seems to urgently call for understanding how relations within rapidly changing and diversifying multicultural/multiethnic contexts are formed at the intersection of everyday experiences with difference and competing imaginaries of cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism embedded both in national and urban space.

Conclusion

Istanbul is a city bearing turbulent historical experiences with respect to migrations and accommodation of differences. The city carries the marks and memories both of an imperial capital and multicultural centre with a great diversity of ethnic, linguistic and religious composition, and equally so of an introverted and hostile city, concealing those un-cosmopolitan moments which wiped-out Istanbul's sizeable multi-faith communities over the last century. It is also a city that transformed dramatically following the 1950s, after which the historic splendour, cosmopolitanism and perceived "urbanity" of Istanbul was "peasantized" due to this influx. Since the mid-1980s however, this image, too, has radically transformed due to another turning point in Istanbul's urban history led by the sudden shift to a market oriented growth strategy in Turkey. Today, Istanbul boasts on having reclaimed a cosmopolitan urbanity, becoming a leading "Global City" and centre for cross-cultural interactions. Concurrently, though, there is growing concern that Istanbul is evolving into a "Divided City" as both rapid neo-liberal spatial transformations, such as in the rise of gated communities, and the particular ethnic dimension of migrations following the 1990s (that of ethnic Kurds), is breeding new and much more intensified exclusions and displacements, leaving one to question the reality behind the popular cosmopolitan brandings of the city.

As this brief account of Istanbul's urban transformation over the past century attests, migration, whether in terms of those it has taken or those it has brought, and whether forced or voluntary, is imprinted on every aspect of the material, social and cultural landscape of the city. Given this context, much of the qualitative research by urbanists working on Istanbul has aimed at capturing the alternative stories behind Istanbul's urban transformation, by examining how these various migrations relate to Istanbul's changing physicality, social exclusions, political mobilizations and urban imaginary. However, since the 1990s in particular, a new form of migration – that of international migrants – has become an emergent reality of the city and there still appears little understanding about how the new and intensifying forms of diversity associated with recent international migrations are physically, socially

and culturally impacting the city. Moreover, there is limited critical engagement with the question over how the various exclusionary sentiments and mechanisms that the city has generated as a result of historic migrations play out in the ways that this new diversity is actually being received and experienced in the city today.

If recent international migrations have been missing in the field of urban research on Istanbul, in turn, the urban question also appears lacking in the growing field of international migration research in Turkey. Until the 1990s, Turkey was commonly referred to as an emigration country, being one of the main recruitment grounds for guest workers to Northern European countries. Today, however, Turkey's migration trajectory is rapidly transforming, as it is becoming a significant country of destination and transit for international migrants and refugees. Given this new migratory context, in the last decade there has been growing academic interest in studying the migration patterns and strategies, social networks and integration experiences of different international migrant groups living in or transiting through the country. Yet a significant gap emerges in this literature for two main reasons.

Firstly, while migration to Turkey remains a predominantly urban phenomenon and Istanbul in particular has become the main center of attraction for the growing number of so-called "un-documented" and "transit" migrants, as well as refugees, the interrelations between global migration and urban social change, and of how migrants relate to and change the city, remain understudied in the Turkish context. Though most studies examine migrant groups residing in Istanbul, the city in itself is rarely analyzed. More importantly, a critical understanding about how Istanbul as a particular locality with distinct imaginaries, genealogies and spatialities of otherness determines the ways in which diversity is received and experienced in the city today still seems missing.

The second gap emerges because migration research in Turkey, as with the more general international trend, tends to focus on experiences of particular ethnic groups, who are generally also distinguished by their legal status and migration motive. Therefore, ethnographic research on the spaces and relations that migrants share with non co-ethnics in Istanbul is almost absent. Moreover, the crosscutting interactions between the great variety of migrant and non-migrant groups, who are differently situated by ethnicity, race, religion, culture and legal status in the super-diverse spaces of Istanbul still remains understudied.

Last, but not least, there are a growing number of qualitative studies examining manifestations of multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism in Istanbul. What these studies reveal is that the cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism of Istanbul is a deeply contested matter. It can symbolize both the loss and absence of the diversity and multicultural tolerance associated with the pre-Republican Ottoman era, and the reclaimed cosmopolitanism of the city evident from Istanbul's growing success in

becoming a leading centre for global culture, finance and politics. In turn, these nostalgic and celebratory multiculturalisms of Istanbul can also serve to conceal "other" unwanted diversities, which are excluded both through spatial and discursive mechanisms. Hence Istanbul, as both real and imagined, embodies layered and conflicted meanings about living with diversity, and the question about how these various layers inform engagements with new diversities today remains largely unanswered. Moreover, whether lost or reclaimed, refuted or upheld, Istanbul's contested multiculturalism continues to be deeply related to Turkish nationalism at its core. In this sense, these varied interpretation provide an opportunity to explore how, in a globalizing age, everyday experiences with new and changing diversities are impacted by the different and often competing understandings of cosmopolitanism and multiculturalisms embedded in the space of the city and the nation. Given this framework provided around Istanbul's unique history of migrations, rich urban research tradition, rapid increase in new migrations and layered meanings of cosmopolitanism, it appears fascinating, timely and imperative to locate experiences with Istanbul's "new" diversity in the framework of the various vocabularies, spatialities, imaginaries and mechanisms of exclusion (or inclusion) that the city has historically generated.

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