



Governing Urban Diversity:

Creating Social Cohesion, Social Mobility and Economic Performance in Today's Hyper-diversified Cities

Report 2c

Fieldwork inhabitants, Istanbul (Turkey)

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1. Introduction

There is a growing conventional wisdom in writings on European cities that presents them as centres of ‘super-diversity’ (Vertovec, 2007), referring specifically to their increasing ethnic diversity and to the demographic diversity that exists between and within such ethnic groups. However, cities are becoming increasingly diverse, not only in socio-economic, social and ethnic terms, but also with respect to lifestyles, attitudes and activities. To indicate this enormous diversity, we proposed referring to it rather as ‘hyper-diversity’ (Taşan-Kok *et al.*, 2013).

Within cities, groups can live either segregated or mixed, and while urban neighbourhoods may be homogeneous residential areas in terms of housing and population, they may also be heavily mixed with respect to types of housing (tenure, type, price, etc.) and population categories (income, ethnicity, household composition and age). In addition, individuals belonging to the same ‘official’ demographic category may have quite different lifestyles and attitudes, and involve themselves in a wide range of activities. Some may, for example, have a very neighbourhood-oriented life in which all of their friends and activities take place in a very small area, while others may have their social activities stretched over the whole city, or even beyond. Residents of mixed urban neighbourhoods may happily live together, live parallel lives, or be in open conflict with each other (Taşan-Kok *et al.*, 2013).

This report is written as part of the EU-FP7 DIVERCITIES project, in which we aim to find out how urban hyper-diversity affects the social cohesion and social mobility of residents in both deprived and dynamic urban areas, as well as the economic performance of entrepreneurs and their enterprises in such areas. In this report, we focus on the findings from our interviews with residents in which we explored their experiences of living with hyper-diversity and how it affects their lives.

The general approach can be broken down into more detailed and concrete research questions that are central to the chapters of this report:

1. Why did people move to the diverse area in which they now live? To what extent has the diversity of the area been a pull-factor, or were other aspects (such as the availability of inexpensive dwellings) a much stronger motive to settle in the present area? (Chapter 3)
2. What do residents think about the area in which they live? Do they see their neighbourhood’s diversity as an asset or a liability? (Chapter 4)
3. How do residents make use of the diversified areas in which they live? Do they actively engage in diversified relations and activities in their neighbourhood? To what extent is the area in which they live more important than other areas in terms of activities? (Chapter 5)
4. To what extent is the diversity of the residential area important for social cohesion? Which elements foster social cohesion, and which elements hinder the development of social cohesion in the area? (Chapter 6)
5. To what extent is the diversity of the neighbourhood important for social mobility? Which elements foster social mobility, and which elements hinder social mobility? (Chapter 7)
6. How are diversity-related policies perceived by the inhabitants of the area? (Chapter 8)

The research in this report focuses on the Turkish city of Istanbul that is currently home to 14,160,467 inhabitants. Spanning two continents, Istanbul is the largest city in Turkey, constituting the country's economic, cultural and historical core. Istanbul experienced rapid growth, especially during the second half of the 20th century, with its population increasing

tenfold between 1950 and 2000 (Gül, 2012). This remarkable growth has been fuelled largely by migrants from different parts of Turkey seeking employment and better living conditions. In recent decades, however, the city has also experienced increasing numbers of foreign immigrants. According to 2006 figures, only 28 percent of the city's residents are originally from Istanbul (KONDA, 2006). It is a highly diverse city in terms of cultural ethnic and socio-economic terms as well as lifestyles, cultural norms and attitudes

Within Istanbul, the research takes place in the area of Beyoğlu, which is one of the most distinctive residential and recreational areas in the historical centre of Istanbul and can be considered as one of the most diversified areas in the city. Throughout the 19th century, Beyoğlu was home to European populations (French, Germans, Italians, British, etc.) and to non-Muslim Ottoman citizens (Greeks, Armenians and Jews), but it would lose many of its former residents at the beginning of the Republican period, starting in the 1920s. Following the population exchange between the Balkan countries and Turkey and the outward migration of people of Greek descent to different cities in Greece after the events of 6-7 September 1955¹, the area attracted many poor immigrant families in the 1960s, as well as other disadvantaged groups. Furthermore, the departure of those of Greek descent led other minorities and a number of families from the higher middle-income groups to leave the district, after which it became home to many immigrants from different parts of Turkey, as well as several groups with different ethnic and cultural background. At this point, the area began to attract minority groups such as Romani people, as well as members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transvestite and transsexual (LGBT) communities, and people engaged in illegal activities, who were not welcome in the middle-income neighbourhoods in other parts of Istanbul. Additionally, since the 1980s, there has been an inflow of immigrants from Middle East and Northern African countries, including Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Palestine, etc., who have enriched the cultural, socio-economic and ethnic diversity of the district. Besides these groups, in the last two decades there has been a growing interest among people in the art, people working in entertainment as well as foreigners to settle in some neighbourhoods of Beyoğlu, such as Cihangir.

At present, Beyoğlu has a very mixed demographic structure, although its diverse population profile has been witnessing gradual change as a result of urban renewal projects taking place in deprived areas, gentrification in certain neighbourhoods (Galata, Cihangir, Tarlabası, etc.), besides revitalisation and transformation processes including the pedestrianisation of Taksim Square and the widening of Tarlabası Street into Tarlabası Boulevard, etc. (Aksoy and Robins, 2011). There has also been an important change in the activity profile of Beyoğlu. What started out as Istanbul's most prestigious shopping and entertainment district turned into a low-quality shopping district in the 1960s and 1970s, although since the 1980s it has witnessed a rise in profile, and has recovered to become home to many cultural events, art exhibitions and entertainment venues, which have been enjoyed by the young population.

For our study, we conducted 54 interviews with residents of Beyoğlu throughout November 2014, following the methodology described in the next chapter. This is then followed by six chapters in which we will answer the research questions above. In the concluding chapter, we summarise the main results and address our main questions, and will provide some guidance to aid policy-making.

¹On September 6-7 1955, a large-scale attack organised by several groups reacting to the existing political conflict between Greece and Turkey targeted Greek, Armenian and Jewish citizens of Turkey living in Istanbul. Some people committed acts of violence in neighbourhoods where Istanbul's non-Muslim population was mostly concentrated.

2. The interviewees

2.1 Selection procedure: How did we select our interviewees?

According to the 2013 census, the population of the Beyoğlu district is 245,219. Of these, only 14.9 percent were born in Istanbul, with the others having migrated both from different regions of Turkey and from abroad. Among the immigrants, 8.3 per cent are foreigners, some of which are in the country illegally. These figures do not include Syrian immigrants, since they have only very recently migrated to Turkey and so are new to this district. The 2013 figures show that the largest numbers of people have migrated from the Black Sea region (20.1% of total population); among which the Giresun province has the largest share. There are also substantial numbers of immigrants from Central Anatolia, especially from Sivas, and from the eastern parts of the country. Antalya, on Turkey's Mediterranean coast, is another province from which quite a large number of immigrants have migrated to Beyoğlu.

We divided the social groups that contribute to the diversity of the area into two categories: (1) immigrants, and (2) residents either who were born in the district, or who have been living there for a long time. The first category includes new international immigrants as well as immigrants from different regions to Istanbul, especially those of a different ethnic and cultural background. There are also very recent in-migrants with very distinct characteristics, including people from the creative class, highly educated immigrants and students who are interested in living in this cosmopolitan neighbourhood. The social groups in the second category are those that have been living in this neighbourhood for more than 50 years but are segregated from the rest of the society or are in a disadvantaged position due to their identity (LGBT* people, Romani people, etc.), and are defined as other target groups in the research. The number of interviewees from the different groups and their place of residence are given in Table 1.

Methodology used to find interviewees

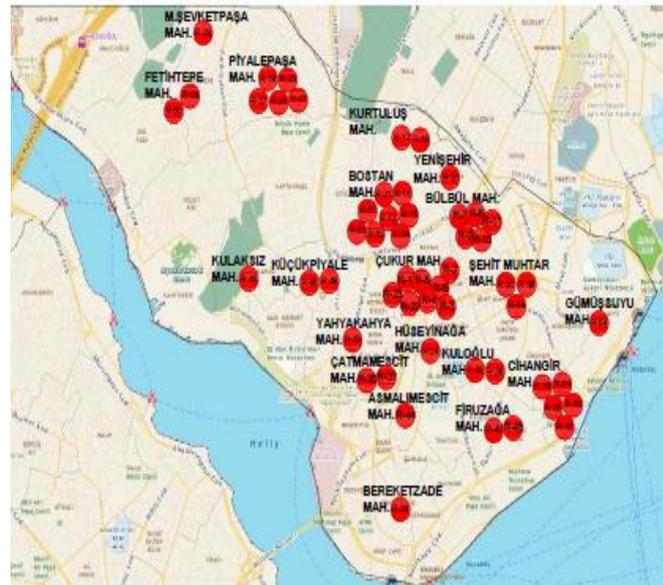
The interviewees were found using a snowballing sample method, which was deemed appropriate for this research, since the members of the groups in which we are interested are difficult to locate in Beyoğlu. To reach the desired target groups:

- First, we attempted to communicate with relevant associations related to our target groups. Prior to the fieldwork, we sent an e-mail to several initiatives asking them for help in contacting potential interviewees. After receiving no reply from some, we visited them and asked for help directly, and some of them² provided us with the address of an individual who belonged to one of our target groups.
- Second, if this individual agreed to take part in the interview, we asked for his/her help in contacting other people that they know. This process continued until all contacts had been exhausted.

² The organisations that were important in finding the first samples of the target groups were the Çukur and Bostan Neighbourhood Units, the Turkish-Armenian Minority Schools' Teachers Support Organisation (Türk Ermeni Azınlık Okulları Öğretmenleri Yardımlaşma Vakfı), the Hrant Dink Foundation, the Istos Publishing House, the Beyoğlu Lider Women Cooperative and the Müjdat Gezen Arts Centre (MGSM), among others.

Figure 1: Numbers of interviewees* by different groups and their place of residence

IMMIGRANTS	No
International- Poor or low skilled migrants	9
International-Highly educated migrants	6
Domestic immigrants from a different ethnic background	8
Immigrants from a different regions of Turkey	4
Immigrants from disadvantaged groups (disabled, very poor, etc.)	5
New elites, professionals and artists	4
GROUPS ALREADY LIVING IN THE DISTRICT	
Women from low-income families	3
LGBTT people	5
Romani People	5
People of different ethnic backgrounds (Istanbul born)	3



*The places of residence of interviewees are indicated as red dots

2.2 Which groups did we miss?

Although it was difficult to locate some groups, the fieldwork was successful in covering almost all groups that contribute to the diverse population of Beyoğlu. It was most difficult to find interviewees from the LGBTT category, but with the help of researchers' acquaintances, it was possible to get into contact with some individuals.

2.3 Some general characteristics of the interviewees

In the field research conducted in November 2014, we conducted 55 interviews, and only one was not used due to missing information. The major characteristics of the interviewees are as follows:

- Among the 54 respondents, 32 are male and 22 are female.
- The largest group of interviewees belong to 20–29 age group (21), followed by the 30–39 age group (17), the 40–49 age group (7), the 50–59 age group (5) and over 60 (4).
- The ethnic distribution of the respondents is as follows: eight Kurdish, eight Syrian-Kurdish, one Nigerian, five Romani, three Greek, two Armenian, one of Turkish-Greek origin, two Americans, one Azerbaijani and 23 Turkish.
- Among the interviewees, 29 are single and 25 are married.
- Eight of the interviewees are housewives and five are retired. The others have very different occupations, including a waste collector, a textile worker, a photographer, a jewellery designer, four musicians, two engineers, two publishers, two cafe managers, two salespersons and two teachers, among others.
- The respondents also belong to various income groups. Among the 54 interviewees, 11 placed themselves to the low-income group, 17 are medium-low, 17 are medium-high and nine are high-income. As these figures show, there is a high level of diversity in terms of income levels. Since there are no statistical figures related to the numbers of families in

different income groups in Beyoğlu, it is not possible to confirm the representatives of the sample. However, general observation supports the robustness of the sample.

3. Housing choice and residential mobility

3.1 Introduction

Beyoğlu hosts different types of people in a highly diversified urban fabric who are engaged in many different types of business. Within this district, the neighbourhoods contain very different types of housing and urban environmental features, as well as different types of social groups. This chapter focuses on the motives of housing choice among different people and their motivation to move to this area characterised by different types of diversity. We want to identify whether or not people from different groups perceive their move to this area as an improvement in their housing career.

One's housing career is defined as a development (Pickles and Davies, 1991), from low quality and accessible to higher quality but less accessible. Bolt and Kempen (2002) define as important not only needs and aspirations, but also available resources at an individual level. While preferences are determined by household characteristics and their lifestyles, resources define what they can afford. In general, people try to maximise their levels of satisfaction based on the available financial and social resources. In addition to resources, individual level factors affecting housing careers include household characteristics and the presence of familial or personal ties to a neighbourhood (Kley, 2011), while neighbourhood characteristics such as the available facilities, especially transportation affect the housing choices of households in the area. Moreover, different ethnic and cultural groups are expected to have different needs and aspirations with regard to housing, which lead them to different housing careers.

The literature also emphasises the attraction of the cosmopolitan character of the neighbourhoods. In such neighbourhoods, the identities associated with diversity carry relatively little meaning as citizens increasingly identify with what is common to all. The differences are less important, especially in the formation of social interaction. These neighbourhoods show how humankind can live in harmony, with allegiance to a moral realm of 'all humanity', rather than thinking about 'communities' and the differences between groups (Held, 2010).

As would be expected, the importance of factors defined above differentiates substantially among the diverse groups already living in the district. For several people, especially the new immigrants with limited resources, the choice of housing is heavily constrained by their income and is only a survival strategy within the new surroundings, while for others individual concerns, lifestyles and the facilities and atmosphere that the district offers can be important. The following section introduces the data garnered through 54 interviews with people living in the different neighbourhoods of Beyoğlu in order to understand the main reasons underlying their housing and neighbourhood choice, and further, to find out how the diversity of the district has shaped their decisions.

3.2 Why did the residents come to live here?

Although Beyoğlu became an attractive place for low-income immigrants in recent years, some of the people living in different neighbourhoods of Beyoğlu were born here and have been living here for almost their entire life. Furthermore, people of very different cultural and ethnic

backgrounds say that they belong to here. R15 (64 years, Romani) says that, “*I was born here. I am the oldest resident of this neighbourhood,*” while others say that not only were they born in the district, but so were their fathers and mothers and even their grandparents. R20 (27 years, jewellery designer), who belongs to the middle-income educated social group, explains her dedication to Beyoğlu: “*My father is about 60 years old. He lived with his father and his grandmother in Asmalimescit, a street next to where I am living. My grandfather was a tradesman in Beyoğlu centre; he owned a shop that specialised in sports equipment. When my father was married he and my mother decided to live in the same neighbourhood, and I also wanted to live here when I left my family.*” While expressing that they have been living in this neighbourhood for a long time, or were born here, they talk about their sense of belonging in a positive way, and emphasise their pride at living here. The main factors that were important among the residents related to their residence in Beyoğlu may be grouped under five headings; social factors, urban facilities, cheap housing locational advantage and the sense of freedom.

Social factors, which include proximity to family and relatives, and living among people of a similar ethnic background are very important, as emphasised by Kley (2011), since proximity to family and relatives is associated with the provision of support among new immigrants. Almost one-third of respondents defined proximity to family and relatives as the main reason why they chose to live in Beyoğlu. A number of the interviewees said that their families had been living in the same neighbourhood for along time. R26 (47 years, immigrant from Black Sea region) says: “*The main reason why we chose to live here is that my family is living here. Now both my family and the family of my husband are living in the same neighbourhood.*” This respondent group includes immigrants from different regions of Turkey, including people of different ethnic backgrounds, although proximity to other family members was important not only for immigrants, but also for such minorities as the Armenian inhabitants, who are the original residents of several neighbourhoods in Beyoğlu.

The strong emphasis on family, relatives and friends reflects the general characteristics of the housing and neighbourhood choices of the Turkish immigrants. Kıray (1999), explaining the immigration pattern in Turkey, states, “*First, one member of the family chooses a place to live, and later the other family members, friends and hometown people follow him and settle in the same neighbourhood, since social support networks are very important, especially in the initial years of immigration.*” It is for this reason that many metropolitan areas feature a clustering of people from the same cultural and ethnic background (Güvenç and Işık, 1997). Although this situation is changing due to the new growth dynamics of the Istanbul metropolitan area, being close to people that they already know is very important in the selection of a place to live (Eraydın, 2008). This is also the case for foreign immigrants. Respondent R10, a Syrian woman said: “*First my husband came here and rented this house, where many Kurds are living. In fact, Kurds helped us to settle here and provided us with furniture and kitchenware*” (she prayed for these people during the interview).

The second group of important factors attracting people to live in Beyoğlu are *urban facilities*. Existing education and health facilities are important to choose a neighbourhood in this district as a place of residence. These facilities include different educational establishments, including specific ones that accommodate disabled children. There are several universities within walking distance of the area, as well as special education facilities, such as schools for children with different handicaps.

“We were living in İzmir, but there were no good quality schools in İzmir specialising in the education of handicapped children. We believed that education in Beyoğlu would be better, and so we decided to live here.”
(R47, mother of a disabled child).

The neighbourhood’s existing cultural facilities and entertainment venues attract young people, including students and young professionals. The presence of various bookshops and art galleries and theatres is a key draw for people interested in the arts, while living in close proximity to various cafés, restaurants and bars is defined as a unique experience for some of the inhabitants. In fact, the Beyoğlu district is composed of several places with very different characteristics, from stylish high-income residential areas to deteriorated housing neighbourhoods, featuring different commercial, eating and dining places and restaurants of different types and qualities. Recently, the area has become the centre of global cultural events as well (Kahya, 2015). Furthermore, the cosmopolitan character and diversity of the people living in this district make this area attractive for certain groups. R24 (young educated immigrant from Azerbaijan) emphasises this point: *“This is the best place for entertainment activities. Many students come here. It is good to have young people here and the atmosphere is also very nice.”*

The existing housing stock makes this district attractive for different income groups. While it is the different education, health and entertainment facilities that are important for students and young professionals, the *availability of cheap housing* in this district makes it attractive also for poor immigrants. The historical parts of the district in particular contain a deteriorated housing stock, although certain areas have been defined as transformation zones that may be redeveloped soon. The deteriorated housing areas, which are of very low quality and have poor sanitary facilities, have low rents that are affordable for poor immigrants (recently Syrians and Africans). Of the 54 interviewees, 13 emphasised the importance of the availability of cheap rented housing in the district. Since most of the housing in Turkey is owner-occupied, and there is no social rented housing sector (Türel, 2010), this is an important issue for the poor immigrants. R10 (Syrian woman, 30 years old) and R11 (Black Nigerian man, aged 30) say, *“The neighbourhood in which we live has cheap rents; it is not possible to find rented housing at this price elsewhere.”* R12 (Roman Musician, 49 years old) is not happy living here, saying: *“This is not a place to live, but if we move to another neighbourhood we have to pay higher rents. We cannot afford it, and so we have to live here.”*

However, not all of Beyoğlu’s neighbourhoods offer cheap housing. Some of the districts with a view of the sea, where the housing stock is of a better quality, have recently become quite desirable. The gentrification of these neighbourhoods (Uzun, 2001) and the increasing popularity of artists, players and movie stars in living here, have played a role in the rise of house prices and rents in Cihangir and Gümüşsuyu and their surroundings. Moreover, some transformation projects that have seen the construction of high-quality housing blocks have triggered a rise in prices in these neighbourhoods.

The fourth important factor is the *locational advantage* of the district. As indicated by many of the respondents, Beyoğlu is ideal for accessing different parts of Istanbul, due to its location and its status as a transport hub. Moreover, for several groups the neighbourhoods in Beyoğlu district are in close proximity to their work. There are two distinct groups of people, who work in the commercial core of Beyoğlu. The first of these is the Romani musicians, who live in the district’s relatively low-quality residential neighbourhoods, such as Çukur, and work in the nightclubs and other entertainment venues. R12 (Romani Musician, 49 ages) explains why they live in Beyoğlu as *“Beyoğlu is our workplace, we have to be here”*. The second group of people are those engaged in different branches of the arts, such as in the theatres and cultural centres located in Beyoğlu and its surroundings, and the owners of cafés and restaurants with live music. These people prefer to

live in Cihangir, which has become quite popular over the last two decades after some well-known movie stars and pop singers moved to the neighbourhood. For these groups, who work very late at night, living nearby their work place is a very important factor in their housing choice.

Besides these two groups, some of the respondents own businesses or work for an existing company in Beyoğlu. In Istanbul, which is a huge metropolitan area with significant traffic congestion, being in close proximity to one's workplace is a significant advantage. The minorities that live in several of Beyoğlu's neighbourhoods in particular have existing business in the district. R16 (Armenian, 61 years), *"My workplace has been always here in Beyoğlu. For more than 30 years I have walked from home to work"*.

Moreover, as indicated by the new immigrants, the small enterprises in the district specialised in retail, services and production in Beyoğlu are a source of employment for them, and obviously, easy access to work is the most important locational motivation for low-skilled immigrants.

The final motivation for choose to live in Beyoğlu is *the sense of freedom* in the district *due to its socio-economic, social and ethnic diversity*. For several groups, who are perceived as "others" in many neighbourhoods, this sense of freedom offered in Beyoğlu is important. There are considerable numbers of LGBTT people living in Beyoğlu. *"I did not want to live with my family anymore. It became very difficult. I am earning good money and living as I like. Beyoğlu gives me this freedom"* (R35, 26 years old, LGBTT).

Moreover, highly skilled people define the diversity of the area as important in their choice of housing, and use the term "cosmopolitan" when defining Beyoğlu. *"I chose to live in Beyoğlu due to its location and cosmopolitan character. This is a horrible place* (he defines horrible as "not quiet but very attractive place"). *It has a diverse character but is also a family-friendly neighbourhood with very good social contacts"* (R30, 33-year-old man of Greek descent). Another interviewee explained her decision to live here as follows; *"We decided on Beyoğlu because of its international atmosphere"* (R33, 27 years, American woman). The diversity of the area is also attractive factor for artists. R37 (38 years, actor) says that it is the cosmopolitan character that attracts many people to the district, although he is unhappy with the change; *"This district hosted diverse groups, which is an important characteristic for the people engaged in different fields of the arts. If the diversity is lost, Istanbul will lose its lively culture, which is important for the culture of the country."* The emphasis of people on cosmopolitan characters is important since it pinpoints their willingness to live without thinking of differences as Held (2010) highlighted.

The brief summary on the main factors that were important among the residents related to their residence in Beyoğlu show that the diversity of the district is not important for most of the existing residents, except for some groups who seek the sense of freedom and the ones interested in having contact with people who belong to different cultures. For others, the advantages of the district, such as location, facilities, housing are more important.

3.3 Moving to the present neighbourhood: Improvement or not?

Moving to this neighbourhood may mean different things for different groups. Firstly, for some groups who moved to Istanbul, it is the primary, and even only, option. The dilapidated buildings and very poor physical conditions provide these people with the opportunity to live and work in Beyoğlu, and in this regard, moving to Beyoğlu is a survival strategy, especially for the very poor foreign immigrants. For other immigrants, especially those coming from different regions of Turkey, living here puts them in close proximity to family members, in that the relatives of people

from their hometowns would have settled in certain neighbourhoods in the district long ago. The existence and availability of social networks is vital for these immigrants.

For some interviewees who moved from other neighbourhoods of Istanbul to Beyoğlu, especially those working in the district, the locational advantages of Beyoğlu are a major factor. Moreover, students also opt to live here due to the availability of cheap housing and the proximity to many of the main universities.

For the groups defined above it is very difficult to say that moving to this neighbourhood represents an improvement in living standards. However, there are certain neighbourhoods where gentrification projects are underway, namely Cihangir and Gümüştuyu, which are becoming *posh*, and have attracted some well-known people in popular culture, who have begun to settle here. These changes have caused house prices and rents to rocket, and so moving to these neighbourhoods has come to be accepted as a sign of improvement in income and social status.

3.4 Conclusions

Beyoğlu comprises different types of neighbourhoods, and different types of people even in the same neighbourhood, and this diversified character is valuable for certain groups of interviewees.

Different groups emphasise the diversity as a pull factor. First, the people who are usually accepted as “others” or “marginal groups” feel social control and hostility less in Beyoğlu. The attitudes to LGBTT people are more tolerant in Beyoğlu compared to conventional residential neighbourhoods. However, even in this district, attitudes towards homosexuality vary between different social groups and cultures, from tolerance to ignorance or hostility. The second group of respondents, who emphasise the diversity of the area as the pull factor is artists. The chance to meet different types of people, who belong to different cultural, ethnic, religious and social background, is attractive for people engaged in arts. They accept the mix of different people and the tolerant atmosphere to differences support creative activities. The loss of its diversity of Beyoğlu is believed to affect not only the vitality of Beyoğlu, but also Istanbul. The third group of people who choose to live in Beyoğlu due its diversity is the foreign immigrants from European countries and USA. According to them, the international atmosphere and entertainment facilities in Beyoğlu are important factors of attraction. In general, it is possible to say that the diversity of the district displays its openness to people of distinct cultures from different ethnic, religious and social backgrounds.

However, for other social groups the main factors that explain why they come to live here are not related to diversity. For many people social factors and especially living in proximity to their families and friends are important. It can be deemed suitable for immigrants, because people are able to find people from similar backgrounds to them, among those with very different origins. The attractive location of the district is another factor. Being in proximity to the main commercial centers and central business districts and different kinds of facilities make people to choose living in Beyoğlu. Another factor is the affordability of housing in Beyoğlu. Especially in the dilapidated areas, the housing rents are relatively lower than other districts of Istanbul, which makes it very attractive for low-income immigrants.

4. Perceptions of diversity in the neighbourhood

4.1 Introduction

According to Wessendorf (2011), local residents can experience ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity as a normal part of social life (commonplace diversity), and not as something particularly special. Commonplace diversity is accompanied by positive attitudes towards diversity among the majority of the population, and especially in public and associational space, there exists a great deal of interaction across cultural differences.

However, social interaction does not always happen. As Albrow (1997) claims, individuals with very different lifestyles and social networks can live in close proximity without untoward interference with each other. In areas characterised by clear-cut minority/majority relations, there may be tensions among different groups, living ‘parallel lives’. In the roots of the tensions between different groups perceptions of who belongs to ‘us’ and who does not, is important. Several studies show that the differentiation of ‘us’ and ‘other’ can be based upon not only ethnicity but many other things, such as notions of order and descent (Wimmer, 2004). Moreover, as Wessendorf (2014:398) pinpoints *“The acceptance (and sometimes appreciation) of diversity is somewhat fractured by the presence of a group which is perceived to threaten the public order”*, which leads to the co-existence of positive attitudes towards diversity as well as resentment against specific groups. The literature emphasises that the absence of direct contact with individuals of different racial, ethnic or class backgrounds serves to reinforce prejudices that are based on stereotypes and sometimes out-group hostility (Stolle et al., 2011)

This section of the report focuses on the interviewees’ perceptions of their neighbours and the neighbourhoods in Beyoğlu. After analysing the way they describe the boundaries of their neighbourhoods, section 4.3 introduces how the interviewees perceive their neighbours. A discussion on the perception of diversity of the interviewees and the positive and negative aspects raised by the respondents are introduced in section 4.4, while the concluding section analyses whether diversity is considered an asset or a liability.

4.2 Perceived boundaries of the neighbourhood

The official definitions or boundaries of neighbourhoods as administrative units and the neighbourhoods/subdistricts in the minds of the people rarely coincide in Istanbul. Since it is a very old settlement, most of the names and images of the neighbourhoods are social and cultural constructs. In this regard, although people know the names of places, they do not know the names of the administrative neighbourhood. The Beyoğlu district, which is located across the historical peninsula, covers 8.76 km² and has 45 neighbourhoods. Each of these neighbourhoods has a distinct character and usually the name used by local people is different from the official one. One respondent (R38, musician 38 years old, born in Beyoğlu) explains this phenomenon: *“None of the people that live in Beyoğlu use the official names of the neighbourhoods. For example, people say Gümüştüyü rather than Ayaz Paşa. Instead of the names of neighbourhoods, people use the names of streets. Living in the same street is important, since from one street to another the character of urban fabric and social composition can change. When we talk among family members, we say that I was in Ömer Hayyam or Sakızgacı (streets) yesterday.”*

In fact, the interviews reveal that the perceived boundaries of the neighbourhoods change according to the respondents, although while some know every street in Beyoğlu, others know very little about the neighbourhood and district. The people in the latter group are the new

foreign immigrants, who maintain very close social networks in the neighbourhood and spend only limited time in the district. They do know a little about Beyoğlu, but have little interest in knowing more, with one reason for this unfamiliarity being their feelings of being only temporary residents in Beyoğlu, Istanbul and even Turkey. The interviews revealed that recent immigrants from countries in the region could be categorised under two headings, being those who plan to work and settle in Turkey, and those who think that their residence in Turkey is only temporary. The latter group desires to return to their home country once political and economic conditions improve there, and are not very happy about their living conditions. In this regard, they make only limited contact with the existing residents of their neighbourhood and have little interest in knowing more about their place of residence.

At the other end of the scale are the group of respondents who have lived in the district for along time, and who may even have been born there. They know the district very well, as well as the different neighbourhoods within the district. One of them (R20, 27, jewellery designer) refers to herself as a *person of Beyoğlu* (Beyoğlu insanı), meaning that she knows every place, the past and present of the district, and every tradesmen in İstiklal Avenue. She even claims to “*know the name of every street in Beyoğlu.*” For them, Beyoğlu is a unity having different sub-units with different characteristics.

For some people, the monumental buildings and places of attraction are important. R2 (school bus driver, 34 years of age), who lives close to İstiklal Avenue, says: “*I know the boundaries of my neighbourhood, as I have been living here for a long time. I also know all the important buildings here, such as Süryani Church, St. Mary Church and Istanbul Arts Centre,*” while another respondent living in Kasımpaşa specifies that she knows Tayyip Erdoğan Stadium, the Military Hospital and Kasımpaşa İskelesi. On the other hand, R16 (Armenian, 61 years old) underlines that “*there are no big parks or big boulevards in our neighbourhood (Kurtuluş), and so when I describe our neighbourhood, two things are important: Kurtuluş Street, which passes through our district, and the bus terminus, where the buses begin their return journeys*”. These responses, among others, indicate that the inhabitants’ perceptions are connected to the subdistricts of Beyoğlu, as well as their place of residence and its surroundings.

In general, few of the respondents referred to such physical boundaries as motorways or large streets, or the architectural quality of their neighbourhoods. Most said that they know the neighbourhood, indicating the parks and green areas that exist there. “*I know my neighbourhood very well, especially the parks. For example there is Veysel Aşık Park in Piyalepaşa and Sivas Park in Çıksalın*” (R27, male, 23, immigrant from the Black Sea region). “*In our neighbourhood there is Roma Park and Cibangir Park. The municipality wanted to turn Cibangir Park to a carpark, but we resisted to this change and managed to stop the transformation project.*” (R 40, 38, musician).

Several interviewees, on the other hand, defined the boundaries of their neighbourhood/sub-district by giving the names of places in close proximity. R33 (27, American woman) said: “*I know the surroundings; we have Kasımpaşa, which is very near; Taksim Square, which is around 10 minutes away; İstiklal Avenue is also around 8 minutes away, sometimes 5 if you are running. We have also Tarlabası, but we do not go there due to its bad reputation, we avoid it (laughing). Moreover, there is a Sunday market in our neighbourhood that we visit every week.*” For businesspersons in particular, the district’s proximity to the main central business districts (CBD) was the most important factor in their decision to locate in the neighbourhood. Similarly, the boundaries of their neighbourhood was not important for the immigrants that came to Istanbul to open businesses, such as R11 (a young black Nigerian man) engaged in luggage trade (bavul ticareti), although they also used the main retail centres and shopping streets in close proximity to define their living areas. He said; “*Our neighbourhood is close to*

Osmanbey, Aksaray and Eminönü (three important shopping areas in Istanbul). Since we make our business in these three centres, the proximity of our neighbourhood is extremely important for us.”

The transformation of the neighbourhood and new projects is also important in defining the boundaries of the district. Most of the inhabitants stated that when an urban renewal/rehabilitation project takes place in their neighbourhood, they think that it may change not only the urban fabric, but also the social composition of the population in their neighbourhood. The interview findings show that there is almost no reference to diversity of population living in the district, when people are defining the boundaries of their neighbourhood, although most of the people know that the dominance of different ethnic, socio-economic cultural groups in different neighbourhoods.

4.3 Perceptions of neighbours

Beyoğlu is one of the most diverse places in Istanbul. It is not only characterised by a multiplicity of ethnic minorities, but also by differences in migration histories, religions, educational and economic backgrounds among long-term residents and immigrants. The diversity of the district was emphasised by almost all of the respondents. R2 (34, school bus driver) said: *“Our neighbourhood can be compared to the United Nations. This is a unique place where people of different ethnic, cultural and racial backgrounds are living”*. He adds that some people who do not live in the district have prejudices and see it as a dangerous place, which, in fact, it is not.

However, when interviewees talk about diversity, their points of references are somewhat different.

Defining neighbours with reference to socio-economic status and occupation

The presence of people from different socio-economic groups and occupations is defined as one of the facets of diversity. R20 (27, jewellery designer) says: *“In our apartment we are living together with two research assistants, an oncologist and one sales person that has a shop in the Istanbul Textile Centre. Across from our building, there are two publishing houses, and my aunt lives there. In our neighbourhood, there are people working in different occupations, including foreigners engaged in different jobs.”* According to her, the profile of the neighbourhood changes once you are off the main the street.

Categorisation of neighbours and the residents of the district in terms of income level

The levels of income of the local population are defined as an important source of diversity. According to R40 (38, musician), the level of income is more important than ethnic background in the choice of neighbourhood. According to him, most of the neighbourhoods in Beyoğlu are for low- or lower middle-income groups, as rich people do not want to live in this area. There are many immigrants from different parts of Turkey, as well as from Armenia and from Eastern Europe: *“This is a Greek sub-district, but only a few are left. There are some Jews and Armenians, although not the rich ones. The rich minorities left Beyoğlu and now live in Etiler, Akatlar, etc., which are high-income neighbourhoods.”* Although as this respondent indicated that people belonging to the high-income groups are rare in the district, the income differences of the residents are still important.

New immigrants and previous residents of the area

Another way of categorisation of the people living in Beyoğlu is between earlier and new residents. The people that have long been living in the neighbourhood consider themselves to be the real landlords of the district, and perceive newcomers as the “others” of the neighbourhood. The older residents tend to think of themselves as urbanites, and complain that the newcomers maintain their village culture and have difficulty in adapting to urban living, while also criticising other types of new residents in some neighbourhoods, such as intellectuals, artists and rich

people who want to spend time with popular people. They claim that all these people do not really belong to Beyoğlu (R34, aged 25, LGBTTT).

However, just who the native residents are is not clear. R37 (38-year-old actor) criticises people who are against the change in the social composition of the neighbourhood, saying, *“Those that complain about the increasing numbers of immigrants are in fact immigrants from such eastern provinces as Siirt. They live in the houses that belonged to the Greeks.”* They define new immigrants as those from Syria, who are more visible since the onset of the crisis in Syria, and from North Africa. The lowest quality and most deteriorated neighbourhoods host the least advantaged groups, who are mainly recent immigrants from poor countries.

Among the many diverse groups, there are people (mostly immigrants) engaged in illegal activities, with drug dealers especially living in poor neighbourhoods such as Tarlabası. This is one of the most important sources of dissatisfaction related to immigrants, however, while some of the respondents claim to be worried about drug dealing and other illegal activities, they tolerate them. They say that as long as they are not affected by the problem they do not mind them living in the same area, but do not want to be in contact with them.

The importance of the place of birth of immigrants in diversity: Where are you from?

The second group adding to the diversity of the district is immigrants from different regions of Turkey with different cultural backgrounds. In each neighbourhood, the hometown of the immigrants is different, and those who migrated from different parts of Turkey maintain their old habits and cultural norms, and do not want to change their way of life at all. They make very little effort to adapt to the existing urban conditions, which is criticised by people who consider themselves to have an “urban culture”: *“When people come from their hometowns, they bring with them their cultures and habits. They have difficulty in adapting to the local people. They fight and swear to each other. That is against me. That is why although the coffee shop is mine, I don’t want to stay there.”* (R15, 64-year-old Romani man)

Marginal groups: LGBTTT and prostitutes

When some of the respondents talked about the diversity of their neighbourhoods, they said that there are “even prostitutes” in their neighbourhood, although they added that as long as they do not create a problem, others should not complain about their way of living. This discourse was similar when referring to the LGBTTT residents.

Ideological differences

The district also hosts people with different political ideologies. Over a very short distance, it is possible to observe the meeting points of people with very different and conflicting ideologies. R30 (Greek man, 33) explains this diversity: *“When I came to this neighbourhood in 2006, on the same street there was a sex shop, the Neighbourhood centre of the Nationalist Turkish Party, and nearby was the Centre of Social Democrats and the Kurdish Cultural Research Centre. Although it was forbidden to use Kurdish in those years, the signboard of Kurdish Cultural Research Centre was in Kurdish. As a foreigner, this picture was very interesting for me.”*

Mainly the socio-economic categorisation, which coincides almost income and occupational categories dominate over the others. Interestingly, different social, ethnic or cultural groups use similar categorisations they describe the characteristics of their neighbourhoods. On the other hand, the categorisation of people with reference to the place of birth of immigrants is a common attitude; compatriotship is still important in Turkish society.

4.4 Perceptions of the neighbourhood: positive and negative aspects

Almost all of the respondents recognised the diversity of their neighbourhoods, and emphasised it as something positive.

“We are here together with people with different languages and beliefs. We know each other and we have no problems. In other words, we do not exclude anyone based on his or her religion, culture, language or sect. For us, everybody is equal, at least for me. They also show their respect to me.” (R1, 51, Mukhtar (elected head of a Çukur neighbourhood).

Similar statements were made by many respondents, although the language used still distinguishes between “us” and “them”. Many of the respondents defined the ability to live in peace as a significant success: *“If you don’t do anything to anyone, they won’t do something to you”* (R24, 23-year-old Azerbaijani man). They explain their ability to live together as “we are used to each other”, which is why the change in the composition of population is seen as a problem by many of the older inhabitants of Beyoğlu. Providing a chronological account of the change, they say: *“First it was Iraqi people that came here, escaping Saddam’s torture, then people from Pakistan and North Africa came, but over the last two years it is Syrians that have begun to settle here. The numbers of these people are getting higher in our neighbourhood.”* This rapid change makes many inhabitants worried, despite being (earlier) immigrants of these neighbourhoods themselves.

The positive aspects of diversity are given as:

- To know different people and learn about their cultures is defined as a positive asset of diversity. One respondent explains, *“In our neighbourhoods we are invited to the weddings of Romani families, which are very nice. When we go to the weddings of Kurdish families, we get to understand their customs. In a diverse neighbourhood, you have a greater chance of meeting very different people. In our neighbourhood, we talk to people from Africa. We speak to them and improve our English.”* (R3, 32, deliveryman).
- The acceptance of others that exists among most of the groups is defined as an outcome of diversity. Most of the respondents emphasised the tolerant atmosphere in the district from different perspectives. R16 (Armenian, 61) defines one of the neighbourhoods in the district, Kurtuluş, as a place of tolerance: *“Kurtuluş is a place of tolerance. For example, a transsexual can live in Kurtuluş without being disturbed. These people were unable to continue living in some neighbourhoods of Istanbul and had to move. In Kurtuluş, there is no such problem. If they are not doing their business in their homes, the people living in the same apartment do not care about their sexual orientation”*.
- According to many of the interviewees, one of the most important characteristics of Beyoğlu is its protest culture and the sense of freedom, which is supported by the diversity of the inhabitants of the district. The existing protest culture is exemplified by the attitude of people in the Gezi Park protests:

“Kurtuluş (one of the neighbourhoods of Beyoğlu) is a nice neighbourhood; I like it very much. The major reason behind my feelings is the active support of its inhabitants during the Gezi Park protests³, when even the people who were raised in a bourgeois culture supported the protestors and provided them with logistical support. In fact, the whole neighbourhood turned into a place of resistance. Many people opened the doors of the apartments to help the children who participated in the protests, and provided them with food, clothing and medicine.” (R16, 61-year-old Armenian man).

³ Gezi protests took place in May 2014 in order to protest the project that aimed to transform Taksim square and construct a shopping mall in the place of Gezi park.

The support provided to the protesters reflects the sense of freedom of the neighbourhood, according to some interviewees. R34 (25 years old, LGBTI) says; *“This is a place of freedom. It is the most modern and free district in Istanbul.”* These characteristics are attractive for several groups and individuals, especially foreign immigrants who want to become familiar with the cultures of different kinds of people. R33 (American woman, English teacher) explains the positive aspects of her neighbourhood: *“If you are international, you can eat international food and speak your own language in that neighbourhood because there are lots of facilities and cafes for international people. Turkish culture is very welcoming, and I think you are encouraged to try to adapt to it. If you do not want to adapt, it does not force you to do so. Such freedom in a diversified environment is nice.”*

The negative aspects mentioned by the interviewees are as follows:

- The very dynamic character of the neighbourhood and the changing composition of people living in the neighbourhood is a cause of worry for most of the previous long-term residents of the area, similar to different cities in Europe. It is believed that the increasing numbers of poor immigrants decrease the “quality” of the neighbourhood, with quality defined with respect to cleanliness in physical terms and social relations. R14, an old Romani woman says: *“Many of the people with money have left this area. The new immigrants from different backgrounds do not get along with each other, and they always fight. If I am able to sell my house, I will leave this neighbourhood.”*
- Some of the long-term residents of the neighbourhoods of Beyoğlu, especially those who were born in the district, are nostalgic about the good old days, when Beyoğlu was more peaceful and quiet. At that time, people had better social relations. They believe the increasing dominance of immigrants, with their different lifestyles to the existing residents, are detrimental to the earlier image of Beyoğlu, which was “cosmopolitan and posh”. R18 (58, woman) said: *“When I married and settled here, most of the people living in these neighbourhoods were non-Muslims, including the ambassadors of many countries. Now, Cihangir is where people that are engaged with popular arts are living, and it has lost its real character.”* In fact, the older residents agree that the rapid change witnessed in the district has meant the loss of its unique character.
- Security and the political conflicts in the area are a cause for concern among some people, especially the prevalence of drug dealing and other illegal businesses. While drug dealing brings a lot of associated problems and unrest, some neighbourhoods are zones of continuous conflict between those engaged in illegal businesses and the police. The increasing numbers of entertainment venues and bars are defined to as changing the social atmosphere of the neighbourhood negatively.
- Moreover, conflicts break out often between people representing different ideologies, between leftist groups and the police, and between Kurdish nationalists and the police. R31 (27-year-old immigrant from Greece) said: *“The fights between some groups and the police on Sunday mornings have become a custom in our neighbourhood. The policemen come, fire tear gas at people with different ideologies, and the fight begins. That has become usual.”*
- Although the district has a highly diversified character, there are also closed networks among people that can be very difficult for some people to join, leading them to feel excluded.

4.5 Conclusions

Beyoğlu has been defined by several respondents as a place where open-minded people live in harmony, and as a unique place where a diversity of people live together, from rich to poor and from affluent people to excluded groups, as well as people of different race, culture and ethnicity. The cosmopolitan character is particularly appreciated by some categories of the population, especially those people who are almost excluded from the mainstream society. The diversity of

the district and the sense of freedom were cited as the attractive aspects of this centre by some of the interviewees. In general, the diversity of the district is defined as an important and positive asset, especially by people with higher education, but also by immigrants from different backgrounds. As mentioned earlier, some respondents claimed that the diversity of his neighbourhood as the main driver in his choice to move to this neighbourhood and complained about the loss of diversity, especially its cultural diversity.

Their praise for diversity, however, does not prevent many people to complain the increasing security problems and conflicts among different groups. Especially, long-term residents of the neighbourhoods long for the old days when people had, according to them, better social relations. They have difficulty to accept the new immigrants, especially the people with low levels of income and socio-economic status.

5. Activities in and outside the neighbourhood

5.1 Introduction

Neighbourhoods are important as spaces of interaction, facilitated by the different elements of the urban fabric and social practices. Recent literature paid increasing attention to the role of specific places within neighbourhoods where people of different backgrounds meet (Wessendorf, 2011) and some studies claim that even fleeting encounters in public space shape attitudes towards others (Vertovec, 2007). As Van Kempen and Wissink emphasise (2014), research into the neighbourhood as a place can provide information on how different groups use different places, and with what forms of practices they are concerned, both inside and outside the neighbourhood.

In this respect, the relationship between neighbourhood infrastructure and social interaction is important, especially in deprived neighbourhoods. The public places such as local shops, pubs, cafés, and community centres, have been described as being “third places” of social interaction after the home and workplace (Hickman, 2010; Holland et al., 2007). According to Hickman (2010), shops perform an important social function. Other social places, such as cafés, community centres, leisure, local clubs, and pubs also fulfil a significant social role. For different age groups different types of social places are defined extremely important, such as fast food restaurants for elderly (Cheang, 2002) and coffee shops (Rosenbaum et al., 2007) for adults. They are defined as the places of “nonobligatory” social interaction. Low, Taplin and Scheld (2009), on the other hand, emphasise the role of urban parks as public spaces in diverse communities. They provide residents with much needed leisure activities and a ‘reason to get out of the house’. Not only public and commercial places, but also streets are defined as important for socialisation (Matthews et al., 2000). People at different age groups chat to each other and children play games, which are especially important for people with limited financial resources.

A decline in the quality and number of public spaces would therefore see some residents faced with the challenge of having to find new ways to engage social interaction. In recent years, although increasing computer-mediated interaction creates different opportunities for socialisation, still the public places in a neighbourhood have important roles in supporting social interaction. As Putnam (2007) emphasises in order to avoid people in diverse communities tend to “hunker down” and isolate themselves from their neighbors, vibrant and welcoming public spaces are important.

How does diversity affect activity patterns? How important is the neighbourhood? Do the different groups have different activity patterns inside and outside the neighbourhood? This chapter aims to identify where activities take place, and to define whether or not living in a diverse neighbourhood matters.

5.2 Activities: Where, and with whom?

An analysis of the interviews reveals that activities inside and outside the neighbourhood do not differ in terms of ethnic background or cultural identity, as the most influential factors are rather income level and education. In general, while low-income families with limited education spend most of the time in their neighbourhood, people working in higher-paid jobs and with higher levels of education spend more time outside their home and away from their neighbourhood.

The reason why people belonging to low-income groups spend most of their free time in their neighbourhood can be explained by several factors:

- Spending time out of home and neighbourhood necessitates spending extra money. According to many of the respondents, even the costs of transportation can be a significant burden on their budget, meaning that home visits, and eating and drinking tea together with family members and friends who live in the same neighbourhood are preferred by many families. R6 (Syrian woman, 50 ages) says that, *“We usually visit our relatives and friends. Since what we earn is not enough, it is not possible to spend money for recreational activities.”*
- Most of the respondents prefer to live in close proximity to their families and relatives, and prefer to spend time with them. While most of the women prefer home visits, they sometimes go to green areas within the neighbourhood or shopping. The Beyoğlu district features several commercial zones, meaning that they can go window-shopping either in Istiklal Avenue or to the new shopping malls that have sprung up close to their homes. R18 (woman, 58 years old) explains that, *“Istiklal street is the place where we go to shopping, besides we like to go to Taksim square and parks in Kasımpaşa.”*
- For many people, free time is limited. Since some of the respondents work very long hours, they have little time to spend outside the neighbourhood. *“I spend my whole life between home and work. I only go to Istiklal Avenue from time to time”* (R39, 20, Syrian waiter). For housewives or working women, the situation is not very different. R48, a 35-year-old mother of a disabled child, says: *“I have lots of responsibilities, but only limited time; therefore I engage in very few social activities. I have only one free day a week when I must clean the house; so I want to spend time with my children. What we do is to go to green areas, parks and sometimes teagardens for breakfast. It may be only a simit (Turkish-style bagel) and tea, but it is good to do something different.”*

In some neighbourhoods, spending time on the street is important in a practice known as “street culture” (*sokak kültürü*), which supports the arguments of Matthews et al. (2000). Women in the neighbourhood in particular gather in front their houses, where they chat and drink tea and talk to people crossing the street. R22 (Kurdish woman, 46 ages) explains that *“We spend time in our street. We have a street culture.”* For men, coffee shops and meeting in the streets is even more important, and meetings with friends usually take place in the neighbourhood. While older people tend to spend time at coffee houses, some of the younger men go to bars close to the neighbourhood, although it is coffee shops where men meet each other. Different friends frequent specific coffee shops that they visit almost every day.

Within the district, Istiklal Avenue is the core of activities, where especially women go shopping or window-shopping with their friends. There is only one shopping mall on Istiklal Avenue, but lots of shops and small shopping arcades (*pasaj*) containing a variety of different outlets, from high quality boutiques to those selling second hand garments. People also go to shopping malls outside their district, which are for not only shopping, but also function as places for entertainment. Some families go to shopping malls at weekends in winter just to spend time. That said, there were some interviewees who voiced negative perceptions of such places, saying that there should be specific places for entertainment that are separate from shopping areas. In the spring and summer, parks and other open spaces become more popular, particularly in the afternoons and at weekends, for family outings. Open spaces are very important for people living in Beyoğlu given the lack of green areas in the residential areas, the large crowds and the density of the population.

The low-income residents of the Beyoğlu district tend not to use the existing cultural facilities, including the cinemas, preferring to go on picnics, for which neighbours will sometimes get together to hire a minibus or bus. For longer holidays, visiting the hometown (village) remains a common pursuit. *“Each year we go to our village for two weeks, which is like a holiday”* (R25, 47-year-old man from Alucra-Giresun). In the district, Village Associations (*Köy Dernekleri*) organise such trips, enabling people to visit their hometowns at a reasonable cost.

The relatively higher income groups, especially the people living in the Cihangir and Gümüştuyu neighbourhoods who are employed in the arts and in well-paid jobs engage in more activities outside of their neighbourhood. Taking part in cultural activities is the main way of spending one’s free time for many professionals and artists living in Beyoğlu, and these people frequently go to the cinema or theatre, or go out for meals, especially at the weekend. It is evident that going to restaurants and bars on Friday and Saturday nights has become very popular among these groups. Proximity to many such venues is one of the main factors in the development of this habit, and is one of major reasons why they chose Beyoğlu as their place of residence.

Parks, green areas and open places along the coast are also important for this people. *“I never miss any cultural event. Now I have become fond of going to Gezi Park. On Sundays, I go there and read newspapers and books with my friends. If the weather is nice, then I go to Rumelibisari. It has a nice view and I usually have a lovely time there.”* (R25, 47 years, from the Black Sea region).

“I don’t have enough time to use all of the public spaces in Aynalıçeşme, but during summer I prefer to go to Gezi Park for fresh air, and I like to spend time at the nearby cafes. I do not use the shopping malls in my neighbourhood very often because I do not like shopping, even in the United States. I try to follow the vintage shops in my neighbourhood.” (R33, 27-year-old, English teacher from the United States).

For these people shopping malls seem less attractive: *“I refrain from going to shopping malls, especially at the weekend. If I really needed something, I visit malls during the week, since they are less crowded”* (R20, 27, jewellery designer). Instead, they prefer to explore the small shops in Beyoğlu, for example, R41 (29, woman musician) said: *“Shopping has never been the first priority in my life. I can even say that I have never visited a shopping mall, except to buy home furnishing material. There are small department stores in my neighbourhood. They are enough for me.”* (R6, 61, Armenian, born in Istanbul).

5.3 Use of public space

The findings of the interviews support the debates in the literature on the importance of public spaces, especially urban parks. Green areas are very important for all people living in Beyoğlu, but especially for low-income families, who spend time in parks in the afternoon and at weekends. The respondents had different views on the existing parks; some of them said that they had become very nice and well looked after, others complained about them being too crowded, and about how green spaces are used. *“Our municipality made nice parks that we go to with our children. We go to parks nearby, but also those in Kasımpaşa (still in the district) and up to Dörtöyl (R 26, 29 years old, working woman from Alucra). “I go to parks with my neighbours at night. That is the only time I spend out of home.” (R48, 35-year-old mother of a disabled child). People who complain about the parks talk about the drug addicts and mafia-type people who use them, who put them off visiting the existing green areas in the district. Some interviewees, on the other hand, said that there are not enough green areas at present, and that the existing parks are very crowded (R28, 21, woman from Black Sea region).*

Gezi Park has special importance in the minds of the inhabitants of the district, especially for the middle and middle-upper income groups. Before the Gezi Park movement, few people used Gezi Park, because it was considered dangerous due to the drug addicts who used it for illegal activities. After the protests of May 2013, people began to look after the park and started to use it more. R32 (30, Greek descent, female) said that the Gezi movement was a symbol of the struggle against what was going on in Turkey. According to some of the respondents, Gezi Park protests are very important to understand the value of public spaces. The inhabitants engaged in the arts, young professionals and even young foreign immigrants with high levels of education emphasized this issue. *“I spend very nice times in Gezi Park and Cibangir Park. They are quiet places among the crowds without any entertainment facilities.” (R37, 38, actor). According to some of the interviewees, the struggle is losing its momentum, and people from Beyoğlu are visiting Gezi Park less frequently, while others say that they tend to use the green areas in the district more after the events surrounding Gezi Park. Parks have become places of protest: “If we want to protest against something as the members of the Cibangir Platform, we gather in Cibangir Park, or we go to Abbas Ağa Park in Beşiktaş,” said R 18, a 58-year-old female activist).*

5.4 The importance of associations

In Turkey, interest in associations is very low, and there are studies suggesting that involvement in the activities of NGOs is around 10 percent (Eraydin *et al.*, 2008). The findings of this fieldwork, which covered people from different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, support the findings of earlier studies. It is apparent that especially new immigrants and low-income people have little interest in getting involved in different types of non-governmental associations, aside from hometown or village associations, which remain important for people who migrated to Istanbul from the different regions of Turkey.

A member of one township association, Dargeçit Association, said that the association in which they are involved aims to help poor immigrants from Dargeçit. If anybody is ill, their expenses are met by the association, and the association also sends school equipment to the villages of Dargeçit. Nowadays, there is a campaign to help Rojava people, and such activities act as platforms of social interaction. For example, the office of the association is also used to express condolences to the families who have lost loved ones. *“In Beyoğlu, we (immigrants from Alucra) have village associations that have branches also exclusively for women. That is why there are different activities organised for women. We meet at either day or night and listen music. These activities support social interaction.”*

(R26, 29, housewife from Alucra). *“The Dargeçitliler Association organises social activities, and I sometimes attend.”* (R22, 46, Kurdish woman). Some people, on the other hand, are critical of these associations, such as R16 (61-year-old Armenian), who says that *“Associations are mainly places where people play cards.”*

Foreign immigrants have almost no contact with existing associations. R11 (Nigerian man, 30) gave his views on this: *“We know some of the associations and international institutions; however, most of them do not have enough resources to help us. Some of my friends told me about the United Nations Office in Taksim, but they also did not help us.”* Some of the interviewees say that they are aware of the local associations in Beyoğlu, such as those working on educational issues or training programmes organised by municipalities, but are not interested in these activities.

While most of the people are uninterested in the activities of different associations, two distinct groups are exceptional in this regard. First, the LGBTTI groups are very active in the associations formed by gays, lesbians, transsexuals and transvestites. There are several headquarters of such associations in Beyoğlu, and most of the interviewees think that they are doing a great job in defending the rights of disadvantaged groups. They also point to the existing associations that are working together and have organised as a member of a coalition called *Rainbow*.

“I am the founding member of the Pink Life (Pembe Hayat) LGBTTI Association and I am also an activist. Furthermore, I am a founding member of the Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Islam and a volunteer in Kaos GL (another LGBTTI association). The main problem we face is hate murders (nefret cinayetleri), and we are looking to form a solidarity network against them.” (R43, 38, LGBTTI, performer).

Another important group is musicians, who try to form networks in order to protect their rights, including those related to royalties. Among the interviewees, there were people belonging to various associations formed by different types of musicians, and these associations can be regarded as occupational associations, being related mainly to work.

Besides these groups, it is possible to find people that work for different associations and policy platforms, some examples of which are as follows: *Cibangir Dayanışması* and *Roma Parkı Bostanı* (R32, 30, Greek descent, born in Istanbul); *The Kurdish Foundation* (R44, 23, Kurdish man); *Greenpeace*, *Diyabet Derneği* and *Kadın Emegini Değerlendirme Vakfı* (R18, 58, woman).

5.5 Conclusions

The findings related to activities in and outside of the neighbourhood show that both immigrants and low-income families with lower levels of education, living in the Beyoğlu district spend most of their time in their neighbourhoods, and indicate that the neighbourhood is very important in building social interactions. They show little interest in the cultural activities that take place nearby, and refrain from taking part in the activities of local associations or using the facilities provided by the local government. Their social relations are restricted to family, friends and neighbours, and these strong networks helps them to sustain their living in Istanbul, while at the same time allowing them to maintain the lifestyles they had in their hometown or village. They have less chance to take advantage of the different opportunities that a huge metropolitan area has to offer.

The second group of people, who belonged to professional groups with better education, are extremely different, and have a different way of life. In fact, this is why they chose to live in

Beyoğlu, and most can be defined as extraverted people, meaning that they like to spend time in the outside world with other people and frequent different cultural and entertainment facilities. Their level of involvement in the activities of associations is quite different, which is shaped by the importance of their problems, identities and interests.

These findings highlight an interesting issue, that the level of education and income is more influential in the lifestyles of people than ethnic, cultural and religious differences.

6. Social cohesion

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we aim to explore to what extent the diversity of a residential area is important for social cohesion, and to identify the issues that foster or hinder the development of social cohesion in a neighbourhood. To this end, we will first discuss how the association between diversity and social cohesion can be analysed, and pose different questions that will enable us to investigate how they are associated.

In general, there is a common belief among scholars that despite differences among the residents, communities can live together in harmony, although finding a balance between diversity and solidarity may be quite difficult (Amin, 2002). Some studies are pessimistic about the level of social cohesion in diverse environments (Putnam, 2007) and, that said, there is need to focus on the contextual factors that play a role in this relationship. Social cohesion can be thought of as the glue that holds a society together (Maloutas and Malouta, 2004), while the definition of social cohesion put forward by Chan et al. (2006:290) is quite useful in understanding the components of this concept. *“Social cohesion is a state of affairs concerning both the vertical and the horizontal interactions among members of society, as characterised by a set of attitudes and norms that includes trust, a sense of belonging and the willingness to participate and help, as well as their behavioural manifestations.”*

This report focuses on two main issues of social cohesion; namely, the role of horizontal interactions, mainly networking among the members of the society; and trust and mutual support, as the set of norms and attitudes that enable people to live together with their neighbours.

Existing literature suggests that network characteristics are important in building a coherent society, and increase the well-being of individuals by enhancing social capital among them (Woolcock, 2000; Stone, 2001; Narayan, 2002; Dekker and Bolt, 2005; Kearns and Forrest, 2000). Strong social ties between individuals, certain family members, close friends and members of ethnic groups help to create bonding capital (Sabatini, 2008), which can be a major source of emotional and material support. Strong social ties are especially important in the poor and excluded communities (Labini, 2008), while Modena and Sabatini (2011) claim that strong family ties are the leading mechanism in increasing the well-being of people, in terms of access to financial support or the provision of help. On the other hand, as Turok and Bailey (2004) suggest, the strong bonding social capital that is created by traditional networks can work against people and social groups in the development of other forms of social capital, and may disable the socialisation and independence of individuals in society.

The weak, cross-cutting social ties between heterogeneous individuals, such as friends of friends and neighbours lead to the second type of social capital, ‘bridging capital’ (Kleinhans *et al.* 2007), which allows people to get ahead through the provision of access to opportunities and resources in social circles other than their own (Forrest and Kearns, 2001; Stone, 2001; Sabatini, 2008). That said, several empirical studies have documented that networks of poorer people may not create good opportunities,

since they are formed among people who share a disadvantaged position (McPherson and Smith-Lovin, 1982; Braddock and McPartland, 1987; Ibarra, 1992). Building bridging capital is not easy in diverse neighbourhoods. According to the homogeneity theory (Gijssberts *et al.*, 2011), people prefer to associate with others who have similar characteristics, and it can therefore be expected that people in heterogeneous neighbourhoods tend to have fewer contacts with fellow residents than those in homogeneous neighbourhoods. Similarly, the group conflict theory claims that people feel threatened by the presence of other groups, and there is more distrust towards the out-groups when the numerical presence of these groups is stronger. The third type social capital is linking capital, which is based upon connections between those of different levels of power or social status, and includes such links as those formed between established professional and administrative structures and local communities. These networks are important in allowing households to adapt to newly emerging circumstances and to engage in social relationships with those in authority, which may be used to garner resources or power.

The *intensity* of networks among different groups in a residential area is important, but there is also a need to understand the *nature* of existing networks. For this, we gain benefit from the notions of *trust* and the *willingness to help* – in other words, *mutual support*. Trust is seen as a component of social capital by some authors (Fukuyama, 1995), while others see it rather as a source (Putnam *et al.*, 1993), or form of social capital in itself (Coleman, 1988). Nanetti (2006) and Leonardi *et al.* (2011) define “social trust” as the dimension of social capital that expresses widespread and mutual confidence in others. They claim that social trust, when present, can be found in multiple societal relationships –between not only family, friends and neighbours. There are again different views with respect to the relations between trust, mutual support and diversity. Putnam’s (2007) view is negative, claiming that a higher ethnic diversity in the neighbourhood goes hand in hand with less trust, and leads to even less trust in the so-called out-group (for example, people of different ethnicity), but also to distrust in the in-group. Vranken (2004) asserts that the non-conflicting relationships between these diverse groups could be structured at lower spatial levels (neighbourhood or district).

6.2. Composition of interviewees’ egocentric networks

This chapter explores which types of networks defined above exist among the people living in neighbourhoods identified with high levels of diversity, and among which groups are the different networks more important than the others. The findings of the interviews reveal some considerable differences among the respondents living in Beyoğlu in terms of networking patterns. The different patterns of networks can be classified under three headings; family based, ethnic and hometown networks and neighbourhood relations; friendship networks and ethnic networks.

Family based, ethnic and hometown networks, besides neighbourhood relations

The findings of the fieldwork indicate that relations with family members and relatives are very important for all groups, but especially for immigrants and people who belong to minority ethnic groups. Living close to each other is one such survival strategy in traditional societies, especially in the event of a lack of social security systems and modern support institutions. That explains why although Beyoğlu is a highly diversified area, it is possible to see agglomerations of family members and relatives in the same neighbourhoods of Beyoğlu. The Mukhtar of Çukur (R1, male, 51, Kurdish descent) emphasises the advantage of living in close proximity with their family and relatives:

“Living together is very important. In a village, everybody knows each other. If you live alone in a certain place, it can be like living in a prison. When we see our family and friends, we get rid of our boredom. We feel relaxed and safe.”

Many African immigrants also prefer to live together in the same neighbourhood, saying that it makes them feel safe (R11, 30, Nigerian textile worker). They spend time with family and relatives, and engage in different activities together, such as picnics, sporting activities, shopping and home visits. They highlight weddings and funerals as important activities that bring them together.

Beyoğlu has high population mobility, especially in dilapidated areas, where urban regeneration projects either are planned or started. Obviously, physical change triggers changes in the composition of the population, and some of the interviewees expressed sorrow at losing their family networks as relatives left the neighbourhood. Particularly those of ethnic descent wanted to sustain their existing family-, relative- and friend-based networks, and were not very receptive to forming relationships with the new residents of their neighbourhood.

“Kurtuluş is the place where most of the Armenians live. In Kurtuluş, I have lots of relatives and friends, and they are the people I meet quite often. My sister-in-law lives in the same street; my sister lives in the next one. We share this neighbourhood with friends, family and relatives. There is no friendship based on being neighbours; relationships are based on family and friendship connections.” (R16, 61, Retired man, Armenian)

In certain neighbourhoods in Beyoğlu, such as Çukur and Piyalepaşa, being from the same region is important, and migrants from the same regions of Turkey tend to live in the same districts in Istanbul, where they form dense social networks. In such a situation, neighbours may be compatriots, being people whom they have known for along time, and this makes them feel safe and more confident. For example, one respondent, a school bus driver (R2, 34, of Kurdish descent), says that most of his neighbours are from the same region, namely Mardin Dargeçit.⁴

Although there is existing literature claiming that neighbourhood relations may be less in diversified neighbourhoods, the result of the interviews show that the importance of neighbours varies among the different social groups. An important factor in building relations with neighbours is the amount of time spent in the neighbourhood. In general, there is reluctance among the existing residents to establish relationships with newcomers, although this may change after people get to know each other.

Several of the interviewees from low-income families underlined the importance of their neighbours, claiming that they were one of the reasons they chose to remain in this neighbourhood. R12 (49, Romani musician) said that *“the reason he prefers to live in his existing neighbourhood is his neighbours”*. Several respondents also glorified their neighbourhood relations, underlining the importance of neighbourhood residents knowing each other for a long time.

“For us, neighbourhood relations are very important. In our neighbourhood, not only our fathers, but also our grandfathers know each other. Everybody has a nickname. For example, everybody calls me the son of Çakar Ahmet. I am a child of this neighbourhood. Although the windows of my house are always open, I have never lost even one Turkish Lira.” (R53, 33, offal seller, Romani descent)

As the above quotation indicates, in neighbourhood relations, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds are not so important, and neighbours may have different ethnic backgrounds, cultures and even socio-economic status, but living in the same place is what connects them to each other.

In the neighbourhoods, there are some actors, who facilitate relations between neighbours. They act as social mediators. Local grocery stores and shopkeepers are very important in this respect. R18 (58, working for a Women’s Cooperative, living in Cihangir) says: *“I am on very friendly terms with all local*

⁴ A small settlement in South East Anatolia.

shopkeepers. I have my butcher, greengrocer. Even when I don't need to buy anything, I visit them for a chat." Such places have thus become a meeting place for neighbours, and this is also true for foreigners. As R31 (27, student, from Athens, Greek) indicates, local stores are points of social interaction. Other important meeting places include coffee shops, where most people spend their free time with friends. For Romani people, however, more than a place, it is the activity of making music together that is more important. They make music everywhere, including in the coffee shops.

Limited connections with neighbours and family members, but strong friendship networks: Parallel lives

While interaction among neighbours is important for low-income families, for women and people working in the neighbourhood and elderly, there are certain groups that maintain limited relations with the local inhabitants. First, for artists and people with full-time jobs outside Beyoğlu, neighbourhood networks seem less important, as they prefer to form relationships with people from outside their neighbourhood. Some of these respondents emphasise the lack of time to develop close relations with their neighbours, and among these are the people who work in the entertainment sector, such as musicians, actors, players, etc., and those working in the services sector (R3, R23, R44). A 36-year-old man working in the entertainment business (R42) says, *"I usually work at night and sleep during the day. Therefore, I have no chance to make friends with neighbours?"*

There were quite different responses from the respondents related to the intensity and form of networks with friends/workmates. While a few of the interviewees claimed that they spend most time with their workmates, others say that they have weaker relations with them when compared to family, friends and neighbours. That said, for people with certain occupations, workmates are more important, such as actors. R38 (29, actor) emphasises the importance of relations with their working partners: *"Sharing your life with workmates is important for me. If you do not share something, what you do together (acting) become quite formal and unconvincing."*

Second, several of the new foreign residents said that while they do not have well-established relations with their neighbours, they observe the close relations among the original inhabitants. Several of the newly arriving foreigners have only limited interactions with their neighbours, since they do not know them. For these groups, the networks between friends living both in the same neighbourhood and in the different places in Istanbul are more important.

Third, bachelors/single people have fewer interactions with their neighbours and spend most of their time with their friends, with Beyoğlu as their meeting place. They attribute their limited interaction with people in their neighbourhood to the fact that most of their neighbours are married couples with different interests to them. The friendship networks mostly revolve around spending time together and joining social, cultural and recreational activities. The location of their living place, a neighbourhood in Beyoğlu, lends itself to the meeting of friends. Especially young people (R17) and those who work in the arts prefer to meet their friends in Beyoğlu, where they use the restaurants, bars and other places in close proximity:

"We are always here. After work, we eat and go to a place for entertainment. We get together with our group, and the aim is to have a good time. We do not miss cultural events. The location in which we live offers us a big advantage in this regard." (R34, 25, Engineer)

Fourth, gay people have fewer relations with their neighbours, keeping within their own network of friends in their social activities. R36 (26, IBM operator, gay) says that he does not know his neighbours, since he has no extra time for them. However, among the LGBTTT community there are some people who like to keep their traditional neighbourhood relations, such as R42 (38, actress, transsexual):

“I come from the generation that makes friends with its neighbours. My family members are those who get together with their neighbours and offer them a plate of food when they cook something nice, thinking that the smell of that food may make them long for it. That is why I try very hard to talk with my neighbours and sustain my contacts with them, although they may not be very enthusiastic.”

Fifth, most of the Romani people are reluctant to form relations with other residents of the neighbourhood, since they feel that they are excluded from existing networks. Some of them (R14) long for the old days, when friendships among neighbours were stronger, and say that if they were able to sell their house, they would leave the neighbourhood.

The dominance of ethnic networks and limited connections with the people in the neighbourhood: exclusionary relations

In networking, ethnic background is still important for some of the interviewees, especially for the new immigrants. One of the reasons behind the dense networks of people from the same ethnic background is the hostility shown towards them by the original residents. Although most of the local residents are tolerant of other groups, they may be relatively hostile to new immigrants from Syria and Africa. Accordingly, Syrian and African immigrants feel excluded from the existing social networks, and so form their ethnic networks, sometimes living like a clan. For example, one 52-year-old Syrian/Kurdish immigrant claimed that local people did not welcome them at all. All of the Syrian respondents (7) that were interviewed during the fieldwork said that they maintained relations only with people from the same ethnic background.

“The native residents of this neighbourhood did not welcome us, and we have little affection for them. I know only the Mukhtar and the real estate agent in the neighbourhood, out of necessity. I have no relations with anyone else.” (R5, 52, Syrian immigrant, Kurdish descent)

Some of the immigrants complain about this situation and declare that they want to return to their country. One 23-year-old Syrian immigrant of Kurdish descent says that he is not happy living in this neighbourhood or this city, and wants to return as soon as the war is over. African people have more difficulty in forming networks with Turks, and often have conflicts with their neighbours when they first moved to their neighbourhood. After a long period of time, they have almost solved their problems, but still they do not have close relations with their neighbours (R11, 30, Textile worker, Nigerian).

The findings above show that people tend to maintain contacts with people from the same background. When someone is from a different background, there is less contact. There are parallel societies in some neighbourhoods, where relations among several groups stay limited and are sometimes even hostile. One immigrant from Giresun-Alucra (R25) even refers to people from other regions in Turkey or with different cultural backgrounds as “foreigners”, and says that there is unfriendliness towards others. She explains this lack of sympathy to others as follows:

“We meet the ones who have known each other for a long time. Although we are not hostile to foreigners, obviously we have our reservations about them, just as they do about us, since everybody likes those with whom they are familiar.”

The findings show the importance of families and neighbours can be different for different groups. While the importance of neighbours are still important for certain groups, including marginal groups, the people who have a different lifestyle and hard working conditions have less relations with their close neighbours. In fact, it is possible to observe different and parallel lives in the same neighbourhood.

6.3 Living together with neighbours: trust and mutual support

Do trust-based relations exist among neighbours who belong to different ethnic, cultural and socio-economic groups? Among which groups do mutual support networks exist? The responses to these questions related to trust and mutual support among neighbours are varied. While some respondents, emphasise their trust in their neighbours and the existing mutual support networks, others do not support this view.

Strong trust-based relations and mutual support among several groups in neighbourhoods

Trust-based relations with neighbours are considered important, especially for people from the more disadvantaged groups. They form good and trust-based relations with their neighbours, since support provided by neighbours, as well as their relatives, are essential for the sustainability of their life in Beyoğlu. *Giving them the key to my home* was used as a symbol of trust by many interviewees. R19 (49, working woman, Turkish) affirms that when they go somewhere outside the city, they give their key to her neighbour so that they can water the plants and look after the fish in their small aquarium. People borrow different things from neighbours, including money; ask for help when they have health problems; need help with childcare, etc. The importance of similar types of relations is confirmed by many others, such as interviewee R51 (62, retired), R32 (30, Rum woman, born in Istanbul) and R22 (46, Kurdish woman). Immigrants, especially those from the Black Sea region emphasise the importance of mutual assistance among neighbours on health issues and in general, with the interviewees claiming that neighbours will help when necessary. They express that *“there is a neighbourhood spirit here.”*

Mutual support among neighbours is very important for certain groups. For example, one of the interviewees (R46), who is the mother of a disabled child, indicated that for her, mutual support is vital:

“My neighbour Gülsüm is my closest friend. Every time I needed it, she ran to help me. God bless her. My daughter has grown up with her help. Neighbours are extremely important if you have a disabled child and you have to work for a living.”

However, trust and a willingness to help inflict also an element of social control on those people who are in need of support, although this is usually accepted as habitual and positive by those asking for help from others. R47 (43, single, working as service personnel in a school for the disabled) says that: *“I get support from my two best friends, who look after my younger daughter when I am at work. My eldest daughter goes to secondary school, and all of the people in the neighbourhood keep a protective eye on her. I also ask my neighbours to take care of her, since she is so young and can make a mistake.”*

The social control in the neighbourhood, although unfamiliar to some foreign immigrants, facilitates living and makes their life safer. R33 (English teacher, American, 27) explains her feelings in this regard: *“In general, I trust my neighbours. They ask questions about you, sometimes they are worried about you. For example, the woman on the first floor knows when and where I work, she knows my general habits and the times I spend at home. When I am late or when I am in trouble, I am sure she will worry for me and wonder about me. Such feelings create trust and I feel safe when she is around ...If I have any troubles with Turkish bills, they translate it for me. All my neighbours help each other in times of need.”* There are also several interviewees who say that they trust their neighbours, although they do not have close relations with them, such as R41 (29, woman, musician).

In building trust-based relations and mutual support among neighbours, how many years people have spent in neighbourhood is important. Most of the interviewees say that living in the same neighbourhood for many years leads to mutual trust among neighbours, and suggest that ethnic and

cultural differences do not matter in building a trusting relationship. As local shops are network nodes in the neighbourhood, trust relations with local tradesman are considered important.

When I was a kid I always forgot my keys at home and had to wait for my father in the small grocery store owned by Muzaffer Abi. When I had no money to return home from school, I took a taxi and asked Muzaffer Abi to pay the taxi, and my father would pay him back later.”(R20, 27, Actress, jewellery designer)

In the neighbourhood, people can obtain most things from local shops without providing a deposit or a contract, and can pay later. One of the respondent (R19, 49, working woman, Turkish) says, *“I have unlimited credit, which is based on trust”*.

No trust, no mutual support

In contrast, some of the interviews claim that they have no trust-based relations with their neighbours:.

- Some groups do not trust the people with other ethnic and cultural backgrounds, with Romani people in particular facing problems related to trust with their neighbours. People of Kurdish descent in particular are uncomfortable about living together with Romani people: *“This is not a nice neighbourhood. It is disgusting. If a man is shot, nobody helps in this neighbourhood. This is a Romani neighbourhood; unfortunately, we live in the same place.”* (R21, 67, coffee shop owner, Kurdish man)
- In general, it is people of the older generations who complain most about their neighbours and say that they do not trust them. R16 (61, Retired man, Armenian), who lives in Kurtuluş (a middle- income neighbourhood in Beyoğlu), has a different reason for his lack of trust of the people in his neighbourhood: *“I cannot trust my neighbours since they are bourgeois. You cannot trust bourgeois people.”*
- Syrian immigrants who migrated to Istanbul only recently became the group that is excluded most from existing neighbourhood networks. R7 (45, Syrian mother, Kurdish descent) claims that they do not get any support from their neighbours, except from those sharing their Kurdish descent. *“If the Kurds were not here, we would be dead. They are the only people that helped us. If they had not supported us, our living conditions would be worse. They also offer us financial help.”* That said, it is possible to observe some of the contacts that have already begun to be established between the Syrian immigrants and existing residents. Some of the Syrian immigrants say that they trust their neighbours in terms of their security. According to a 25-year-old Syrian cook of Kurdish descent (R9), if anybody bothers them, their neighbours will help.

While many of the interviews emphasise the good neighbourhood relations and social cohesion that exist in the different neighbourhoods of Beyoğlu, there are others that do not share the belief in the presence of trust-based relations and mutual support in the district. One of the respondents criticised the belief in mutual support in Turkey, saying that *“although there is a common belief in Turkish society in the strength of neighbourhood ties and support among residents that is not actually the case”*. (R45, 29, musician, American).

“I have been here in Turkey for more than two years and have not noticed any mutual help among neighbours. In different regions of Turkey, mutual support may be important, but it is certainly not available in Istanbul.” Similarly R43 (Actress, transsexual) expresses her view on this subject: *“I even think that the inhabitants of Beyoğlu do not know each other. Yesterday my neighbour fell down the stairs with a beer bottle in his hand. We wanted to help him, since his hand was bleeding, but he did not want our help and left the apartment. He never spoke to us.”*

6.4 Conclusions

In this chapter, we have explored to what extent the diversity of the neighbourhood is important for social cohesion, and have attempted to answer the questions: *Do the trust-based relations exist among neighbours of different ethnic, cultural and socio-economic groups? Among which groups do mutual support networks exist?* An evaluation of interrelationship between diversity and social cohesion in Beyoğlu, Istanbul reveals some interesting features of this relationship.

- Firstly, although there were some contradictory views, it can be said that most interviewees believe that diversity does not affect social cohesion in any way. They declare that even in their diverse neighbourhood, they have different types of networks, including those related to their neighbours, trust relations and mutual support among the residents. Those with negative views on the level of social cohesion in their districts are mainly new immigrants (especially Syrian Kurds), and young and single individuals. As some of the interviewees emphasised, living in the same neighbourhood is important in building trust-based mutual networks. Young individuals, especially professionals with different lifestyles, have stronger networks with their friends, which decreases their connections with the inhabitants of the same neighbourhood.
- Second, the fieldwork revealed that, still, networks among members of the family and relatives are important in Beyoğlu, as one of the most important characteristics of Turkish society, although this is also true for foreign immigrants. For low-income families, these types of networks are essential, and for people from different groups and of different status, it is still very important. Moreover, for many respondents approached during the fieldwork, living in close proximity to one's family and relatives brings feelings of safety and guarantees against loneliness.
- Third, relations among compatriots are still important among those who migrated from different regions of Turkey. Although, there is a growing impression that these types of relations are becoming lost in large urban centres, the findings of this study indicate the sustained significance of compatriotship.
- Fourth, ethnic and friendship networks are important for specific groups, although not for all; while relations with neighbours are deemed important for most of the interviewees. Even between some groups with completely different cultural norms and values it is possible to see strong neighbourhood relations and mutual support.
- Fifth, it is possible to see trust-based relations and mutual support between diverse groups. In building these relations, local meeting points, such as coffee shops and grocers, are important, facilitating interaction among neighbourhood residents.
- Sixth, in general, the interviewees define Beyoğlu as a place of tolerance, although it is apparent that mutual support may lead to social control.
- Seventh, younger generations are more open to other identities, and for them, friendship with people from different ethnic, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds is important, as emphasised by several interviewees. They say that they have relations not with family and friends, but also people with different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds.
- In general, the interviews show that in diverse neighbourhoods, both parallel lives and intense and good relations are possible. The neighbourhood is still important materialising social contacts and enabling certain people to continue living in a huge metropolitan area.

7. Social mobility

7.1 Introduction

Literature identifying the specific role of neighbourhood diversity in social mobility is limited, with most focusing on social capital, and thus the social contacts between people living in the same neighbourhood. The question of how individuals can profit from their social contacts is crucial here. Do neighbourhoods and their population composition indeed affect the social mobility of their residents? There is no consensus on the effect of neighbourhood composition on social mobility. Several studies have shown that neighbourhood effects do exist, but they are always found to be small (Galster *et al.*, 2008; Brännström and Rojas, 2012; Gordon and Monastiriotis, 2006). Why are these neighbourhood effects so small? Existing explanations point to the limited contacts between different kinds of people, since individuals generally have contacts with people who are like them (Rosenbaum *et al.*, 1998) and the contacts outside of the neighbourhood becoming more important due to the increasing transport facilities and the Internet and social media (Van Kempen and Wissink, 2014). In this regard, it cannot be said that contacts are instrumental in finding a better job. In this chapter, we address this question aiming to understand the importance of neighbourhood diversity in finding a job or a well-paid job, in general, on the social mobility of inhabitants.

7.2 Current and previous jobs

Among the inhabitants of Beyoğlu, it is possible to observe people working in very different types of jobs.

- Some are engaged in jobs at the lower end of the existing labour market. Especially many Syrian immigrants earn their living as workers in informal activities. Their primary interest is to earn a living, and nothing more. Most of the Syrian women sell water on streets and do house cleaning, while the men either collect scrap paper and junk, or work in the construction sector. They complain that not many entrepreneurs offer them jobs, and even if they find a job, they work informally, without being registered in the social security system (R6, 50, Syrian woman). Most of these people work in Beyoğlu: *“I am working as a waiter in a café, and have a free day once every two weeks. I work for 60 TL/day (approximately 22 Euros) without any social security. Before getting this job, I slept in parks for over two months; now I am renting a dilapidated house with my friends in Tarlabası.”* (R39, 20, Syrian immigrant)
- Immigrants from Africa seem to be engaged in different activities to the immigrants than immigrants from Syria. According to one of the interviewees, *“Most of the African immigrants buy goods from Aksaray, Eminönü or Osmanbey and send them to Africa. In a way we engage in export-import activities, mainly in informal exports. The rest of them are working in textile firms. There are also people who came here with the intention of going on to European countries. For them, this is a stopover.”* (R11, 30, Nigerian man)
- Some of the groups who have been living in Beyoğlu for many years are engaged in specific sectors. For example, the Romani’s are specialised in the entertainment sector, especially as professional musicians, and since almost all Romani work in this sector, they are able to work collectively.
- Women labour merits special attention, as a significant number of women does not work outside the home in Turkey, being rather “housewives”. The share of employed women in the active age is about 25 per cent; however, there are very active and hardworking women. In Beyoğlu, one can observe a similar picture. While there is a group of women

responsible looking after family, there are women who work very hard under difficult conditions, and who change their jobs to earn more income.

The interviews showed that most of the people with low levels of education and low skill levels seem to change their jobs quite frequently. Most of the jobs that are available to them are temporary. Depending on changing conditions and opportunities, people shift easily from one job to another. A good example is the Mukhtar of Çukur: *“I am now the Mukhtar of the Çukur neighbourhood, but before, I worked as a peddler, as a taxi driver, as a manager of a coffee shop. Finally, I was elected Mukhtar of this neighbourhood.”* (R1, 51, Mukhtar of Çukur)

The main reasons for changing jobs are:

- The most important motivation in changing jobs is to find a better paid one. One interviewee claimed that it was not difficult to find a job. One interviewee (R28, 21, immigrant from the Black Sea region-Trabzon, woman) said that she is now working in a restaurant, but she worked previously as a nanny, as a textile worker and as a waitress in another restaurant. She says that she found work through newspaper advertisements and through people living in the neighbourhood. According to her, if you want to work, it is possible to find a job, and there are many studies in Turkey showing that by moving from one job to another, workers can increase their wages. This is especially true in the textile production sector, in which women working in small workshops change their jobs as soon as they find a better paid one (Eraydin and Erendil, 1991).
- First, the decreasing attractiveness of some occupations, products and services forces people to change their jobs. For example, the school bus driver (R2, 34, Kurdish descent) was formerly a tailor, until custom-made clothing lost its attractiveness with the rise in popularity of the ready-to-wear clothing sector. This resulted in him finding work as a driver for a cargo company, and after a year he changed his job again as he thought the wages were too low. Now, he works for another company still as a driver.
- People prefer a well-settled job rather than a temporary one, and so, for example, rather than working as a construction worker, they want either to have a full-time job or to own their own business. A shopkeeper explains why he changed his job, *“You have to change your living place quite often when you are employed as a construction worker; having a retail shop makes your life much easier if you have a family.”* (R25, 47-year-oldman from the Black Sea region (Giresun, Alucra)
- The medium- to high-skilled immigrants also change their jobs, one of the motivations of which is to have a different kind of living and working environment. R33 (27, woman from the United States) says: *“For now I am a part-time worker until the end of November, but in December I will become a full-time worker in a pre-school for international children. It is what I wanted to do. I am giving part-time English lessons to Turkish students, so we mainly meet in Taksim, I do not have a specific working place for now. I found this job by myself. I applied for the job, and they hired me. I left my previous job to move to Turkey. When I was in New York I worked in an insurance company for four years, and at the same time I was a yoga teacher.”*
- Similar to low-skilled people, it is possible to see some people with unique skills who moved from being a wage earner to become a small entrepreneur. For example, a jewellery designer working for a company now owns a jewellery atelier, or a man working in a hotel in Beyoğlu left to open a small café. In fact, opening a small enterprise, which is a radical change in working status, is usually appreciated by the community, and doing more than one job is usual. For example, R30 (27, Greek) says

that he is a partner in a publishing house and is a member of a group that performs Greek music several days a week.

- Most people have to work after their retirement, since pensions are not sufficient for living in Turkey. The jobs people work in after retirements are usually unrelated to their earlier occupations and skills. A man who owns and manages a coffee shop says that he was a welder before he was retired (R21, 67, male, Kurdish descent), and one woman who worked as a bank cashier is now working as a manager in a women's cooperative. There are interesting cases, one of which is a newspaper editor, who was a technician in a biochemical laboratory before retirement. He explains how he became newspaper editor: *"I was a technician in the medical sector. I was a friend of Hrant Dink (Armenian journalist who was murdered), and once in a while I wrote for the Agos newspaper, especially in my fields of specialisation. After Hrant was killed, I devoted more time to the Agos newspaper (published in Armenian). After two months I realised that it would be better if I spent more time there, and so after I retired, I began to work as the editor."* (R16, 61, Armenian man, born in Istanbul)

7.3 Using neighbours and others to find a job

In general, family members, relatives, friends and neighbours are important in finding a job, and most of the respondents emphasised that social networks and social relations were extremely helpful in this regard. R2 (34, school bus driver) says: *"My neighbours and friends supported me in finding a job. I did the same. We always give moral and material support to each other."*

Providing support to people from the same hometown, and who live in the same neighbourhood, is also important in finding work. Many of the interviewees who migrated from the different regions of Turkey said that compatriots like to give the different types of support to newcomers, including help in finding a job. According to interviewees, the bonds between immigrants from Eastern Anatolia and the Black Sea region are stronger than the mutual support among immigrants from the western regions, which can be explained by the lower levels of income of the former regions.

New foreign immigrants, however, receive little support from their neighbours, and can rely only on their family members and relatives to find a job. The Syrian respondents say that relatives have to provide support to each other in order to survive in Istanbul. In general, they have very close ties, and sometimes work together. Some of these interviewees also said that they obtained support from Kurdish people living in Beyoğlu, which is a strong indication that ethnic origin still matters in social support mechanisms, including active coping assistance. For immigrants from Africa, on the other hand, friends living in the same neighbourhood are more important.

For the relatively medium- to high-skilled people, social networks are more important than family bonds. R17 (22-year-old Armenian man, born in Istanbul) explained how he found its existing position: *"After I learned that there was an open position in the newspaper, my friends, who know the manager, recommended me for the job. If you know people who own the workplace or if you work in that workplace, the chance of getting the job increases."* For people with artistic careers and for individuals in the entertainment sector, the social networks that form among friends are extremely important; although in recent years, the importance of social relations is decreasing, while the role of the internet, social media, etc. is increasing, as exemplified below:

- For technical professions, social networks are relatively less important. Some of the interviewees declared that they found their job by applying for a position that appeared in a newspaper, or on the window of the workplace. R35 (LGBTI, 26) explains how he

found his job: “After my graduation I completed my on-the-job training in İzmir and began to work in İzmir as a salesperson. After that, I saw a job advertisement and applied for it. Following several interviews I was accepted and moved to Istanbul.”

- Associations and NGOs are important sources of information regarding new job opportunities.
- Among the new methods of finding a job, mass media has become important for skilled people, while neighbourhood relations are becoming less important.
- LinkedIn and other Internet sites are also used to find good job opportunities, as indicated by R36 (26, LGBTT, computer engineer). Moreover, television news can help people get information about potential job opportunities.

The findings indicate that relations in the neighbourhood are important finding certain jobs, mostly the ones that need less skilled labour, while for medium- to high skilled people they are relatively less important.

7.4 Neighbourhood reputation as an asset in upward social mobility

Although living in the Beyoğlu district offers several advantages to people seeking work, none of the interviewees spoke about neighbourhood reputation as an asset in upward social mobility, although none of them spoke about the reputation of the district as a negative asset either.

New immigrants (R4, Syrian restaurateur) say that it is not the reputation of the neighbourhood, but the location and the composition of the people in the neighbourhood that enables them to find jobs in different sectors. They say that living close to Taksim offers a real opportunity, where there are many jobs in the service sector, including jobs for low-skilled people. Secondly, Beyoğlu-Taksim is defined as a place of interaction, which helps people find information about new job opportunities. R33 (27, American woman, English teacher) said: “I think living in Taksim helps me, everybody comes to Taksim, I can meet anyone in Taksim, especially my students, and go on to find new students.”

On the other hand, people with careers in the arts and those engaged in cultural activities emphasise the significance for their profession of living in such a diverse district. Many of the people who are involved in culture-related activities also live in the district, and this allows them to make face-to-face contact easily. R37 (38, actor) emphasises that Beyoğlu permits him to meet people of different origins, and with different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, as well as people with different experience, which he says is very important for an actor. R45 (American man, musician) also underlines this issue, saying that for a person such as him, Cihangir-Beyoğlu is the perfect place.

7.5 Conclusions

Although there are controversial views on the importance of neighbourhood diversity in social mobility, our findings indicate that it should not be underestimated. For several groups, especially the new immigrants, it would seem that living in such a diverse neighbourhood as Beyoğlu is quite important for finding a job. For people with different skills, social interaction in their neighbourhood may also be quite helpful in finding work. Obviously, the jobs found through social interactions may be quite similar to those of the people in the same network. Therefore, although relations in a neighbourhood are important in finding new jobs, the question how far they lead to actual social mobility remains open.

The findings of the study also indicated that contacts outside the neighbourhood and the new means of dissemination information, such as internet, are becoming important. The traditional means of information dissemination are being replaced by new forms of access to information, especially related to high-skilled jobs.

8. Perceptions of public policies and initiatives

8.1 Introduction

In an overview of policies related to diversity in Turkey we raised several important points (Eraydin *et al.*, 2014). First, we detected the unwillingness of policy makers to address the different forms of diversity explicitly. Although the term *diversity* is used in certain policy documents, it can be observed that the existing urban policies of central and local governments are focused primarily on the need to improve the well-being of disadvantaged groups and the access of such groups to public services. Second, the official documents, including policy briefs, plans and programmes of different central government agencies and local authorities reflect only limited concerns about cultural and ethnic diversity. In fact, the legislation regulating the responsibilities of both central and local government departments fails to define clearly their roles in issues related to diversity. Third, the emergent discourse on cultural diversity adopted by some central and local government departments is not reflected in current policies and practice. While the general discourse was *decreasing social pressure* on immigrants coming from different cultural backgrounds helping them to adapt to the way of living of the current urban dwellers, symbolised as the ‘Istanbul way of living’, there is a tendency to devalue and stigmatise some urban identities, such as Romani people. Fourth, while recent changes in the legislation are providing special rights and freedoms to ethnic groups, the other demands of some of these ethnic groups, are not being met. For example, still some ethnic groups have limited rights to education and broadcasting in their native languages. Finally, there is a growing authoritarianism in urban policies and in the discourse of the central and local governments, in which less emphasis is given to the practice of policies related to diversity.

This chapter aims to answer the following question: How are diversity-related policies perceived by the inhabitants of the Beyoğlu district? To this end, an analysis is made of the different policies and initiatives from the standpoint of the residents, while also providing a summary of what it is the different residents of Beyoğlu actually want.

8.2 Perception and evaluation of existing policies and initiatives: what do residents know?

Both the perception and evaluation of existing policies and initiatives vary substantially among the different groups.

New immigrants say persistently that they know nothing about public policies since they are new to the area, although they do receive some financial help from the central government: “*We obtain some financial support each month. We put our names on the list and we get money. Other than this, we know nothing about the policies and measures related to us*” (R9, 25, woman, Syrian immigrant). They tend to decline to comment on the amount of support they receive, and on the general policies of the government.

Domestic immigrants, on the other hand, often criticise the diversity related policies that focus on the disadvantaged groups. R26 (29, immigrant from Giresun-Alucra) says that social policies,

especially the ones targeting poverty alleviation, are insufficient: *“There are too many families in Beyoğlu, who are extremely poor. I am really concerned about them. There should be an acceptable poverty eradication programme that will help to these people”*.

On the other hand, the families who receive financial and food support either from the Fund for Social Support and Collaboration of the Directory of Social Support (Ministry of Family and Social Policies) or from the Beyoğlu Municipality are satisfied with the existing support schemes. R46 (38, mother of a disabled child) says: *“My husband is unemployed, and my child is disabled. We live with help from Beyoğlu Municipality. Their assistance services are good. I receive food and money.”* R52 (Mukhtar of Bostan neighbourhood) underlines that many families are in need of support in the Bostan neighbourhood: *“In our neighbourhood the people in need apply to the Fund for Social Support and Collaboration or to the Municipality, which provide food and financial assistance. The people can survive on this assistance.”* It is clear from the above quotations that poor people are interested in direct measures and their contribution to living conditions, but pay little interest to the other aspects of the diversity related policies.

However, the evaluation of the existing support policies shows that many people have difficulty to get benefit from existing support schemes. In fact, the emergence of various governance arrangements targeting poverty groups indicates that the insufficiency of the existing measures to enable poor people to improve their living conditions. Moreover, other disadvantaged groups, who belong to different ethnic and cultural groups, have various problems related to access to job opportunities. That is why there are different governance arrangements and non-governmental organisations specialised in providing support to these groups, which indicates the lack of interest central and local governments to deal with problems of diverse groups living in the Beyoğlu district.

8.3 Policy priorities proposed by interviewees: what do residents want?

According to many of the interviewees, the first policy priority with respect to diversity should be *“having the same attitude for all people”* (R31, 27, immigrant, Greek) and *“Respect to all and services for all, without prejudice”* (R36, 26, LGBTTT). This debate runs in parallel to the discourse of the government with respect to urban diversity, but at the same time, it means that special measures to support diversity are not on the agenda of the central or local governments, or the people.

Secondly, the interviewees who belong to disadvantaged groups spoke about several issues related to their own experiences and the personal problems they face, which include:

- Immigrants from different countries want to be given residence permits and to be free travel to their home countries and come back to Turkey without restriction. R11 (30, Nigerian man) complains about the short duration of residence permits, and expresses that extending residence permits in Turkey is very difficult.
- Many low-income people criticise the lack of social security, especially those working in temporary jobs. R12, a Romani musician, says: *“There should be social security for temporary workers. We have been working without any social security for years.”*
- Some interviewees complain about the level of assistance provided by the municipality, and say that the services provided are not good enough. They have been informed by their friends that the municipalities and the central government are providing financial help and food to poor families, but say that they have as yet received no such support (R23, 34, Kurdish woman).

The problems related to living in the district were also emphasised by the interviewees, who have been living in the district for a long period:

- The level of drug dealing and the lack steps to deal with the dealers is one of the key complaints of the interviewees. They say that even children of 15 are using drugs and that people are selling drugs even on the street. This was the main problem with some neighbourhoods in this district (R27, 23-year-old man from the Trabzon in the Black Sea region). Most people agreed that new policies and measures are needed to tackle this problem.
- Municipal services are defined as a policy priority by many of the respondents, with some being dissatisfied by the level of local government service, claiming that they are insufficient. Street lighting, garbage collection, the lack of parking spaces and other practical problems were highlighted by many of the respondents, while some complained about the loss of public spaces and the privatisation of health services. The privatisation of İlyardım Hospital in Taksim was criticised by many interviewees, most of whom said that this public hospital had been very important for them, and that its privatisation will mean a loss of access to health services for poor people with no social security. Moreover, many of the respondents from the better-educated groups are against the ongoing urban transition in the built-up areas that are occurring in the neighbourhoods.

Transformation projects tended to be another issue on the agenda of many people, who say that the local and central government are looking to transform some parts of the district. Some are concerned with the high value increase potential of their neighbourhood that will result from the new luxurious buildings that will be constructed to replace the old buildings. This will allow developers to earn huge profits, but more importantly, will lead to the loss of historical buildings, since all of the partners in redevelopment processes are looking only for financial gain. R37 (38, actor) gives the example of a shopping mall constructed on İstiklal Avenue, describing it as being against the general patterns of the built-up areas of the district.

Another point emphasised is the aim of gentrification projects, which force some groups that currently live in Beyoğlu to leave the district. R34 (LGBTT, 25) says that the people in power do not like those with different identities, and have a negative attitude towards them. He believes that urban renewal and gentrification projects are used to enforce them to leave Beyoğlu. The LGBTT groups believe the existing government does not approach them in a positive way and wants to “*make them invisible*”. Another group of interviewees said that the main reason for the hostility of government towards people living in Beyoğlu is the support they provided to those involved in the Gezi Protests. R35 (LGBTT, 26) complains about the attitude of the police and their heavy use of tear gas to disperse protesters.

The existing urban transformation projects are seen as efforts to coerce many small businesses to leave leaving Beyoğlu. There are increasing problems in the entertainment sector in Beyoğlu due to the increasing restrictions and pressures on people working in nightclubs. R40 (38, musician and owner of a café) states that they are planning to leave Taksim due to the restrictions being imposed on them, such as the ban on the use of the open spaces in front of the restaurants and cafés by the local government. Although some of the streets are pedestrianised, the municipality does not give permission for the use of the street in front of the premises, saying that it is detrimental to circulation in the neighbourhood. R37 (38, actor) highlights the restrictions on playing music in certain places, and talks about how they are taken off the streets and beaten. He says these kinds of intrusions decrease the attractiveness of the district, meaning that less and less people come to Beyoğlu to spend their free time.

8.4 Conclusions

In Turkey, although there is increasing attention to diversity in the discourse of policy makers and government officials, in practice, some of the diverse groups remain unsupported. The negative attitude towards certain groups by both local and central government sees little change, and this is a significant criticism of many people. The living conditions of several groups do not improve, and in some cases, they are unable to receive all their democratic rights. However democratic rights may not be the top priority for groups, who are struggling to make a living in Istanbul. What is negative about the local government attitude is the decreasing tolerance of different people and different ways of life, while the rise of authoritarian interventions and governance constitute the main threat to diversity. Especially, the attitude of the local government to places specialised in recreation activities, which are mainly used by people who belong to non-conservative groups, such as restrictions to use the open spaces in front of restaurants and cafes is given as an example of its authoritarian attitude.

9. Conclusion

Summary of the key findings

At the beginning of this report, we defined several questions that were to be answered in the different chapters. The questions and their answers, as garnered during the course of the field research, can be summarised as follows:

Why did people move to the area in which they now live? To what extent has the diversity of the area been a pull-factor? Were there other factors a much stronger motivator for settlement in the area?

Different groups choose to move to Beyoğlu, which is a highly diversified district, for different reasons. While its diversified character is important for certain groups of respondents, for others, especially for the new immigrants and low-income families, it was the low housing rents (due to the dilapidated state of the housing stock) that was the major motivating factor in their choice to move to certain neighbourhoods in Beyoğlu. For highly skilled professionals, artists and marginal groups (such as LGBTT groups) the “cosmopolitan” character (they use this word specifically rather than diverse) of the district played the leading role in their choice to live there. Even for the immigrants, the diversified character of the neighbourhood was a positive aspect, since are able to find people who are both similar and dissimilar to them, which alleviate any feelings of antagonism they may experience in the other neighbourhoods of Istanbul.

What do the residents think about the area in which they live? Do they see their neighbourhood’s diversity as an asset or a liability?

Beyoğlu is defined by most of the interviewees as a place where diverse open-minded people live in harmony. It can be considered unique, being home both to the rich and poor, and to affluent people and those groups who are excluded because of race, culture or ethnicity. Almost all of the respondents consider the diversity of the district to be an asset, although some are not satisfied to live in close proximity to particular groups (such as Romani people).

How do the residents make use of the diversified areas in which they live? Do they actively engage in diversified relations and activities in their neighbourhood? To what extent is the area they live in more important than other areas in terms of activities?

There are two distinct groups of residents with very different lifestyles. The first group can be characterised by poor families who migrated from the different regions of Turkey, and low-income people who have been living in Beyoğlu for many years. They spend most of their time in their neighbourhoods. For them, the neighbourhood is very important for the building of social interactions and their resulting social relations are restricted to family, local friends and neighbours. The cultural, ethnic and social backgrounds of neighbours are not very important for them once they become familiar with newcomers. The second group of people, professionals and people having higher levels of education have more relations outside their neighbourhood, and for them it is the cultural and entertainment activities in Beyoğlu that are important. The findings of the study indicate that the level of education and income matters more than differences based on ethnicity, culture and religion in the lifestyles of people.

To what extent is the diversity of the residential area important for social cohesion? Which elements foster social cohesion, and which elements hinder the development of social cohesion in the area?

Although there are some contradictory views related to this question, it can be said that most of the interviewees believe that diversity is not detrimental to social cohesion in the neighbourhoods. Many respondents declare that even in their diverse neighbourhood, they have different types of networks among their neighbours, besides trust-based relations that foster mutual support among the residents. It is even possible to see good neighbourly relations and mutual support among groups with completely different cultural norms and values. Those that maintain a negative view of social cohesion in their neighbourhoods are mainly the new immigrants, and young and single individuals. In general, the interviewees define Beyoğlu as a place of tolerance, which is one of key characteristics of social cohesion.

To what extent is the diversity of the neighbourhood important for social mobility? Which elements foster social mobility, and which elements hinder social mobility?

The findings indicate that the importance of diversity in the neighbourhood in promoting social mobility should not be underestimated. Especially for new immigrants, it would seem that living in Beyoğlu is quite important in finding work, although they profit mainly from the people like them. For these people with different skills, social interaction in their neighbourhood can be quite helpful when attempting to find a job. Obviously, the jobs that are found through social interactions will be quite similar to those of the people within the same network. For highly skilled people, the findings of interviews indicate that contacts outside the neighbourhood and the new means of job hunting, such as social media, are becoming more important.

How are diversity-related policies perceived by the inhabitants of the area?

In general, neither the diversity related policies nor the existing measures of the central and local governments are well known by the inhabitants, although most of them are aware that their living conditions do not improve much, and they do not have access to all of their democratic rights. What is important for some people who are sensitive to the diversity of the district is the decreasing tolerance of local and central governments to the different people and the ways they live, and maybe this is the critical issue in diversity debates.

How do residents profit from a hyper-diverse area

The findings of the interviews revealed that the diversity of the neighbourhood in which they live is defined as positive by many of the respondents. While some people think that the diversity

of the neighbourhood nourishes their experience with different cultures, for most of the people diversity is accepted as a fact, as an element of their way of life; and for most of them, the different ethnicities identities, cultures and religions are not so important. That said, the answers show that the intensity of networks among similar people is stronger than among those that are dissimilar. People prefer to have relations with people like themselves. Moreover, still the relations between different social groups are quite distant and there is a lack of trust to 'others'.

Do they profit from a hyper-diversified area? It is difficult to answer yes to this question for most of the groups, aside from the people who want to observe differences in the behaviours of people of different cultures, ethnicities and socio-economic groups. These people like to live in an urban environment in which differences exist; while for some others, the lack of social control in these diverse neighbourhoods when compared to those with a more conservative character is a significant asset, since they feel less excluded and able to choose to follow their own lifestyles. In terms of the negative factors, the most important is the existence of illegal activities, especially drug dealing, in some neighbourhoods. Like in many metropolitan centres, the illicit drug trade is concentrated in specific neighbourhoods of Beyoğlu, and obviously the people living in these neighbourhoods suffer from such activities.

What can policy makers learn from the perceptions and practices of the inhabitants?

Policy makers should learn two important issues from the inhabitants' perceptions. First, they have to understand the importance of providing acceptable living conditions for all, including the different kinds of immigrants. The main divisions in society are based on socio-economic differences rather than ethnic, cultural or religious differences, while the level of education is found the most important factor in Turkey defining socio-economic status in many studies in Turkey (Güvenç and Işık, 1997). Accordingly, in order to support social cohesion, providing a good education is vital, and it can be seen from the interviews that those with a better education are usually more tolerant of others. Furthermore, one of the most promising findings is that young people have higher levels of tolerance of people of different backgrounds.

Second, the findings show that while people with a higher level of education are more sensitive to their democratic rights, many people living in diverse neighbourhoods are more respectful and tolerant of protests, and in fact, there is strong support of social protests in the neighbourhoods, as well as criticisms of any prejudice to different lifestyles. That said it should be underlined that for people living under the poverty line, asking for democratic rights is far from the top of their agenda.

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Appendix

List of the interviewed persons

R	Interviewee	Age	Gender	Position in household	Income * group	Ethnic group
1	Mukhtar of Çukur Neighbourhood	51	M	Married, father in a household with 5 children	ML	Kurdish
2	School bus driver	34	M	Married, father in a household with 4 children	L	Kurdish
3	(Propane) delivery man	32	M	Married, father in a household with 2 children	ML	Kurdish
4	Syrian waiter in a restaurant	40	M	Married, father in a household with 5 children	L	Syrian-Kurd
5	Old Syrian man	52	M	Married, father in a household with 8 children	L	Syrian-Kurd
6	Old Syrian woman	50	F	Married, mother in a household with 5 children	L	Syrian-Kurd
7	Syrian woman	45	F	Married, mother in a household with 7 children	L	Syrian-Kurd
8	Young Syrian man	23	F	Married, father in a household with 2 children	L	Syrian-Kurd
9	Syrian woman	25	F	Married, mother in a household with 5 children	L	Syrian-Kurd
10	Syrian woman	30	F	Married, mother in a household with 6 children	L	Syrian-Kurd
11	Young black Nigerian man	30	M	Single	L	Nigerian
12	Romani musician	49	M	Married, father in a household with 3 children	ML	Romani
14	Old Romani woman	68	F	Married, mother in a household with 5 children	ML	Romani
15	Old Romani man	64	M	Married, father in a household with 3 children	H	Romani
16	Old Armenian man (born in Istanbul)	61	M	Married, father in a household with 5 children	MH	Armenian
17	Young Armenian man (in Istanbul)	22	M	Single, living with mother and father	ML	Armenian
18	Woman	58	F	Married, mother of 1 married daughter	H	Turkish
19	Woman	49	F	Married, mother in a household with 2 children	MH	Turkish
20	Artist woman (jewellery designer)	27	F	Single, living alone	H	Turkish
21	Kurdish old man	67	M	Single (widower), living alone	ML	Kurdish

22	Kurdish woman	46	F	Married, mother of 2, separated from husband	ML	Kurdish
23	Kurdish woman	34	F	Single	L	Kurdish
24	Young Azerbaijani man	23	M	Single, living with friend	L	Azerbaijani
25	Man from Black Sea region (Giresun, Alucra)	47	M	Married, father in a household with 5 children	MH	Turkish
26	Woman from Giresun, Alucra	29	F	Married, mother in a household with 1 child	ML	Turkish
27	Man from Black Sea region (Trabzon)	23	M	Single, living with his family (father, mother and sister)	ML	Turkish
28	Woman from Black Sea region (Giresun)	21	F		ML	Turkish
29	Man from Black Sea region (Gümüşhane)	21	M	Single, living with his family	MH	Turkish
30	Greek man (came from Athens for education)	33	M	Single, living alone	ML	Greek
31	Greek man (came from Athens for education)	27	M	Single, living with a Greek friend	MH	Greek
32	Rum woman Born in Istanbul)	30	F	Single, living alone	MH	Greek
33	Young American Woman	27	F	Single, living with two American friends	MH	American
34	LGBTT	25	M	Single, living alone	H	Turkish
35	LGBTT	26	M	Single, living alone	MH	Turkish
36	LGBTT	26	M	Single, living with 2 friends	MH	Turkish
37	Artist man (actor)	38	M	Married, father in a household with 1 child	MH	Turkish Kurdish
38	Artist man (musician)	29	M	Single, living alone	ML	Kurdish
39	Young Syrian man	20	33	Single	ML	Syrian Kurd
40	Artist man (musician)	38	M	Single (divorced), living alone	H	Turkish
41	Woman musician	29	F	Single, living with parents	MH	Turkish
42	LGBTT	36	M	Single	H	Turkish
43	LGBTT and Actress	38	F.	Single	H	Turkish
44	Young Kurdish man	23	M	Single, living in a household with 3 brothers	ML	Kurdish
45	Young American man	29	M	Single	H	American
46	Mother of Disabled Child	38	F	Married, living in a household with 2 children	ML	Turkish
47	Mother of Disabled Child	43	F	Single (divorced), living in a household with 3 children	L	Turkish
48	Mother of Disabled Child	35	F	Married, living in a household with 2 children	ML	Kurdish
49	Teacher of Disabled Children	30	F	Single	MH	Turkish
50	Mother of Disabled Child	37	F	Married, living in a household with 2 children	ML	Turkish

51	Retired 52 (Mukhtar of Bostan neighbourhood) (former mechanic)	62	M	Married, living in a household with wife	MH	Turkish
52	Mukhtar of Bostan neighbourhood	51	M	Married, living in a household with wife	H	Turkish
53	Young Romani man	33	M	Married, living in a household with wife	ML	Romani
54	Romani Musician	29	M	Single	MH	Romani
55	Educated migrant	28	M	Single	L	Greek Turkish origin

(*L (low) = 1500 TL per month, ML(medium-low)=1501–2500, MH(medium–high)=2501–5000, H(high)=5001+