Bordering the EU: Istanbul as a Hotspot for Transnational Migration

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Table of Contents

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Due to the large-scale migration from Turkey to Europe in general, and to Germany in particular, since the 1960s, Turkey has primarily been regarded as a migrant-sending country. This image of Turkey characterizes, however, only one aspect of the reality of Turkish migration. From a very general perspective, we can distinguish two phases in Turkish migration history: migration into the Ottoman Empire and the young Turkish Republic, and current global migration movements to Turkey.

In this context, it has to be stated firstly that Turkey received over 1,445,000 migrants of the Muslim religion and/or Turkish descent between 1870 and 1920. In addition to this, 836,826 migrants from the Balkans alone settled in Turkey in the first years of the Republic.[1] This migration flow included the population exchange with Greece and Bulgaria and was used as a tool for the homogenization of the population in the young Republic during the nation-building process. Parallel to the settlement of migrants of Turkish descent, we can also observe resettlement, displacement and annihilation of non-Muslims in Turkey.

Since the 1980s, the nature of migration flows to Turkey has changed dramatically. From the 1980s onwards, estimates put the numbers at up to 1 million (transit-) migrants from Iran, hundreds of thousands of Iraqi (transit-) migrants and refugees, three hundred thousand Turks from Bulgaria, suitcase traders, circular migrants and clandestine workers from Eastern European countries and the former USSR, transit migrants and refugees from the Middle East and Africa as well as an increasing number of mainly regular migrants

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[1] Kirişçi (1998, p. 63).

from the Western world.[2] All in all, we can say that the migration flows to-
wards Turkey have become much more diverse compared to their earlier coun-
terparts. We can characterize Turkey today as a migration-sending, receiving
and transit state.

At the crossroads of Asia, Africa and the European Union (EU), Turkey de-
lineates the global rich from the global poor at the frontier of the EU. In migra-
tory terms, the line between the global rich and global poor is visualized by
strict EU migration regulations, spoken of literally as "Fortress Europe". The
geographical and political location of Turkey in general and Istanbul in particu-
lar is fundamental to Turkey's migration reality.[3]

Istanbul as a global city is a hotspot for all the migration movements
mentioned above.[4] Istanbul is listed as an alpha-global city by the GaWC (Glob-
alization and World Cities) research group: a glance at the world map of GaWC
shows Istanbul as one of the very few economic centers and global cities at the
frontier of the EU. This location of Istanbul illustrates its great importance in
the region as center of the global modern economy and its attraction for vari-
ous migrant groups.[5]

Figure 1: Map of Global Cities According to GaWC 2008

Source: Globalization and World Cities (GaWC) Research Network (2008).

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[2] İçduygu/Kirişçi (2009, pp. 1–179).

[3] İçduygu (2008), Kirişçi (2008).

[4] İçduygu (2004 a, 2006), Lordoğlu (2008).

[5] In my article, "Vom Tellerwäscher zum Millionär: Arbeitsmarktpartizipation von AusländerInnen in der Türkei", I focus on
the attractiveness of Istanbul for formal and informal labor migrants (Pusch 2010 a, pp. 119–138).

In this article, I want to analyze various forms of transnational migration to Istanbul. After a short overview of recent migration movements to Turkey and clarification of the theoretical concepts used in the article, I will focus on Istanbul, which is currently a rising global city. Istanbul's special location at the frontier of the EU has boosted this transformation process, which has also led to the construction of transnational social spaces in the city. Therefore, as a third step, I will focus on this transformation and analyze Istanbul as a hotspot for transnational migration movements. My expositions will basically be based on my own empirical research (Cultural Capital During Migration 2005–2008)[6] and the analysis of other studies published recently by various scholars.

Migration Movements to Turkey/Istanbul

Migration to Turkey as such, as mentioned above, is not a new phenomenon.[7] The enormous variety of migrants coming to the county, however, is a relatively new trend. According to Ahmet İçduygu and Kristen Biehl,[8] we can state four main groups of foreign migrants in Turkey: *regular migrants*, *irregular labor migrants*, *irregular transit migrants* and *asylum seekers and refugees*.

Regular migrants represent only a small minority within the large variety of migrant types in Turkey. In 2008, only 174,926 foreigners – which is only 0.25 % of the whole population in the country – obtained a residence permit. As we see in Table 1, residence permits are awarded for work, study or other reasons such as marriage or parentage.

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[6] For the general outline of this project, see http://www.cultural-capital.net. For research results on the Turkish case, see Pusch (2010 a, 2010 b) and Weiß et al. (2010).

[7] For a comparison between "old" and "new" migrants in Turkey, see Erder (2003). For the legal changes regarding foreigners in Turkey, see Pusch (2008).

[8] İçduygu/Biehl (2009, pp. 8–20).

Table 1: Residence Permits in Turkey (2000–2008)

Residence Permits	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total	168,100	161.254	157,670	152,203	155,500	131,594	186,586	183,757	174,926
For work	24,200	22,414	22,556	21,650	27,500	22,130	22,805	25,475	18,900
For study	24,600	23,946	21,548	21,810	15,000	25,240	24,258	22,197	28,597
For other reasons	119,300	114,894	113,566	108,743	113,000	84,224	139,523	135,365	127,429

Source: İçduygu/Biehl (2009, p. 10).

Students mainly come from countries such as Albania, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Iraq, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Kosovo, Macedonia, Mongolia, Moldova, Romania, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.[9] Residence and work permit holders are however in general highly qualified professionals in prestige jobs and do not primarily come from the main countries of origin of migrants in Turkey but partly from the global North and other countries with transition economies. These migrants mainly represent the economic elite in Turkey. Turkey opens up its doors to this elite in the hope of profiting from their knowledge and/or their direct investments. The main regulations in the new Law on Foreigners' Work Permits from 2003 and its amendment[10] are aimed at simplifying the bureaucratic procedure for obtaining working permits for these highly qualified short-term professionals. Thus, in all official documents phrases such as "giving highly qualified foreigners the possibility to work" are used.[11]

Irregular labor migrants[12] can be mentioned as the second migrant group in Turkey. Their estimated number is much higher than the above-cited number of regular migrants with work permits and varies, according to different

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[9] *Ibid.* (p. 13).

[10] See Law No. 4817 (Yabancıların Çalışma İzini Hakkında Kanun) and Law No. 5665 (Yabancıların Çalışma İzinleri Hakkında Kanun ile Bazı Kanunlarda Değişiklik Yapılmasına İlişkin Kanun).

[11] Pusch (2010 a).

[12] For more detailed information on irregular labor migrants in Turkey, see İçduygu (2006, 2004).

researchers, between several hundred thousand and one million.[13] This means that a share of up to 4.3 % of the active population in Turkey consists of a foreign work-force. Their exact number is, however, not known. Estimations are based on entry statistics for foreigners and statistics on apprehended irregular migrants. Irregular labor migrants mainly come from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation and Ukraine.[14] In general, they enter Turkey legally with tourist visas. However, they become irregular by taking up work without work permit and/or overstaying their tourist visas or without prolonging their visas. The share of female migrants is much higher in this group than in other migrant groups in Turkey. Irregular labor migrants are often the subject of circular migration and repeatedly move between their home country and Turkey. Sectors such as domestic work, sex and entertainment,[15] textiles, construction and some service sectors provide these migrants temporary jobs.[16] In this context, it has to be stated that they do not plan to settle in Turkey but want to make some money to improve their lives in the country of origin. However, during their stay in Turkey they also set up various types of transnational spaces between Turkey and their country of origin.

According to the financial aims of irregular labor migrants, the reasons for participating in the Turkish labor market differ enormously between them and the officially registered foreigners. While highly skilled professionals are generally sent by their global acting companies abroad, Turkey has become an attractive country for clandestine immigrant workers of the former Soviet Bloc. This rising attractiveness is inter alia related to Turkey's relatively liberal visa policy for this group compared to the strict regulations in the EU and the fact that the Turkish economy offers more job possibilities and better wages than their countries of origin.[17]

The third group of migrants in Turkey involves *irregular transit migrants*[18] who come to Turkey mainly from the Middle East (Iran and Iraq) and from

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[13] İçduygu/Kirişçi (2009, p. 11).

[14] *Ibid.* (p. 15).

[15] In this context, it has to be mentioned that many women are trafficked. For a detailed report on this issue, see Erder/Kaşka (2003).

[16] İçduygu (2004 a, 2006).

[17] Pusch (2010 a).

[18] First studies on transit migrants were conducted by Ahmet İçduygu (1995, 2003). For a comparison of these two studies, see İçduygu/Biehl (2009).

Asia and Africa. Many of them are smuggled into Turkey.[19] Others arrive legally with tourist visas but drift into illegality by overstaying in Turkey without extending their visa or trying to enter a third country without proper papers. Unlike the informal labor migrants, these transit migrants use Turkey as a hub for further migration. In order to earn the money necessary for the onward migration, which, due to its clandestine nature, is often very expensive, transit migrants also participate in various niches of the Turkish labor market. They primarily work in the construction, textile and agriculture sectors, as day or seasonal workers.[20]

The fourth group of migrants are *asylum seekers and refugees*. Until 2000, most asylum seekers were from Iran and Iraq. Although the majority of asylum seekers in Turkey are still from these two countries, the countries of origin of asylum seekers in Turkey today have much diversified. As Table 2 indicates, the number of asylum seekers was about 4,000 between 2000 and 2006 and has tripled in the last years.

Table 2: Asylum Applications in Turkey (1997–2008)

Year	Iranians		Iraqis		Other		Total	
	Cases	Persons	Cases	Persons	Cases	Persons	Cases	Persons
1997	746	1,392	1,275	2,939	83	117	2,104	4,448
1998	1,169	1,979	2,350	4,672	124	187	3,643	6,838
1999	2,069	3,843	1,148	2,472	184	290	3,401	6,605
2000	2,125	3,926	791	1,671	108	180	3,024	5,777
2001	1,841	3,485	497	998	372	709	2,710	5,177
2002	1,456	2,505	402	974	219	315	2,077	3,794
2003	1,715	3,092	159	342	373	514	2,247	3,948
2004	1,225	2,030	472	956	540	912	2,237	3,898
2005	1,021	1,716	490	1,047	753	1,151	2,264	3,914
2006	1,343	2,297	364	722	1,094	1,534	2,801	4,553
2007	1,024	1,668	1,738	3,470	1,651	2,502	4,413	7,640
2008		2,116		6,904		3,960		12,980
Total	15,734	27,933	9,732	20,265	5,501	8,414	30,921	56,561

Source: UNHCR Ankara Office, cited in İçduygu/Biehl (2009, p. 46).

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[19] İçduygu (2004 b).

[20] İçduygu (2004 a, 2006).

Turkey has signed the 1951 Geneva Convention and its 1967 Protocol and thus has to grant asylum, protection and rights to refugees on its territory. Nevertheless, Turkey is one of the few countries left that sticks to the "geographical limitation" clause. This means that Turkey provides asylum only to European refugees, whereas non-European refugees are only allowed to stay in Turkey temporarily. They are provided protection under the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) extended mandate. Due to the geographical limitations, non-European refugees can apply for asylum at the UNHCR and are resettled to a third country if they are recognized as having a right of asylum by the UNHCR. When their application for asylum is rejected, most of them try informal ways to reach the West. Therefore, it can be argued that Turkey is for most of the non-European asylum seekers – like for transit migrants – a stop-over. Only very few rejected asylum seekers return to their country of origin and only some remain in Turkey irregularly.[21]

During the procedure for gaining the right of asylum, non-Europeans are placed under control in 30 satellite cities in Turkey, where local authorities and humanitarian associations are assigned to provide a minimum of their economic needs.[22] However, as this assistance is very limited, social networks are lacking and informal working opportunities are rare in these cities, asylum seekers often leave these cities for Istanbul and thereby fall into irregularity even during the formal waiting process.

Apart from the above-mentioned examples, we can also state *migrants with "Turkish backgrounds" from abroad*. This heterogeneous group of migrants consists on the one hand of ethnic Turks such as members of the Turkish minority from Bulgaria, who fled to Turkey in 1989 and have obtained the Turkish citizenship easily after settling in Turkey due to specific regulations.[23] On the other hand, so-called return-migrants or (grand-)children of return-migrants from Europe have to be mentioned in this category. While some of these returnees are Turkish citizens, others obtain a double-citizenship or are in possession of a foreign citizenship. Both of these groups are generally not reflected in the typology of migrants in Turkey because of their Turkish

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[21] Kirişçi (2002, 2005), Danış et al. (2009).

[22] Özgür-Baklacıoğlu (2011).

[23] For the regulations, see the Citizenship Laws (Law No. 403 [Vatandaşlık Kanunu] and its amendment Law No. 5901 [Türk Vatandaşlığı Kanunu]) and the Settlement Laws (Law No. 2510 [İskan Kanunu] and its amendment Law No. 5543 [İskan Kanunu]). The practice of neutralization has, however, changed in the last years. The legislative authority progressively refrains from the positive discrimination of migrants with a Turkish background (Parla 2007, Danış/Parla 2009).

background and their legal (Turkish citizenship or *mavi kart*) status.[24] In this context, it has to be stated that "Turkish background" refers to "Turkish citizenship" for the second group and points out "Turkish ethnicity" for the first group. However, as I will show later both of these groups that have to be taken into consideration within an article on transnational social spaces in Turkey.

The short overview above shows that the four groups of migrants are not mutually exclusive and the lines between the different types of migrants are blurred as the legal status of migrants can easily change within their migration biographies. Regular migrants, for instance, can fall into irregularity if they cannot renew their permits. Or asylum seekers can become irregular transit migrants if their application is rejected and they do not intend to return to their country of origin but stay in Turkey for a while and then try to enter a EU-country illegally.

In addition, it has to be stated that irregularity of residence and/or working status characterizes the life of the vast majority of migrants in Turkey.[25] Contrary to migrants in the EU, however, irregularity does not only mark the life of migrants in precarious and poor working and living conditions but also migrants in relatively well-paid and prestigious jobs and fairly stable circumstances. In my empirical work, I exemplify this with three impressive examples: a German business woman, who set up a textile business and employed up to 300 workers while having no work permit herself; an Austrian academic, who was employed and paid by a Turkish state university for more than a year without having legal working papers and a biologist with EU-citizenship who had a good position in a Turkish pharmaceutical/chemical company.[26] Thus, we can regard irregularity in the words of Fragues (2009) as normality among migrants in Turkey.

Since ambivalent relationships to the country of origin and the country of migration, sequential or ambivalent time frames for migration and religious, political, economic or organizational reasons for migration are for Pries[27] the main characteristics of transnational migrants, we can include transnational

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[24] The *mavi kart* is a Turkish ID-card, which guarantees holders all the rights of Turkish citizens except the right to active and passive voting. Thus, they do not face the juridical limitations foreigners face and they do not need any work or residence permits.

[25] Pusch (2010 a, 2011).

[26] Pusch (2010 b, 2011).

[27] Pries (2010, p. 59).

migrants in all the above-mentioned groups.[28] As a result of their ambiguous view-points and practices, the above-mentioned migrants groups in Istanbul can be included socially and spatially in various ways.

Last but not least, it has to be stated that Istanbul has become the hot spot of all these various migration movements. While Istanbul provides the exclusive cultural, economic and social infrastructure for the formal migrants who mainly belong to the socio-economic global elite, it also offers a variety of informal networks and working possibilities for their informal counterparts. Other areas and cities such as the Black Sea region, Antalya or the South Coast of Turkey are characterized as primarily seasonal centers of migration in the specific literature.

Istanbul: A Global City at the Frontier of the EU

Global cities are important urban nodes in the global economic system. According to Sassen,[29] global cities function in four ways: "as highly concentrated command points in organization of the world economy; … as key locations for finance and for special service firms, which have replaced manufacturing as the leading economic sectors; … as sites of production, including the production of innovations, in these leading industries; and … as markets for products and innovations produced".

For the integration of a city into the global world economy, however, competitiveness is of high importance. According to Eraydın (2008), the competitiveness of a city lies in the intersection of different types of global networks, global command functions, capital accumulation and concentration of specialized producer services. In particular, these main aspects of competitiveness are the increasing attraction of cities due to increasing global functions, the increasing knowledge and innovation and production for external markets, the technological capabilities and innovation in high-tech activities, the integration in the global economy by mixed strategies (both traditional and new/high-technology economic activities). In this context, Eraydın connects competitiveness with the cheap labor resources to the labor market. She argues that the competitiveness of a city leads to massive migration and employ-

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[28] For a general classification of various migrant types, see the chapter "Istanbul as Hot Spot for Transnational Migration" in this article.

[29] Sassen (2001, pp. 3–4).

ment opportunities for both skilled and unskilled workers. Parallel to this development, she states that both the increasing opportunities for skilled manpower and people with talents in formal work positions and various employment opportunities in low-wage and informal work, leads to social pluralization and ethnic segregation, as well as increasing flexibility of the available work-force.[30] Sassen (1988) also observes a close connection between the expansion of the global economy and the expanding number of international labor migrants and stresses the often precarious legal and socio-economic status of migrants, which pulls them towards low-status, labor-intensive and often informal jobs. According to her, many of these international labor migrants serve as an "auxiliary army" and buffer the economic situation within the modern global economy, which, among other factors, is based on the flexibility of labor. As such, she sees immigrant workers as an essential element of the modern global economy.

A glance at the development of Istanbul indicates very well that Istanbul has become a global competitive city: with its 13.2 million[31] inhabitants and its fast-growing economy, Istanbul is listed as a global city by the GaWC research group today. Although Istanbul has been the center of the national Turkish economy for most of its history, the global economic functions have increased enormously during the last years. This phenomenon can be explained by the increasing service sector as well as the import and export shares: in 2006, for instance, 56.4 % of the people in Istanbul were employed in the service sector, which is a very high share compared to Turkey's average of 48.2 %;[32] and the export volume of Istanbul grew from 8,000 million USD in 1994 to 35,042 in 2006.[33] This increase is also reflected in the international ranking of Istanbul. The city Istanbul alone would be the 17th highest on the list of export incomes of all EU-countries[34] and was considered as the 34th richest city in the world in 2005.[35] According to the forecast of Price Waterhouse Coopers, Istanbul will even become the 27th richest city in the world in 2020.[36]

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[30] Eraydın (2008, pp. 1668–1691).

[31] These are the official numbers published by the Turkish Statistical Institute recently.

[32] IDO (2008, p. 46).

[33] *Ibid.* (p. 52).

[34] ITO (2008 b, p. 40).

[35] *Ibid.* (p. 45).

[36] *Ibid.* (p. 44).

In addition, Istanbul's unique location and the huge hinterland extending from Eastern Europe to the Black Sea region and from the Middle East to Central Asia has to be mentioned, as it provides Istanbul a large market. Proximity to the EU is, however, not only important in terms of an easily reachable hot spot for goods and producer services but also in terms of an attractive location for foreign direct investment and an out-sourcing location for production, since the work-force is cheaper and environmental rules are less strictly implemented than in the EU.

Figure 2: Foreign Direct Investments in Turkey in Million USD (1995–2009)
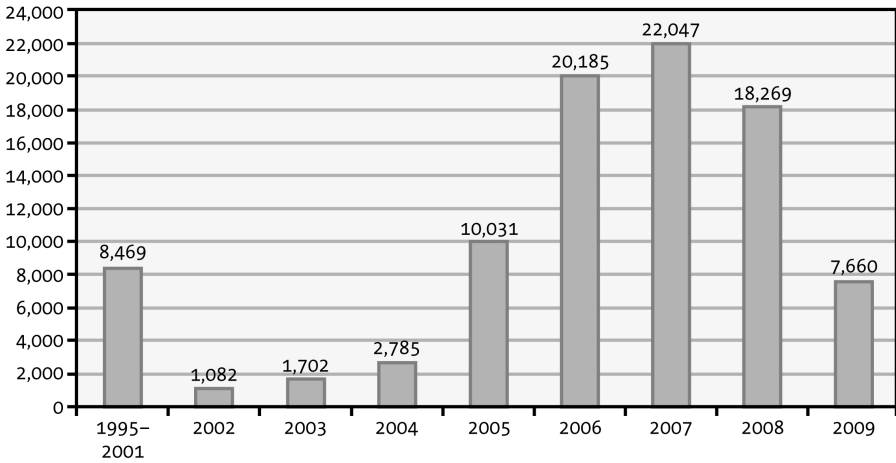
Source: T. C. Başbakanlık Hazine Müsteşarlığı (2010, p. 12).

Particularly, since Turkey and the EU started full membership negotiations in 2005, we can state an enormous increase in foreign direct investments. While there were 8,192 foreign direct investments set up between 1954 and 2004 the number of all foreign direct investments in Turkey grew up to 23,620 in the year 2009.[37] More than half (55 %) of all these foreign direct investments are located in Istanbul today.[38] Anyhow, a glance at the newly set up foreign direct investments in the year 2009 emphasizes the growing importance of Istanbul even more: 89.58 % of all new foreign direct investments in Turkey were set up

[37] T. C. Başbakanlık Hazine Müsteşarlığı (2010, p. 24).

[38] *Ibid.* (p. 35).

in Istanbul in 2009.[39] As illustrated in Figure 2, there was also an enormous increase in foreign capital until the global crises. While the foreign direct investment was only 1,082 million USD in 2002 it rose to 22,047 million USD at its peak in 2007. Although these figures are still low compared to the amount of investments in the top-tier global cities, the enormous increase in foreign direct investments must be noted. This increase points out Istanbul's new attractiveness for the global economy and indicates its potential for further development.

Over recent decades, Istanbul's population has exploded from 5.8 million in 1985[40] to 13.2 million in 2010. Although this population increase is mainly related to internal migration movements in Turkey, the high share of foreign migrants in Istanbul should not be ignored either. All these newcomers contribute to the global labor market in Istanbul, which is marked by the demand of the all-embracing labor flexibility, cost reduction and informalization.[41]

The fact that about 45 % of the whole and 30 % of the non-agrarian workforce in Turkey is informal (TUİK 2009) indicates the cheap and flexible labor. In this context, Ahmet İçduygu[42] argues that "the informalization of labor has flourished and has been adopted by many small and medium-sized enterprises as a survival strategy to cope with economic crisis, fierce competition and heavy tax burdens on employers. The insertion of irregular foreign labor into the informal economy is neither entirely hidden nor entirely in line with the legal requirements of a formal economy, but an integral part of the Turkish economy". Nevertheless, according to Ahmet İçduygu,[43] migrants do not create the informal conditions but they come into this picture after these conditions are created. They do less desirable jobs generated by informalization, and this leads to a decline in the costs of production of formal industries. In doing so, they facilitate informal production and engage in the distribution of certain activities.

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[39] *Ibid.* (p. 22).

[40] ITO (2008, p. 13).

[41] The new Labour Law (Law No. 4857) from 2003 and its recent amendments within the "Torba Yasası" (literally: "Bag Law") illustrates that increasing flexibility is also demanded in formal working conditions. For the liberal developments in Turkey in general, see Mültevellioğlu and Sönmez (2009); for the impacts of the liberal developments on the Turkish labor market, see Mültevellioğlu and Işık (2009); for the effects of Turkish neo-liberalism on the foreign work-force, see Toksöz (2007).

[42] İçduygu (2006, p. 13).

[43] *Ibid.* (p. 11).

The global economy does not only demand flexible workers but also cheap skilled and unskilled labor. While the majority of the internal migrants from the rural areas compose, in general, the unskilled local masses, big cities like Istanbul also have a skilled workforce with foreign language skills available.[44] In addition to this, international migrants (often with higher skills than their Turkish counterparts) from different countries of origin are seeking work opportunities in Istanbul.[45] So-called "highly skilled return-migrants" from the EU, especially Germany, can be mentioned as a rising transnational labor potential. As they do not need work permits due to their Turkish descent, they occupy a special place in the international labor migration to Istanbul.[46]

Last but not least, Istanbul's changing image from an oriental to a "cool" city[47] offers the global elites an attractive place to live, where they can fulfill their often quite sophisticated cultural and social ambitions. For the bottom of the local and foreign workforce, Istanbul – like all other global cities – offers various opportunities for informal lives such as informal jobs, networking and housing possibilities.

Istanbul as Hotspot for Transnational Migration

Global cities are the centers of the global economy and accommodate the whole range of actors in the global modern economy from the very top to the very bottom. They are therefore places of extremes and encompass not only various groups of natives but also of migrants.[48] Within this setting global cities are not only centers of the global economy but also provide various spaces for transnational identities, life-styles and formal and informal organizations. Istanbul is the center of the global economy in Turkey. Thus, transnational social spaces in Turkey are predominantly set up in Istanbul.

Transnational migration is defined as a "process by which immigrants forge and sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement".[49] Accordingly, "transnational

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[44] Eraydın (2008, p. 1672).

[45] Tokgöz (2007).

[46] Aydın/Pusch (forthcoming).

[47] Özkan (2011).

[48] Sassen (2001).

[49] Schiller et al. (1997, p. 121).

migration emphasizes the on-going and continuing ways in which current-day immigrants construct and reconstitute their simultaneous embeddedness in more than one society".[50] By doing so they set up pluri-local and cross-border practices, which are referred to as "transnational social spaces". As a result, transnational social spaces differ from national container-space concepts, which are based on the assumption that social and territorial spaces overlap. Although transnational spaces are strongly determined by national structures, they are not constructed by them, but by economically, politically and culturally acting people – it is thus also labelled as "transnationalism from below".[51]

However, over recent years the term "transnational" has become very popular. For this reason, Ludger Pries points out that this term has become a trendy catch-all.[52] In order to overcome this pitfall of popularity, he suggests a conceptual precision and more explicit empirical research. Yet, transnational social spaces are not simply set up by people's frequent border crossing but also by relatively immobile persons who, for instance, use modern communication technologies to contract their families abroad or send remittances to their country of origin.[53] Correspondingly Ludger Pries[54] differentiates between transnational relations (e.g., internet-based music communities), transnational networks (e.g., internet-based alumni networks or transnational women's organizations) and transnational social spaces (e.g., periodic contract through visits of transnational families) according to the density of contacts. In other words, we can say that transnational social spaces differ from transnational relations and networks in their denseness and durability.

Furthermore, Ludger Pries (2010) notes three ideal types of social spaces for transnational studies: everyday life, organizations and institutions. In this context, he remarks that everyday life focuses on the micro-level, organizations on the meso-level and institutions on the macro-level of transnational social spaces. In his explorations, he enumerates, for example, transnational families and aging in transnational networks for the micro-level, border-crossing migrants' organizations for the meso-level and transnational labor markets and transnational institutions for the macro-level.

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[50] *Ibid.*

[51] Pries (2008), Smith/Guarnizo (1999).

[52] Pries (2007, p. 2010).

[53] Faist (2000, pp. 9–56).

[54] Pries (2010, pp. 29–31).

Pries also distinguishes four types of migration (emigration/immigration, return migration, diaspora-migration and transit-migration) in his typology of migration. These four types, which are essential for the following evaluation of transnational social spaces in Istanbul, are based on the following four dimensions: relation to the country/region of origin, relation to the country/region of settlement, typical migration context and time frame of migration. Table 3 illustrates these dimensions for each type of migration very clearly.

Table 3: Four Ideal Types of Migration

Ideal Type	Relation to region of origin	Relation region of settlement	Typical context of migration	Time frame of migration
Emigration/ immigration	Association/ valediction	Integration/new home-land	Economical/socio-cultural	Unlimited/long-term
Return-migration	Constant relation/ identification	Difference/host country	Economical	Limited/short-term
Diaspora-migration	Constant relation to "holy land"	Difference/space of suffering	Religious, political/ posting organization	Short-term/ medium-term
Transit-migration	Ambiguous	Ambiguous	Religious, political, economic/organization	Unclear/ sequential

Source: Pries (2010, p. 59).

Along with Sema Erder and Deniz Yükseker (2009) a lack of theoretical debate has to be stated in studies about in-migration to Turkey. In accordance with this, a general lack of transnational phenomena has also been highlighted only casually. Due to this shortage of specific studies, I will exemplify some transnational social spaces in Istanbul according to various indicators of their existence among the four ideal types of migrant groups (regular and irregular labor and transit migrants as well as refugees and asylum seekers) mentioned above.

Aspects of Regular Migrants' Transnationality in Istanbul

Although regular transnational migrants constitute the clear minority of foreigners in Turkey or Istanbul respectively, the category of regular migrants consists of a huge range of different foreigners. Foreigners, who live with legal residence (and work) permits in Turkey, consist of various groups such as dip-

lomats, posted personnel and foreign spouses of Turkish citizens, etc. However, as many of those foreigners can be considered as diaspora-migrants,[55] the number of regular transit migrants is even smaller. To the group of regular transnational migrants belong, for example, foreign spouses of Turkish citizens, labor migrants and businessmen with official working papers who have come to Turkey individually and were not posted by international firms, etc. However, despite the small number of transnational migrants in Turkey, we can observe that they have set up various transnational everyday lives, organizations and institutions.

The studies on EU-citizens in Turkey[56] in general and German citizens in particular indicate this phenomenon very well.[57] Their transnational everyday lives are mainly dominated by their transnational families and/or their jobs. In this context, for instance, visits to and from their family of origin, support of and from the family of origin in exceptional circumstances (illness, birth, etc.) for transnational family networking, transnational working conditions or transnational-acting small businesses can exemplify transnational labor aspects for this group. On the meso-level, organizations such as the Network of Foreign Spouses, the IWI (International Women of Istanbul) and the association Die Brücke can be mentioned. For the lives of regular transnational German migrants in Istanbul, the association Die Brücke can be cited as most important organization[58] since this association not only networks between different German-speaking groups (preliminary women) in Turkey and Germany and lobbies for better legal status of Germans in Turkey, but was also one of the main initiators of a transnational institution – the Avrupa Koleji – Europa Kolleg.[59] The Avrupa Koleji specifically aims to enroll children from binational Turkish and German speaking families as well as re-migrant Turkish families in Istanbul and wants to facilitate access to both the German and the Turkish cultures and societies. Thus, we may conclude, in line with Pries, that

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[55] Pries (2007, 2010).

[56] Kaiser (2001, p. 2003).

[57] Erbaş (2006), Kaiser (2003, 2004, 2008), Saksak (2003), Radt (2006), Özbek (2008), Pusch (2006).

[58] Die Brücke (2011). For analysis of this association, see in particular Radt (2006) and Kaiser (2003).

[59] Avrupa Koleji – Europa Kolleg (2011). For a short analysis of the school, see also Kaiser (2004). Interestingly, the two German schools in Istanbul, the Botschaftsschule and the Deutsches Gymnasium, reject these growing target groups of re-migrants and bi-national families, which is leading to various conflicts in the German community in Istanbul in general and the schools in particular (for an insight in this problematic see, Pusch [forthcoming b]).

this school is one of the few transnational German-Turkish institutions in Istanbul.

Another example of a transnational set-up by regular migrants resident in Turkey is the newpaper *Tur Press Panorama*, which was formally established in 2004 by a Ukrainian engineer in Istanbul. This paper provides an interesting example of such organizations because, although its founder is a regular migrant, its readership is primarily informal labor migrants from the former USSR as well as Turkish citizens interested in those countries. The paper is published bilingually in Turkish and Russian and provides its readers with a wide range of different information and advertisements. In this publication, one can access travel information to various countries of the former USSR, missing person's reports, news on changing laws for foreigners as well as "lonely heart" advertisements. As the owner of the paper puts it: "The paper is an independent medium with close ties to all embassies [of the countries of the former USSR; BP] and various small and big businessmen …". The paper addresses all Russian-speaking people in Turkey and is distributed free of charge in embassies, airplanes and various places in Turkey and the countries of the former USSR. Although the owner does not describe his newspaper as transnational, we can clearly define it as such since it primarily distributes information to people operating in transnational circumstances.

Characteristics of Irregular Labor Migrants' Transnationality

As mentioned above, irregular labor migrants in Turkey are mainly female. They come primarily from the countries of the former USSR and Central Asia and work in sectors such as domestic work, sex and entertainment. The scientific literature, however, predominantly focuses on women in the domestic sector.[60] Although the authors discuss various transnational dimensions in their lives and family, they do not label them as transnational.

In my empirical work on the usage of cultural capital during migration, I also interviewed a domestic worker, who was working as a care nurse for the elderly in a private upper-middle class household in Istanbul. She came to Istanbul approximately six years ago. The reason for her decision to come Turkey was related to her bad financial situation in her country of origin: Ukraine. After the death of her husband, she had to care for her two daughters alone.

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[60] Güler (2011), Kaşka (2006, 2007), Akalın (2007, 2008), Eder (2007), Kümbetoğlu (2005).

Due to the economic situation in Ukraine, she was not able to find a job where she could earn enough money to finance her daughters' education in her home country and thus decided to take up a job as domestic worker abroad. Since it was too difficult to go to the EU because of the strict visa regulations, she came to Turkey/Istanbul. In Istanbul, she has been working as domestic worker without any work permit or social insurance. Her residence status is irregular, as well, since she always overstays her two-month tourist visa. Because the travel costs and the fines she has to pay for overstaying when she leaves the country are, compared to her earnings, rather high, she travels to Ukraine only sporadically to see her daughters. Thus, we may conclude that the main bonds to her daughters are based on her sense of responsibility, which she expresses materially with the remittances. Although this woman has to be characterized as return-migrant in terms of Ludger Pries, her family relations are clearly transnational.

Biographies of other irregular labor migrants feature, however, even more transnational aspects. A Bulgarian engineer, interviewed by the author during the above-mentioned research project, can be cited in this context. This man came to Istanbul in order to work in a small-scale manufacturing company. Unlike many other Bulgarian migrants in Turkey, he is not of Turkish descent and thus did not interpret his step to Turkey as "return to the motherland". Un-employment, economic crisis and lack of hope for economic improvement were the reasons for him coming to Turkey 14 years ago. His family (his wife, son and daughter) stayed in his home town in Bulgaria, which is about 480 km away from his work place in Istanbul. In order to see his family and provide them with money, he has been driving to his hometown approximately once a month. The subsequent migration of his family was never a serious issue of discussion since his wife has had a less-paid but permanent teacher position and would not be able to find a comparable job in Turkey. In addition, my interviewee wanted his children to have a Bulgarian education. Now, many years after coming to Turkey, the children are nearly finishing school and the Bulgarian economy has improved – but he is not thinking of going back. He explains this temporary decision to stay with arguments such as "I have gotten used to my working environment in Turkey", "when I go back to Bulgaria, I may find a similar paid job, but again I will not be able to stay with my family because in our region there is no productive industry" and "it is not so far to visit my family". In addition to this, he wants his son to come to Istanbul for a university education. His answer to my question about future plans was am-

biguous. He likes Istanbul, although he is not able to participate in the cultural life there, but wants to give his son the taste of city air. On the other hand, he also likes his home in Bulgaria. However, he can imagine neither going back to Bulgaria permanently, nor setting up a life with his family in Istanbul. During the whole interview, he seemed to feel no pressure to make a decision yet and seemed to be happy to have rational reasons for delaying a decision and continuing his life in his transnational Bulgarian-Turkish space.

Although we can observe transnational social spaces of irregular labor migrants mainly on the family level, there are also examples at the organizational and institutional level. The Armenian "school" in the Kumkapı district of Istanbul may be mentioned in this context. In addition to the long-established Armenian minority with Turkish citizenship in Turkey, Armenian migrants from Armenia have come to Istanbul in the last decades. Similar to their counterparts from other countries, they generally enter Turkey with a one-month tourist visa. By overstaying their visas and taking up employment in the informal sector, their status becomes, however, irregular.[61] Many Armenian informal workers have come to Istanbul with their children, or their children were born in Turkey. Thus, their children also have an irregular residence status in Turkey, which prevents them from participating in the formal school system. In order to guarantee these children some primary education as well as provide for childcare and care for the children while their mothers are working, a former teacher from Armenia began to informally teach seven children in the basement of a Protestant Church. Today, seven teachers instruct 70 pupils from grade one to five. Since this "school" is neither officially recognized in Turkey nor in Armenia, the children do not receive any certificates.[62] In general terms, this "school" can be described as an informal educational establishment for Armenian children with informal residence status in Turkey. However, a closer look at this informal institution shows us that it is a transnational organization. While the Turkish language is the *lingua franca* among Armenian children in Istanbul, one of the general aims of this initiative is to prepare the children for a possible return to Armenia. In other words, this "school" does not clearly prepare the children for a permanent residency in Turkey, but for a possible (re-) migration and (re-) integration into Armenia. In this context, this "school" reflects not simply the irregularity of its pupils, but also their ambigu-

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[61] Rutishauser (2008), Salamoni (2010).

[62] For an interview with the teacher, who sets up this "school", see Ozinian (2011).

ous relation with Armenia and Turkey and the unclear time frame of their dur-
ation in Turkey. This characteristic distinguishes this "school" from other edu-
cational establishments, such as the German Embassy School in Istanbul for
diaspora-migrants or the above-mentioned Avrupa Koleji.

Transnational Social Spaces for Transit Migrants and Asylum Seekers in Istanbul?

As I have already pointed out above, the lines between regular migrants, irreg-
ular labor migrants, transit migrants and asylum seekers in Turkey are gener-
ally fluid. However, since not all refugees apply in a regular way for asylum,
and many rejected asylum seekers do not return to their home countries but
try to enter a EU-country irregularly, the distinction between transit migrants
and asylum seekers is even more complex. This difficulty is also indirectly re-
flected in various empirical works, in which asylum seekers and transit mi-
grants are often represented in one sample.[63]

Furthermore, a glimpse at the available studies also shows that the
transnational social spaces of transit migrants and asylum seekers have not
been researched in Turkey yet. As Turkey is for most of them simply a "waiting
room" for further migration, this lack of research might not be surprising. On
the other hand, transit migrants and asylum seekers often stay in Turkey
longer than they initially have planned, leading to, out of necessity, a variety of
survival strategies and practices, including the creation of extensive socio-eco-
nomic networks. In this context, Didem Danış states for her research group:[64]
"The networks that Iranians mobilize in Istanbul are mostly familial and eth-
nic-religious ones. Familial tries provide a crucial resource for Iranians, as for
other migrant groups. They utilize and mobilize contacts with family mem-
bers, who are in Istanbul or relatives abroad and at home. Relatives furnish so-
cial, mental, as well as economic assistance that relieve some extent migrants'
vulnerability and thus facilitate their survival in Istanbul". The importance of
tight family ties is also reflected in other studies: for instance, Ahmet İcduygu
underlines the importance of relatives in Iranian and Iraqi migrants' motiva-

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[63] Yükseker/Brewer (2009, pp. 637–718), Danış et al. (2009, pp. 443–636), İçduygu (2003).

[64] Danış (2009, p. 620).

tion to come to Istanbul.[65] In another study,[66] he points out that 10 % of interviewed transit migrants were sending money to their families and relatives in their home country, 30 % were receiving money from family members abroad and 20 % from their families or relatives in their home country. However, a simple stroll through districts like Kumkapı or Tarlabaşi in Istanbul, which are densely inhabited by irregular migrants, will turn the visitor's attention towards the enormous number of internet-cafes and call-shops with special telephone-fees for the main country of origin of irregular migrants.

These tight family ties of transit migrants and asylum seekers can be exemplified by an Iranian woman doctor, whom I interviewed during the research project "Cultural Capital Migration". This young woman fled Iran with her daughter because of spousal abuse and the lack of resources in Iran. In Turkey, she applied for asylum at the UNHCR. During the time of my interview with her, she had been in Turkey for one and a half years, but her application for asylum was pending. Since she did not receive enough financial support from the UNHCR and foreign doctors are not allowed to work in Turkey, her family sent her 500 USD every month. Besides financial support she received much-needed emotional support from her parents who were concerned about their daughters' well-being abroad. Once, when my interviewee had a mental break-down, her mother even travelled to Istanbul to care for her daughter and grand-daughter. Visits like that are certainly rather unusual among transit migrants and asylum seekers. In this case, it was only possible because of the financial means of the interviewee's family and because of the liberal entry regulations between Turkey and Iran. However, this example illustrates very well the functionality of transnational families: transnational families not only manage to stay in contact with one another, but they also cultivate their relationships at an intimate level. The geographical distance between them poses no obstacle for participating in each others' lives and for providing financial and emotional support.

This and all the other examples in this section indicate intensive contact between the transit migrants and asylum seekers in Istanbul and their family members who are being left behind. Hence, we may conclude that there is a lot of transnational evidence on the micro-level for transit migrants and asylum

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[65] İçduygu (2003, p. 33).

[66] İçduygu (1995, p. 30).

seekers in Istanbul. Further research, however, has to be conducted in order to specify their transnational social space in more detail.

Transnational Social Spaces of Migrants with a Turkish Background in Istanbul

Migrants with Turkish backgrounds have also set up transnational social spaces in Istanbul. On the micro-level, transnational family structures of migrants with Turkish backgrounds are remarkably similar to those migrants being mentioned above. Remittances, regular visits and close emotional relationships mutual support when needed should be mentioned in this context. However, as a result of their legal inclusion in Turkey as well as in their former country of residence, they have various possibilities to act and live transnationally. This is illustrated best in their professional lives and their ambivalent plans for the future. In my research on international labor migration to Turkey, I interviewed a woman of Turkish origin from Bulgaria who came with her husband and sons to Turkey in 1989. Although she never considered going back to Bulgaria after settling in Istanbul, she ended up working for her son's transnational Turkish-Bulgarian business.[67] Another example of ambivalent future plans characteristic of transnational migrants are my highly qualified "German-Turk" interviewees. For example, a Turkish-German man came to Istanbul because the internationally acting company he was working for promised him career advancement within a new position in Istanbul. He accepted the offer and came to Istanbul with his wife and two children approximately four years ago. After a year of working in this position, he found a better job in another company. Although he originally planned to stay in Istanbul for only two years, he continued to prolong/expand his stay. When I asked him about his future plans and his attitude about going back to Germany he answered ironically: "Of course, we often talk about that [re-migration to Germany; B. P.], but we do not have a time frame … We do not say anymore, in two years we will go back. I guess we have become like our parents. They also always said: 'We will go back'. But they have been in Germany for 40 years now. I guess it will be the same with us".

However, typical of transnational migrants, he remains ambivalent about living in Turkey or Germany. Migrants like him express rational pro and cons

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[67] For a detailed analysis of her case, see Pusch (forthcoming a).

for staying or leaving for a certain period in their life. As a result, they never come to a final decision but constantly have to re-evaluate their situation, which leads to periodical decision-making. Their legal inclusion in both societies allows them to base their decisions purely on their perception of their current situation without regarding any legal constraints.

Conclusions: Global Istanbul as Hotspot for Transnational Migrants

Although there are very few scientific analyses focusing on transnationality in Istanbul, a glance at the available studies on international migration movements to Turkey in general and Istanbul in particular indicates the emergence of transnational lives and practices very clearly. However, the analysis above shows very evidently that global Istanbul provides its inhabitants various possibilities for transnational lives and set-ups. In conjunction with the current state of research, we can maintain that transnationality is predominantly set up on the micro-level. The comparatively lower intensity of transnationality on the meso- and macro-level may be related to the fact that transnational migration to Turkey is a relatively new phenomenon and the establishment of organizations and institutions is, in comparison with the development of everyday life routines, more time-consuming.

The high share of informal migrants in Istanbul is another reason for the relatively poor transnationality on the meso-level and the macro-level. As informal migrants avoid attracting attention to their illegal status, this low visibility on the meso- and macro-level is easy to comprehend.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the above-mentioned examples have an important similarity: all migrants live and work in global Istanbul. Thus, we may conclude that global Istanbul provides a range of transnational lives and social spaces for various migrant groups. Istanbul's nearby border with the EU – albeit for very different reasons – makes Istanbul attractive for most migrants.

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