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## **The Interchange of Economy and Urban Diversity – A Case Study of Metropolis Istanbul**

**by**  
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# The Interchange of Economy and Urban Diversity – A Case Study of Metropolis Istanbul

Global Young Faculty  
Research group “Economics”

Steffen Brinckmann (University of Bochum)  
Korinna Schönhärl (University of Essen)  
Darja Reuschke (University of Trier)

# An interdisciplinary group:

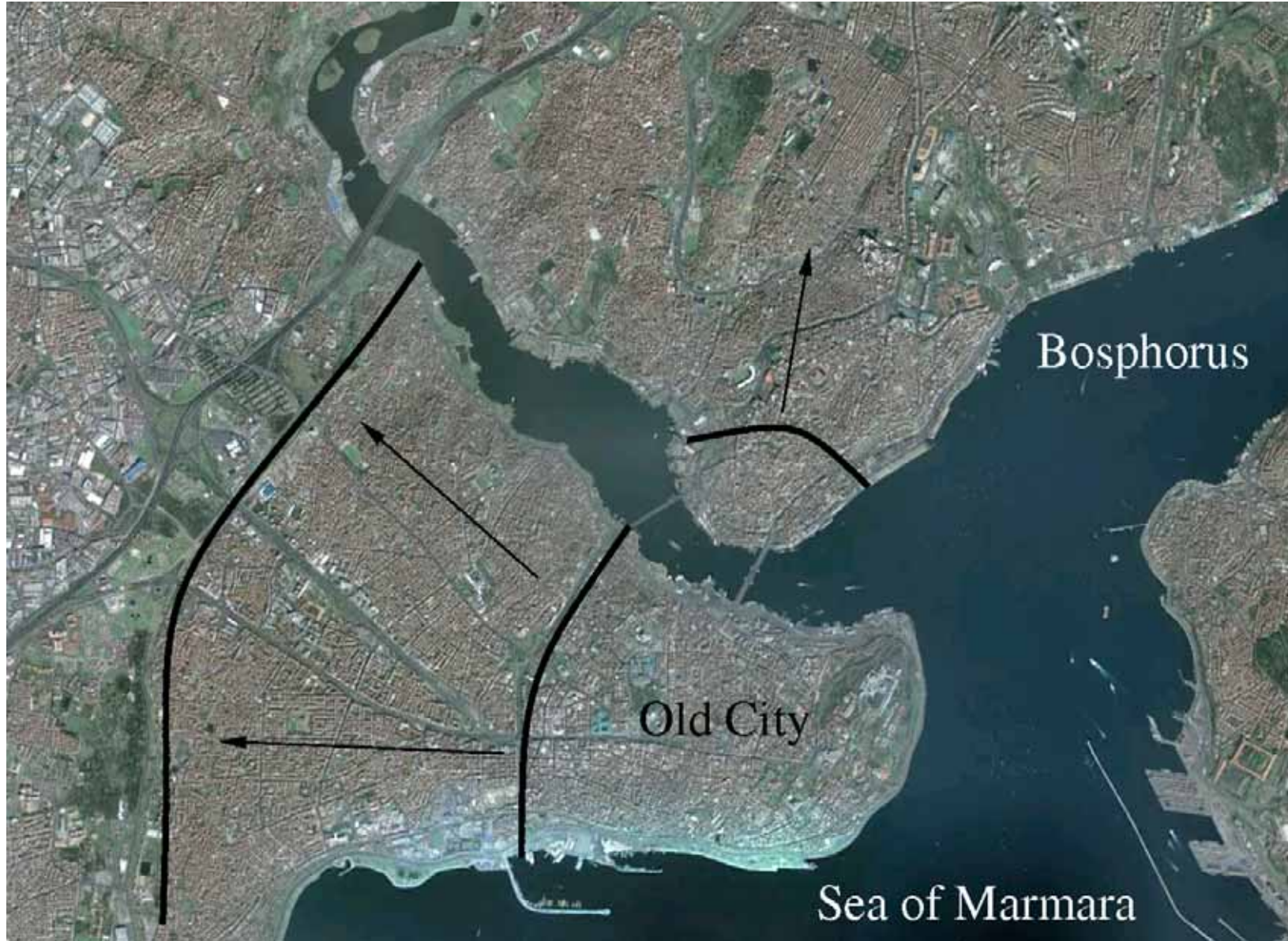
Steffen Brinckmann	Materials Engineering	Bochum
Dirk Drenk	Economic Development	Mühlheim a.d. Ruhr
Jens Kroh	Social Science	Essen
Jörg Plöger	Urban Development	Dortmund
Darja Reuschke	Geography	Trier
Carsten Ruhl	Art history	Bochum
Karsten Rusche	Urban Development	Dortmund
Monika Salzbrunn	Social Science	Lausanne
Korinna Schönhärl	History	Essen
Sabine Weck	Urban Development	Dortmund
Christoph Woiwode	Urban Development	Dortmund

# Research Questions

- How is cultural diversity being dealt with in the past and present?
- To what extent is cultural diversity being perceived as economic capital?
- How does the perception / production of cultural diversity impact on urban development?



# Istanbul – urban areas under study



# Istanbul – urban areas under study

global  
young  
faculty



# Constantinople / Istanbul



# “Gentrification” in the 19th century

- 1839-1870: Tanzimat Era
- Political, economical, intellectual reforms
- Reasons for reforms:
  - Construction of an „Ottoman Identity“ to stabilize the Empire
  - Demonstration of „modernity“ towards the European Powers
  - Hope for economic progress and wealth



Sultan Abdülmejid I.  
(1823-1861)

„If the non-Muslims are spread among the Muslims, neighbourhoods will become mixed, the price of our properties will rise, and civilized amenities will expand.“

(Member of the Ottoman gentry on occasion  
of the reform decree Hatt-ı Hümayun, 1856)

# “Gentrification” in the 19th century

- Istanbul’s district Galata: 1850th about 50% non-Muslims: Greeks, Armenians, Jews, Arabs, Bulgarians
- Organized in religious *millet*s
- Many diplomats, rich merchants, bankers
- Driving-out of the low-income Muslim population

Stadtansicht Istanbul 1820

# “Gentrification” in the 19th century

- 1856: call for Western-styled self-government of the district
- Authorisation of a Municipal Council by the Sultan
- Members: wealthy Christian merchants
  
- Problems:
  - Concentration on projects on behalf of the own social class, no social responsibility
  - Traditional practice of the population to refuse the payment of taxes
  - Corruptibility of the members of council
- Bankruptcy of the District 1863  
Appointment of a new governmental director by the Sultan

# Ethnical unification 1923–1960

- 1923: Treaty of Lausanne: Population exchange with Greece  
Attempt to construct an ethnical homogeneous Nation State
- 1955: Pogroms against Christians in Istanbul (Cyprus-Conflict!)  
Displacement of most of the Christians in Istanbul and Galata
- 1980th: new wave of gentrification in Galata
- Literature:
  - Justin McCarthy: Muslims and Minorities. The Population of Ottoman Anatolia and the End of the Empire, New York 1983.
  - Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis: Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire. The Functioning of Plural Society, New York 1982.
  - M. Şükrü Hanioglu: A brief history of the Late Ottoman Empire, Princeton 2008.

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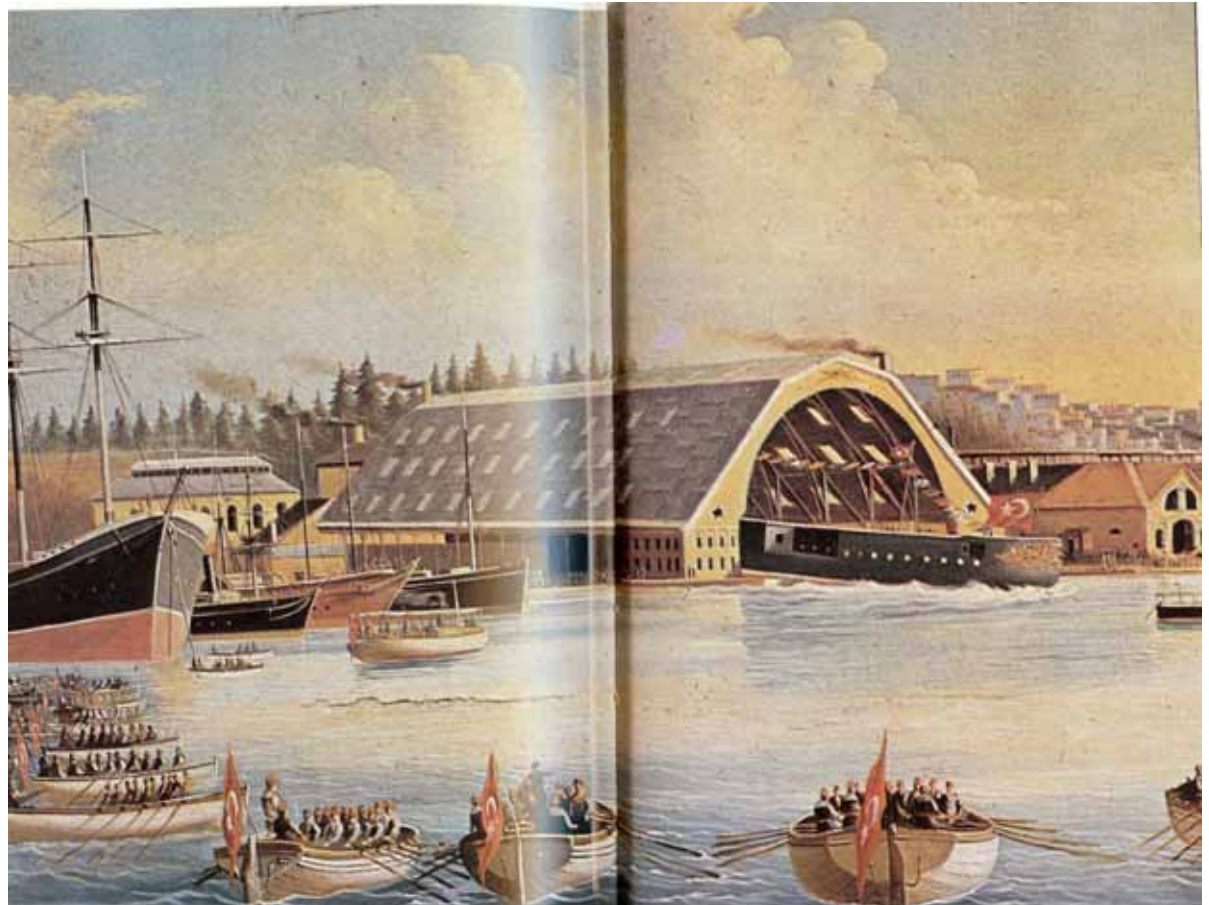
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# Contemporary urban transformation and the loss of urban diversity

- Gentrification = important force in İstanbul's urban transformation since the 1980s
- new stage of gentrification of inner-city areas in the last years
- Global image campaign and the promotion of a modern image
- new (Western) commodification of land



# Urban renewal and image marketing

- urban renewal projects show whether and how urban diversity is represented / employed
- extensive public debate on urban renewal in newspapers, academic journals, international press & politics
  - İstanbul 1910-2010 exhibition at santralistanbul (Bilgi Üniversitesi)



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# New radical form of gentrification



- first stage of gentrification in Galata and Cihangir resembles Western gentrification
- second stage of gentrification:
  - municipality-led
  - officially labelled a cultural project
  - part of neo-liberal project of the Metropolitan Municipality
- top down gentrification projects based on law # 5366 (2005) for the renewal and conservation of historic assets
- right for expropriation of private property (eminent domain)

# Sulukule: Erasure of Roma culture in historic İstanbul

- neighbourhood of Roma for hundreds of years
- hold title deeds of the land and the houses
- registered as historic renewal area in 2006
- 3,500 people were evicted from their properties in April 2009 with the help of TOKİ
- Relocation to İstanbul's periphery, 45 km away from Sulukule (Tasoluk)



Source: Seger/Palencsar 2006



# Tarlabaşı: Demolition of historic buildings and displacement of minorities

- Residential (“*Levantine*”) buildings from the 19th century
- Poor minority tenants (> 50 % Kurds)
- property owners were informed about the renewal not until the municipality had signed a contract with private developer
- 278 buildings, demolition and restoration



Source: Seger/Palencsar 2006



# Tarlabaşı: Demolition of historic buildings and displacement of minorities

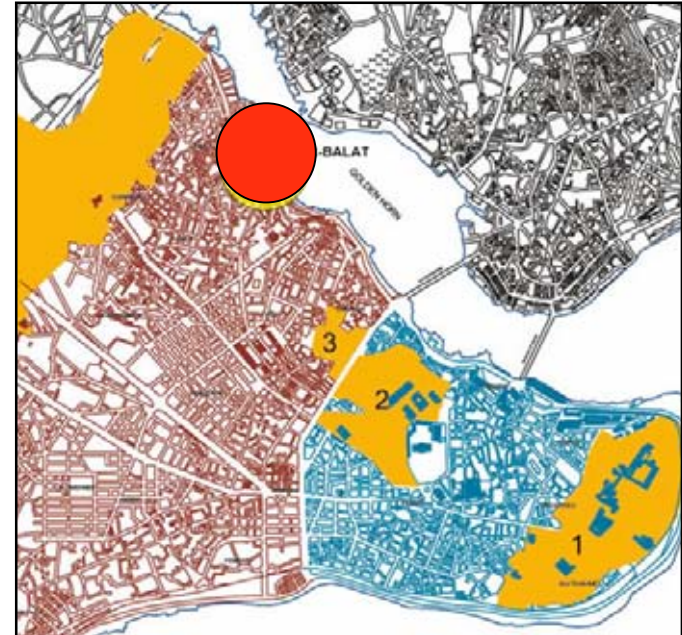
- Property owners are forced to sell their property or to leave it in exchange for one renovated apartment / business real estate
- Residents are offered TOKİ owner-occupied social housing on the periphery

(Hürriyet Daily News, May 14, 2010)



# Fener: Failure of reproduction of Greek history

- home of the Greek upper middle class of İstanbul
- Greek Orthodox Patriarchy
- municipality aimed to materialise Fener's minority history
- Rehabilitation Project has been funded by the European Union
- restrictions on selling restored properties and rent regulations
- Muslim residents regard project as attempt to revive İstanbul's Greeks past



Source (above): [www.fenerbalat.org](http://www.fenerbalat.org)

# Fener: Failure of reproduction of Greek history

- Rumours among residents that Patriarchy tries to repurchase former Greek properties
- Residents fear relocation  
“Don’t touch my house ...!”
- lack of participation of local residents produces problems with regard to cultural diversity instead of using urban diversity as concept for urban development



# Conclusion

- 19th century and today: promotion of a modern image
- Cultural heritage is presented in a folkloristic manner
- Disregard of peculiar structures (“eigenlogische Strukturen”) that relate to historical development and current social structures
  - ▶ How can the intrinsic logic of a metropolis be taken into account in urban planning?
- Adaptation of the entrepreneurial (Western) city as means to position itself as global city
- People with little economic, social, and cultural capital are displaced to social housing on the periphery where they lack inner-city’s geographies of opportunities (e.g. informal work)

# Panel discussion

## Panel discussants:

- Ananya Roy, UC Berkeley
- Monika Salzbrunn, Université de Lausanne (GYF fellow)
- Gerald Wood, University of Münster

## Moderator:

- Jörg Plöger, Research Institute for Regional and Urban Development (ILS) Dortmund (GYF fellow)