

# **We Learn With Youth, We Get Stronger With Youth: Youth, Urban Citizenship and Local Government in Istanbul**

BİLİM, SANAT, EĞİTİM,  
**- B i**  
ARAŞTIRMA VE DAYANISMA DERNEĞİ  
**R - A R**  
ASSOCIATION FOR SCIENCE, ART,  
**A - D A**  
EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND SOLIDARITY

**BİRARADA PUBLICATIONS**



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**BİRARADA YAYINLARI**



Bilim, Sanat, Eğitim, Araştırma ve Dayanışma Derneği  
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We Learn with Youth, We Get Stronger with Youth:  
Youth, Urban Citizenship and Local Governments in Istanbul  
MURAT TÜLEK / EDA YÜCESOY  
MUSTAFA KEMAL COŞKUN  
SEMA BAYRAKTAR

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## Preface

This report is prepared within the scope of the project titled “Learning from and Empowering the Youth: Youth, Participatory Urban Citizenship, and Local Governance in Istanbul” by BİRARADA Association, with the aim of contributing to the inclusion and empowerment of youth in local governance and policy-making processes and to the improvement of youth in terms of their representation in urban politics and career development. The report consists of three sections.

In order to support the survey and in-depth interview studies that reveal the socio-economic status, political tendencies, lifestyle preferences, attitudes and expectations towards the city of young people residing in Istanbul, the first part of the report was prepared by analyzing the existing publicly available data of the young population in Istanbul in order to reveal the social profiles of youth that can shed light on the research through spatial mapping method. Within the scope of the research, 2020 Address Based Population Registration System and National Education Statistics published by the Turkish Statistical Institute were used. Within the scope of Economic Status research, data and analysis maps compiled within the scope of the “Kent95: A Data-Based Policy Tool” research conducted by TESEV and Kadir Has University, Istanbul Research Center in 2019 were used as reference sources. It was tried to show how the demographic, social and economic characteristic of young people differ in metropolis like Istanbul and the importance of reflecting this diversity when planning fieldwork.

In the second part of the report, it was tried to understand the expectations from local governments and the possibilities of participation in local government activities within the framework of urban citizenship, urban identity and urban quality perception, focusing on young people aged 18-29 living in Istanbul. For this purpose, a total of 1000 people between the ages of 18-29 living in different districts of Istanbul were surveyed and 100 face-to-face interviews were conducted, thus aiming to measure young people’s perceptions of urban quality and urban identity with both qualitative and quantitative data. Urban Quality Perception measures individuals’ evaluation of the city’s unique features in five dimensions: city plan perception, gain/advantage perception, security perception, livability and transportation perception. It was observed that the city plan, security and livability perceptions of the participants were low and the perception of transportation was partially high. Despite these negative situations, the perception of gain/advantage appears at a high level. The Urban Identity Scale is measured in three dimensions and shows to what extent the city where the participant lives, is a central part of his/her identity. In the study, it was found that urban identity was high in all three dimensions (identification, level of responsibility towards the city and familiarity with the city). On the other

hand, young individuals also have high expectations from the city administration. The first and primary demand is to increase cultural and artistic activities for young people. This is followed by the demand of local governments to create employment opportunities for young people. Thirdly, young people demand direct educational support, various courses, certificates, vocational training. Increasing and expanding transportation opportunities and making transportation either free or cheap is another demand. Another demand is to increase the number of free or inexpensive sports fields and to carry out sports activities for young people. Finally, the young people participating in the research want domestic or international trips to be organized.

The last part of the report focused on the internship opportunities that young people expect from local governments. Here, we aimed to follow and examine the internship process in the local government while trying to determine the current situation, considering that the internship opportunities to be provided to the youth in the municipality will make a significant contribution to the local governments. The review shows that there are important steps we need to take in this regard and that the development of internship programs will greatly contribute to both municipalities and young people.

Undoubtedly, this study is only a small beginning for increasing the participation of young people in local governments and empowering both themselves and local governments. Hoping for more work to be done on this subject...

BIRARADA





# Chapter 1

## Neighborhood-based Representations of Youth Population in İstanbul (15-29 age)



**Research Report**

by

Murat Tülek

Eda Yücesoy

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## Index of Symbols and Abbreviations

**BİRARADA:** Association for Research and Solidarity in Science, Arts, Education

**TESEV:** Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation

**TGSP:** Turkey Youth NGO Platform

**NGO:** Non-governmental organisation

**SODEV:** Social Democracy Foundation

**UNESCO:** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

**TURKSTAT:** Turkish Statistical Institute

**NUTS:** Turkey Statistical Region Units Classification

**ABPRS:** Address Based Population Registration System

**TEM:** Trans European Motorway

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## **Preface**

This research covers the socio-economic status, political tendencies, and lifestyle preferences of the young people residing in Istanbul, which constitutes the first stage of the project titled "Learning from and Empowering the Youth: Youth, Participatory Urban Citizenship, and Local Governance in Istanbul" carried out by BIRARADA Association. Within the scope of the research, Address Based Population Registration System (ABPRS) for 2020 and National Education Statistics published by the Turkish Statistical Institute were used. The data and analysis maps, which are compiled from "City95: Data-Based Policy Tool" research conducted by TESEV and Kadir Has University, Istanbul Research Center in 2019 were used as reference sources for economic status research.

# 1. Introduction

In recent years, the number of studies on the geographical distribution of social groups defined by their demographic characteristics like children, young and elderly people and the characteristics of the urban environment they live in has started to increase in the national and international literature. (Erginli, 2018 ; Şentürk ve Ceylan, 2015). In Turkey, which has a young population above the average of European countries, studies examining the demographic, socio-economic, and socio-political status of young people and the significance and perspectives they attach to social values and issues have become prominent, and major themes such as employment, education, politics, economy and participation in politics often set the research agendas (TGSP, 2018; SODEV, 2020; Çağlar ve Çağlar, 2021). It is observed that the number of researches on the young people's participation in politics and policy preferences, the differentiation of their choices due to changing technology and the global system, and the development of new generation policies are increasing. Although the young people living in urban areas do not receive much attention as a distinct group in youth studies in the current literature, the role of youth becomes especially prominent through the issues such as cultural policies and positionality, the daily life shaped by domestic and social relations, the relations in schools; behaviors and rituals in the transition to consumer society, and public representation and political participation.

The concepts of "young" and "youth" are changing social and cultural definitions throughout the historical process. These concepts also include universal meanings covering the transition period from childhood to youth and maturity, which also describe the changes and effects in the physical characteristics of the individual. The World Health Organization defines the 10-19 age group as adolescence, the 20-24 age group as the youth period, and the 10-24 age group as young people.

According to the United Nations UNESCO, a young is defined as a person between the ages of 15 and 24 who is studying, does not work for a living and does not have a separate residence. In this framework, while the International Labor Organization and UNESCO define the period of youth within the 15-24 age range, the United Nations envisages the period within the 12-24 age range. In Turkey, the age range of 12-24, determined by the United Nations, has been adopted as the youth period and has taken place in the policies in this way. On the other hand, UNESCO emphasizes that young people are a diverse and heterogeneous group and that the experience of being young varies greatly according to region and country. In some reports of the European Union, young people are defined as those between the ages of 15-29. The youth

period thus begins with the age of adolescence and ends with a step towards the relative maturity of adulthood after the age of 18. In Turkey, living in a separate residence [from the family of origin] is mostly due to marriage. According to the Family Structure Survey conducted by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT) in 2016, 76% of first-time marriages take place between the ages of 18-29. In this context, the age of 29 can be considered as the age limit in terms of leaving home and settling in a separate residence.

Within the scope of this study, the population between **the ages of 15-29** was accepted as **young**. According to TURKSTAT data for 2020, the rate of youth population between the ages of 15-29 in Turkey is 23.04% of the total population which is 19,264,704. 51.13% (9.850.565) of this population is male and 48.87% (9.414.139) is female. According to evaluations of NUTS Level 2 regions of Turkey, the first three regions with the highest density of youth people between the ages of 15-29 are respectively Van, Muş, Bitlis, Hakkari (% 30,6); Mardin, Batman, Şırnak, Siirt (% 30,3) and Ağrı, Kars, Iğdır, Ardahan (%28,5) (Table 1). In the metropolitan area of İstanbul where this study was conducted, 23% of the population is between the ages of 15-29. 36.3% of this group is 25-29 years old, 33.6% is between the ages of 20-24, and the remaining 31% is the young people in the 15-19 age group. Considering their share of the total population of İstanbul, the 25-29 age group takes the first place with 1,292,327 people (8.4%).

#### NUTS-2 Level

#### Percentage of population aged 15-29 in total populations of regions

Van, Muş, Bitlis, Hakkari	30.6
Mardin, Batman, Şırnak, Siirt	30.3
Ağrı, Kars, Iğdır, Ardahan	28.5
Şanlıurfa, Diyarbakır	27.5
Erzurum, Erzincan, Bayburt	26.7
Gaziantep, Adıyaman, Kilis	25.2
Malatya, Elazığ, Bingöl, Tunceli	24.0
Konya, Karaman	23.7
Kırıkale, Aksaray, Niğde, Nevşehir, Kırşehir	23.4
Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Osmaniye	23.3
Kayseri, Sivas, Yozgat	23.2
<b>İstanbul</b>	<b>23.0</b>
Kocaeli, Sakarya, Düzce, Bolu, Yalova	22.6
Ankara	22.3
Adana, Mersin	22.2
Manisa, Afyonkarahisar, Kütahya, Uşak	21.5
Samsun, Tokat, Çorum, Amasya	21.5

Bursa, Eskişehir, Bilecik	21.4
Antalya, Isparta, Burdur	21.4
Tekirdağ, Edirne, Kırklareli	21.2
Trabzon, Ordu, Giresun, Rize, Artvin, Gümüşhane	21.1
Zonguldak, Karabük, Bartın	20.9
İzmir	20.4
Kastamonu, Çankırı, Sinop	20.1
Aydın, Denizli, Muğla	20.0
Balıkesir, Çanakkale	19.2

**Table 1. Distribution of Youth Population (15-29 ages) at the level of NUTS-2 in Turkey**

According to the youth surveys conducted on a national scale, when compared to the adult population, the young population has a very high usage of social media; is familiar with foreign languages; is aware of humanitarian and social values; prioritizes scientific thinking rather than traditional conservative values; is up-to-date about the national and global agenda to a significant extent; believes in gender equality, human and animal rights, and is sensitive to the environment (Çağlar ve Çağlar, 2021, s.27). While these studies put a limited emphasis on regional differences, they underline that there is significant differentiation between the adult population and youth throughout Turkey. While research is mostly carried out at the axis of macro politics and participation in [macro] politics, there are limited studies on local politics and participation in local politics. In this sense, this study, which focuses on the youth living in Istanbul, plays a pioneering role.

**As the first step** of this project, which aims to empower young people and strengthen youth involvement in local governance and policy-making processes, and improve their representation in urban politics and career development, **an exploratory spatial mapping study** was carried out regarding the geographical distribution and characteristics, social and economic status of young people residing **in Istanbul**. In this context, maps of age group, education, and economic status were produced at the neighborhood level in the Istanbul metropolitan area, based on TURKSTAT data for 2020.

## 2. Data and Method

The study is based on spatial analyzes made on the basis of neighborhoods by using Address Based Population Registration System (ABPRS) data for 2020 published by TURKSTAT. In this framework, the social and economic characteristics of 39 districts and 864 borhoods in the Istanbul metropolitan area were analyzed through the features obtained from the ABPRS data. In this way,

it is planned to prepare the following analyzes at the level of neighborhoods in the Istanbul metropolitan area.

- a. the distribution of the neighborhood residents through quinary age groups,
- b. neighborhood residents' level of education (completed schooling)
- c. economic status of neighborhoods according to fair market value of real estates.

In the analysis and maps made according to age groups, the distribution of the young population between the ages of 15-29 in neighborhoods was examined through significant agglomerations. The model used in the study is the **relational stratification model**, which aims to map the representative quantities, together with the agglomerations and distinctive qualities of places. According to this model, the qualitative characteristics of places are represented through the positions they take in relation to each other in context-dependent relationships. Thus, not only singular features but also plural features come together and become evident and differentiating profiles can be observed.

The relational stratification model produces multi-dimensional categorical data profiles by stratifying multi-dimensional social and economic profiles, by the means of displaying the features that make up the social and spatial structure throughout the city as distinctive and weighted profiles. In this way, an infrastructure suitable for the implementation of context-dependent explanatory frameworks is established.

The examinations made throughout Istanbul describe the characteristics and structure of the neighborhoods. Differentiation in population, education, and economic status is revealed on a neighborhood basis. The main reason for this is that TURKSTAT - ABPRS data cannot be detailed for individual-level investigations. Therefore, all studies are based on the analysis of neighborhoods.

While examining the maps in the study, it is necessary to pay attention to some issues. On these maps, the neighborhoods where the young population is concentrated may not correspond to the neighborhoods with the most young population. Neighborhoods with a high population share in the total population of the district naturally have a large young population. For instance, the district of Esenyurt has 6.2% of the total population of Istanbul, and 6.8% of the young people in Istanbul aged 15-29 live in Esenyurt (Table 1). Esenyurt, Küçükçekmece, Bağcılar, Pendik and Ümraniye are the districts with the largest population in Istanbul and also have the largest young population.

Secondly, young people between the ages of 15-29 are not a homogeneous



group in terms of household structure, and they live together with different age groups within the Turkish family structure. We can say that young people between the ages of 15-19 mostly live with their families, however those between the ages of 25-29 can also live in their own houses. Since all households are combined at the neighborhood level in the TURKSTAT database, every age group can be seen in every neighborhood, however, spatial analyzes reveal neighborhoods and neighborhood groups where different age groups differ significantly. Neighborhoods where different age groups are represented with distinct differentiation may correspond to different social and cultural lifestyles within the whole urban area. Nevertheless, this mapping study provides an exploratory analysis for the whole of Istanbul and should be supported by detailed field works.

### **3. District-level Analyzes**

According to the ABPRS results for 2020, 3,556,208 people between the ages of 15-29 live in Istanbul. When the distribution of the young people in the same age group, who make up 23% of the Istanbul population, is analyzed within the Istanbul metropolitan area, Esenyurt, Bağcılar and Küçükçekmece are the top three districts with the highest ratio, and the male and female young population of are generally represented at almost similar ratios.

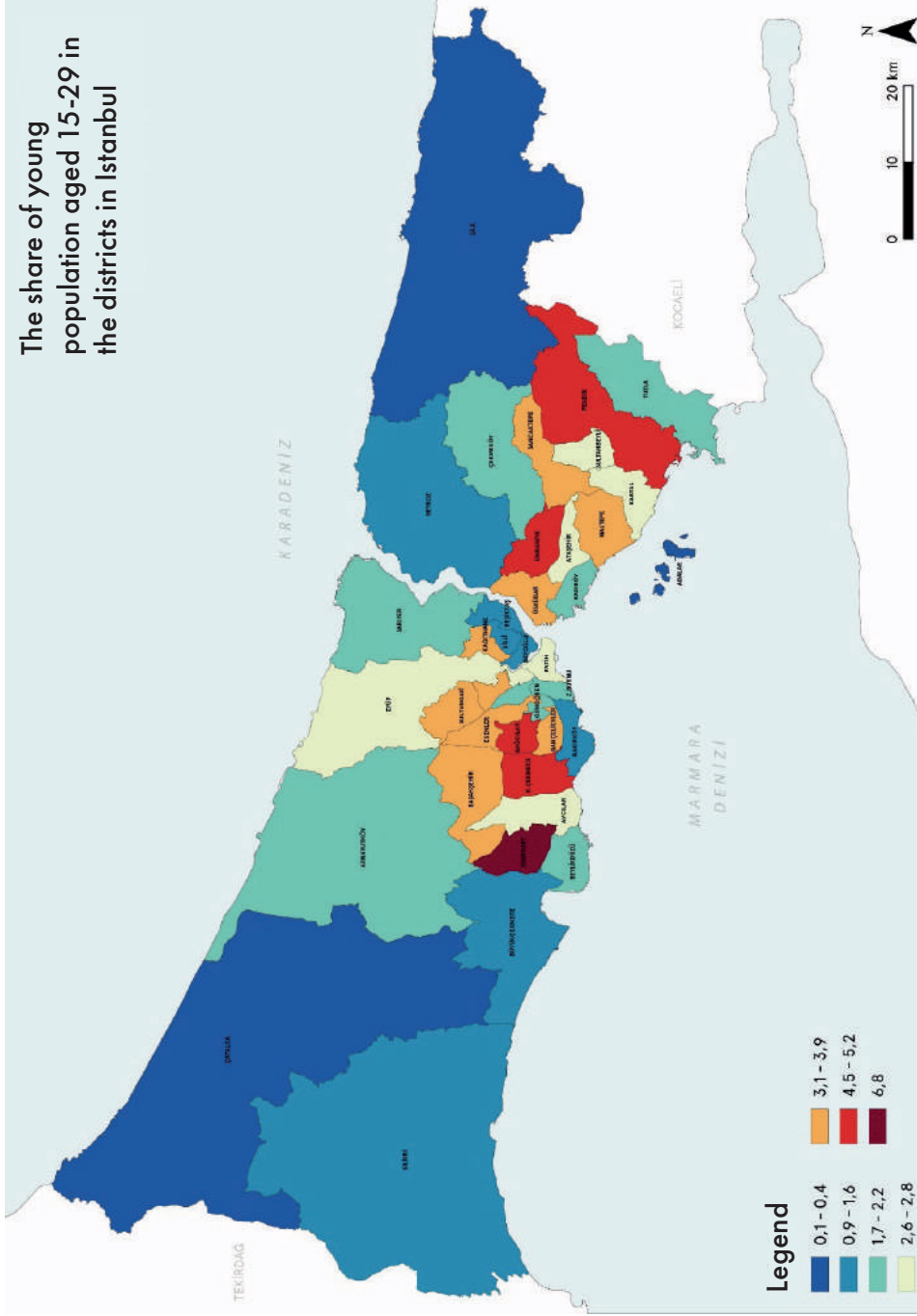
When the age groups and gender distribution in Istanbul are examined together at the district level, the male population ratio of the age group 15-29 in Silivri and Esenler (13.6%), Sultanbeyli (13,5%), Zeytinburnu (13,2%), Arnavutköy (12,9%) and Güngören (12,8%), is quite above the Istanbul average (11.7%). When the female population in the 15-29 age group is examined, the ratios in the disticts of Sultanbeyli (13.1%), Zeytinburnu (13%), Arnavutköy (12.7%), Esenler (12.6%), Sultangazi and Sancaktepe (12.5%) is above the Istanbul average (11.3%) (Map 1).

On the other hand, an exceptional situation for Istanbul, in general, is observed, in Silivri, Adalar, Şile and Güngören, in the distribution of the young population aged 15-29 by gender in the districts where they reside. In these districts, the young male population between the ages of 15-29 is up to twice that of women in the same age group.

	The share of the total population of the district in İstanbul	The share of young population aged 15-29 in the districts in İstanbul	The share of young population aged 15-29 in the district	The share of young Female population aged 15-29 in the district	The share of young Male population aged 15-29 in the district
Esenyurt	6.2	6.8	25.2	12.4	12.8
Küçükçekmece	5.1	5.2	23.5	11.6	11.9
Bağcılar	4.8	5.2	25.1	12.4	12.8
Pendik	4.7	4.7	22.8	11.3	11.5
Ümraniye	4.6	4.5	22.5	11.2	11.3
Bahçelievler	3.8	3.9	23.5	11.3	12.2
Sultangazi	3.5	3.8	25.3	12.5	12.8
Üsküdar	3.4	3.2	22.2	10.9	11.3
Maltepe	3.3	3.1	21.4	9.9	11.5
Gaziosmanpaşa	3.2	3.2	23.4	11.6	11.8
Kadıköy	3.1	2.2	16.0	8.1	7.8
Kartal	3.1	2.8	21.1	10.4	10.7
Başakşehir	3.0	3.2	24.2	12.0	12.2
Sancaktepe	3.0	3.1	24.5	12.5	12.1
Esenler	2.9	3.3	26.2	12.6	13.6
Kağıthane	2.9	3.1	24.8	12.1	12.7
Avcılar	2.8	2.8	22.6	11.1	11.5
Ataşehir	2.7	2.6	21.8	11.0	10.8
Eyüpsultan	2.6	2.6	22.4	11.0	11.4
Fatih	2.6	2.6	23.2	11.2	12.0
Beylikdüzü	2.4	2.1	20.6	10.5	10.1
Sultanbeyli	2.2	2.6	26.6	13.1	13.5
Sarıyer	2.2	2.0	21.0	10.1	10.9
Arnavutköy	1.9	2.1	25.6	12.7	12.9
Zeytinburnu	1.8	2.1	26.2	13.0	13.2
Güngören	1.8	1.9	23.9	11.0	12.8
Çekmeköy	1.8	1.7	22.4	11.3	11.1
Tuzla	1.8	1.8	23.2	11.0	12.1
Bayrampaşa	1.7	1.7	22.5	10.8	11.6
Şişli	1.7	1.6	21.5	10.4	11.1
Büyükkçekmece	1.7	1.5	21.0	10.4	10.7
Beykoz	1.6	1.5	22.1	10.8	11.3
Beyoğlu	1.5	1.5	23.4	11.0	12.4
Bakırköy	1.5	1.1	17.5	8.6	8.8
Silivri	1.3	1.3	22.6	8.9	13.6
Beşiktaş	1.1	0.9	17.9	8.9	9.0
Çatalca	0.5	0.4	20.0	9.5	10.5
Şile	0.2	0.2	19.1	8.4	10.6
Adalar	0.1	0.1	18.1	6.6	11.4
Total	100		23.0		

**Table 2. Distribution of Male and Female Young Population (ages 15-29) by Districts in İstanbul Metropolitan Area**

The share of young population aged 15-29 in the districts in Istanbul



Map 1. Distribution of young population (15-29 years old) by districts in Istanbul metropolitan area

## 4. Neighborhood-level Analyzes

### 4.1. Age Groups and The Neighborhoods in Istanbul

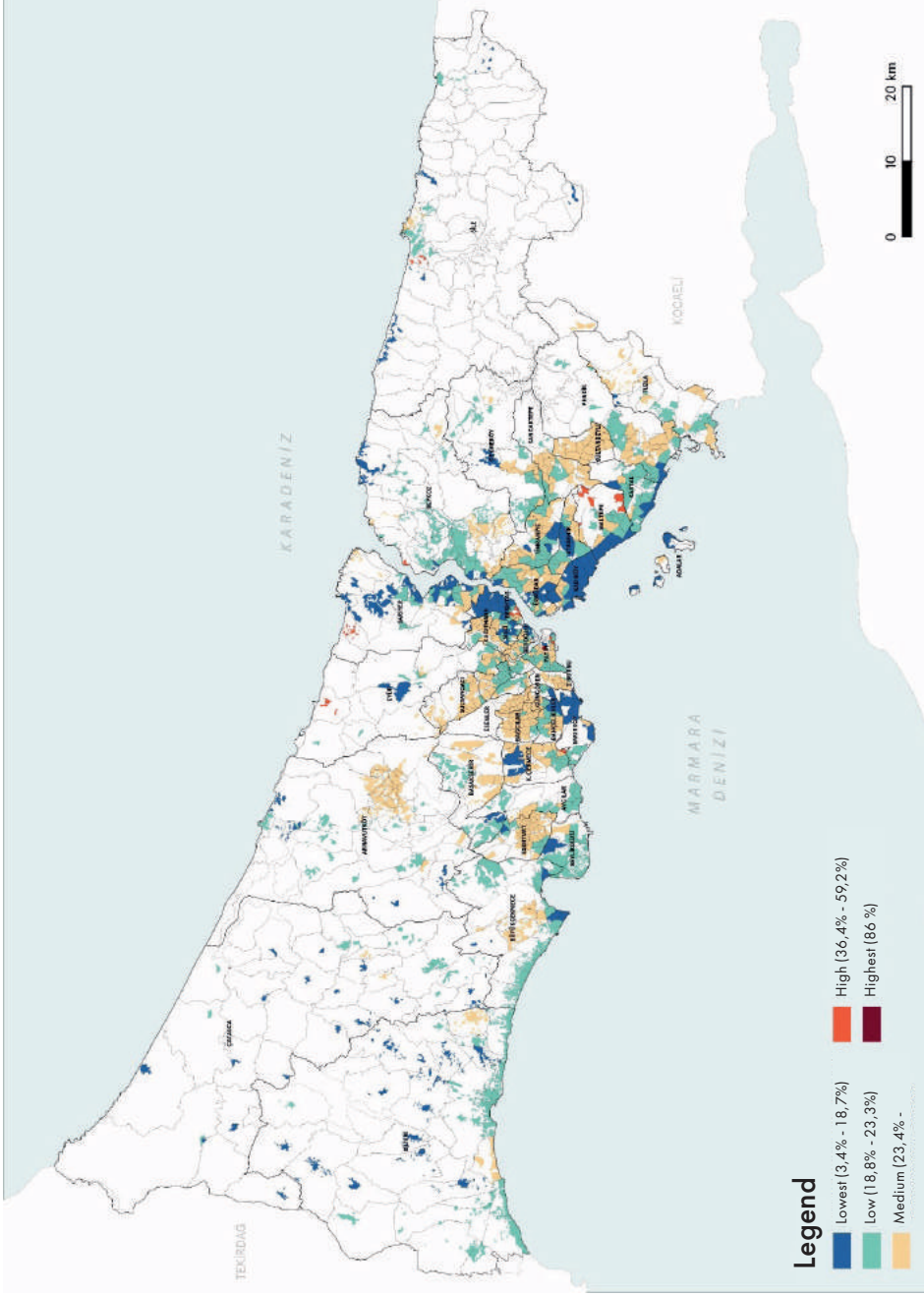
When the distribution of the young population between the ages of 15-29 in Istanbul neighborhoods is examined, though there is a similarity with the distribution in the districts, differentiations are identified. Interesting features in the compositions of the neighborhood populations become prominent, as the population differences of the neighborhoods within the districts highlight the young population in the share of the district population (Table 3).

First of all, considering the share of the young population in the total neighborhood population, the youth population in Kalenderhane, Fatih, constitutes vast the majority with 82.5%. The neighborhoods of Fatih Binbirdirek and Küçükçekmece Beşyol also have significantly higher ratios. Fatih Molla Hüsrev neighborhood is in the fourth place in Istanbul, then Beykoz Anadolu Kavağı, Fatih Şehsuvarbey, Eyüpsultan Ağaçalı, Sarıyer Gümüşdere, Maltepe Büyükbakkalköy, and Şile Meşrutiyet are noticeable as the top 10 neighborhoods, respectively. Some of these neighborhoods are located in the urban area, and some in the periphery.

On the other hand, gender plays an important role in the distribution of age groups by neighborhood. Table 4 shows the top 10 rankings of Istanbul neighborhoods according to the gender groups of the youth population and their population share in the neighborhood. For example, in Kalenderhane (Fatih) neighborhood, which has the largest youth population in Istanbul, 82.5% of the population is composed of women between the ages of 15-29, and 4.2% is men between the ages of 15-29. Similarly, in Binbirdirek (Fatih) neighborhood, women aged 15-29 constitute 59.2% of the population, while men aged 15-29 do only 6.2%. In Beşyol (Küçükçekmece) neighborhood, the rate of young women is nearly four times higher than that of young men, as well (Female: 43.9% and Male: 14.9%). On the other hand, a reverse situation is observed in Molla Hüsrev (Fatih), Anadolu Kavağı (Beykoz), and Şehsuvar (Fatih) neighborhoods. While the female population between the ages 15-29 is 6.2%, 6.1%, and 6.5% in all three neighborhoods, respectively, men between the ages of 15-29 constitute half of the population. Males between the ages 15-29 constitute 49.8% of the population in Molla Hüsrev (Fatih), 44.1% in Anadolu Kavağı (Beykoz) and 40.3% in Şehsuvar (Fatih).

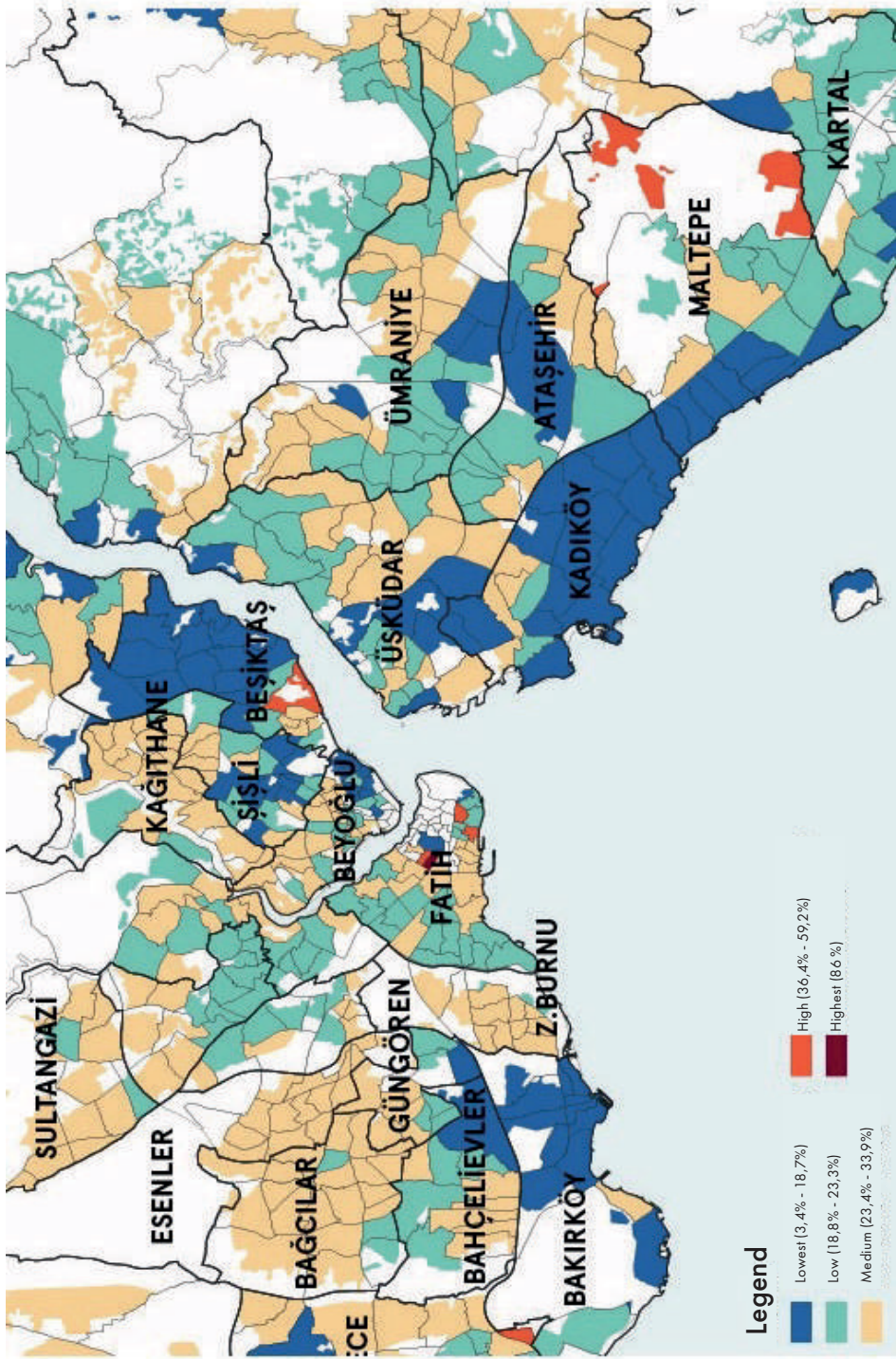
District	Neighborhood	% of the population aged 15-29 in the total neighborhood
FATİH	KALENDERHANE	82.5
FATİH	BİNBİRDİREK	59.2
KÜÇÜKÇEKMECE	BEŞYOL	58.8
FATİH	MOLLA HÜSREV	56.0
BEYKOZ	ANADOLU KAVAĞI	50.3
FATİH	ŞEHSUVAR BEY	46.8
EYÜPSULTAN	AĞAÇLI	42.9
SARIYER	GÜMÜŞDERE	42.5
MALTEPE	BÜYÜKBAKKALKÖY	42.1
ŞİLE	MEŞRUTİYET	42.0
BEŞİKTAŞ	YILDIZ	36.4
ZEYTİNBURNU	MERKEZEFENDİ	33.9
ZEYTİNBURNU	MALTEPE	32.9
SİLİVRİ	SEMİZKUMLAR	31.8
ÜSKÜDAR	KULELİ	31.6
BEŞİKTAŞ	SİNANPAŞA	31.0
FATİH	TOPKAPI	30.9
GÜNGÖREN	GENÇOSMAN	30.3
FATİH	NİŞANCA	30.0
PENDİK	RAMAZANOĞLU	29.3

**Table 3. Istanbul neighborhoods, the first 20 neighborhoods according to their youth population share.**



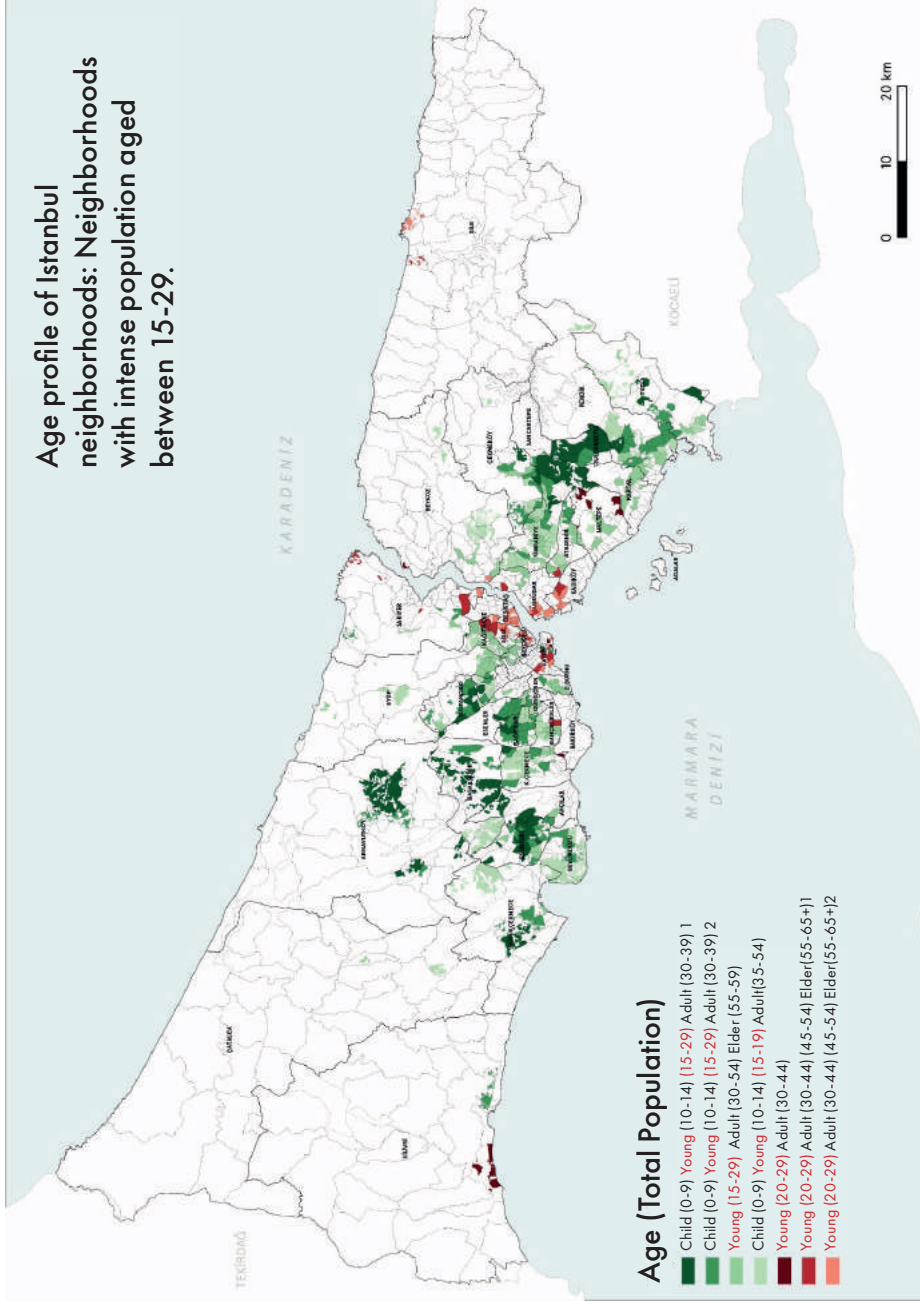
**Map 2a. Distribution of population intensities of the young population aged 15-29 in neighborhoods within the metropolitan area of Istanbul**





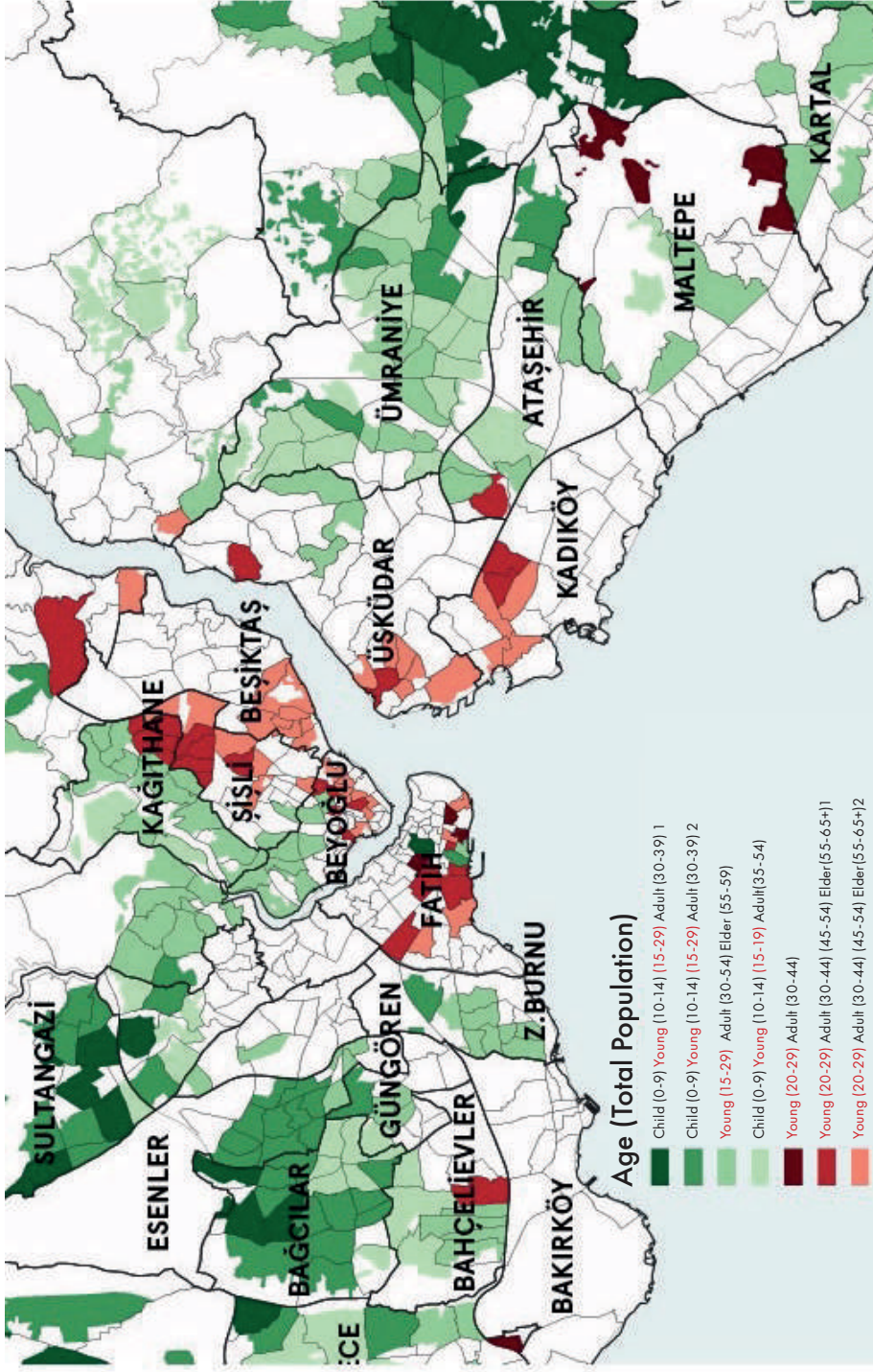
Map 2b. Distribution of population densities of young people aged 15-29 in Istanbul central neighborhoods.

Age profile of Istanbul neighborhoods: Neighborhoods with intense population aged between 15-29.



Map 3a. Geographical distribution and significant intensities of the entire youth population (together with other population groups) in neighborhoods of the Istanbul metropolitan area





Map 3b. Geographical distribution and significant intensities of all young population (along with other population groups) in central neighborhoods in Istanbul (2020)

	Share of 15-29 years olds in neighborhood population	Share of Females aged 15-29 in neighborhood population	Share of Males aged 15-29 in neighborhood population
1	Kalenderhane (Fatih)	Kalenderhane (Fatih)	Molla Hüsrev (Fatih)
2	Binbirdirek (Fatih)	Binbirdirek (Fatih)	Anadolu Kavağı (Beykoz)
3	Beşyol (Küçükçekmece)	Beşyol (Küçükçekmece)	Şehsuvar Bey (Fatih)
4	Molla Hüsrev (Fatih)	Merkezefendi (Zeytinburnu)	Büyükbakkalköy (Maltepe)
5	Anadolu Kavağı (Beykoz)	Göksu (Beykoz)	Semizkuşlar (Silivri)
6	Şehsuvar Bey (Fatih)	Ağaçlı (Eyüpsultan)	Gümüşdere (Sarıyer)
7	Ağaçlı (Eyüpsultan)	Topkapı (Fatih)	Meşrutiyet (Şile)
8	Gümüşdere (Sarıyer)	Yıldız (Beşiktaş)	Kuleli (Üsküdar)
9	Büyükbakkalköy (Maltepe)	Göztepe (Beykoz)	Ağaçlı (Eyüpsultan)
10	Meşrutiyet (Şile)	Ramazanoğlu (Pendik)	Camiikebir (Beyoğlu)

**Table 4. Gender-based and total shares of neighborhood population aged 15-29**

At this stage of the project, the aim is to examine the distribution of young people residing in Istanbul according to their different characteristics and to provide a framework for the survey studies to be carried out in the later stages of the project. In this way, an inclusive scope will be offered not only for certain educational, social and economic status groups, but also for the whole Istanbul.

Maps 2a and 2b show the distribution of the percentages of youth in the 15-29 age group, whose diagram is given in Table 4, according to the population of their neighborhoods in Istanbul. Blue colors represent low intensities, and colors going from light pink to dark brown represent an increase in the rate of young people aged 15-29. Generally speaking, the shores of Istanbul; excluding Yıldız and Sinanpaşa in the district of Beşiktaş, Kuleli in Üsküdar and the [whole] district, Fatih; are the neighborhoods where the young population is less represented. As one moves from the coasts to the inner districts, the percentage of youth in the neighborhood increases.

On the other hand, when the youth in the 15-29 age group are examined together with the other age groups in the neighborhood, different geographical distribution and distinct intensities emerge at the neighborhood scale, as shown in Maps 3a and 3b. In the analysis made on the profile similarities of the age groups, instead of the analysis based on the weight of the neighborhood population in the entire province population, the profiles of young people aged 15-29, which appear prominently in Istanbul neighborhoods, are observed.

Especially in Map 2b, there are significant intensities that cannot be observed due to proportional differences, and there is a differentiation in youth age group profiles observed in certain neighborhoods in Beşiktaş, Beyoğlu, Üsküdar, Kadıköy and Fatih districts. In this context, examining both the population rates in the neighborhood and their weight in the young population, **6 neighborhood groups** are determined for the youth in the 15-29 age group.

The most important feature of the neighborhoods forming **Group 1** is that the young population distinguishes itself from other age groups and creates a distinctive profile. The 15-29 age group, particularly the 20-24 age group, is predominantly represented in these neighborhoods. These neighborhoods are Kalenderhane, Binbirdirek, Şehsuvar Bey, Molla Hüsrev in Fatih; Beşyol in Küçükçekmece; Anadolu Kavağı in Beykoz and Büyükbakkalköy in Maltepe.

In the neighborhoods constituting **Group 2**, not only the young population but also the elderly population live together. The neighborhoods of Meşrutiyet in Şile, Üsküdar Kuleli in Üsküdar, Topkapı in Fatih, Camikebir in Beyoğlu and Ptt Evleri in Sarıyer are represented in this group.

Although **Group 3**, which consists of neighborhoods of Yıldız in Beşiktaş and Göksu in Beykoz, is similar to Group 2 in terms of profile, it is further behind in weight.

In **Group 4**, in addition to the 20-24 age group, the 15-19 age group is dominant in the neighborhood. These neighborhoods are Ağaçalı and Emniyettepe in Eyüpsultan and Ramazanoğlu in Pendik.

In the neighborhoods constituting the **5th and 6th Groups**, it is observed that the age groups under the age of 15 are predominant, together with the youth. Excepting the neighborhoods Merkezefendi and Maltepe in Zeytinburnu, these neighborhoods are in the periphery districts of Istanbul. They are Gümüşdere in Sarıyer; Gençosman in Güngören; Altınşehir, Şahintepe and Ziya Gökalp in Başakşehir; Oruçreis in Esenler; Yarımburgaz in Küçükçekmece; 100. Yıl and Mahmutbey in Bağcılar; Yunus Emre, Atatürk, Boğazköy, İstiklal, Hicret and Nenehatun in Arnavutköy; and Akşemsettin and Hamidiye in Sultanbeyli.

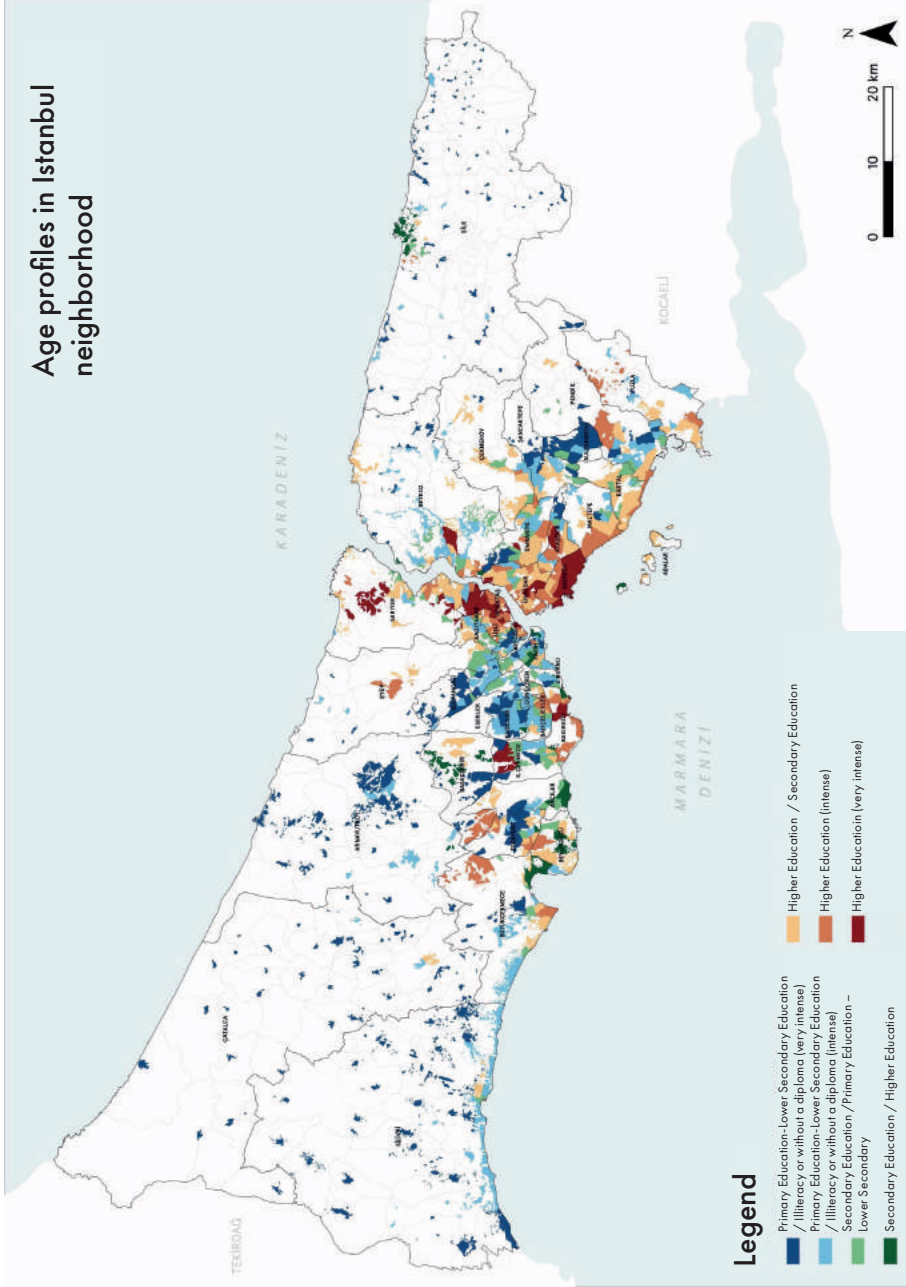
In the studies on the quinary age groups in Istanbul neighborhoods, significant differences based on gender were found. It may be possible to investigate the reasons for this differentiation seen in male and female groups between the ages of 15-29, during the field studies in the later stages of the project. The neighborhoods of Kalenderhane and Binbirdirek in Fatih, Beşyol in Küçükçekmece, and Göksu in Beykoz deserve attention especially for their female youth population rates.

## 4.2. The Educational level of People in Istanbul and Istanbul Neighborhoods

TURKSTAT National Education Statistics presents the educational profiles of the people living in the Istanbul metropolitan area, on a neighborhood basis. These profiles cover all groups starting from illiterate people and people with postgraduate degrees. Although all groups live together in all neighborhoods of Istanbul, clusters and agglomerations are observed in different neighborhoods in terms of educational characteristics.

The educational profiles of Istanbul neighborhoods given in Map 4 were created by analysing the neighborhoods with their similar and diversifying characteristics of education. In the most general terms, although groups with high education levels mostly live on the shores of the Marmara and the Bosphorus, it has been observed that neighborhoods with high education profiles are formed in districts such as Büyükçekmece, Eyüp, Sarıyer, Beykoz, Pendik and Tuzla, especially due to the effects of gated communities that have increased in number in recent years, which located on and near the main transportation corridors on the periphery of the Istanbul central urban area.

Although the education profiles shown on the map reflect the educational levels of all the residents of the neighborhood, when examined together with the neighborhoods where the young people mostly live, they can give important clues about the education level of the young people.



**Map 4. Educational profiles in neighborhoods in the Istanbul metropolitan area**

### 4.3. Analyzes on Economic Status of Istanbul Neighborhoods

There is no data disclosed by public sources regarding the economic status of neighborhoods in Turkish cities and the income of those living in these neighborhoods. However, various studies have been carried out indirectly on economic status, especially on real estate values. Within the scope of this study, "minimum square meter unit values of plots and lands", published by the Revenue Administration every four years starting from 2002 and based on the calculation of "tax value" in accordance with the Real Estate Tax Law, were compiled and analyzed on a neighborhood basis. The distribution of the current values in the space gives clues about the value of the urban land and the economic status of the people who use these plots.

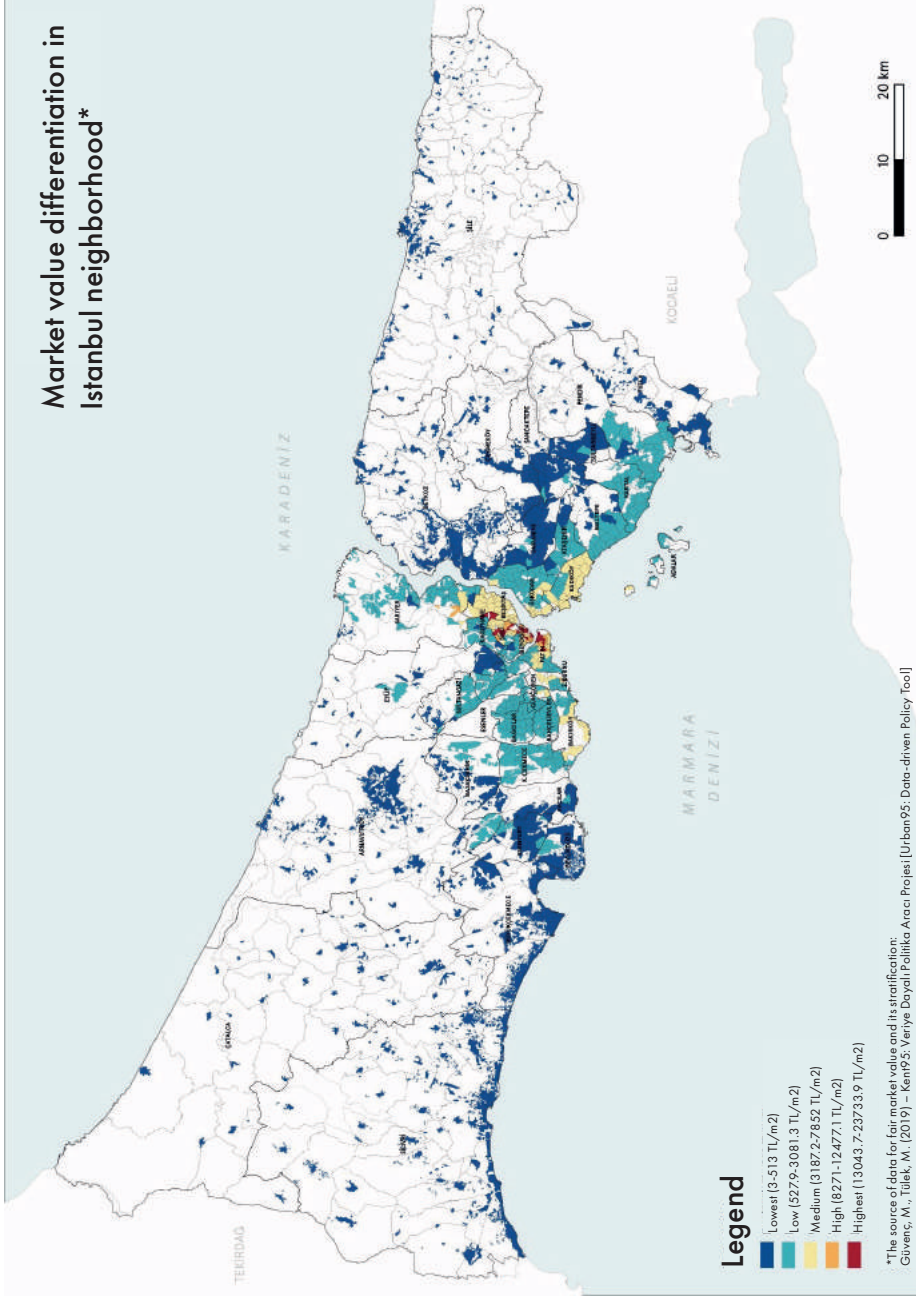
When the fair values announced for 2018 are compiled for all neighborhoods in the Istanbul metropolitan area, it is seen that the average fair values vary between 3 and 23,734 TL. First of all, the neighborhoods with the highest real estate market value in the Istanbul metropolitan area are located in and around the Central Business District. These neighborhoods have a market value of more than 10.000 TL, have a very low population density and have a household size that is well below the average of Istanbul (2.2 and 2.6). The neighborhoods in the Highest Fair Market Value and High Fair Market Value Clusters include 17 neighborhoods in total, concentrated in the central neighborhoods of Beyoğlu and Şişli, within the borders of the old Eminönü district.

The 102 neighborhoods, whose average socio-economic status can be described as medium, with an average market value of 4,742 TL, are concentrated in Bakırköy, Beşiktaş, Beyoğlu, Fatih, Kadıköy, Şişli, Üsküdar and Zeytinburnu districts, which can be considered the central districts of Istanbul. Exceptionally Silivri, Büyükçekmece with a dominant periphery character and districts like Güngören and Üsküdar, which are located right outside the center are in this cluster, too.

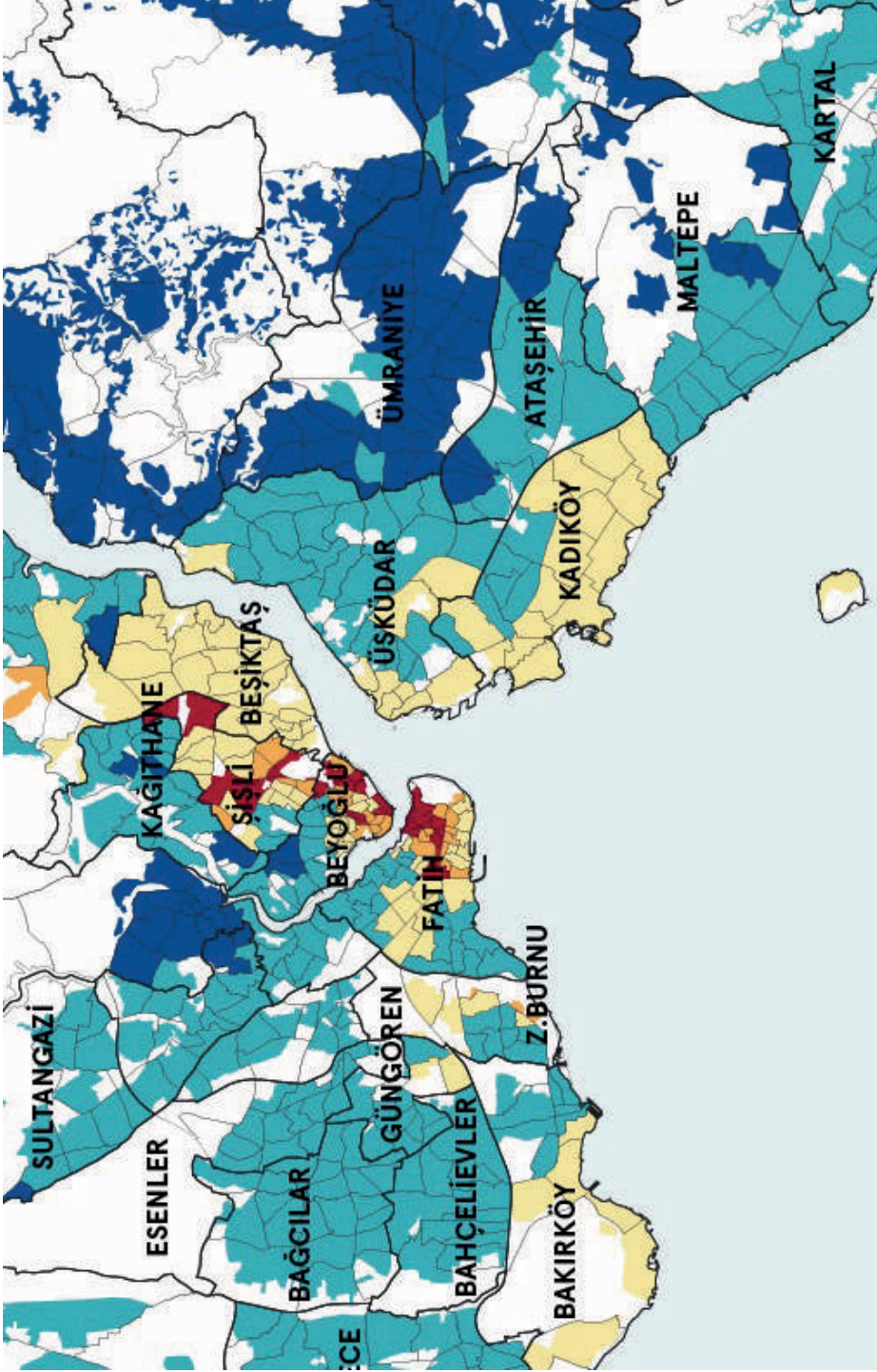
The majority of the neighborhood cluster in Istanbul is predominantly low and lowest fair market value neighborhoods. The socio-economic status average of both clusters is below 4, and the household averages are above the Istanbul average of 3.4. The fact that the fair market values are very low in the rural area of Istanbul, as well as the low population density, increases the number of rural neighborhoods in the poorest cluster and complicates the analysis compared to a higher cluster. On the Asian side of İstanbul, the poorest neighborhoods are more dominant in the north of the Trans European Motorway. When the two northern sides of the Bosphorus are compared, it is observed that the neighborhoods on the Beykoz ridge are poorer than the neighborhoods on the Sarıyer ridge. On the European side, the worst-conditioned neighborhoods are concentrated in Arnavutköy and Eyüp, west of Basın Ekspres Yolu.



## Market value differentiation in Istanbul neighborhood\*



Map 5a. Economic status indicators in Istanbul metropolitan area over land fair value



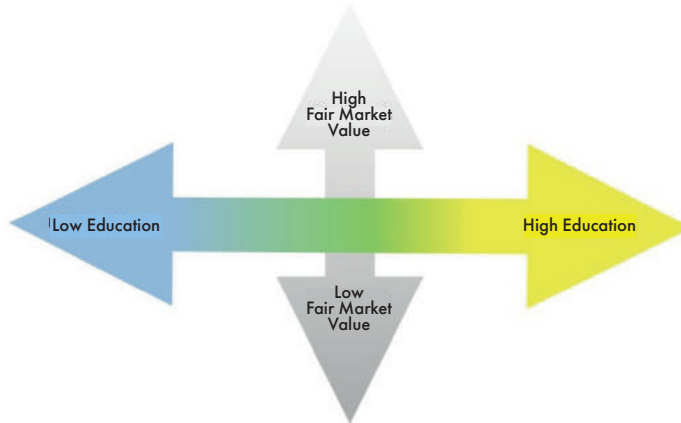
Map 5b. Economic status indicators over Land fair market value in central neighborhoods of Istanbul



## 5. In Lieu of Conclusion: Considerations on Sample Selection for Survey Study:

In recent years, the number of studies on representations and indicators to support field studies on specific groups has been increasing. In these representations, it is aimed to provide information that will shed light on researchers who go to the field for exploratory purposes rather than absolute indicators. In this context, the prominent neighborhoods within the scope of this study, which was prepared to support the survey and in-depth interviews with young people living in one of the world's largest metropolises such as Istanbul, are listed below.

While determining the neighborhoods, an analysis of the socio-economic structure was made based on the education level of the residents and the street fair market values, and nine groups were identified. Neighborhoods in these nine groups are included in Annex A.



Low Education Level – Low Fair Market Value	Medium Education Level – Low Fair Market Value	High Education Level – Low Fair Market Value
Low Education Level – Medium Fair Market Value	Medium Education Level Eğitim– Medium Fair Market Value	High Education Level – Medium Fair Market Value
Low Education Level – High Fair Market Value	Medium Education Level – High Fair Market Value	High Education Level – High Fair Market Value

**Figure. Neighborhood groups determined for the survey study**

Among these neighborhood groups, 4 groups deserve attention in terms of their spatial and socio-economic characteristics.

Whilst the Low Education Level- Low Fair Market Value group is mostly consisted of districts (such as Arnavutköy, Avcılar, Başakşehir, Beykoz, Beylikdüzü, Büyükçekmece, Çatalca, Çekmeköy, Esenyurt, Pendik, Ümraniye, Sancaktepe, Sarıyer, Sultanbeyli, Sultangazi ve Tuzla) located on the periphery of Istanbul,

this pattern is also observed particularly in districts located in the center such as Beyoğlu (Fetihtepe ve Piyalepaşa), Kağıthane (Şirintepe ve Harmantepe), Maltepe (Büyükbakkalköy, Gülsuyu ve Gülensu), and Eyüpsultan (Silahtarağa, Esentepe ve Sakarya). Neighborhoods in this group have a young population of 25% of the average population. On the other hand, High Education Level-High Fair Market Value group, which is the opposite of the former group, consists entirely of districts and neighborhoods located in the center of Istanbul. Neighborhoods in this group have a young population of 19% of the average population.

The other opposing groups can be defined as Low Education Level- High Fair Market Value and High Education - Low Market Value groups. Low Education Level - High Market Value group indicates urban depression areas located in the center of Istanbul. Young people in this group make up about 27% of the entire population. On the other hand, in the High Education Level- Low Fair Market value group, mostly the neighborhoods formed by newly developed gated communities located on the periphery of Istanbul are represented. In this group, there are also regions such as Ümraniye (Yamanevler, Çakmak, Armağanlar, İstiklal, Namık Kemal, Necip Fazıl, Esenevler, Çamlık, Tantavi, Mehmet Akif, Şerifali), Beykoz (Göztepe, Kavacık, Soğuksu, Paşabahçe, Acarlar), Tuzla (Postane, Tepeören, Aydınli, Yayla, İstanyon), Maltepe (Başibüyük), which are rapidly transformed through urban transformation projects.

As a result, while planning a field study in a site like Istanbul, which is spread over a wide area and represented by hundreds of neighborhoods, it is important to consider the urban landscape formed by the differentiation of demographic, social and economic characteristics in various parts of the city.

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# Chapter 2

## Youth, Urban Citizenship, and Local Government Field Research in Istanbul



**Fieldwork** (SOAR Social Studies)  
by  
Mustafa Kemal Coşkun

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# 1. Introduction

Does the word “young” mean a certain age range or a mood? Michel Saint-Pierre defined youth as a situation rather than an age range.<sup>1</sup> A similar definition was made by Aristotle. To him, being young means being inexperienced, following your passions, and going to extremes in everything.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, whether it is defined as an age range or a mood, it is also possible to talk about groups that can have very different qualities such as rural youth, urban youth, working youth, and student youth. In addition, there are approaches in the literature that defines youth with their dynamic, innovative, and strong aspects, as well as those that define them with problematic and noncompatible aspects.<sup>3</sup> Although youth ultimately express an age range in the biological sense, it can neither be squeezed into a single age range nor considered as a monolithic whole. Therefore, while describing youth, taking into account the mood but also taking into account the class background should be considered as useful categories to understand it.

In addition, more recent studies reveal that, despite the highly restrictive and exclusionary nature of political life, Turkish society has undergone a significant change in a modernizing and liberalizing direction in terms of lifestyle choices and worldviews. This change shows its effect mostly on the younger generation. Indeed, youth is the most dynamic section of society that supports progressive and inclusive views more strongly, as shown in many studies. KONDA’s report on the changing trends between the ages of 15-29 between 2008 and 2018 shows that the rate of adopting a modern lifestyle increased from 34% to 43%, the rate of students from 22% to 41%, and the rate of singles from 60% to 75%. In addition, the number of social media users increased from 69% to 93%, computer usage increased from 42% to 70%, and smart mobile phone usage increased from 90% to 100%. Apart from these, it is observed that some values have changed. For example, the rate of those who agreed with the statement “my son-in-law/bride-in-law may be of a different sect” increased from 47% to 64%, and the approval rate of the statement “My son/daughter may have a non-heterosexual orientation” increased from 12% to 21%. According to the results in 2018, 40% of the youth between the ages of 15-29 agree that political parties can be closed, if necessary, while this rate was 54% in the same age group in 2008.<sup>4</sup> In addition, according to 2018 data, while the rate of those who agree with the statement that a “religious marriage ceremony is necessary for a man and a woman to live together” is 63% in the 15-29 age group, this rate rises to 74% throughout Turkey.<sup>5</sup>

1 Kışlalı, A. T. (1974). Öğrenci Ayaklanmaları [Student Uprisings], Ankara: Bilgi, p. 15.

2 Aristoteles. (1997). Nikomakos’a Etik, [Ethics for Nicomachus] (trans.: Saffet Babür), Ankara: Ayraç, p. 5.

3 Baran, A. G. (2013). “Genç ve Gençlik: Sosyolojik Bakış” [Young and Youth: Sociological Perspective], Gençlik Araştırmaları Dergisi [Journal of Youth Studies], 1/1, p. 9.

4 <https://interaktif.konda.com.tr/gencler-2018#3rdPage>

5 <https://interaktif.konda.com.tr/gencler-2018#secondPage/5>



These data show us that, contrary to the government's desire to raise a "religious generation" in recent years, young people have increasingly adopted modern, egalitarian and libertarian values. On the other hand, when it comes to participation in political life and civil society activities, which can be another indicator of modernity, it is observed that the rate of young people is gradually decreasing. Organizational rigidity, hierarchical and non-inclusive decision-making mechanisms and insufficient attention to young people's perspectives and problems are presented as some of the reasons for low youth participation in organized politics. In addition, social media and online technologies, in which the younger generation grew up and socialized, have significantly changed the way they participate in politics. While this change encourages personalized political expression frameworks in social media to generate instant reactions, it causes a more superficial view of social problems. Brooks<sup>6</sup>, quoting from L. Bennett's (2007) work, emphasizes the following points: young people are not less interested in politics than previous generations, but traditional political activity no longer emphasizes issues related to contemporary youth culture. Bennett states that what better represents many young people today is the self-realized individual. That is to say, he argues, it is the individual who is motivated by an individual sense of purpose rather than obligations to the state, perceives voting as less meaningful than other political actions, and advocates loose networks of community action (often facilitated by new technologies). Similarly, some other studies have shown that while young adults in society are more indifferent to opportunities for participation in traditional politics and service delivery, they are among the most active groups in virtual participation environments, both in the political and societal fields.<sup>7</sup>

Some researchers, who emphasize the importance of participation, especially in local government, emphasize four interconnected points. First, participation is seen as a way of increasing the legitimacy and accountability of democratic institutions by involving individuals more directly in decisions that affect their lives. Second, it is believed that involving people in local decision-making processes and bringing them together around a common goal or interest will capacitate communities and help build societal integrity. Third, participation is seen as a tool to improve public services and provide more effective and more relevant services to people's needs. Finally, participation is associated with a range of personal benefits for individual participants, from increased political activity and satisfaction stemming from influencing change, to increased personal development and self-esteem stemming from learning new skills such as public speaking. Therefore, participation is associated with "more social justice, more

6 Akt., Brooks, R. (2009) "Young People and Political Participation: An Analysis of European Union Policies", Sociological Research Online, 14(1) <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/14/1/7.html> [Access Date: 07 June 2022].

7 Gibson, R., Lusoli, W. ve Ward, S. (2005) "Online Participation in the UK: Testing a 'Contextualised' Model of Internet Effects", British Journal of Politics and International Relations, 7(4): 561-583, p. 564; Notley, T. (2009) 'Young people, online networks and social inclusion', Journal of Computer Mediated Communication, 14(4): 1208-1227, p. 1221.

effective public services, and a society of self-confident citizens” and is seen as an expression of active citizenship<sup>8</sup>.

At this point, it may be meaningful to talk about the concept of the right to the city first. Urbanization has always been a class phenomenon, as capitalism is in constant pursuit of surplus-value growth. In this context, David Harvey explains what should be understood from the right to the city with the following sentences:

To claim the right to the city in the sense I mean it here is to claim some kind of shaping power over the processes of urbanization, over how our cities are made and remade, and to do so fundamentally and radically. From their very inception, cities have arisen through the geographical and social concentration of a surplus product. Urbanization has always been, therefore, a class phenomenon of some sort, while surpluses have been extracted from somewhere and from somebody, control over the use of the surplus typically lies in the hands of a few. This general situation persists under capitalism, of course, but in this case, there is a rather different dynamic at work<sup>9</sup>.

The right to the city points to more than meeting the needs such as housing, education, health, and democratic participation, but demanding a right in the city also makes participation important.

Especially when it comes to local governments, it is an important factor to what extent a person owns the place she/he lives in and to what extent she/he identifies with it. The relationship of a person with the place she/he lives in affects not only the concept of identity but also her/his participation in any societal and political processes in the neighborhood or district. For example, according to Lewicka (2005)<sup>10</sup>, place attachment within the framework of urban identity encourages people to participate more in civic actions only through local social capital. Another study has shown that individuals can develop behaviors to protect the environment when the urban identity is strong.<sup>11</sup>

Stets and Biga (2003)<sup>12</sup> state that the visibility of an identity means that it is associated with the probability of activating a meaningful action associated with that identity in a situation. Therefore, it can be thought that place identity will reveal a behavior toward laying claim to and protecting the city within the framework of identification, responsibility, and familiarity with the city. Within the framework of the discussions briefly above, the primary objective of this research report is to focus on young people aged 18-29 living in Istanbul and try to understand their

8 Akt. Brodie, E., Cowling, E. ve Nissan, N. (2011). Katılımı Anlamak: Bir Literatür Taraması [Understanding Participation: A Literature Review], (trans.: Aslı Toksabay Esen), İstanbul: Tepav, p. 7.

9 Harvey, D. (2012). Rebel Cities, London, New York: Verso, p. 5.

10 Lewicka, M. (2005). “Ways to Make People Active: The Role of Place Attachment, Cultural Capital, and Neighbourhood Ties”, *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 25, 381–395, p. 384.

11 Van Vugt, M. (2001). “Community Identification Moderating the Impact of Financial Incentives in a Natural Social Dilemma: Water Conservation”, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 27, pp. 1440–1449.

12 Stets, J. E. ve Biga, C. F. (2003). “Bringing Identity Theory into Environmental Sociology”, *Sociological Theory*, 21(4), 398–423, p. 404.

expectations from local governments within the framework of urban citizenship, urban identity, and urbanization perception and their opportunities to participate in local government activities. In this context, answers to the following questions are sought:

1. What kind of urban identity do young people aged 18-29 living in Istanbul have in terms of identification with the city (feeling of belonging to the city), responsibility towards the city, and familiarity with the city?
2. How does urban identity affect young people's expectations from the city administration and what kind of city they want to live in?
3. What kind of social distance do young people have towards different communities/social groups living in the city (immigrants, LGBTI+s, different classes, the poor, Kurds, the elderly, the disabled, singles, etc.) and what is its relationship with urban identity?
4. What are the pros and cons of Istanbul (perception of urban quality) according to the participants?
5. To what extent do young people's perceptions of the urban quality of Istanbul affect their expectations from local governments?

In the next chapter, the method of the study is explained. In the 3. chapter, the findings of the research are given, and the last chapter is devoted to the conclusion and evaluation.

## 2. Methodology of the Study and Fieldwork

The research was carried out by random sampling in 36 of 39 districts of Istanbul (excluding Adalar, Çatalca, and Şile districts).

In this study, quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques were used together. First of all, in line with the goals set above, a questionnaire was applied to a total of 1000 people between the ages of 18-29 living in different districts

of Istanbul. The questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part consists of demographic questions such as age, gender, and education, which are asked to obtain information about the participant and her/his social circle. The second part of the questionnaire includes their expectations from local governments, their perceptions of the city and urban life, and the urban identity and urban quality scale developed by Derin and Alparslan (2021)<sup>13</sup> to measure the participants' perceptions of urban identity and urban quality under the above-mentioned

<sup>13</sup> Derin, G. D. ve Alparslan, B. (2021). "Kent Kimliği Ölçeği: İstanbul Örneklemini Üzerinde Ölçek Geliştirme Çalışması" [Urban Identity Scale: A Scale Development Study on the Sample of Istanbul], in Bireyden Topluma: Kent ve Dil İlişkisi Üzerine [From Individual to Society: On the Relationship between City and Language], (ed.: Seda Güven ve Göklem Tekdemir), İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları, 63-100.

objectives. The Urban Identity Scale measures to what extent the city in which the participant lives, is a central part of her/his identity in three dimensions (identification, responsibility, and knowing/familiarity). Urban Quality Perception measures individuals' evaluation of the city's unique features in five dimensions: city plan perception, gain/advantage perception, safety perception, livability, and transportation perception<sup>14</sup>.

The answers obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) package program.

The second part of the fieldwork consists of qualitative data obtained from face-to-face interviews with 100 people aged 18-29 living in Istanbul to understand their perceptions of the city and local governments. The aim here is to deepen the discussion of the data obtained from the quantitative research with the data obtained from the qualitative research.

In this study, the transcripts of the audio recordings of the interviews were transferred to the computer environment and then the analysis of the data was started. MAXQDA Qualitative Data Analysis program was used in the analysis of the data.

The process of analyzing qualitative data was carried out based on an inductive structure. A process bound for general was followed by coding the concepts and terms obtained directly from the interviews and creating themes within the framework of these codes. To put it more clearly, at the beginning of the analysis, the data were coded and divided into subsections, after that, a broader, unified, and holistic structure was tried to be created. In this framework, thematic analysis, which is one of the data analysis forms, was chosen. In this type of analysis, themes and patterns are searched directly in the data and coded with analytical techniques. Therefore, analytical coding is done first, and then classification and theming are focused on.<sup>15</sup>

In this analysis, the coding technique is a process related to the way of defining what the obtained data tells the researcher<sup>16</sup>. Then, codes are defined and classified through the findings obtained from the data. Finally, a thematic framework is presented by placing codings with similar views into the same data classifications.

Based on this technique, in the study, firstly, sub-codes were created and coded

14 Derin ve Alparslan, *ibid.*

15 Glesne, C. (2013). *Nitel Araştırmaya Giriş [Introduction to Qualitative Research]*, (Trans. Editors A. Ersoy ve P. Yalçınoğlu), 3. Edition, Ankara: Anı, p. 259; Rubin, H. J., Rubin, I. S. (1995). *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*, California: SAGE Publications, p. 239.

16 Gibbs, G. (2007). *Analyzing Qualitative Data*, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, p. 38.

from the data obtained from the interviews, and these codes were then classified within the framework of themes.

As a result of this;

- Relationships between the researched phenomenon and other subjects,
- Whether there are different causes and effects related to the research subject in the collected data,
- Whether certain words, similes, and metaphors that the participants used while describing their own experiences were the reason for the differences or similarities regarding the researched subject were examined.

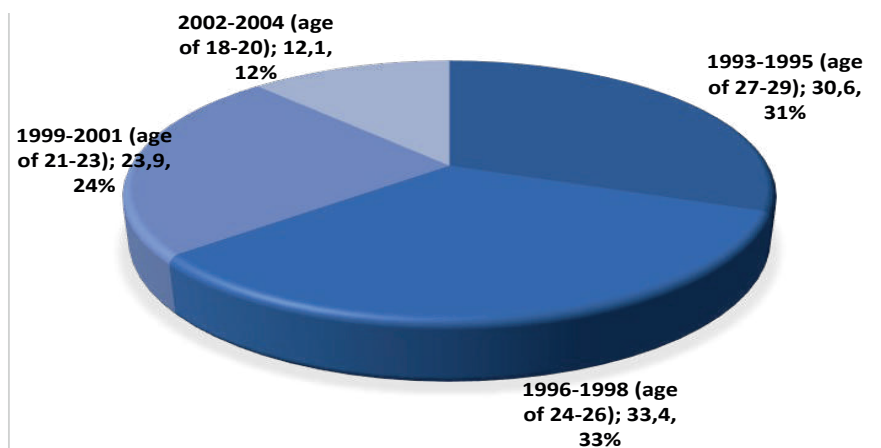
In the following chapters, the data obtained from both the questionnaire and the interviews are analyzed.

### 3. Findings of the Research

#### 3.1. Demographic Indicators

In the study, the participants were first asked about their date of birth. Accordingly, the birth dates of the participants varied between 1993 and 2004. The chart 1 shows the birth date and age ranges of the survey participants.

As can be seen, the highest participation in the survey is between the ages of 24-26. In second place comes the age group of 27-29. These are followed by the 21-23 age and 18-20 age categories, respectively. Qualitative interviews also show a similar result to these data. Among the participants who were interviewed face-to-face, the rate of those aged 21-23 and 24-26 was 28% in both groups. This is followed by the age group of 27-29 (25%). The rate of those between the ages of 18-20 is 19%.



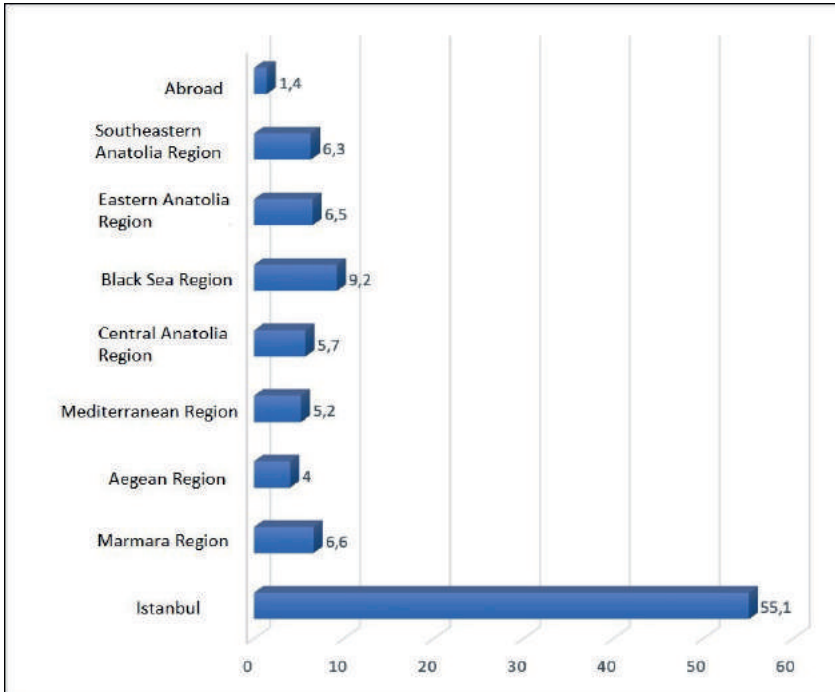
Mean: 1997,43    Minimum: 1991    Maximum: 2004

**Chart 1: Age Distribution of Participants**

48.2% (482 people) of the survey participants were female and 50.1% (501 people) were male. 1.7% of the participants (17 people) said that they did not want to specify their gender. A significant majority of the participants are single (90.4%). The rate of those who are married is only 8.2%. Four people stated that they were divorced (0.4%).

The data obtained from the qualitative interviews are also close to the above rates. As a matter of fact, among the participants interviewed face-to-face, the rate of women is 51% and the rate of men is 49%. Among these participants, the rate of those who are married is only 5%.

Although the birthplaces of the participants vary, more than half of them were born in Istanbul. This situation can be considered as more than half of the participants do not have a migration story. On the other hand, a significant part of this group may be the second or third-generation immigrant group. For this study, this data may have important implications. As a matter of fact, some studies have found that "length of living in a place" among socio-demographic factors significantly affects individuals' attachment to that place. That is, people who live in a place longer feel a greater attachment to that place.<sup>17</sup> The chart 2 shows the birthplaces of the participants by region.



**Chart 2: Birthplaces of Survey Participants by Regions**

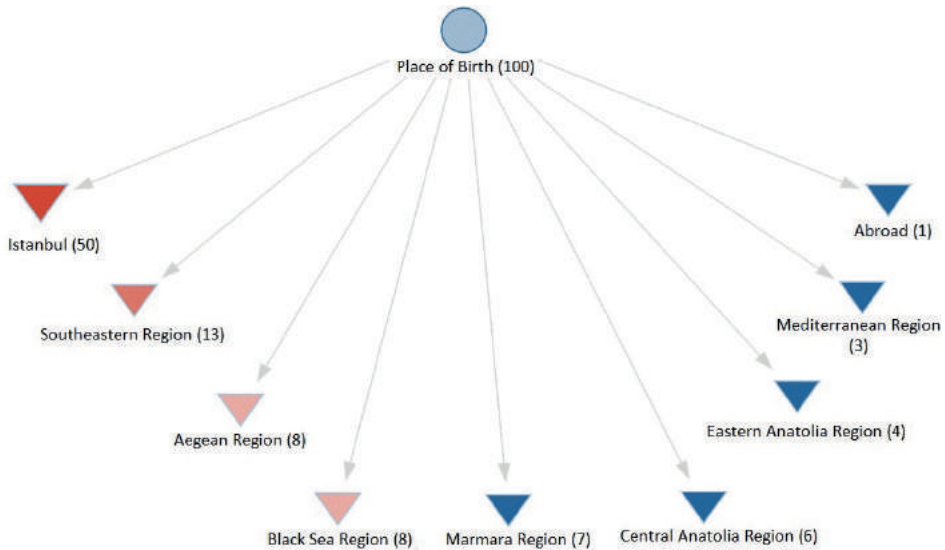
<sup>17</sup> Göregenli, M., Karakuş, P., Kösten, E. Y. Ö., ve Umuroğlu, İ. (2014). "Mahalleye Bağlılık Düzeyinin Kent Kimliği ile İlişkisi İçinde İncelenmesi" [Examining the Level of Commitment to the Neighborhood in its Relationship with Urban Identity], *Türk Psikoloji Dergisi* [Turkish Journal of Psychology], 29(73), 73-85, p. 75.

Those who were interviewed face to face also show a similar feature about the place of birth. The figure 1 shows the birthplaces of the qualitative research participants.

As can be seen, half of the participants in face-to-face interviews were born in Istanbul. This is followed by those born in the Southeastern Anatolia Region (13%), the Aegean Region (8%), and the Black Sea Region (8%).

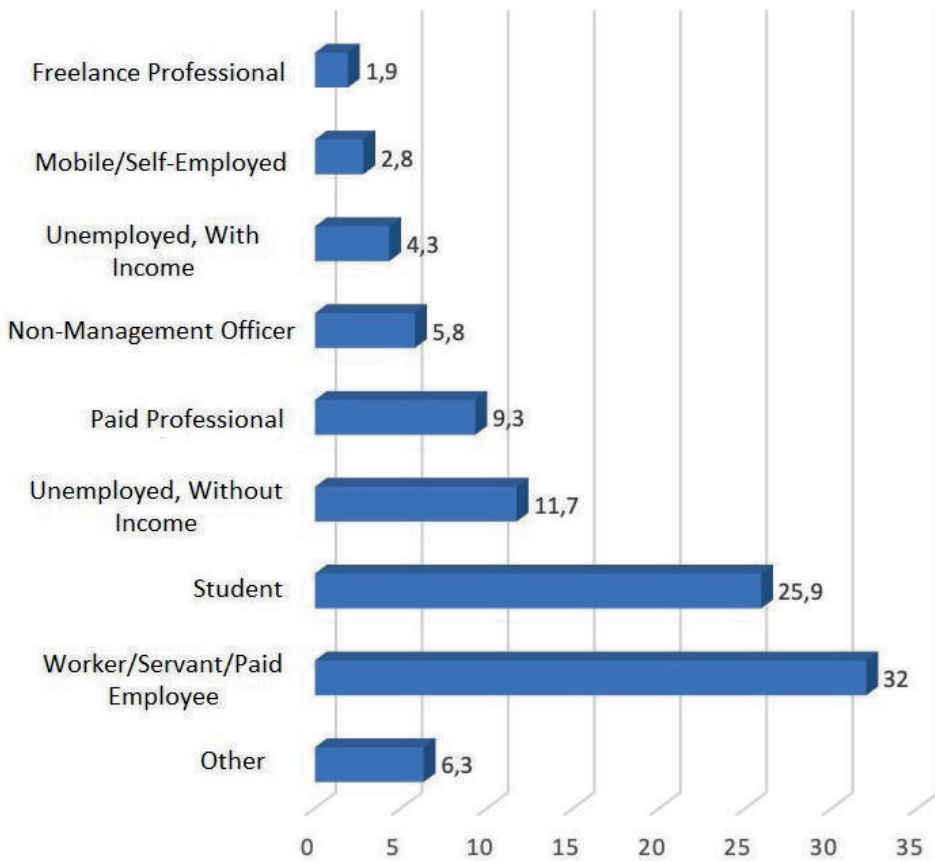
Slightly more than half of the respondents to the survey state that they live in rent (51.2%). The rate of those who state that the house they live in belongs to them is 45.1%. While only 6 people (0.6%) stated that they stayed in the lodgement, 3.1% of the students stated that they stayed in the dormitory.

The current jobs of the survey participants vary. The chart 3 shows the professional status of the participants.



**Figure 1: Birthplaces of Qualitative Research Participants**

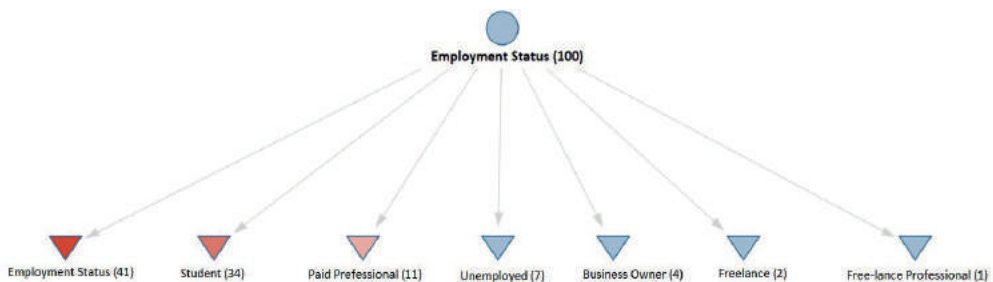
It is possible to say that nearly half of the participants in the research are paid employees. Students constitute about a quarter of the participants. The rate of unemployed with and without income is approximately 16%. The rate of self-employed is very low.



**Chart 3: Employment Status of Participants\***

\* The Other category includes housewives, managers in a workplace, members of the military, self-employed shopkeepers, and business owners employing workers.

The working status of qualitative research participants is also similar to the data above. The figure 2 shows the working status of the qualitative research participants.



**Figure 2: Employment Status of Qualitative Research Participants**

As can be seen from the figure 2, paid employees are in the first place (41%)



among those who participate in face-to-face interviews. This is followed by students (34%) and paid professionals (11%).

There is no significant difference between the genders in terms of employment status. When it comes to age, the rate of those who state that they are students is the highest in the 18-20 age group (54.2%). Similarly, the rate of those who are in working life increases with age. As a matter of fact, while the rate of those who state that they work as workers/servants/paid employee is 39.2% in the 27-29 age group, this rate decreases to 16.7% in the 18-20 age group. The unemployment rate also decreases with increasing age (the rate of unemployed and without income in the above-mentioned age groups is 10.8% and 20%, respectively). Similar rates are also valid for the participants who were interviewed qualitatively. The table 1 shows the employment status of those who participated in the face-to-face interviews by age.

As can be seen, among the qualitative research participants, the highest rate of students is between the ages of 18-20. Similarly, the rate of paid employees and paid professionals increases with age. When the gender of the interviewed participants is compared, there is no significant difference between the employment status.

The majority of the participants in the research are regular high school or vocational high school graduates (45.1% in total). One reason for this relatively high rate is that current university students mark their last graduation status as high school graduates. The rate of university graduates is 33.7%. This is followed by vocational school graduates (7.7%) and those having a postgraduate degree (7.4%). The rate of primary and secondary school graduates is only 6%.

Age					
Employment Status	18-20 %	21-23 %	24-26 %	27-29 %	Total
Self-employed professional					1,0
Freelance			7,1		2,0
Tradesman			10,7	4,0	4,0
Unemployed		7,4	14,3	4,0	7,1
Paid employee	15,8	37,0	57,1	44,0	40,4
Student	84,2	51,9	10,7	4,0	34,3
Paid professional		3,7		40,0	
<b>TOTAL</b>	100,00	100,00	100,00	100,00	100,00

**Table 1: Employment Status of Qualitative Research Participants**

Educational status emerges as a significant difference between genders. As a matter of fact, while the rate of university graduates among female participants is 39.3%, this rate decreases to 28.7% for males. The high school graduation rate for males (38.7%) is higher than for females (29.7%) ( $p < .000$ ).<sup>18</sup> When it comes to age, there is a difference for the reason mentioned above. In other words, the rate of university graduates is naturally very low (2.5%), as university student participants between the ages of 18-20 mark their last school as high school or vocational high school. This rate rises to 48.7% in the 27-29 age group.

In the study, the employment status and education level of the parents of the participants were asked. The table 2 shows the employment status of the parents of the participants.

	Mother		Father	
	The Number	%	The Number	%
<b>Worker/Servant/Paid employee</b>	135	13,8	212	22,4
<b>Retired and not working</b>	103	10,5	226	23,9
<b>Retired and working</b>	26	2,7	105	11,1
<b>Non-Management Officer</b>	21	2,1	58	6,1
<b>Solo Worker/Shop Owner</b>	10	1	51	5,4
<b>Mobile/Self-employed</b>	8	0,8	38	4
<b>Unemployed, without income</b>	92	9,4	36	3,8
<b>Business Owner (1-5 employees)</b>	6	0,6	34	3,6
<b>Paid Professional</b>	22	2,2	33	3,5
<b>Free-lance Professional</b>	10	1	31	3,3
<b>Business Owner (6 and more employees)</b>	5	0,5	28	3
<b>Manager (1-5 employees)</b>	6	0,6	22	2,3
<b>Manager (6 and more employees)</b>	10	1	26	2,7
<b>Housewife</b>	492	50,2	-	-
<b>Unemployed, with income</b>	24	2,4	23	2,4
<b>Other</b>	11	1,1	24	2,5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>981</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>947</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 2: Employment Status of Parents**

<sup>18</sup> For the reader unfamiliar with the interpretation of this statistical value, which we will use in the following chapters, the following should be understood from the p value: If the p value is between 0.01 and 0.05, there is a statistically significant difference between the two variables. If the p value is between 0.001 and 0.01, there is a highly significant difference. If the p value is less than 0.001, there is a statistically significant difference at a very high level.

The first striking point in the table 2 is that the majority of the mothers of the participants are housewives. The majority of working mothers are on a salaried basis. This is followed by mothers who have already retired and are not currently working. The unemployment rate is also slightly higher than 10%. Most of the fathers of the respondents are retired and 11.1% of them are still working. When the categories of worker/servant/salaried, non-management officer, retired employees, and paid professionals are considered together, it is seen that approximately 43% of the participants' fathers are paid employees.

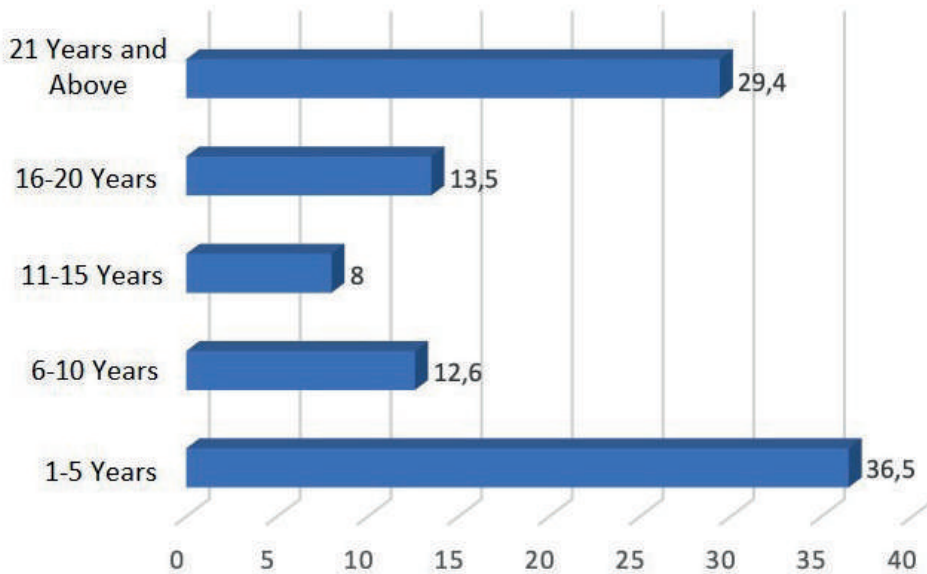
First of all, there are great differences between the education levels of the participants and their parents. Young people have a much higher educational status than their parents. A second point is that the education level of fathers is partially higher than that of mothers.

As stated above, the surveys applied in this research were carried out in 36 districts of Istanbul, except for Adalar, Çatalca, and Şile districts. Slightly more than 50% of the questionnaires were carried out in the following districts: Üsküdar (7.8%), Kadıköy (7.6%), Şişli (6.1%), Pendik (5.9%), Maltepe (5.2%), Kartal (4.4%), Eyüpsultan (4.3%), Ataşehir (4.2%), Kağıthane (4.1%) and Fatih (4%). Slightly less than 50% of the questionnaires are distributed over the remaining 26 districts.

	Mother		Father	
	Number	%	Number	%
<b>Primary School</b>	410	41,8	281	29,6
<b>Secondary School</b>	173	17,6	178	18,8
<b>High School</b>	203	20,7	225	23,7
<b>Vocational High School</b>	31	3,2	34	3,6
<b>Vocational School of Higher Education</b>	8	0,8	14	1,5
<b>Graduate</b>	148	15,1	199	21
<b>Postgraduate</b>	9	0,9	17	1,8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>982</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>947</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3: Educational Status of Parents**

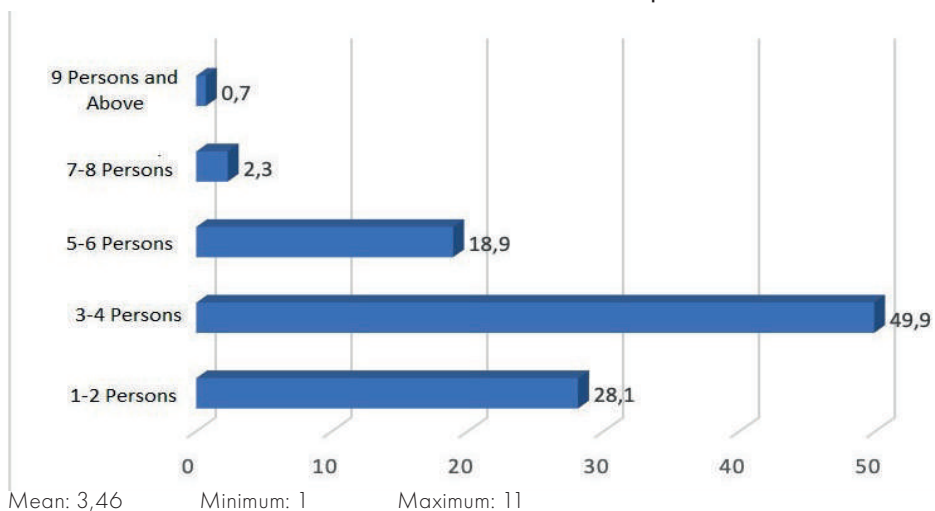
The respondents were asked how many years they have been living in the same district. The chart 4 shows the answers to this question



**Chart 4: Participants' Duration of Living in the District**

Approximately one-third of the participants have been living in the district where they have been for 1-5 years. This is followed by those who live 21 years and above with a rate of 29.4%. The rate of people living in the same district for 10 years or more is slightly over 50%. This situation can affect the perception of urban identity and urban quality.<sup>19</sup>

Participants were asked about the number of people currently living in their households. The chart 5 shows the answers to this question.



**Chart 5: Household Size of Participants**

<sup>19</sup> See Göregenli et al. *ibid.*

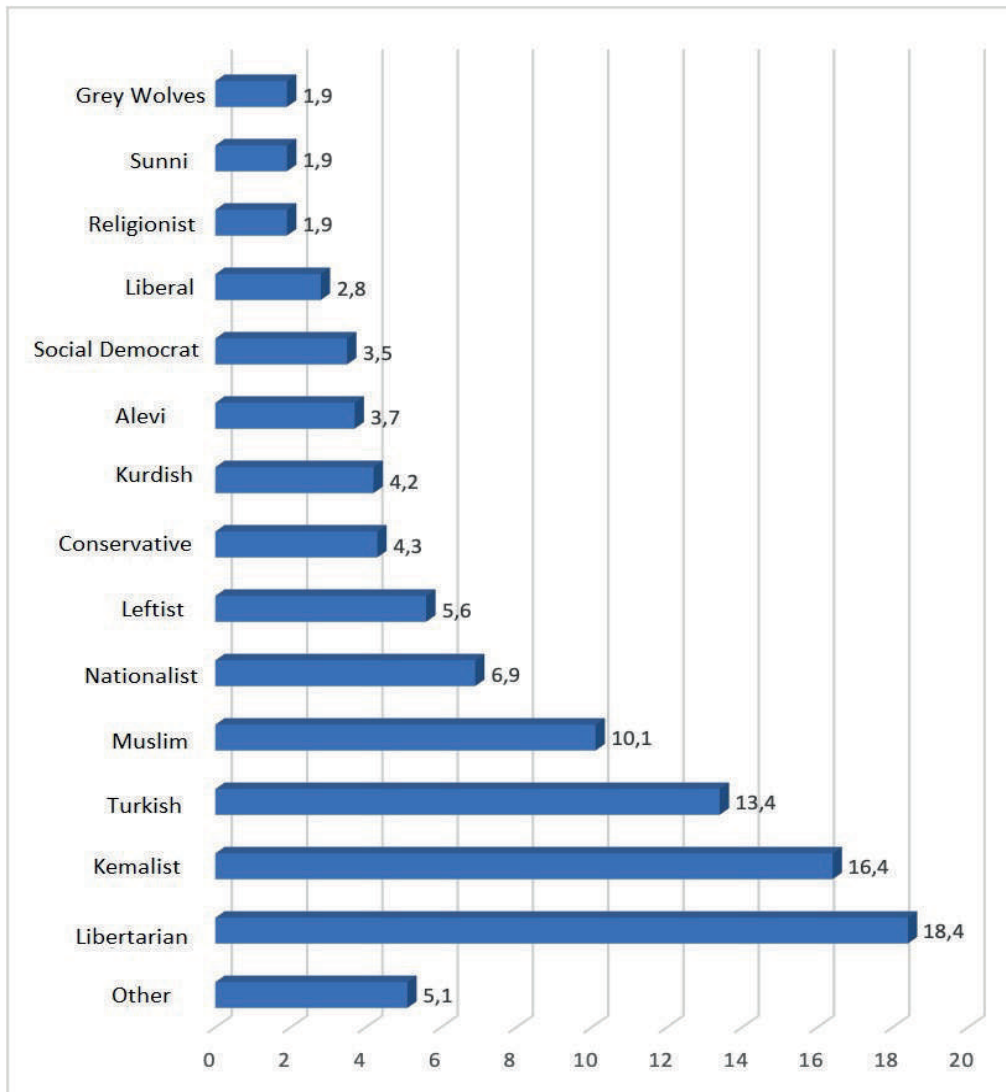
As of 2021, TURKSTAT has calculated the average household size in Turkey as 3.23, and specifically in Istanbul as 3.27.<sup>20</sup> The data obtained in this study also show a similar feature to this average. As can be seen from the chart, the household size of approximately half of the participants is 3-4 people. The average household size is found to be 3.46.

The participants were asked how they perceived the socio-economic level of the household they live in. Those who define the socio-economic level of the household as middle level are slightly more than half (51.3%). This is followed by the lower-middle category (22.6%). The rate of those who see it as upper-middle is 16%, and the rate of those who see it as upper is only 1.4%. The rate of those who see the socio-economic level of the household as the lowest is 8.7%. On the other hand, it should be kept in mind that this data is related to how the person sees herself/himself, therefore it will not fully reflect the socio-economic level.

Participants were asked with which identity/identities they defined themselves more. However, while interpreting these data, it is necessary not to ignore the subjective and complex nature of the identities that the participant states as defining herself/himself. As a matter of fact, an individual who sees herself/himself as a Kemalist can also adopt identities such as religious, libertarian, nationalist, or liberal. The chart 6 shows the answers to this question.

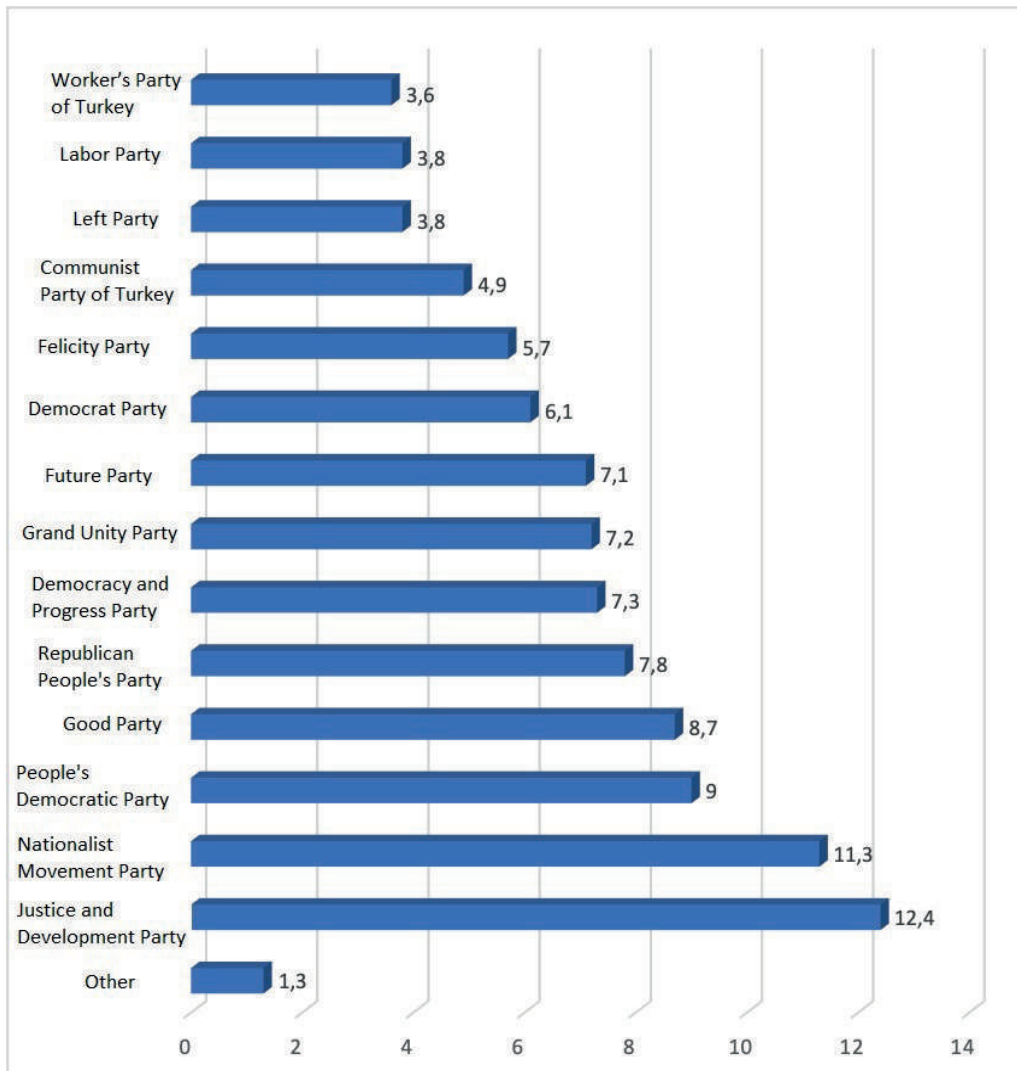
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<sup>20</sup> <http://urlbu.com/d6640>



**Chart 6: Identities by which Young People Identify Themselves**

As can be seen from the chart, libertarian, Kemalist, Turkish, and Muslim identities are the most prominent identities. However, as we emphasized above, these identities should not be perceived as identities that completely cross each other. Some of the people who stated that they were Kemalists defined themselves as a libertarian, Turkish, and Muslim at the same time. Or, some of those who emphasize that they are primarily nationalists may define themselves as a libertarian at the same time. Another point that can be said from this point of view is that it is also important how everyone defines these identities. As a matter of fact, being a Kemalist can reach different definitions in both the rightist and leftist spectrums.



**Chart 7: Which Parties Would You Not Vote For?**

When the statements about self-definition are compared with gender, there is no significant difference. On the other hand, when compared with age, it is seen that young people between the ages of 18-20 emphasize Kemalist and Turkish identities more than other age groups. While the rate of those who statthat Kemalist and Turkish identities define themselves in the 18-20 age group is 50.4% and 37.6%, respectively, these rates decrease to 28.7% and 22%, respectively, in the 27-29 age group. There is no significant difference with age in other categories.

At this point, the participants were specifically asked which parties they would not vote for. The chart 7 shows the answers to this question.

The chart 7 shows that the polarization atmosphere that has already been created in the country also exists among the youth. There are those at the top stating that they will not vote for the JDP (Justice and Development Party – AKP) and NMP (Nationalist Movement Party – MHP), followed by PDP (People’s Democratic Party – HDP), RPP (Republican People’s Party – CHP) and GP (Good Party – İYİP). When we compare these data by gender, there is no significant difference. However, when it comes to age, it is seen that younger people tend to vote for conservative and right-wing parties. Although there is no difference between JDP and RPP, the rate of those who say that they will not vote for parties such as NMP and GP increases as their age increases. For example, while the rate of those who say they will not vote for the NMP is 53.3% among the 18-20 age group, this rate rises to 71.3% among the 27-29 age group. The rate of those who say they will not vote for GP is 20.6% and 46.7%, respectively, in the same age ranges. Similarly, while the rate of those who say they will not vote for the PDP is 54.2% among the 18-20 age group, this rate drops to 36.7% among the 27-29 age group.

Until this part, the demographic indicators of the participants have been tried to be evaluated. It can be said that the sample is generally in accordance with the data on Istanbul (in terms of gender distribution, household size, etc.). In addition, when evaluated only within the framework of Charts 6 and 7, it can be said that men have a slightly more conservative attitude than women and younger people than older people.

### 3.2. Urban Life, Urban Identity, and Perception of Urban Quality

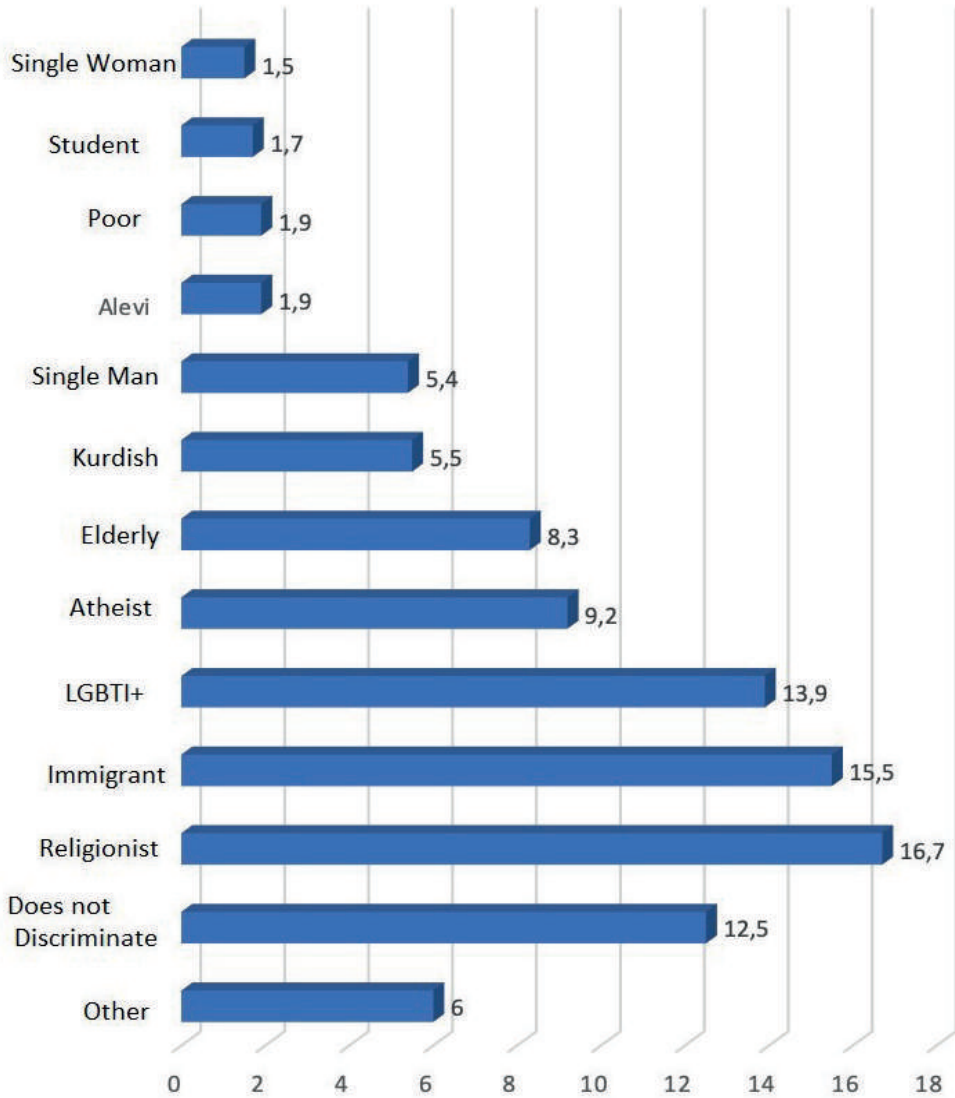
In this part of the study, questions about urban life, local governments, urban identity, and urban quality perception were asked of the participants for the above-mentioned purposes. The data obtained from these questions will be evaluated below.

The level of acceptance towards people and groups that individuals do not see as their own is one of the indicators of social distance.<sup>21</sup> As seen above in party preferences, it would not be wrong to say that social distance will increase in a society where political polarization has increased. In this study, two questions were asked of the participants to understand their acceptance level and social distance towards other groups living in the city. The first of these is which individuals from different social groups living in the city they will not want as their neighbors. The chart 8 shows the answers to this question.

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<sup>21</sup> Bogardur, E. S. (1926). "Social Distance in the City", Proceedings and Publications of the American Sociological Society, 20, p. 41.





**Chart 8: Who You Don't Want as Your Neighbor? \***

\* The Other category includes disabled, Turkish, Sunni, socialist, poor, and worker categories.

According to the data above, on the one hand, the participants do not want religious people (especially various religious communities emphasized here) as neighbors, while on the other hand, immigrants, LGBTI+s, the elderly, and atheists are not wanted to large extent. There are significant differences in this regard, especially between male participants and female participants. It can be said that men have a greater sense of social distance than women, especially towards immigrants and LGBTI+s. While the rate of men who do not want immigrants as neighbors is 27.9%, this rate drops to 13.7% for women. The rate of men who do not want LGBTI+ neighbors is 22.8%, while the rate of women is 14.7%. There is no

significant difference according to gender in other categories. When compared with age, there are differences in not wanting immigrant and religious people as neighbors. While the rates of not wanting immigrant and religious neighbors in the 18-20 age group are 26.4% and 20.8%, respectively, these rates decrease to 9.9% for immigrants and increase to 42.6% for religious neighbors in the 27-29 age group.

At this point, it would not be wrong to say that the participants have some contradictory statements. For example, a female interviewee who participated in qualitative interviews emphasized the following about not wanting a neighbor:

I don't want people who are racist. So, I wouldn't want to be in contact with such people. There are no such people around us. If they [neighbors] were gay, it would bother me. So, I don't even think about it. Not a bother but a different point of view. Male students or single men wouldn't bother. Syrians would (disturb). Even their looks are negative for me. There is no event that I have experienced, but most of the people I have heard around have. It's mostly the way they look at girls and their verbal abuse. Single more. They're already roaming around. There are no Syrians at school (Female, 18, student).

Similar expressions are seen more towards immigrants. More importantly, many participants who state that they do not want immigrants as neighbors also state that they are not racist or discriminatory. The following expressions are examples of this situation:

No, we only see it on social media, we see it on the news. It is not possible to love too much after seeing the damage they have done to the country. They harm in every way. They both increase the crime rate and do a lot of harm to the country in terms of unemployment. Being Alevi, homosexual, or something is a more personal thing. For example, being Arab interests themselves [Arabs], but I am disturbed. I don't want to be among an Arab community. Because our culture is different from theirs. Because Arabs speak loudly at night. This of course annoys people. It bothers me that their culture is so different. It doesn't matter if she/he [neighbor] is gay or Alevi. Because, after all, they are people who were born and raised in Turkey and know Turkey's culture. But since Arab is a very different culture, I don't want it too much. Even if she/he [neighbor] is single, it will not be a problem for me (Male, 19, student).

Frankly, I never, ever make such a distinction. Alevi, Kurdish, gay, that's what she/he is. What is important to me is her/his heart and how she/he makes me feel. Or as much as she/he can touch me or as much as I can communicate with her/him. Of course, there are always good and bad for every community. We all see it. It is never true to generalize. Everyone is different and diverse. Whoever you feel close to or catching your feelings is what is beneficial for you. So, I have no such distinction. I can't say that I don't want to be a neighbor right now. But I can say this: Although I am not racist, I do not like Arabs. I do not know why. They seem so uncouth to me. For example, I feel very uncomfortable in an environment with Arabs because they are quite rude. For example, the fact that she steeps the soup, speaks loudly, and acts without thinking about her surroundings does not give me peace. This makes me think of it as disrespect. So, I perceive it as an insult to me. That's why it's not because of racism. I don't want to make any disrespectful generalizations, but as far as I've seen and lived, I think they are a disrespectful society

that doesn't think much about the surrounding. That's why I'm uncomfortable with Arabs. Other than that, there is no community that I am uncomfortable with (Male, 25, Paid employee).

I do not discriminate. Every nation has good and bad. But the Syrians came a lot. Being neighbors with them demoralizes me. 20 people live in one house. It's hard... They make a lot of noises inevitably. I am not angry with them. I am angry with the state. They are seen as trouble whenever it wants so. But they are not even seen when it doesn't serve the purpose... they don't help either. They live poorly. We are also unhappy. Also, I don't like religious communitarians. I don't want. Don't get me wrong... bro. Not a religious person. Community. People are afraid. How many years they have been here... Their clothes, their beard. They also look very bad. They hate women. I have a hard time being a young girl in this city (Female, 21, paid employee).

There is nothing about Kurdish, Alevi, or anything like that. I'm just a little bit against Syrians, Afghans, immigrants, a little bit against that kind of thing. So, according to me, they are not respectful (Female, 21, student).

The point emphasized by the interviewees, who stated that they would not want religious or conservative people as neighbors, stems from the possibility of their meddling in everything. At this point, people who are thought to be closed-minded, whether religious or secular, are not wanted as neighbors.

I don't want to become neighbors with people who have radical ideas, Islam, or any religion, or I don't want to become neighbors with people who don't respect differences and can't look from different perspectives. It doesn't have to be an ethnic origin, for example, it is not something like I don't want German, Kurdish, or Turkish; people without different perspectives should not be my neighbors. Because they restrict my life in some way, although they do not directly affect it, it always coincides with a direct point by influencing it indirectly. Being a neighbor with someone I feel uncomfortable makes me feel restricted, for example, I can say that they won't see me when I enter [my home], or I don't want to be subjected to mobbing because I dyed my hair; I don't want to be pressured (Male, 22, unemployed).

Maybe it will be perceived as a bit of a thing, but I don't think it is much racism, there are groups of immigrant men who are left straggling, they do not have an identity in any way, and the fact that these people walking around in a group while I am returning from somewhere in the middle of the night makes me nervous, I don't want to live together with them. Also, unfortunately, the perception of people here is at a very masculine level, so families have a very patriarchal structure here, which bothers me a bit. Frankly, I don't want to be neighbors with these people, I can say that. I guess I don't want to be with people who are too conservative or who have adopted too much secularism on the contrary. I mean, I would like to be together (with) people who can accept me as I am and, in any circumstances, in this way, so I guess this is it (Female, 25, paid employee).

Absolutely and absolutely with ultra-conservative and Islamist people. I don't want to describe it like this, but I don't want to be neighbors with people even whose clothes and outfits will make me very nervous. Because I am not such a person with respect to clothing. Lots of my friends come home and these people, I know from previous experience, make you very uncomfortable. That is to say, in the meaning of who goes in and who leaves. This is especially true for Islamists and conservative people. They ask too much about who is who. You know, you don't want to play neighborly, but they still

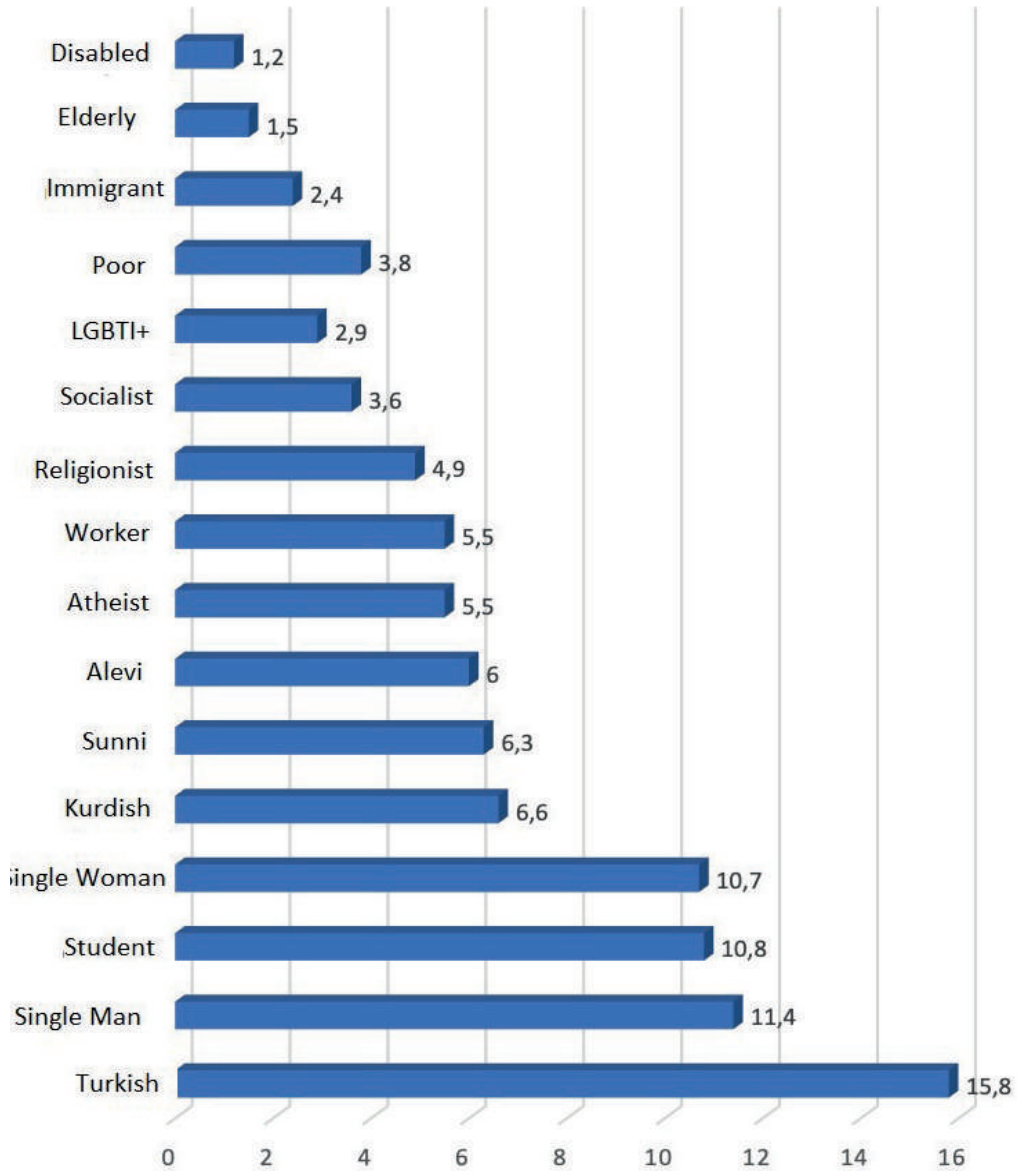
force you from somewhere. First of all, I don't want to be with these people. Secondly, I don't want to be neighbors with people who see themselves as a native of this place, who have lived here for many years, so they are like older brothers and sisters of the neighborhood. Because, in the same way, those people also have conservatism and they get on you a lot. Other than that, I can be neighbors with other people, I don't think I'll have much trouble (Female, 28, paid employee).

I don't want to be neighbors with people who don't fit well with my lifestyle, in fact not with people who don't fit, but with people who have the potential to create conflict with this incompatibility. I'm a young, single woman if I have to open up. That's why young people like me can come in and out of my house, regardless of gender. I came across something like this, there is a family apartment profile in the neighborhood where I live. I received warnings because I did not fit this profile. In other words, I do not want to be with religious people and people who try to impose this lifestyle on me. I don't want to be with very racist people, I don't want to be neighbors with them. I don't want to be neighbors with people who watch my house all the time. I don't want to be neighbors with people who are quarrelsome, and who have constantly violent in the house. Frankly, I don't want to be neighbors with people who might disturb me, interfere with me, or people who disturb their surroundings (Female, 26, paid employee).

At this point, it can be said that the participants do not want to be neighbors with people who will intervene in and interfere with them. This situation should not be seen as being related to being secular, religious, or conservative. However, it would not be wrong to say that when it comes to immigrants, we come across more racist or nationalist discourses, and there is stereotyping about immigrants.

To further develop our view on this issue, the participants were asked from which social groups they have more friends. The chart 9 shows the answers to this question.

When charts 8 and 9 are evaluated together, it is seen that the two data support each other. There is hardly anyone who does not want Turkish neighbors, and the participants state that they mostly have Turkish friends. Similarly, while the rate of not wanting a migrant neighbor is very high, the rate of those who state that they have migrant friends is at the lowest level. A similar comparison seems to be valid for LGBTI+s as well.

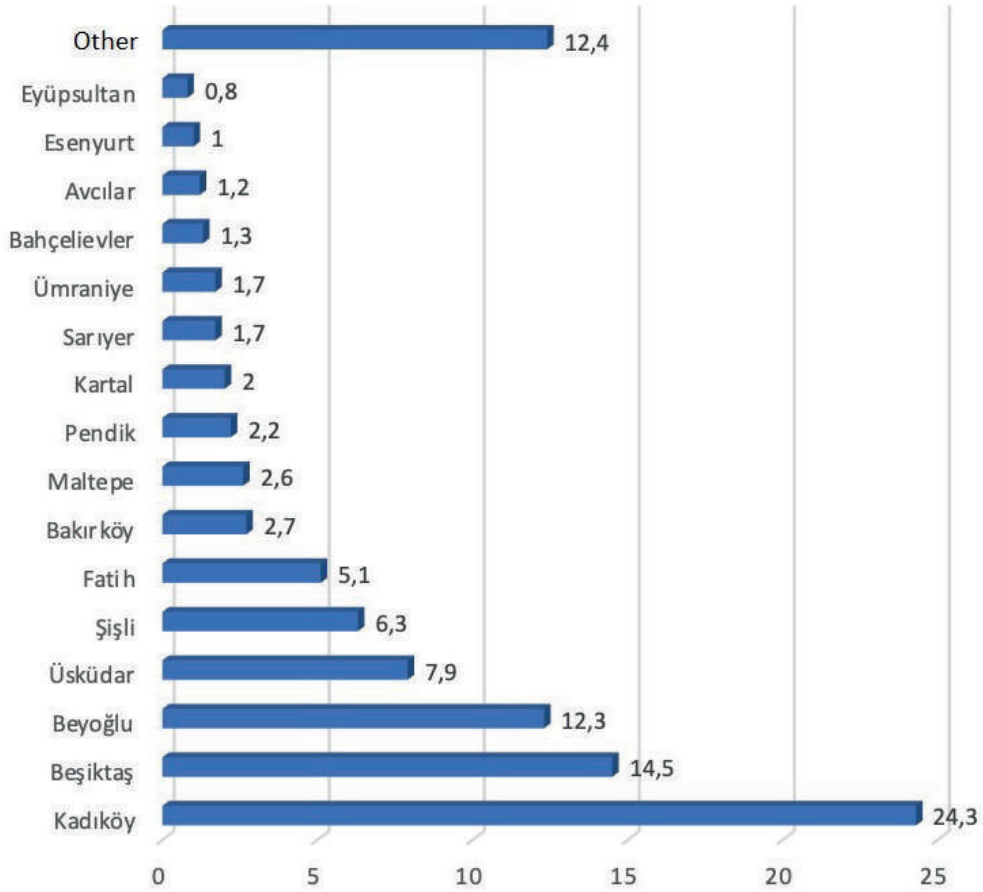


**Chart 9: From which Social Group Do You Have More Friends?**

When this data is compared with gender, a difference emerges in the categories of single women, single men, and LGBTI+. As might be expected, women reported having more single female friends than men, and men reported more single male friends than women. One difference that may be important here is especially in having LGBTI+ friends. While 31.7% of women state that they have LGBTI+ friends, this rate decreases to 17.6% for men.

We mentioned above that the survey was implemented in 36 districts of Istanbul.

In this context, the participants were asked whether they leave the district they live in, and if they do, which districts they visit most. First of all, only 7% of the participants stated that they do not leave their district. Those who leave the district they live in were asked about the districts they visit most. The chart 10 shows the answers to this question.



**Chart 10: Most Visited Districts\***

\* The Other category is the rate of 23 districts not included in the chart.

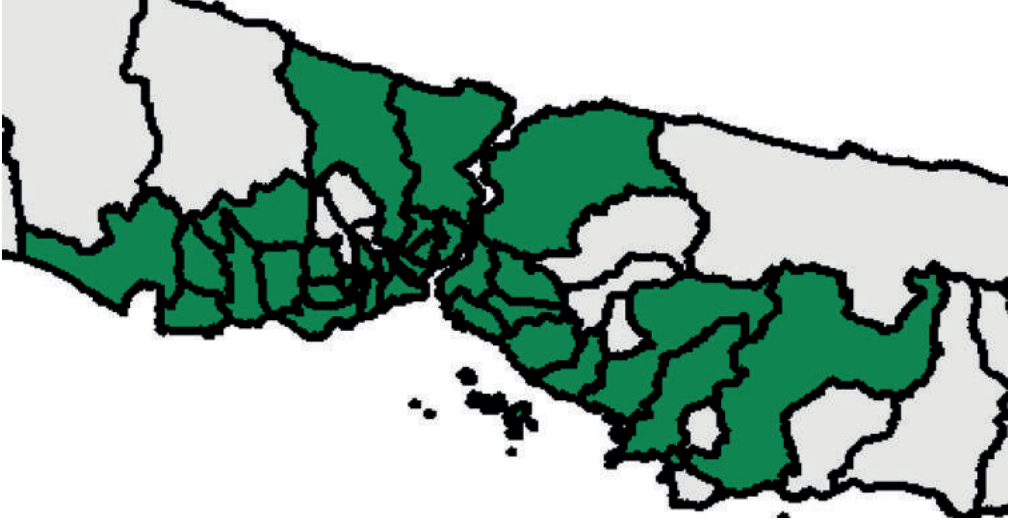
Kadıköy, Beşiktaş, Beyoğlu, Üsküdar, Şişli, and Fatih are the districts that the participants of the research visit most, apart from the district they live in. However, this data does not provide an opinion on why they go to these districts and therefore their thoughts about that district. Because for reasons such as work, school, etc., they may be going to these districts more. To develop our view further on this subject, the participants were asked about the districts they want to go to most and the districts they like most, and the districts they do not want to go to or dislike at all. The table 4 shows the answers to this question.

Liked Districts			Disliked Districts		
Districts	Number	%	Districts	Number	%
<b>Kadıköy</b>	494	27,3	<b>Bağcılar</b>	288	18,7
<b>Beyoğlu</b>	245	13,6	<b>Esenyurt</b>	178	11,5
<b>Beşiktaş</b>	230	12,7	<b>Fatih</b>	133	8,6
<b>Üsküdar</b>	184	10,2	<b>Esenler</b>	123	7,9
<b>Fatih</b>	102	5,6	<b>Beylikdüzü</b>	72	4,6
<b>Sarıyer</b>	76	4,2	<b>Sultanbeyli</b>	70	4,5
<b>Şişli</b>	69	3,8	<b>Beyoğlu</b>	69	4,4
<b>Bakırköy</b>	43	2,4	<b>Gaziosmanpaşa</b>	58	3,7
<b>Beykoz</b>	35	1,9	<b>Ümraniye</b>	57	3,6
<b>Maltepe</b>	33	1,8	<b>Başakşehir</b>	42	2,7
<b>Adalar</b>	23	1,3	<b>Pendik</b>	41	2,6
<b>Kartal</b>	15	0,8	<b>Sultangazi</b>	37	2,4
<b>Eyüpsultan</b>	14	0,8	<b>Kadıköy</b>	29	1,9
<b>Arnavutköy</b>	13	0,7	<b>Üsküdar</b>	28	1,8
<b>Avclar</b>	11	0,6	<b>Sancaktepe</b>	28	1,8
<b>Pendik</b>	11	0,6	<b>Şişli</b>	27	1,7
<b>Other</b>	210	11,6	<b>Other</b>	271	17,5
<b>TOTAL</b>	1808	100	<b>TOTAL</b>	1551	

**Table 4: Districts Liked and Disliked by Survey Participants**

According to the report published by the Ministry of Industry and Technology in 2022,<sup>22</sup> 29 of Istanbul's 39 districts have reached the first stage of development. The map 1 shows these districts.

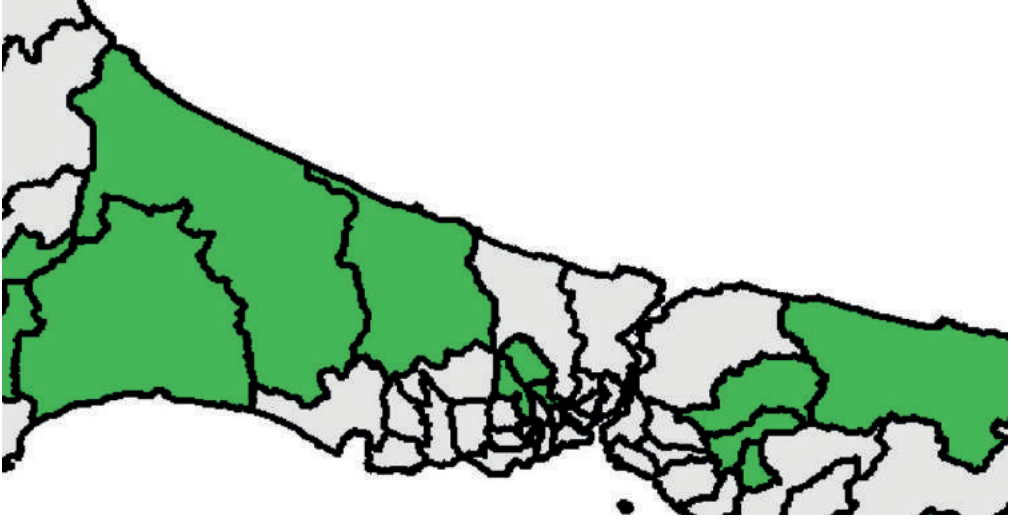
22 T.C. Sanayi ve Teknoloji Bakanlığı, İlçelerin Sosyo-Ekonomik Gelişmişlik Sıralaması Araştırması, Ankara: Kalkınma Ajansları Genel Müdürlüğü [T.C. Ministry of Industry and Technology, Socio-Economic Development Ranking Research of Districts, Ankara: General Directorate of Development Agencies].



**Map 1: First Stage Developed Districts of Istanbul**

Source: T.C. Ministry of Industry and Technology, Socio-Economic Development Ranking Research of Districts, 2022

According to the same research, the remaining 10 districts of Istanbul are at the level of second-stage developed districts. The map 2 shows these districts.



**Map 2: Second Stage Developed Districts of Istanbul**

Source: T.C. Ministry of Industry and Technology, Socio-Economic Development Ranking Research of Districts, 2022

As can be seen from the map, 10 districts with second-stage development are Arnavutköy, Çatalca, Silivri, Esenler, Gaziosmanpaşa, Sultangazi, Çekmeköy, Sancaktepe, Sultanbeyli and Şile.



It would not be wrong to say that the answers of the participants of this research to the question of liked and disliked districts are partially parallel to the development levels in these two maps. Only Arnavutköy, which has the second stage of development, can find itself a place among the liked districts in the 14th rank. Districts such as Esenler, Gaziosmanpaşa, Sultangazi, Sancaktepe, and Sultanbeyli, which are in the second stage in terms of development, are among the most disliked districts. Although Bağcılar is at the first stage in terms of development, the fact that the industry in this district is developed and therefore receives intense immigration and dense unplanned construction<sup>23</sup> may have caused the participants to put it among the districts they disliked in the first place.

In the qualitative interviews, the answers given to the question of which districts are liked and disliked, reveal almost similar results to the answers of the survey participants. The table 5 shows the districts that the face-to-face interviewees liked and disliked.

Sevilen İlçeler	Sayı	%	Sevilmeyen İlçeler	Sayı	%
<b>Kadıköy</b>	69	31,94	<b>Bağcılar</b>	24	14,29
<b>Beşiktaş</b>	38	17,59	<b>Esenyurt</b>	23	13,69
<b>Beyoğlu</b>	34	15,74	<b>Fatih</b>	15	8,93
<b>Üsküdar</b>	18	8,33	<b>Beyoğlu</b>	15	8,93
<b>Fatih</b>	11	5,09	<b>Beylikdüzü</b>	10	5,95
<b>Şişli</b>	10	4,63	<b>Esenler</b>	9	5,36
<b>Sarıyer</b>	7	3,24	<b>Gaziosmanpaşa</b>	6	3,57
<b>Bakırköy</b>	5	2,31	<b>Avcılar</b>	5	2,98
<b>Beykoz</b>	4	1,85	<b>Sultanbeyli</b>	5	2,98
<b>Maltepe</b>	4	1,85	<b>Ümraniye</b>	5	2,98
<b>Adalar</b>	4	1,85	<b>Üsküdar</b>	5	2,98
<b>Diğer</b>	12	5,54	<b>Diğer</b>	39	23,40
<b>TOPLAM</b>	216	100	<b>TOPLAM</b>	168	100

**Table 5: Districts Liked and Disliked by Qualitative Research Participants**

As can be seen from the table 5, the districts that both the participants of the survey and face-to-face interviewees like and dislike are concentrated in almost the same districts.

23 Bkz. Temurcin, K. (2012). "Bağcılar (İstanbul) İlçesi'nde Sanayinin Gelişimi ve Yapısı" [Development and Structure of Industry in Bağcılar (Istanbul) District], SDÜ Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi, Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi [SDU Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Journal of Social Sciences], 26: 105-123.

On the other hand, it is necessary to make a few distinctions at this point. First of all, the reason why the popular districts are liked is explained as the places where you can live more comfortably, the coasts, the calmness of some parts, the high socialization opportunities, and the high cultural level. The following statements are examples of these emphases.

The places I like are mostly Beşiktaş, Kadıköy, and Karaköy region which is in Fatih. Some places in Beyoğlu come to my mind, they are under Beyoğlu Municipality, I like these places more... Why do I like it? Because I think that I can get along better with people, the segments of people there, or I can spend time more comfortably without being judged, or I think that the places there are more suitable for me, districts where I can do more social activities, this way (Female, 25, paid employee).

If I start from Üsküdar, it is generally the same for me. I also like the aura it creates. I like the impression. In other words, it's not more complicated. How can I say? That's why it makes me feel at home. I don't know, maybe because I studied here as an undergraduate, I was staying here in the dormitory. This place makes me feel at home. I love the atmosphere. People are more like that, how can I say, modest. When you talk about something, come across or ask for help, they immediately contact you and try to do something. I really like this (Female, 23, paid professional).

My favorite places to go are Beşiktaş-Kadıköy in general. Probably from the human profile. Well, first of all, because they're safer. I mean, because I won't get into trouble easily, you know, in these places. Apart from that, we can also say something else: the fact that the opportunities are concentrated in a limited area, that they're in a narrower area, that it is easier to access everything, that there are entertainment venues, places to eat, places to socialize (Male, 29, paid employee).

Taksim, Beşiktaş, Kadıköy... The way you dress is not very important in these places. Nobody looks at anybody. Nobody bothers anybody. So, I feel more comfortable. In addition, most of the cultural and artistic activities take place in these regions. That's why I go to these places (Female, 25, unemployed).

On the Anatolian Side, Kadıköy, Bağdat Caddesi. I mean, I don't know much about Ümraniye or Çekmeköy, but I've been to Üsküdar a few times, and I know that there are beautiful places there, I've been a few times. In general, Kadıköy, Moda, Bostancı, Caddebostan, Bağdat Caddesi, you know, these are the same districts, but these are on the Anatolian side. Beşiktaş, Nişantaşı, Şişli, Bakırköy are the ones on the European Side. The more coastal part of Bakırköy, Fulya, Florya, and so on... Why do I like them? Frankly, it wasn't something I thought about until now, why I liked it, but instinctively, the places where I have spent a lot of time since my studentship are especially on the Anatolian side. As for this age group you mentioned, I think since the age of 18, from the age of 18 to 28, in Istanbul, I am suitable for your target audience. In other words, the places where I spend my time since university preparation are here, I mean, for young people, etc., it has a different atmosphere compared to the rest of Istanbul, I mean a small cultural space where sociological prejudices, which can be called neighborhood pressure in a social sense, are less. There are of course socioeconomic reasons for this. Why I like... I mean, there are two reasons for this: one of them is the sea in a physical sense, there are such reasons that, places with beautiful views, etc., and secondly, there are reasons such as the youth environment, being freer, giving a feeling of something more... Even though I don't have the experience of living a life similar to that of my European peers... I don't know if I've lived it or not, but I feel like I can at least acquire

something like that when I live there. You know, I didn't have this feeling that much in Kayışdağı (Male, 28, paid professional).

On the other hand, the reasons for disliked districts are mostly explained by the fact that these places are crowded, conservative places, people's cultural level is low, they feel unsafe, there are too many immigrants living there and there are high crime rates.

Which ones I dislike... I lived in Yenibosna the first year I came. I don't like those sides at all. Şirinevler is from Yenibosna side. First, it is crowded. Second, I hate the subway. I spent my undergraduate years at Yıldız Technical. It was like that at that time. I was always using the old airport subway. Too crowded. School rush hours coincided with work rush hours. How can I say? There is nothing social and cultural. That's why I don't like it that much. Other than that, what can I say? I had the opportunity to go to Ümraniye a couple of times. I don't like it too much. Apart from that, I was always in the inner parts of Istanbul. There aren't many places I don't like. I say it specifically (Male, 28, paid employee).

The place I don't like, because it is close to me, is Esenyurt, very crowded place with a high potential for crime, you don't feel safe there (Female, 21, student).

Yes. I don't like Sultanbeyli... So, I don't know, definitely don't get this wrong, I don't classify people, but the people in Sultanbeyli have always offended me. So, I did not feel warm to the people there... I had a girlfriend once, I was going to her, and I was staying 2-3 days a week. In other words, I had a visit to Sultanbeyli for 3-4 months, that is, for 2 weeks or so in 3-4 months. After that, I already soured on there. They are extremely conservative and their mentality is extremely, completely closed, that is, they do not have an open mindset (Male, 27, paid professional).

Başakşehir. They are very religious. We went to the hospital. It's like there's sharia. Everyone is so cold. Women are veiled. But they have a lot of money. But there is no life. Also, I don't like Bağcılar. There are men behind women and they don't stop. They perve on. Complex. One can be lost there. Esenyurt is bad but Bağcılar is worse (Female, 21, paid employee).

I mean, I haven't been to most of the places that I don't like to go to anyway. I went to Rami önce. Why do people go to Rami? A friend of mine had a job in the auto industry, we went for him. I went to Bağcılar a couple of times, and there I went to a friend in Training Research [Hospital] or something. There is evil in two ways, both in a physical sense and something. For example, I will add this thing soon, the Historical Peninsula, Fatih, etc., it differentiates a little there. Physically, historically, visually, and so on, but here the second component is bad as a feeling. But then, in Bağcılar, in Rami, here and there, both physically ugly, people feel uncanny and insecure, and even if they are safe, they do not feel pleasant. If I had listened to the audio recording later, it might sound very snob like this. I didn't want to use it in that sense, so it's not just poverty and wealth. For example, although Ataşehir is a wealthy place, Ataşehir is not a place that makes me feel very pleasant. But in terms of the general texture and culture, I don't know, it seems like someone might scold me "what are you looking at" at any moment while walking on the road. Unfortunately, it is not an unfounded illusion that I think of it that way, and similar things are happening. I think so, that's why I guess these are the places I don't want to go. I haven't been to places I don't want to go (Male, 28, paid professional).

There are many places I don't like. But I guess I can say Bağcılar in the first place. Because I actually went to Bağcılar once, but I went to that side. It's like it's a completely different place. For example, even in the shops there, the writings written on the windows are in Arabic. There is such a Syrian concentration there. So, it made me feel like I was never in Istanbul. It made me feel like I had to get out of there as soon as possible. I could not go there again. Sultanbeyli, Esenyurt. They're very same. It's probably these places. Nor can I live and go (Female, 26, wage worker).

I can't say that there isn't an area that I don't like at all, but to be fair, I don't like places like Bağcılar and Esenler very much. The reason for this is the news of murders, rapes, and shootings that I hear on the evening news all the time. In other words, the reason for my prejudice is never about me, but about what I have experienced and seen. That's why I don't like these kinds of places and I don't go there anyway. I can say these (Male, 25, paid employee).

Because it is a little more protective zone. A little bit of politics. CHP is there. In Kadıköy. The municipal police leave there a little more alone and so on. They never allow this in Üsküdar. For example, no alcohol licenses are issued in Üsküdar anymore. Alcohol is everywhere in Kadıköy. So that's not because I am against alcohol. They just make it too easy like that. They allow drugs on the street. They allow drinking alcohol. Normally, it is forbidden to drink alcohol on the street. But it is free in Kadıköy. Free in Taksim. It's free in Beşiktaş... It's going to be a little political now, though. Taksim, Beşiktaş, and Kadıköy are very dirty places. Alcohol is very easily allowed. That's why there are so many bad people besides being allowed it. They can take drugs freely on the street. They can drink alcohol. In other districts, they cannot do this. So, it's a little easier there. That's why I don't like it. Or someone can roll it up and smoke on the street. The police don't say anything. In a place like Kadıköy, in a place like Taksim. But far from taking drugs, they can't even drink beer in a place like Üsküdar (Male, 24, paid employee).

After this point of the study, questions about the city and local governments were asked to the participants. The first of these is about whether the participants of the research agree with the statement that "local governments communicate with me enough". The chart 11 shows the answers to this question.

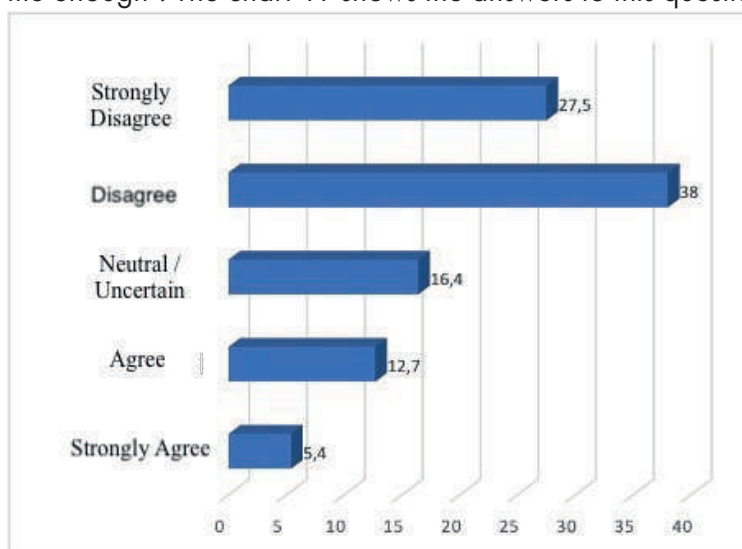


Chart 11: Communication with Local Authorities

As can be seen from the chart 11, 65.5% of the young people participating in the research state that local governments do not communicate enough with them. The rate of those who find this communication sufficient is only about 18%.

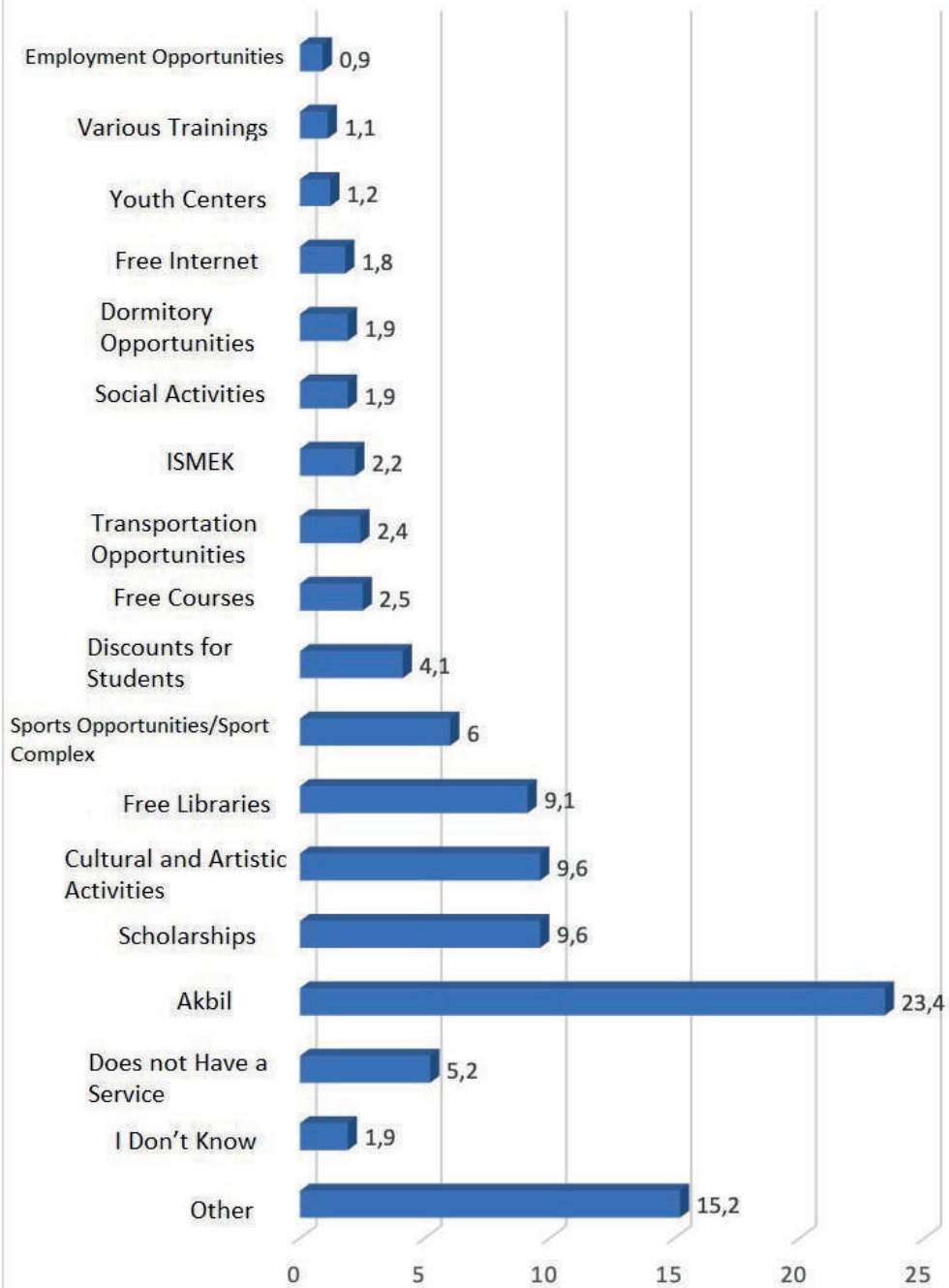
When these data are compared with age groups, there is no significant difference ( $p = .476$ ). However, when compared with gender, there is a partially significant difference. The rate of those who state that they do not agree with this statement is partially higher in men than in women (69.6% and 60.5%, respectively,  $p < .05$ ). In addition, the rate of undecided is slightly higher in women than in men (19.3% and 13.5%, respectively).

After that, the participants were asked what are the most important services that local governments provide for young people. The chart 12 shows the answers to this question.

As can be seen, almost a quarter of the participants are satisfied with the cheap Akbil service. This is followed by the scholarships given by the municipalities and the cultural and artistic activities they carry out. The fourth place is the libraries that can be used free of charge. Sports activities, various student discounts (museum or exhibition entrances, etc.) are in the fifth and sixth places. On the other hand, 5.2% of the participants think that municipalities do not have any services for young people. There is no significant difference between age groups and gender in this regard.

Parallel to the above question, the participants were asked what additional programs they need to get the job they target or to improve themselves in addition to the training they received. The chart 13 shows the answers to this question.

Participants state that they need language courses, various certificates, vocational training, computer courses, and internship opportunities, respectively. When this data is compared with gender, it is seen that female participants prefer various certificates and language courses compared to men. There is no difference at this point in other categories. When the same data is compared with age, the most important difference appears in the category of internship opportunities. While the demand of young people for internship opportunities between the ages of 18-20 is 53.4%, this rate decreases to 24.1% in the 27-29 age group. There is no significant difference in other categories.



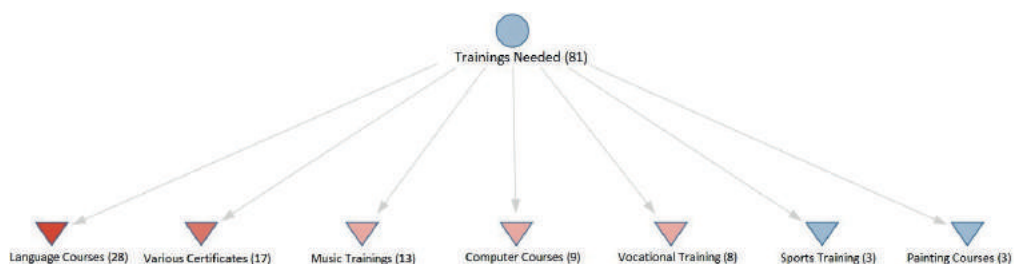
**Chart 12: Services of Local Governments for Youth**



**Chart 13: Training Programs That Survey Participants Need**

Since this issue is more about education, we also compared this data with the educational status of the participants. There are some significant differences here. For example, while the rate of demand for vocational training is 61.4% for participants with “secondary school and below” education, this rate decreases to 45% for those with “undergraduate and above”. On the contrary, while “undergraduate and above” participants have the highest rate in language and computer courses (84% and 48%, respectively), this rate is lower in “secondary school and below” participants (64.9% and 29.8%, respectively).

The training programs that the participants in the qualitative research expect from local governments also coincide with the chart 13. The figure 3 shows the training needed by qualitative research participants.



**Figure 3: Training That Qualitative Research Participants Need**

As can be seen, language courses and certificates for different fields are mostly preferred. This is followed by music education, computer courses, and vocational training.

In connection with this issue, the participants were asked in which fields of work they would like to volunteer. Graph 14 shows the answers to this question. Accordingly, human rights, cultural and artistic activities, animal rights, gender equality, environmental projects, sports activities, education, social support projects, production activities, and travel activities take the top 10 places.





**Chart 14: Areas in which Participants Want to Work Voluntarily**

These data were also compared with gender and age. Although there are no significant differences between age groups, gender creates significant differences. The table 6 shows the results of the comparison by gender.

Working Areas	Female		Male	
	Number	%	Number	%
Human Rights	372	78,6	251	52,3
Culture and Art	300	63,4	269	56
Animal Rights	269	56,9	211	44
Gender Equality	300	63,4	167	34,8
Environmental Projects	224	47,4	185	38,5
Sports Activities	169	35,7	225	46,9
Education	188	39,7	193	40,2
Social Support Projects	209	44,2	166	34,6
Production Activities	150	31,7	177	36,9
Travel	163	34,5	160	33,3
Science and Technology	103	21,8	200	41,7
Street Activities	130	27,5	127	26,5
Health and Nutrition	126	26,6	124	25,8
Social Entrepreneurship	105	22,2	136	28,3
Communication and Media	116	24,5	108	22,5
Photography	130	27,5	84	17,5
Table Games	23	4,9	70	14,6
Other	5	0,5	16	1,7

**Table 6: Areas of Working Voluntarily by Gender**

As can be seen from the table, while female participants stated that they want to work more in the fields of human rights, animal rights, gender equality, environmental projects, social support projects, and photography compared to men, the areas where male participants differ from women are mostly the categories such as sports activities, science and technology, social entrepreneurship and table games.

In addition, the participants were asked open-ended what kind of services they expect local governments to produce for young people. The answers to this question are quite varied. We will try to present the answers given here by categorizing them.

1. Increasing cultural and artistic activities is the service that is expressed in the first place. However, almost all of the participants demand that such activities be carried out free of charge or cheaply. Some participants expressed this as “all kinds of cultural and artistic activities that are economically accessible to students and young people”. This is one of the most frequently expressed demands in face-to-face interviews. The following examples show considerations for these claims.

Now, frankly, I don't know much. But as far as I've heard from my circle, let me tell you more. Most of my friends make requests such as gym or concert, or theatre. When there is, of course, it is important for us that it is free of charge. Especially if you live in this economic situation and a metropolis like Istanbul. Well, as I said, I didn't participate much, but I think to participate and search. Gym or concerts are important things for young people. Because I think that young people should improve themselves, in this regard. They have a major shortcoming (Male, 21, student).

Also, I need to add: Cultural and artistic activities need to be increased; they need to be increased. People no longer realize that it is a vital need in Turkey. However, each of these people, whether working twelve hours a day or working two hours a day, students who are busy with something for two hours a day, that is, students, employees, non-workers, retirees, regardless of age group and criteria, whatever language they speak, need movies, theatre, books, shows. At this point, I expect the municipality to be enterprising. By opening a library somewhere, I don't think people can be told how to use their free time or full time and how they can create added value for themselves. A show should be organized on this street, and we should be able to go to side street knowing that something will happen a week later there. And they can be free, they can be for a small fee. It makes more sense to have them for a small fee. I mean, I'm talking about going to watch something for fifty TLs (Female, 26, unemployed).

2. The second important demand is for economic and job opportunities. Participants demand financial support, food aid, rent aid, and cheap accommodation opportunities from local governments. Improving scholarship opportunities is added to this. At the same time, it is among the most important demands that local governments create employment and job opportunities. Similar demands are also encountered in qualitative interviews. The following statements exemplify this situation.

Let me come to your local government question, the local government needs to do a study to facilitate these problems experienced by young people across the country. This is not to say: “fix the economy.” They can't do that, the power of the local government is limited, but they can comfort a young person in the district she/he lives in: This means that they can provide job opportunities. Currently, 8 out of 10 university youth cannot work or find a job. Definitely job. My brother, what is your education, this or that, they will look for a job according to that young person. The one who is a university graduate, she/he went and studied for 4 years, she/he got his undergraduate degree, she/he did it, it doesn't work if you go and put that person in a cafe. There was a system in the Ottoman Empire, and this was done by local administrations: Children's talents could be discovered from childhood, education was given, and that child was made to have a job accordingly. Don't give a child who is better at numeric [sciences] a writing job at a desk, bro. That child has a bachelor's degree in mathematics, put that child in, I don't know, put her/him in the classroom, put her/him in something (Male, 27, paid professional).

First of all, it is employment, I don't know most likely, municipalities can give priority to young people to find a job, or they can do something like a building for science. I think they can be a little more interested in young people (Male, 23, student).

Young people... I don't know. If there was some pocket money, for example, 500 TL per month for each young person. At least the transportation fee and the money for tea and coffee. Then young people do something. If there were free courses. Free things. That's what people with money do. What people want to do for themselves and their future. They also interfere with young people too much. Young people should be free. Young people should do something, there are no jobs (Female, 21, paid employee).

There are fundamental problems concerning the youth. They want them resolved. These are nutrition, sheltering, and hanging out in places where they can spare time for themselves, traveling, and having fun. Now, these three basic elements are the things that should be in one's life, to improve herself/himself. If these do not exist, people cannot philosophize and think. I would like them to be met by the municipality. As a college student, you don't want to have food or shelter problems. Or you don't want to wait a week or two to go to a theater. I would like them to be completely deprivatized and at least handled by the municipality and made free of charge. As a student at least. Frankly, we don't have much demand (Male, 20, student).

3. The third important demand is related to education. Here, direct educational support, various courses (especially language and computer), certificates, and vocational training come to the fore. In addition, it is requested to establish libraries in each district and improve the existing ones. Similar demands were also expressed in the qualitative study.

Actually, these ISMEK-style things are very nice, you know, they have institutions in most places. For example, there is a place in Ataşehir or Çerenköy, the ISMEK that I went to was a place only on Turkish-Islamic arts and there was also a private course there. From a private course, a teacher came to our course; the teachers who, at the same time, give lessons in private places, outside, etc., the training of teachers is good. That kind of training activities can be increased. Because, as I said, the quota is full, and in some places, they close it because the participation is low. Again, on the Hasanpaşa side, I think my sister was going to a "bağlama" course and I would go to guitar but there is a building in Hasanpaşa that gives only music training. Such things are good, for example, you go to a place, you meet people with the same interest, it helps you to socialize or something. They are doing something now, for example, people use social media a lot or they do something, they envy people on Youtube or something. You know, they can do this, digitalize it, you can use it in a good way, like this, they can vaccinate it from somewhere, catch it. Because it is referred to as new media, it is already referred to as new media education in universities, maybe they added it to these ISMEK courses or something, I really like ISMEK. I've been going there for years because I really like it. They can be added, so that kind of thing can be done. I mean, there is one in every district, so that's why ISMEK is beautiful (Male, 28, paid professional).

I mean, I didn't think about it individually, but in general, for example, there can be more courses about software. Informing people about it. Because what they say is the profession of the future is true. And young people are not a loon either. Not all of them need to read software. Not all of them need to be computer engineers. A technology that can be added anywhere, in every sector. And I think a little more work should be done on this issue (Male, 20, student).

There are courses, of course, but I can't find them here, the photography course. I'm very curious about photography and I can't find that course around here. Folk dances, for example, are usually paid courses (Female, 22, paid employee).

4. Fourth and one of the most expressed demands is to increase and expand transportation opportunities (such as 24/7 transportation) and to make transportation either free or cheap.

I know that municipalities are probably interested in them as well. Subway things, hours. Public transport. I think they can extend the public transport hours. Frankly, I think it's a bad thing that everyone around me has to be able to catch a subway or bus. These are especially young people, university students, or high school students. She/he wants to stay, she/he wants to have fun. But since there is a certain time limit, for example, for ferries crossing from here to the opposite shore, taxis are incredibly expensive when crossing from here, so they go earlier (Female, 20, student).

For example, on a municipal basis, Istanbul Card has been almost inaccessible to students lately. While it was 30-40 TL at first, now it is 80 TL and I find this increase very meaningless, in this regard, improvements can be made also for vehicles used for transportation. Or, municipalities may have their ring shuttle services for some schools, they should not be expected only from the school, municipalities may also create ring services themselves (Female, 21, student).

Firstly, they can increase the number of buses at night. Secondly, they can lower the price of AKBİL. Thirdly, for nightlife, some cafes may be open, but now they close after 12 (Male, 23, student).

5. The fifth demand is about increasing of sports fields and carrying out sports activities.

I expect something to be done for the youth in general. At least, I think they should increase sports activities. Because in our country, we live in a country where sports activities are mostly in the hands of the private sector and the favoritism is at the highest level. At the very least, I want the state to increase sports activities and make sports activities with less favoritism and more justice. It's not just for football. It applies to all sports, basically judo, karate, and basketball. When we say sports in our country, only football and basketball come to mind. Since there are many sports branches, I would like them to establish platforms for other sports branches instead of only football and basketball courts (Male, 19, student).

I would like to touch on something like this: I am in favor of encouraging young people to participate in sports more. Because you know, the habit that has been going on for years, most of the people of Turkey were directed to football. In their youth. Not much was achieved. Obviously, they can be directed to other sports branches (Male, 24, student).

For example, there is something like this. When you go down to Fatih, where I live, you pass to Yenikapı beach. I always expected something related to a water sport here. Well, it didn't happen, the last time Fatih Municipality started a canoeing activity there. I think it took a week or so. I don't know who participated and who didn't, or how did the participation come about. I just saw its pictures later; I was so sad. For example, I would love to participate. Obviously, there is no such sporting activity. I always see that there are things like classical fitness or something like that. So, to be able to use the area, as I said, you are by the sea, why is there no activity related to water sports? It can be used for that very easily there. I don't understand at all, there is none. Sometimes I see it in things, for example, in TV series, and foreign films, I look at the fields in the middle of the street, and children are playing games or something. I say 'what the hay', I mean if they were here, they would immediately do something else there. There is no such thing. There are almost none. All I know is that there is Çukurbostan or something in Fatih. It's also very old there, it was built in time. So, I didn't see anything put on it. I have never seen a sports event (Male, 29, unemployed).

It can encourage (youth) to sports and arts. They can open courses. There can be fields. It can be tennis for those who want tennis and basketball for those who want basketball. For example, I have been playing basketball since the second grade, I live in Maltepe, but there are 3 courts, and they are already full. We have to do something like that in the gardens of the schools. Not really, but I would like to play basketball, for example, on the beach of Maltepe. I know the thing about Maltepe beach, I know that there are very nice tracks, but they are very full. It is a bit hard (Female, 21, student).

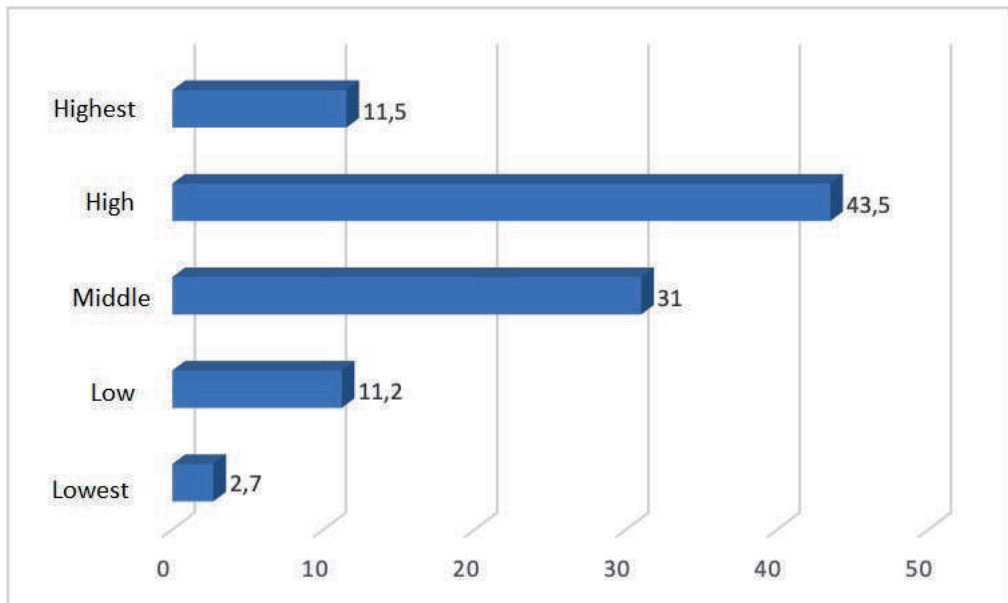
6. Finally, the participants demand that local governments organize domestic and international trips, create social activities and socialization areas, and create a liberal environment.

Maybe tours, cultural tours organized by the municipality. For example, Cappadocia. Historical places. It could be Diyarbakir. The history of it. Maybe to Cappadocia. More like this, Pamukkale. It sounds like it might be in places where there are more historical places. These are the ones that come to mind (Female, 26, paid employee).

The biggest problem for young people may be socializing for a more affordable price because there are too many university students in this age group in this city. I guess when municipalities say public service, the only thing that comes to their mind is the road or something. Not that, I used to come across a lot in Aydın or Didim, it was like that in İzmir, the municipality had its own restaurants and cafes for a while, they were doing this. Except for a few places in the metropolitan municipality, there are almost no places that belong to the local municipality, this could be made more common (Male, 29, paid employee).

First and foremost is a better education. Then it's an activity where we can feel a little freer and more comfortable. In other words, I think it is necessary to organize activities where we can spend our energy more easily and people can socialize more easily (Female, 23, paid employee).

As stated earlier, one of the aims of this study is to understand and interpret the urban identity and urban quality perception of the participant young people. The urban identity scale is a five-point Likert-type scale and consists of three factors: identification, knowing/familiarity with the city, and responsibility. The data obtained in this study were calculated by scoring the responses of the participants to the statements measuring these factors. For example, in the urban identity scale, the identification factor is measured with 17 statements. The responses of the participants were summed up, scored, averaged, and classified into five categories: "the lowest level of identification", "low level of identification", "moderate identification", "high level of identification" and "the highest level of identification". The same method was applied to the other two factors. The chart 15 shows the level of identification of the participants with the city.

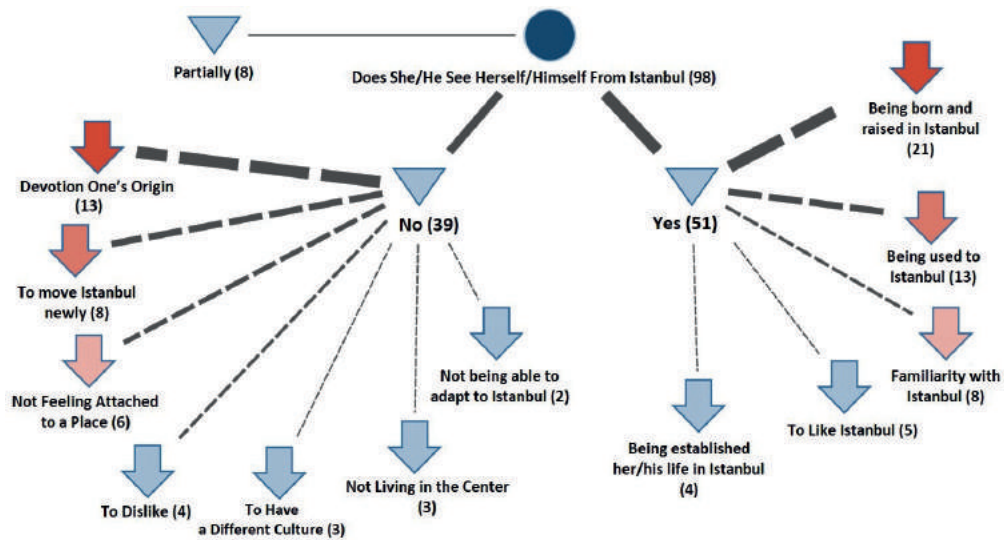


**Chart 15: Participants' Level of Identification with the City**

Identification refers to both the emotional attachment of the person to the city and the extent to which she/he sees the city as a part of her/his identity. When the chart 15 is examined, it is seen that 55% of the participants of this study identify with the city at the "high" and "the highest" levels.

When this data is compared with gender and age, there is no significant difference. However, when the place of birth and length of residence in the district are compared, there are partially significant differences ( $p < .05$  for both). While the high level of identification among the participants born in Istanbul is 59.2%, these rates decrease to 33.3% for the Southeastern Anatolia Region, 46.2% for the Aegean Region, and 46.7% for the Black Sea Region. Similarly, the highest identification rate is seen in those who have lived in the same neighborhood for 21 years or more (60.3%) and those who have lived for 16-20 years (58.1%).

To further develop our view on this subject, qualitative research participants were asked whether they consider themselves Istanbulites. The figure 4 shows the answers to this question.



**Figure 4: The Tendency of Qualitative Research Participants to See themselves as Istanbulites**

As can be seen from the figure 4, slightly more than half of those who participated in face-to-face interviews consider themselves Istanbulites. The reasons put forward in this regard are mostly being born and raised in Istanbul (21), being used to Istanbul (13), and familiarity with Istanbul (8). In this context, it would not be wrong to say that being born and raised in a city increases identification with that city. The following statements show a few examples of this.

Of course. I have been living in Istanbul since I was born. And I grew up loving Istanbul very much. Either the movies I watch or the books I read. All of them came to me in a way that made me love Istanbul. And I really saw myself as an Istanbulite (Male, 22, student).

Yes, I was born here. I grew up here. I am from Istanbul. Because I was born and raised here, the culture of another city, including Edirne, where my family was born and raised, and where I go often; including Ankara, where I went to university and spent five years constantly, because I think no other place, raised me. Istanbul is like my substitute mother. Looking after me, raising me. I say this as a child who grew up on the periphery of Istanbul. It impresses me that it can take everyone in. These are the most attractive places in the world for me. New York, Istanbul, New Delhi, London; these cities take you in themselves. Yes, it leaves much out too. Yes, there is a lot of injustice. Life is difficult. I'm sure it is more difficult than the surrounding provinces, but it has more opportunities. In other words, if something is very expensive there, there are also cheaper of this thing in these cities. So that always attracts me. I would like the cities I visit to have such characteristics. In addition, the fact that its historical background cannot be plundered no matter what happens is a very decisive criterion for me. Istanbul has its own temperament, its own character, its own history, and no one can destroy it. Knowing this connects me to Istanbul. It also connects to Diyarbakir. Likewise, it connects to Thessaloniki and connects to Aleppo. Cities I have never seen; Thessaloniki, and New Delhi for example. Places that I am very curious about. And I know that I will find there as much as I find here, for example, Antakya is a city with such a character. Cairo. I love cities that have their own identity. Actually, they all have an identity. It may be wild; it may not be wild. It can be multicultural or monocultural. But these seem like cities that



cannot be manipulated. Maybe I think this way because I overestimate the identity of the city. Baghdad is such a city. Baghdad is one of the most important cities in the world. Today, people flout, but it is one of the places where urban culture emerges. In other words, these are cities that can recover themselves, no matter what happens to them, even if bombs fall on each of their streets. I think Istanbul is such a place and I am lucky because I was born and raised in Istanbul (Female, 26, unemployed).

Yes, I think I am definitely from Istanbul. Because I never felt like a stranger when I came here. It's like I've always been here. Most of my friends who came here found it strange. Because Sakarya was smaller, Istanbul seemed too big to them. But that has never happened to me. Since the first day I came, I got used to it as if I had always been here. It continues (Female, 22, student).

I've been feeling like Istanbulite for a while, yes. When I learned about many parts of the city now... I was at the beginning of the university; it has been 8 years. Knowing and accepting the city with its beautiful and ugly sides a little more is good about being an Istanbulite. Or, for example, when someone comes to Istanbul and says one cannot live here, and I feel that I can oppose it with nice counter-arguments, I say to myself I have become an Istanbulite. When I see that I have a word to say to people who come from abroad and talk about certain things here, I say yes (I am Istanbulite), so for the last few years. Of course, it wasn't like that at the beginning (Male, 26, paid employee).

The reasons put forward by those who do not consider themselves Istanbulites are being attached to their origin (13), having just moved to Istanbul (8), and not feeling attached to a place (6). The following statements show examples of this.

I don't see myself as an Istanbulite. I see myself as a Mardinian. I have never called myself an Istanbulite. I cannot deny my origin. Culturally, I feel I am originally from Mardin (Male, 22, paid employee).

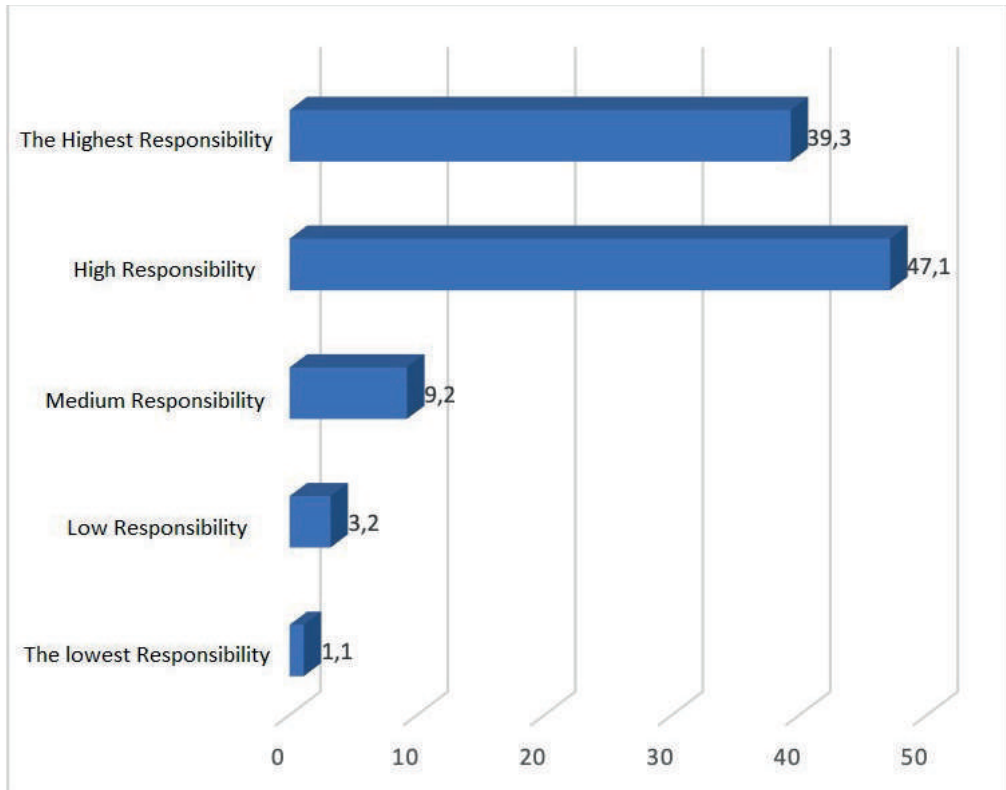
No, because I am from Diyarbakır. I was born here and lived here for 6 years. Then I lived in Diyarbakır until I was 19. Then I came to university, I went back again sometime. A part that I do not remember was spent here, but my childhood and early youth years were all spent in Diyarbakır. That's why I believe I'm from Diyarbakır. I believe the people there are friendlier. I believe that I am from the Middle East, and Istanbul is very far from the Middle East (Male, 24, unemployed).

I don't see myself as an Istanbulite. Because I think I just moved to Istanbul. So, I'm still in the process of getting used to it. I love Istanbul very much, but I cannot say that I am from Istanbul yet. Because there are many places I haven't discovered yet (Female, 27, paid employee).

I don't see myself as an Istanbulite, because I'm very new right now. In other words, I am not very likely to be an Istanbulite, I envision a life in which I will enjoy Istanbul, benefit from its opportunities, in terms of certain artistic and educational activities, and move to another city after that. So, it feels like I'd live here for about three or four years (Female, 28, paid employee).

Or rather the fact that I see myself as no native. I guess it's partly due to my life in recent years. I live part-time in all provinces; I have a room with my belongings everywhere. Maybe if you had asked this at university, I would have said, "I feel a bit more Istanbulite rather than from Kütahya", but right now I feel like no native, that is, I feel a bit like a guest everywhere (Female, 29, paid professional).

In the survey application, the responsibility factor was measured with four questions on the scale and was calculated in the same way as the identification factor. The chart 16 shows the level of responsibility of the participants towards the city.



**Chart 16: Responsibility Levels of Participants towards the City**

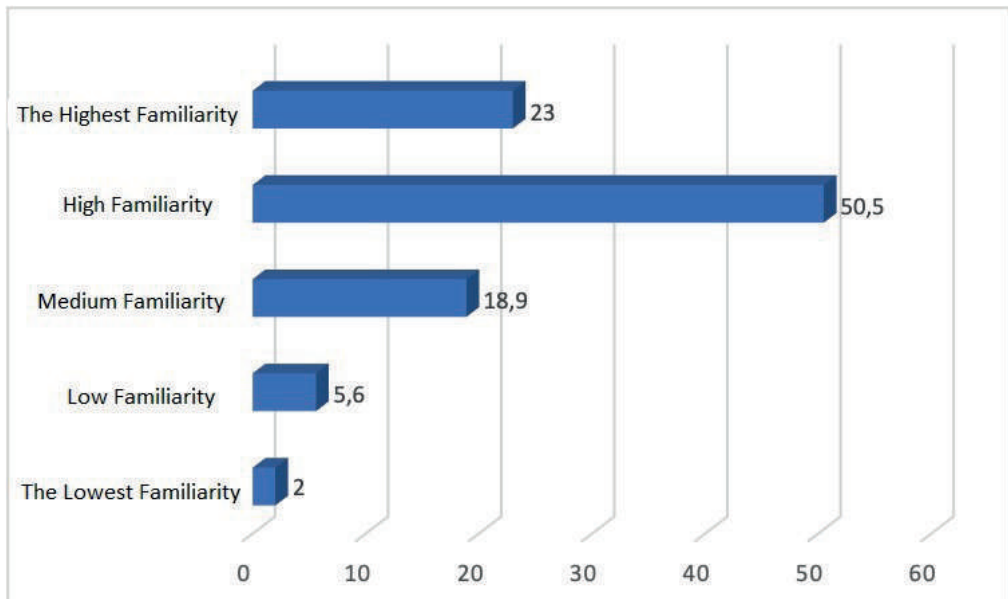
As can be seen, it is revealed that there is a very high level of responsibility in the participants of the study. The responsibility factor is related to the motivation of individuals to protect the city in every aspect, and as the individual sees the city as a part of her/his identity, she/he will try to prevent any damage to the city. In this sense, it can be said that the participants of this study have such motivation.

These data were also compared with gender and age. When it comes to age, there is a high level of responsibility in all age groups and there is no significant difference between age groups. However, when compared with gender, although the level of responsibility is high in both genders, it is seen that women have a higher sense of responsibility than men ( $p < .000$ ). For example, while the level of responsibility for women is 90.5%, this rate decreases to 82.3% for men.

The data obtained about the level of responsibility were compared with both the place of birth and the time lived in the district. Although a high level of

responsibility has emerged in both variables, there is no significant difference between the categories.

Lastly, the factor of knowing/familiarity with the city, which was measured with five questions on the scale, was measured. This factor was calculated in the same way as identification and responsibility. The chart 17 shows the participants' level of knowledge/familiarity with the city.



**Chart 17: Participants' Knowing/Familiarity Levels of the City**

The factor of knowing/familiarity with the city is related to the extent to which the places of the historical and architectural monuments and even the institutions of the city are known. According to the chart 17, the majority of the participants of this study state that they are familiar with the city and know it well.

When the data on the level of knowing/familiarity with the city is compared with gender, there is no significant difference. The highest significant difference occurs in the place of birth of the participants and the time they lived in the district (in both  $p < .000$ ). When compared with age, there is a partial difference ( $p < .05$ ).

The highest level of familiarity is seen among those who were born in Istanbul (80.5%). This is followed by Central Anatolia (71.4%), Eastern Anatolia (68.2%), Marmara (66.1%), Black Sea (64.4%), South East (63.8%), Mediterranean (58%), and those who were born in the Aegean Region (56.4%) ( $p < .000$ ). Similarly, the longer the stay in the district, the higher the level of knowledge/familiarity with the city. For example, while this rate is 80.6% for those living in

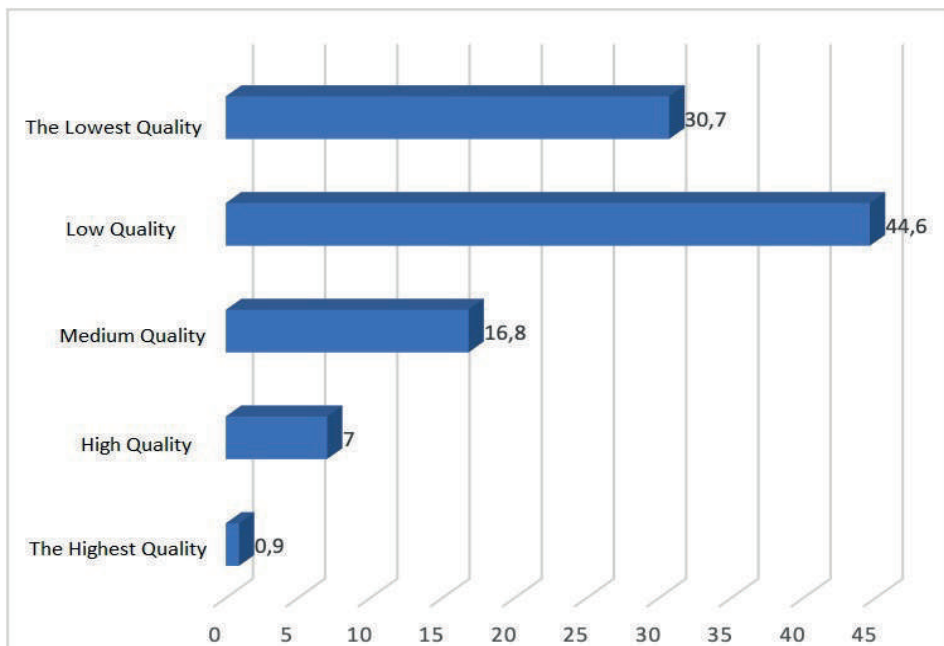
the same district for 21 years or more, it decreases to 68.2% for those living in the same district for 1-5 years ( $P < .000$ ).

There is also a partial difference with age. As expected, the level of knowledge/familiarity with the city increases as the age increases. Thus, while this rate is 78.1% in the 27-29 age group, it decreases to 67.2% in the 18-20 age group ( $p < .05$ ).

If the data available so far are evaluated in general, it is possible to state that we are faced with a youth with a high level of responsibility towards the city (86.4%) and a high level of knowing/familiarity with the city (73.5%) and a partially high level of identification with the city (55%).

Finally, the perception of urban quality was tried to be measured in the study. This scale consists of five factors and aims to measure the individual's perception of various aspects of the city. These five factors respectively consist of perception of city plan (7 questions), perception of gain/advantage (4 questions), perception of safety (4 questions), perception of livability (3 questions), and perception of transportation (3 questions). In this part of the study, data on these factors will be analyzed respectively. Data on these factors were calculated with the method used in calculating the factors related to the perception of urban identity above.

The chart 18 shows the data regarding the city plan perception of the participants.

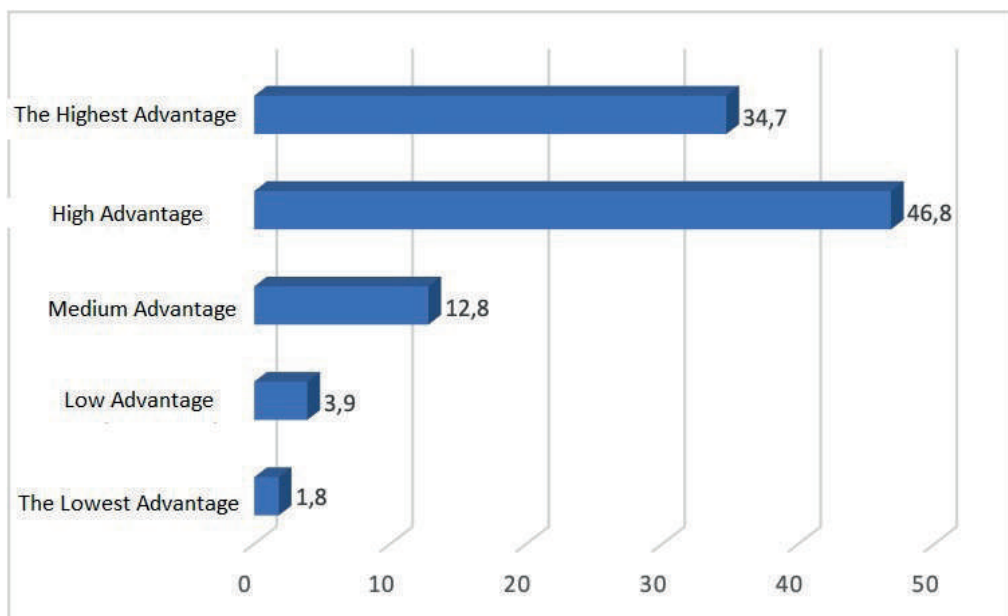


**Chart 18: City Plan Perception Levels of Participants**

The city plan perception factor measures the perception of whether the city is planned according to the inhabitants of the city in general and people who need to be considered from different perspectives, such as pedestrians, the elderly, children, and women in particular. As seen above, the participants of this study state with a very high rate that the city plan of the city is of low quality. In other words, according to the participants, Istanbul is not planned for women, the disabled, children, the elderly, etc.

When the data regarding the perception of the city plan are compared with the place of birth, gender, and length of residence in the district, we do not encounter significant differences. At this point, a very high level of significant difference emerges between age groups. While the low perception of city plan is 86.4% in the 27-29 age group, this rate decreases to 69.2% in the 18-20 age group ( $p < .000$ ).

The category for the perception of gain/advantage, consisting of four questions, was also calculated with the same method. The chart 19 shows the rates of participants' gain/advantage perception levels.

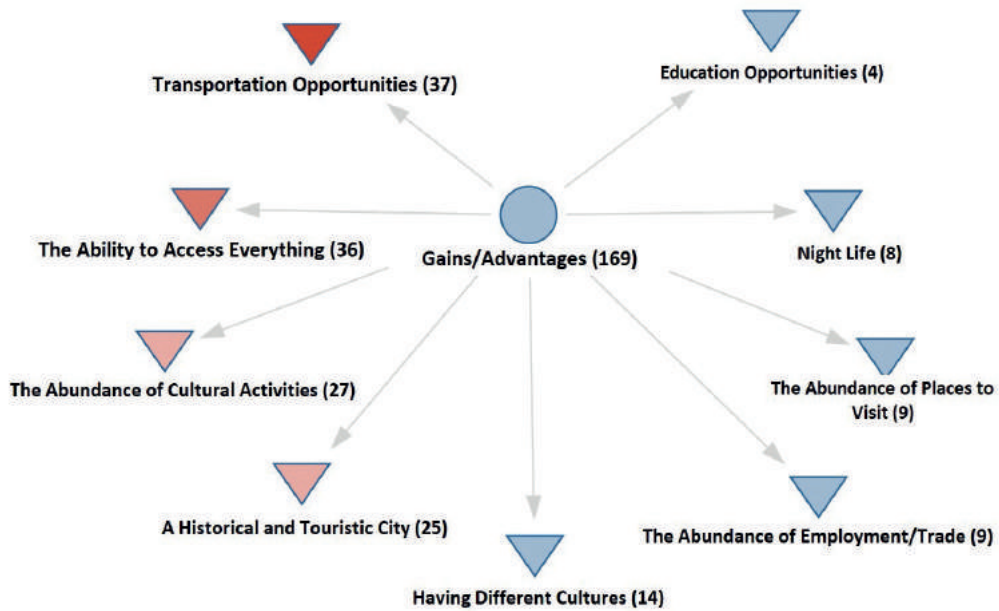


**Chart 19: Gain/Advantage Perception Levels of Survey Participants**

The perception of gain/advantage is about whether the individual evaluates the city in which she/he lives compared to other cities in the country, as more advantageous in terms of the opportunities of the city, the enjoyment of the city, the prestige of the city, etc. Although the city plan of the city in Chart 18 is perceived as low quality by the participants of this study, they have a high

perception in terms of gain/advantage as seen in the chart 19. In addition, the variables of gender, age, place of birth, and duration of living in the district do not reveal significant differences in the perception of gain/advantage.

To understand what the gains or advantages are, questions were asked during the qualitative study. Similar to the chart 19, it is seen that there is a high level of gain/advantage perception in the qualitative study.



**Figure 5: Gain/Advantage Perception Levels of Qualitative Research Participants**

As can be seen from the figure 5, the participants see especially the transportation opportunities (37), the ability to access everything (36), the abundance of cultural activities (27), and the historical and touristic features of Istanbul as a gain/advantage. Some expressions for this are exemplified below.

What I love most about this city is that I can finally reach the place I want at the end of the day, albeit late. I'm talking about neighborhoods, and places I want to go. Except this, knowing that there are various people, knowing that there are people from various countries and richness seems to me to be one of the good reasons (Male, 24, student).

Public transport goes everywhere. It was especially difficult to go to Çekmeköy in the past. But the subway goes there, too. You can go there. You are crossing to the European side, there is a way to go everywhere in Anatolia. There is somehow. And it really is a great easiness. Is there anything other than that? Istanbul is a city that does not die. When you need something in the dead of night, at least you can find a place to provide it (Male, 22, student).

What I love most about Istanbul is firstly the opportunity to access everything. I can

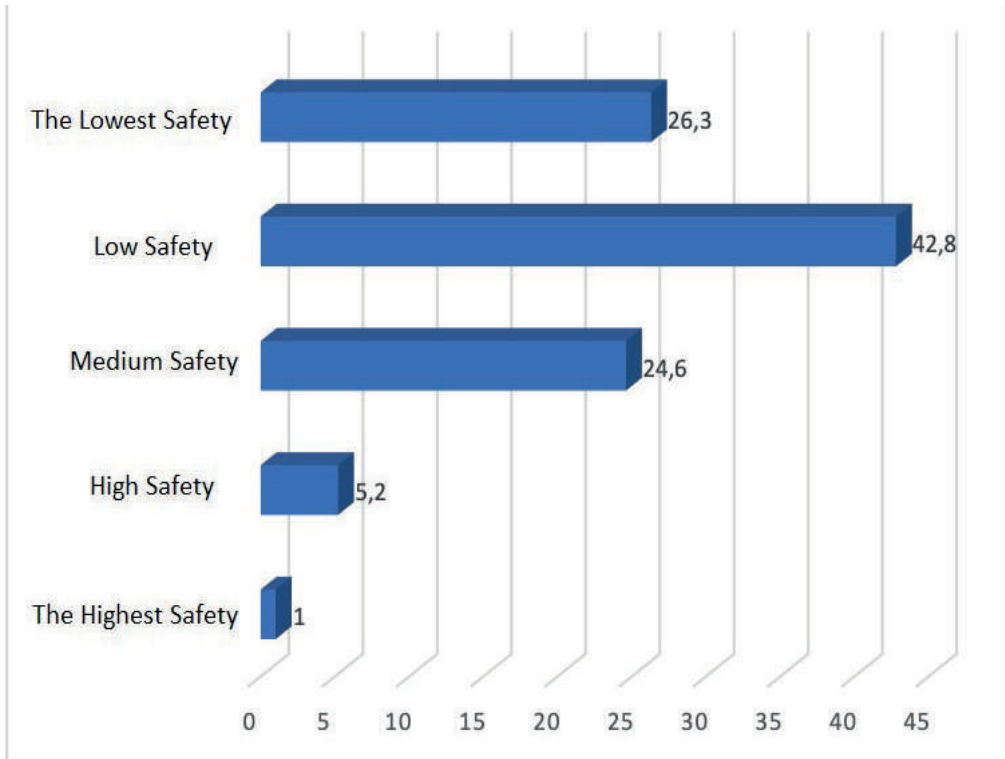
find anything I want here, and I can find it anywhere, in any district. I love this so much. Apart from that, it is very nice that there are so many entertainment venues and so many activities. Even though I can't go to all of them, I still like this. Other than that, it's a lively city. I don't know, you can see what you want when you walk here. In that sense, they are very appealing to me. Okay, we say transportation or something is difficult, but it has a ton of advantages. There is no possibility that you will not be able to go from one place to another. For example, it is not so in other cities. It will be oversharing, but I cannot return home from the airport after midnight in Antalya without a private shuttle or taxi. There is no such thing in Istanbul. You can come from anywhere in Istanbul at any time. For example, you can find taxis affordable, which is good in that sense. Other than that, it's a beautiful city, if you enjoy it, if you don't see the negatives, it's good in that sense. I love these so much. My environment is good. Job opportunity is good. Yes, it may be difficult to make a living in Istanbul, but you are likely to find a lot of work in Istanbul. There are many in the education sector. If you find a place nearby, you can very easily go from one course to another between the districts. And they created its sector. Since the places where you work already know that you work somewhere for two days and somewhere for three days, they make the offer to you like this and you foresee them. Also, you can provide your network faster here than in small cities. In that sense, these are very appealing to me in terms of Istanbul. I love these situations (Female, 28, paid employee).

Well, actually, Istanbul is a really beautiful city. I mean, when I said my family for the city, for example, what I say after my family is something different because I was born and raised here. And there are things that I'm used to here. You know, we say there is traffic, etc. something like that, but for example, you can go by metro or Marmaray to arrive at a place. If not, you know there are "Martı"s (Ed.n.electrical scooter), you can ride them, you can provide transportation somehow, and I know where I can go and why. Everything is like the palm of my hand now. It's been 28 years, you know, if someone asks something, you can easily direct him, you can do something very easily, you make a circle of friends in 28 years. Inevitably, there is a circle, good or bad. So, you can access everything very easily. For example, my sister went to Gökçeada. She got married at around my age. For example, she goes by ferry or something, so it's a problem to go somewhere there. If I lived in Büyükdada in Istanbul, maybe I would have the same problem. But while it is very different to go from the island, for example, from Büyükdada to Istanbul, it is very different to cross from Gökçeada of Çanakkale to Çanakkale. If you have a health problem there, you can't solve it right away, but the farthest hospital here is within 5 km, if you don't consider the private, you consider only the public ones. When you consider the private ones, there is a hospital 1 km away, so you can maintain your living standards in Istanbul. You know, maybe if I went to a village, I wouldn't be able to do that at all. In other words, living in a metropolitan city meets all my standards. I mean, I go to Bursa just because I have relatives, but I also go to Antalya or somewhere for vacation, but it's not like in Istanbul (Male, 28, paid professional).

In fact, the thing I love most in Istanbul is history. Istanbul is a historical place. In some regions where I've been, they call 500-year-old historical things new things in places I just said I love. In other words, the stones of this city, the sea, the strait structure, and the hills are always 2 or 3 things that are one of the biggest reasons why I am in this city (Male, 28, paid professional).

The city is beautiful. So let me say both geographically and architecturally. Cultural diversity is also good. So, in a sense, the city has a soul. When you look at it like this, when you look at the sea, you see something like that, you see that past. You see the history or something. So nice (Male, 20, student).

The third factor for the perception of urban quality is the factor of perception of safety, which is measured by four questions. The chart 20 shows the data for the perception of safety.



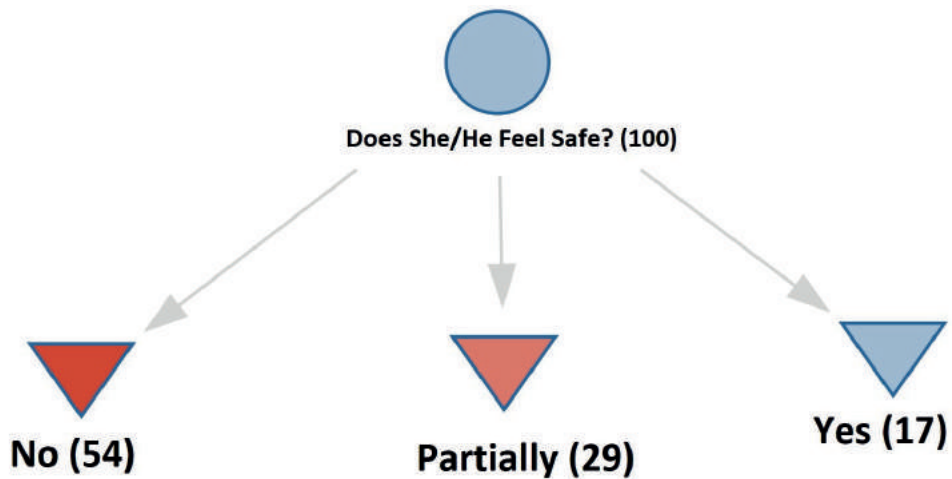
**Chart 20: Safety Perception Levels of Survey Participants**

The perception of the safety factor tries to measure the state of the city and its residents to make people feel safe. In this context, it would not be wrong to say that a little more than two-thirds of the participants of this study do not feel very safe in Istanbul.

When the perception of the safety factor is compared with other variables, a highly significant difference emerges only in the gender variable. Women's perception of safety is lower than men's (respectively, low perception of safety is 73.8% for women and 64.6% for men,  $p < .01$ ).

To further develop our view on this issue, qualitative research participants were also asked whether they felt safe in Istanbul. The figure 6 shows the answers to this question.





**Figure 6: Safety Perception Levels of Qualitative Research Participants**

As can be seen, more than half of the participants state that they do not feel safe in Istanbul. Just like in the survey data, there are significant differences between the genders in this regard in qualitative interviews. While the rate of female participants who stated that they do not feel safe is 72.5%, this rate decreases to 32% for male participants. Some statements on this subject are exemplified below.

Frankly, I don't feel very safe for the reasons I mentioned. Because in the latest news, there is a lot of abuse against women, and you know, femicides are so much. Also, I live in Ataşehir, they killed the woman with such a sword, remember? After hearing that, my gym Brandium is there. There are customs in between though, so I don't think the people who work there will do such things, but they usually park trucks or something there, anything can happen to you, anything can happen to you anywhere at any time. For example, in the subway, they attacked a woman again. Because of such incidents, these kinds of things affect both my health and psychology. No matter how healthy you are, I don't feel safe both from that point of view and because of Syria. I say directly Syria, but you will understand what I will say, there are a lot of people migrating here from Syria. People are having a hard time finding a job and there has been a lot of theft. For example, in our Ataköy, there was a lot of theft. This is something that happened after this migration, and I don't take kindly them to steal in this way to feed themselves. There are many reasons why we don't feel safe, but we go out of the house to maintain our lives. But (Ed.n. we try) not to go out too much... There is also a health issue because of Covid, but Covid is now the last reason (Male, 28, paid professional).

No. In other words, when you pass in front of the opposite sex, whether you are under the age of or older, they look at you as if they have never seen a person. Everything is clear from this glance. It's very disturbing. For example, in the evening, people want to walk in the fresh air. It's hard for girls to go out at a late hour. For example, I would like to go out without thinking at a late hour, to go for a walk, but I don't feel safe. It does not happen when going to school (Female, 18, student).

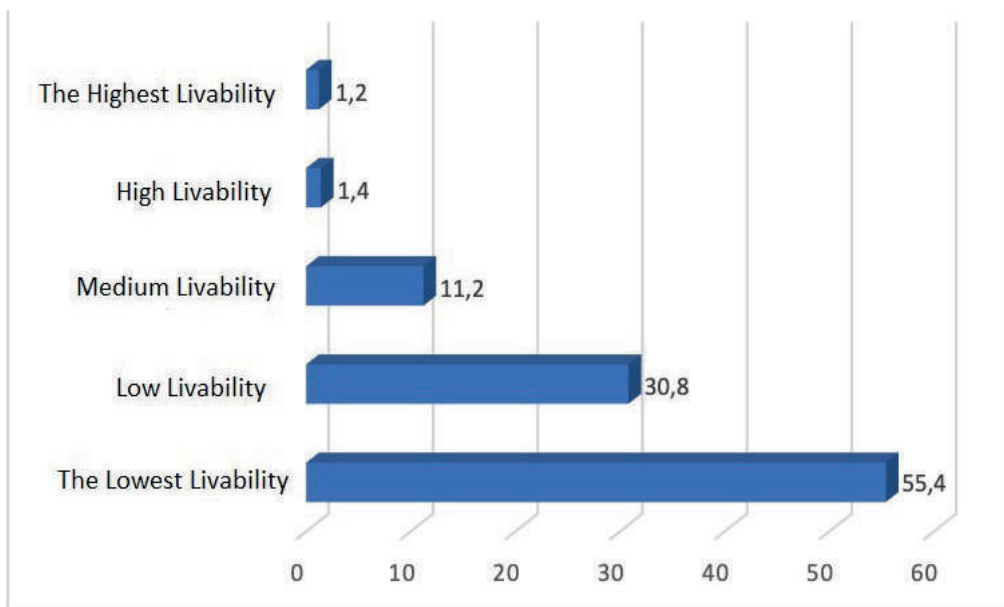
I don't feel safe at all. Especially, if I come home after 10 o'clock. Basically, I sit in a cafe

with my friend, and I start to think about going back at half past 11 because there is a way, there is a return, for example, I have a long walking distance from the tram, likewise by bus. When that happens, it becomes lonely. Especially the view of the people here at the woman who is out at night is very bad, I have to think about it. Since it is not legal to carry tear gas, it is not allowed to go to shopping malls or anything, even if you go, it does not help, they do not let them in. So, what am I doing... Here, for example, I learned a new method that I keep deodorant, etc. in my bag, or I have to put my headphones down because I don't feel safe. So, this way (Female, 25, paid employee).

Yes, I feel it in most places. It may be a bit of my composure, but I feel safe in most places, yes. You already feel generally safe in this neighborhood, it is for many people. Other than that, I also feel that there is not that much insecurity in most parts of the city. Istanbul is not in such a bad place among safe cities anyway, as far as I can see (Male, 26, paid employee).

As I said, I'm used living here since I was little. I know how to act if I am in trouble. For example, because I know where and what to do. I know where the bus stop is. On the street, for example, a minibus passes through the minibus street. From there I can reach my home. This sounds safe to me. It makes you feel safe (Female, 18, student).

Another factor for the perception of urban quality is livability, which is measured by three questions. The livability factor is related to whether the city is stressful or noisy and has clean air. The chart 21 shows the answers to the questions related to this.

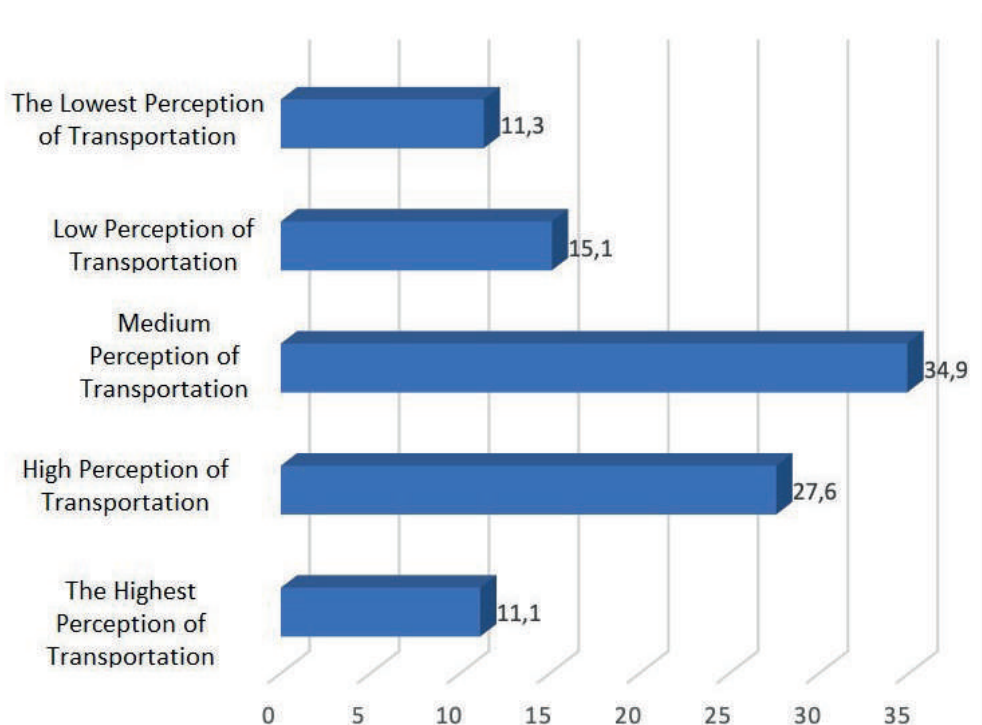


**Chart 21: Livability Perception Levels of Participants**

The data above show the lowest level of perception among the data disclosed so far in the perception of urban quality. The rate of those who find the livability level of Istanbul "the highest" and "highest" is only 2.6%. In this sense, it would not be wrong to say that the participants of this research consider Istanbul, which

is a very large and crowded city, uninhabitable in terms of stress, noise, and clean air. At the same time, the variables of gender, age, place of birth, and time lived in the district do not make a significant difference in this data regarding livability.

The last factor related to the perception of urban quality is the transportation factor, which is also measured by three questions. The perception of transportation measures the perception of the extent to which the transportation opportunities expected to be offered to the people living in the metropolitan city are provided. In other words, having advanced transportation networks, a comfortable public transportation service, and being able to go from one place to another easily constitute the variables of this factor. The chart 22 shows the results obtained from these questions.



**Chart 22: Transportation Perception Levels of Participants**

As can be seen from the chart, although the perception of transportation is perceived as “moderately good” at the highest rate, the sum of “high” and “highest” good transportation perception is close to 39%. In this sense, while the transportation perception of approximately one-fourth of the participants is negative, the perception of the remaining three-quarters is at medium or high levels.

When these data are compared with other variables, a highly significant difference

emerges only between age groups. Accordingly, as age increases, the rate of satisfaction with transportation decreases. For example, while the high level of transportation perception regarding Istanbul is 54.7% in the 18-20 age group, this rate decreases to 26.8% in the 27-29 age group ( $p < .000$ ).

When the perception of urban quality is evaluated as a whole, it is seen that there is a very low perception level in terms of the city plan, safety, and livability, and a moderate and partially high perception level in the transportation factor. In this case, what keeps these young people in Istanbul? Based on these data, it seems possible to answer this question as the gains/advantages of the city.

## **4. Conclusion and Evaluation**

In this study, we focused on young people between the ages of 18-29 living in Istanbul and tried to understand their expectations from local governments and their opportunities to participate in local government activities within the framework of urban citizenship, urban identity, and urban quality perception.

First of all, within the framework of urban identity, it is seen that the level of identification with the city of both survey participants and qualitative study participants is quite high. At this point, it can be said that being born and raised in the same city, getting used to the city even if she/he came to Istanbul later, and being familiar with the city increased this identification. In this sense, it would not be wrong to say that a significant majority of the participants of this study see the city as a part of their identity and have an emotional bond with the city.

It is seen that the level of responsibility towards the city, which is another part of the urban identity, is high among the participants of the research. In this sense, it is possible to say that we are faced with a group of young people who are motivated to protect the city in every aspect and will try to prevent any possible damage to the city.

Knowing the city/familiarity factor is the last factor related to the city's identity and is related to the extent to which the historical and architectural monuments and even the institutions of the city are known. It is one of the results of this study that the majority of the participants of this study are familiar and well acquainted with the city.

The expectations of young individuals with these strong perceptions from the city administration are diversified. The first and primary demand is to increase cultural and artistic activities for young people. It is also requested that these activities be either free or inexpensive in a way that students can access them.

This is followed by the demand of local governments to create employment opportunities for young people. Considering the size of both youth unemployment and the unemployment of university graduates in our country, this demand is quite understandable. Thirdly, young people demand direct educational support, various courses, certificates, and vocational training. Increasing and expanding transportation opportunities and making transportation either free or cheap is another demand.

Another demand is to increase the number of free or inexpensive sports fields for young people and to carry out sports activities. Finally, the young people participating in the research want domestic or international trips to be organized. Young people participating in this study have a social distance towards two groups in particular. The first of these is immigrants, which appears in the form of not wanting to be her/his neighbor or living intensely in the districts she/he does not want to go to. Participants develop a social distance, especially towards immigrants who migrated from Syria. The second group is the group that is seen as conservative and religious. It is clear from the face-to-face interviews that the problem here is not whether they are religious or conservative, but the reservation that these groups may interfere with themselves, their individual spaces, and their freedoms in one way or another. Therefore, it can be said here that they do not see any harm in being neighbors with a religious or conservative person if she/he does not interfere with their freedom. However, the situation seems to be a little different when it comes to immigrants.

Finally, the perception of urban quality was tried to be measured in the study. At this point, it was observed that the city plan, safety and livability perceptions of the participants were low and the perception of transportation was partially high. Despite these negative situations, the perception of gain/advantage is interestingly high. Therefore, as a big and crowded city, Istanbul is perceived as an advantageous city due to the opportunities it offers (access to everything, transportation opportunities, the abundance of cultural and artistic activities, etc.) besides the difficulties it creates.



# Chapter 3

## Youth Participation in Local Governments



**Research Report**  
by  
Sema Bayraktar

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# 1. Importance of Internship and Current Situation in Turkey

According to TurkStat's January 2022 Labor Force statistics, the unemployment rate is 11.4%. This rate reaches a much higher figure of 21.6% among the young population, which includes the 15-24 age group. The unemployment rate in this age group is estimated to be 18.4% for men and 27.6% for women.<sup>1</sup> When these rates are compared with OECD averages, it is seen that the situation in Turkey is not encouraging at all (Tolgay&Çakır, 2022). On the other hand, academic studies show that well-designed internships and volunteering initiatives provide a significant advantage for young people to enter the labor market, especially in youth employment (ILO, 2022, p. 240).

One of the questions asked to young people in the field research in the second part of the report is related to internship programs. Accordingly, young people were asked which programs they need in addition to the education they have received in order to get the job they aim for or to improve themselves. According to the answer to this question, internship opportunities have an important place among the programs needed with 14.4%. While the demand for internship opportunities among the 18-20 age group is 53.4%, this rate drops to 24.1% among the 27-29 age group. This confirms the fact that internship opportunities are important for getting a first job. Young people see internships as a means of both gaining experience and making it easier to find a job.

Internship programs are also very important for the institution in which the internship takes place. Donovan (2002) explains why internship programs are important for an institution with four reasons. Accordingly, internship programs offer institutions the opportunity to plan new hires, low-cost temporary labor force, the opportunity to build relationships with academic in-stitutions, and learning experiences for both trainees and "regular employees". Recognizing the importance of combining theory and practice, many educational institutions have adopted the internship tool as part of the students' compulsory program. According to Donovan (2006), who discusses the importance of internship programs in more detail, trainees bring new ideas to institutions, internship programs can be considered as a kind of trial period for both the institu-tion and the trainee, internships have a positive place in the trainee's resume in terms of the next job search process, internships in public institutions provide trainees with important expe-rience in public service. The same study compared internship programs by state in the US and found that, unfortunately, despite all these benefits, in a typical internship program, very few trainees are paid, trainees' mentors receive no special training, and there is no monitoring and evaluation of trainees' contributions or whether they remain within the public institution.

<sup>1</sup> TurkStat Labor Force Statistics, January 2022, <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Isgucu-Istatistikleri-Ocak-2022-45644>

Although there are some international studies investigating the importance of internship in these different perspectives (Wheeland C.M. and Palus C.K.; 2010, Phakathi, 2010; Mkhize, 2019; Mohlamme, 2019), there are only two studies in Turkey: Bostancı S., in two studies conducted in 2010 and 2013 using different samples, tried to determine the importance of the internship gain of urban and regional planning students doing internship in municipalities and the problems related to the development of the internship program. The results of the study shows that urban planning students' knowledge has increased and their professional awareness has been positively affected by the internship process. On the other hand, the trainees were neither able to observe nor participate in the decision-making processes in local governments during the internship process.

There are two national internship programs in Turkey. One is the National Internship Program (NIP), established by the Presidential Human Resources Office to ensure that young people benefit from internship opportunities offered by public and private sector organizations. The most important contribution of this program, of which many municipalities are also members, is that it provides trainees with insurance and wages. However, according to the very limited information about the program, the program is mainly concerned with the placement of trainees. Apart from the placement, the duration and conditions of the internship may vary depending on the institution, and there is no follow-up on the internship process of the trainees. According to recent announcements, internship periods are being extended to three months. Another national program is the International Local Governments Internship Program (LOCALINTERNational). This program has been organized by the Union of Municipalities of Turkey since 2012. The program is open to international participation and each year around 20 students from different countries participate in the program. In addition to the theoretical trainings, these students participate in field visits and social-cultural activities and are given a certificate of participation at the end of the one-week program. Therefore, this program is designed as a theoretical training and integration of young people from different countries rather than an internship experience. In short, existing national programs seem to be far from serving the purpose yet. In this sense, important institutional work falls on local governments so that they can benefit from the internship tool.

## **2. Internship in Local Government**

In this part of the study, we wanted to closely examine young people's experiences of being trainees in municipalities within the framework of the protocol we made with a local government in order to observe whether the internships in local governments serve their purpose. Our expectation here is that while trying to ensure that young

people are a part of the decision-making mechanisms in local governments through internship opportunities, they will contribute to local governments with their work, knowledge and innovative perspectives. By following the young people who were doing internships in the local government, we tried to determine how much this expectation was realized and the obstacles to its realization.

First of all, we organized Right to the City Workshops in June 2022 in order to theoretically prepare the potential young people who would participate in the internship. We announced these workshops on our social media accounts and tried to encourage young people who participated in the survey in the second part of the study to participate in these workshops by making phone calls. However, both the participation in the workshops and the number of internship requests remained below our expectations.

In the Right to the City Workshops, it was tried to ensure the participation of not only young people but also those responsible for the units in local government where young people would potentially work. The workshops were held in 4 weeks and 8 sessions. Workshop names and trainer information are as follows:<sup>2</sup>

Who Owns the City? (Cemal Salman),

Urbanization, Local Governments and Environment (Atilla Göktürk),

Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (Cankat Tanrıverdi),

Commons in Urban Governance for Citizen Law (Ulaş Bayraktar),

The Possibility of Another Urban Space in COVID 19 (Gül Köksal and Efrin Özyetiş),

The Right to the City as an Intellectual Basis for the Possibility of Another City (Hatice Kurtuluş),

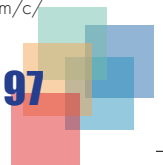
Active Citizenship (Veysi Altıntaş),

Empowerment of Women in Local Governments (Esra Kaya).

Each session of the workshops consisted of a presentation followed by a long discussion. After the end of the workshops, young people who wanted to do an internship did their internships in August, September and October according to their availability. The units where the young people would do their internships were determined by the Internship Unit of the institution trying to match the demand of the relevant young person with the need of the unit.

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<sup>2</sup> Video recordings of the workshops are available on our association youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/c/B%C4%B1RARADADernek>



Interviews were held with the internship students about their internships, either virtually or face-to-face. Interviews were also conducted virtually with the responsible persons in the units where the young people were doing their internships. The questions asked in these interviews can be found in Annex 1.

From the responses to these questions, we can see that internships in local governments provide young people with practice and experience in many areas. First of all, with this experience, young people can improve themselves in terms of communication, understanding the expectations in a workplace and planning their careers. Since they do their internship in a local government, they have the opportunity to get to know people from different social and cultural backgrounds, thus improve their communication skills. Especially those who have the opportunity to observe different units can gain very important advantages in terms of making decisions about their own careers. We observe that trainees spend their internship processes much more efficiently in units where mentors are assigned to them. Because mentors are assigned such a responsibility, they can spare time to both show the trainees the work to be done and try to create space for their different ideas.

On the other hand, the answers to these questions have also revealed that there are many things that need to be done in order for local governments and young people to benefit more from each other. We have tried to categorize these in three categories: what to do during the preparation for the internship, what to do during the internship process and what to do after the internship.

## 2.1. Preparation for the Internship

We can divide young people who want to do internship in local governments into two categories: Those who are required to do internship by the universities they are affiliated with and those who want to do internship voluntarily. These two groups of young people may differ in terms of expectations, motivation and relationships. Of the five young people who did internships within the scope of our project, only one did a compulsory internship, while the other four did voluntary internships.

Young people who will do their internship voluntarily have the chance to choose in which department they will do their internship. However, this is also limited by the capacity of the institution –in this case, capacity of the units of the municipality. In our case, although the unit dealing with volunteers tried to place young people in their units according to their demands and fields of study, not every young person was able to do an internship in the department of their choice due to the

capacity constraints of the units. Unfortunately, the unit where the young people doing compulsory internship would do their internship was predetermined by the school/department they were affiliated with, and they were not allowed to do internship in a different unit even if they had done internship in that unit before. In this sense, there was a lack of motivation due to not being directed to the desired units even before the internship started.

Overcoming this lack of motivation may partly be possible by trying to close the gap between expectations and realizations before the internship begins. This, in fact, requires that the young person who will do an internship in a local government should be informed in advance about how that local government works, its units and functions. Although local governments publish information on these issues on their web pages or prepare some orientation programs for the internship applicants, this information is not sufficient to prepare the young person for the internship or the young person can only access this information after the internship starts. One of the important points we observed is that these informative meetings should be held before the internship. Therefore, guidelines giving information about the units, the content of each internship, what will be learned from the internships, what responsibilities the participants can take, and what is expected of them should be prepared in general or per unit and shared with the trainees before the internship. Thus, if trainees can learn in advance what they will learn and what responsibilities they will take on in the unit where they will do their internship, and if they can decide which unit they want to do their internship in the light of this information by comparing their own expectations with the expectations and opportunities offered by the unit, there will undoubtedly be less lack of motivation and disappointment for both the institution and the individual.

In addition, unit employees should be informed about how to communicate with trainees during these preparatory activities. First of all, even though the trainee is an adult, since he/she will be in the unit temporarily, he/she should not be expected to see himself/herself as equal to the unit staff and to be comfortable in communication, and steps may need to be taken to encourage the trainee in this regard. For this reason, the personnel in the units where internships will be carried out should be trained or informed about the importance of trainees and the internship system before the internship starts.

Finally, in this section, it should be noted that we have observed that it is necessary to examine whether the unit where the internship will take place is suitable for the internship program in advance. In the most ideal situation, the most productive internship environments will undoubtedly be provided by units that have achieved a certain systematization. We are talking about units that are adequately staffed,

where work is carried out according to a plan and where the impact and value of that work can be measured. Only units of this capacity will develop the time and activities to deal with the trainees and will be able to respond to new suggestions in a calm manner. This will maximize the benefit to both the trainee and the unit. For example, the Canadian “Municipal Internship Program” is a program that seeks to create opportunities for recent high school graduates to gain first-hand practical experience and training in municipal administration, finance/accounting or land use planning. This program has very clear eligibility criteria for municipalities and planning services agencies interested in hosting a trainee. Accordingly, municipalities selected to host a trainee must have a customized work plan. This plan defines the projects the trainee will work on, the expectations for the completion of the internship and outlines the competencies and skills to be gained. According to the same program, in addition to the work plan, the local government must meet certain requirements to apply for this program. Accordingly, the local government should demonstrate that it has the capacity to train trainees (it can also partner with other institutions to do so), be able to dedicate time and resources (both financial and personnel) to support a trainee, aim to help the trainee to pursue a career in local government, appoint an effective mentor with professional, supervisory and mentoring skills, and have a qualified back-up mentor for the trainee in case the mentor is unavailable (e.g. vacation or leaving the institution).<sup>3</sup>

## 2.2. During the Internship

In fact, with a well-designed internship preparation process, it may be possible to prevent or minimize the problems that may arise during the internship. However, we can still mention some important issues that should be taken care of during the internship.

First and foremost is again communication. In terms of communication, there are responsibilities for both the trainee, the unit and the institution. First of all, the unit should inform the trainee about the works and responsibilities to be carried out and, if necessary, should be able to provide training on these issues. Deficiencies should be determined by working together on the works done, and if any, these deficiencies should be eliminated, so that the training process should be tried to be completed through practice. Secondly, a “point/person” should be determined within the unit where the trainee can talk about the problems she/he is facing and it should be ensured that the trainee is aware of its existence. The trainee should be encouraged to communicate with this point/person; and his/her opinions, suggestions and criticisms should be taken into account. On the

<sup>3</sup> Alberta, Municipal Internship Program, <https://www.alberta.ca/municipal-internship-program-host-municipalities-and-organizations.aspx>

other hand, the trainee should also be open to the communication. The trainee should know that the units may not notice the problems experienced by her/him in their busy pace, so it is best to ask for help directly from the person they are affiliated with when necessary. Unfortunately, in our sample, we observed that trainees, when they had a problem, preferred to accept rather than try to change it with learned helplessness. Finally, the institution should create mechanisms for the trainee and the unit to express their criticisms and demands, and inform them about these mechanisms.

Another issue to be considered during the internship is to ensure that the trainee is seen not only as a person who will support the existing unit, but also as a person who will learn from the institution and reflect his/her own perspective to the unit. Therefore, no matter how intense the work is, it must be remembered that the priority is the participation and learning of the trainee. Learning should be in theory (observation-reading) as well as in practice (action), and trainees should try to participate as much as possible in activities and fieldwork, and should be given the initiative over time. In terms of participating in more fieldwork, we think that planning internship programs to take part in project studies conducted with Municipality-NGO-Company collaborations would be a good solution. For example, the Local Government Academy (LGA), an independent, non-profit, non-partisan organization in the USA, provides internship opportunities to graduate and undergraduate students who want to work on real problems that society faces every day with its 'Municipal Internship Program'. In this program, both students and municipalities apply to LGA. Local municipalities propose projects they want to undertake during the internship period in their application processes, and students take part in these projects for a fee according to their interests. Therefore, students are guaranteed to work in the field and their responsibilities are determined from the very beginning.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, we need to talk about the importance of monitoring the internship process and dynamically planning it accordingly. If the internship process of the trainee is followed closely, the rotation of the trainee to different units should be considered by taking into consideration the criteria such as harmony, happiness and consumption of what can be learned in the internship place. In this way, experiences that may start negatively can turn positive, or what can be learned by rotating between different units can be increased synergistically by observing the relationships. In short, we believe that rotating the internship process will increase the benefits received. Of course, it should be noted that the duration of the internship should be appropriate for a rotation to take place here.

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<sup>4</sup> Local Government Academy, Municipal Internship Program, <https://localgovernmentacademy.org/mip/students/#students>

## 2.3. After the Internship

After the internship, it is necessary to meet with the trainees and the responsible people of the unit that hosts the trainees and try to find out what the problems are and whether the expectations are met. As a matter of fact, this report has emerged as the product of such an effort. Such a follow-up will undoubtedly allow for the next internship attempt to take place in much better conditions, for the employees in the unit to improve themselves and for the trainees to feel that they are valued.

Such a monitoring process can also ensure that individuals who can be active for the unit are recruited as permanent employees. As we have already emphasized at the beginning, the internship is like a trial period that does not create pressure on both sides. If there are positive impressions on both sides of the internship experience, the institution should undoubtedly provide the necessary environment to retain this highly motivated and experienced person.

Another issue that emerged in this study is that the duration and timing of the internship is extremely important. The result of all the interviews is that the summer internship will not be very productive since there is not much work in the summer period in local governments. For this reason, it is very beneficial to do internships after September. On the other hand, it has been revealed that the internship period should be at least 2-3 months in order to establish a relationship of trust that will enable communication and for the trainee to participate in a sufficient number of activities. If the trainee can only do an internship 2-3 days a week, this two-month period should be extended to 4-6 months.

## 3. Conclusion

In our country, suitable conditions could not be created for local governments to benefit from the internship process. Currently, local governments are trying to make room for young people who want to do internships within their own possibilities, or rather their impossibilities, but these internship experiences are far from being useful within many limitations.

Local governments should take the organization of internship programs at least as seriously as their employment policies. Internship programs should actually be part of the employment program. The internship acceptance process should be carried out like the recruitment process and it should not be overlooked that trainees are potential regular employees. On the other hand, it should not be thought that a trainee is in the same pot with a permanent



employee. The trainee comes to the institution where she/he works to observe both the practices and the decision-making processes and to be a part of them. But she/he is expected to look critically at these processes with her/his own vision and to contribute with her/his innovative ideas. In other words, it should not be considered as “permanent cheap labor”. On the contrary, the institution should take measures to encourage the person who contributes to the institution to join the team. In other words, the internship process should be seen as a kind of trial process that does not create any pressure for both the person and the institution. If the experience is evaluated positively by both parties at the end of the process, the necessary mechanisms should be established for the trainee to be a permanent employee of the institution. This can be possible by closely monitoring and evaluating the internship process.

However, it is extremely important that both the person and the institution get prepared for this process besides the follow-up and evaluation of the internship process. First of all, the unit where the internship will be done should be chosen in accordance with the education and interests of the trainee. For this reason, local governments should open not only certain support units but also units and projects where decision-making processes are managed to internship programs. In order to ensure maximum benefit to the trainee, internship programs can be formulated on the basis of a project to be carried out by the local government or/and with a partner, not on a unit basis, as in the example of the Local Government Academy (LGA) given above. In addition, it is extremely important for the trainee to obtain information about the unit or project that she/he will take part in before starting the internship and to make her/his choice accordingly, as well as the fact that the unit that will host the trainee has sufficient capacity and that a mentor can be assigned to the trainee within the unit. Again, the duration of the internship should be at least two months and the timing should be such that the trainee is engaged in maximum action and practice. If the internship program is long enough, rotation between different units may increase the efficiency of the program, but it is not that essential if other conditions are already met. Finally, despite all these preparations, it is also very important to identify a “person/unit” that the trainee can consult with regarding problems that may arise.

Since local governments are still in the development stage regarding the institutionalization of the units and they are forced to work with insufficient personnel for various reasons, they cannot fulfill the conditions mentioned above and cannot get sufficient efficiency from the internship programs. For this reason, there is a significant benefit in partnering with one or more academic institutions and non-profit organizations when conducting internship programs, not only in terms of education, but also in terms of planning and

evaluation of the internship. In addition, it would be much more appropriate to evaluate internship programs by independent institutions.

## **ANNEX 1**

### Questions for the young person to measure the efficiency of the internship in the municipality:

In what ways did the internship meet your expectations and career goals?

Can you give specific examples of tasks and responsibilities that were particularly meaningful or challenging during the internship?

What did you find most valuable about your mentor's guidance and support during the internship?

Were you able to build meaningful relationships with other employees during your internship?

In what ways did the internship help you learn and gain experience professionally?

Can you think of any specific skills or experiences you gained during the internship that you believe will be valuable for your future career?

Was the internship an overall positive experience?

What, if anything, could have been done to make the internship a more positive experience?

Do you have any suggestions for improving the internship program in the future?

If you were working in the same department as a staff member and not as a trainee, what would be your contribution to the institution you work for / in which area would you make improvements?

What you would like to add?

### Questions for the young person to measure the efficiency of the internship in the municipality:

What specific goals and objectives were set for the trainee at the beginning of the internship?

How did the trainee progress towards achieving these goals and objectives?

What specific tasks and responsibilities were assigned to the trainee during the internship?

How did the trainee fulfill these tasks and responsibilities?

Did the trainee receive adequate guidance and support?

Did the trainee show any strengths or areas for improvement during the internship?

How did the trainee's performance compare to other trainees or employees in similar roles?

Do you have any suggestions for improving the internship program in the future?

What you would like to add?

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