

Urban Development of Komotini: Mapping of Multiculturalism and Social Segregation of the Urban Area

Chilal MECHMET^{1,2}

Introduction Multiculturalism

The term of multiculturalism states that different social groups with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds coexist in a society and that these groups manage to live together. The first time this term is used in the U.S.A, Australia, England and Canada. Unfortunately, in all the heated discussion around the term no clear definition of the concept has yet emerged. Rosado (1996) states that: *“Multiculturalism is a system of beliefs and behaviors that recognizes and respects the presence of all diverse groups in an organization or society, acknowledges and values their socio-cultural differences, and encourages and enables their continued contribution within an inclusive cultural context which empowers all within the organization or society”*.

In European countries, the phenomenon of multiculturalism was developed long before Greece, our country as an immigrant country proudly declared the homogeneity and the Orthodox Christian identity by the great majority of the population. But in the case of Thrace, it seems that those not correspond fully with

reality. An important starting point of the concept of multiculturalism in Greece is considered the establishment of a “fairness” and “egalitarianism” in the minority in Thrace in 1991 by the then government.¹

Social segregation

In this paper the term of segregation refers where the members of a minority group are not evenly distributed entirely to the rest of population in the living space. Also, the concept of segregation is an institutionalized form of social distance, which translates into a spatial removal. Thus, the segregation is defined as “an isolated social group or an individual’s racial, religious, cultural, social (gender discrimination) or other reasons.”²

Finally, we can talk about segregation by extension each group is isolated. Therefore, the segregation involves the concept of exclusion, as a cause, but also its direct effect.³

¹ Ntonti, 2007, Chousein, 2005, p. 120

³ Saputzi, 2008

² Saputzi, 2008

¹Department of Planning and Regional Development, University of Thessaly, Greece;

²Department of Environmental Engineering, Democritus University of Thrace, Greece

These concepts were analyzed enable us to understand the criteria for selection of housing sites from various social groups. The desire of the members of the minority group to maintain their collective identity or lifestyle is an important cause of spatial concentration.

Minority

The diversity in every human society is a fact. In almost every community is identified a variety of ideologies - national, political, religious-many languages, multiple cultures and cultural trends. This situation creates de facto "majorities" and minorities.

The lack of definition for the term 'minority' has been a problem in international relations for a long time. There have been different definitions for this term. In the interwar era, the Permanent Court of International Justice (PCIJ) in its advisory opinion for the issue related with the emigration of Greco-Bulgarian communities defined the term minority as:

"...a group of persons living in a given country or locality having a race, religion, language, and tradition in a sentiment of solidarity, with a view to preserving their traditions, maintaining their form of worship, ensuring the instruction and upbringing of their children in accordance with the spirit and traditions of their race and mutually assisting one another".

Later, for the definition of minority was an attempt by the UN Subcommittee, which held that the term minority *"includes only those non-dominant groups of population who have and want to maintain ethnic, religious or linguistic traditions or characteristics distinct from those of other population".* Moreover, *"these minorities should be formed by several people to develop such characteristics and to show respect to the laws of the State whose are citizens".*⁴

However, the subcommittee's definition seemed more stringent as it introduces the criterion of a non-dominant position of the group and the number of its members, which should be such as to enable them to develop specific characteristics.

After the proposals were received negative reviews from the Commission on Human Rights, Professor Capotorti suggests in his report to the UN subcommittee for minorities be considered as a minority: *"A group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a State, in a non-dominant position, whose members*

*-being nationals of the State- possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language".*⁵

Taking account of the fluidity of the concept of minority, Capotorti's definition appears acceptable.

Also, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, in 1993, made an effort to define the term of minority. Thus, was executed an Additional Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. According to this Additional Protocol, national minority is defined as a group of persons in a state residing on the territory of that state and being citizens of that state. They maintain longstanding, firm and lasting ties with that state. They display different ethnic, religious, cultural or linguistic characteristics. They are smaller in number than the rest of the population of that state but they are sufficiently representative. They are determined to preserve together which constitutes their common identity, including their culture, their traditions, their religion or their language.⁶

Demographics of the Study Area

The city of Komotini is the capital of the prefecture of Rrodope and seat of the Eastern Macedonia and Thrace and the seat of the Democritus University of Thrace. After the liberation of Thrace, the Municipality of Komotini there is by the Ottoman regime division. At this point, was considered that an analysis of the evolution of population of the city it necessary to do.

In this analysis used information from 1920, which Komotini was incorporated in the State of Greece until the last census in 2001 by the Hellenic Statistical Authority.

Regarding the Municipal district of Komotini, the data of population includes the settlements of Ifante, Ifestos, Paradimi, Mesohori, Mikro and Megalo Kranobounio. In the census of 1920 the residents in the Municipal district of Komotini comprises 21.244 as in the census of 1991 the residents numbered 40.522. The population growth in decades of 1920-1928, 1928-1940, 1961-1971, 1971-1981, 1981-1991 and 1991-2001 can be characterized ascending, the decades of 1940-51 descending and the decades of 1951-61 the population is static (Table 1).

The increase of the population of the city in the in-

⁴ Chousein, 2005.

⁵ Chousein, 2005.

⁶ Prentoulis, 2010.

Table 1. The evolution of population of the municipal district of komotini in 1920-2001

Population of the census by Hellenic Statistical Authority									
	1920	1928	1940	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
The municipal District of Komotini	21.294	31.551	33.224	31.893	31.845	32.219	37.487	39.927	46.586
Years		1920	1928	1940	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991
		1928	1940	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
Change of population	-	48.17%	18.85	24.9	-0.15	1.17	6.11	15.36	5.99

Source: Koutsoukos, 2000, Hellenic Statistical Authority.

terwar period is caused to the influx of refugees and their installation. It is observed that the population of the city has soared in the period 1920-1928, as the number of appeals before 1922 amounted at 808 people and after 1922 to 9.937 people.

Furthermore, this increase is due to the establishment of populations which were displaced by the Bulgarian lands to Thrace and a part of them were settled in Komotini in decades of 1908-1913 and 1913-1919.⁷

In the period of 1928-1940 there was a smooth demographic transition and progress. As for the period 1940-1951 the population decline is due to the Bulgarian and German occupation but also in removal of the Israeli Community of Komotini with 819 members. The decade of 1951-1961 was characterized from a demographic stability with minimal reduction. Finally, in 1991-2001 observes a significant increase in population of the city, which is due to the removal and installation of the population of rural settlements in the area.

Population Synthesis

In this part is presented the population synthesis of the Muslim Minority of Western Thrace. Specifically, as population we referred the population which resides in Rrodope and in the Municipality of Komotini. In Rrodope is appeared that there most Muslims inha-

bitant compared with the others prefectures of Thrace (Table 2). In the city of Komotini, the population of Muslim's (55%) is about 10% more than the Christian population (45%), this is due to higher rates of natural increase that Christians. Almost the half of population belongs to this, there is no legitimate census after the 1951 (the minority numbered 105.092 members) because of the political factors of the Greek government. So, in the following tables showed the data of population of the minority at prefecture level which provided by various research tasks.

Also, beyond the Muslim minority in Komotini such as was mentioned before there were whole neighborhoods of Jews and Armenians were inhabited by Jewish and Armenian population. These data were presented by the Turkish side to the Conference of Lausanne, in 1922-1923 (Table 3).

The Muslim minority of Western Thrace constitutes as mentioned before, a racially and linguistically mixed population layer. The racial composition is basically a triple origin. In particular, in the prefecture of Rrodope as presented the population of Turkish is higher than other ethnic groups because the Turks and Greeks are locals of the district, as regards the population of Pomaks in Rhodope is sediment population from the mountains of Bulgaria.

Table 2. Population synthesis of minority of western thrace in 1923

Ethnic groups	Prefecture of Rrodope	Prefecture of Ksanthi	Prefecture of Evros	Thrace
Turks	50.000	30.328	10.571	90.899
Pomaks	8.000	14.824	675	23.499
Roma	1.500	500	505	2.505
Total	59.500	45.652	11.751	116.903

Source: Kottakis, 2000.

⁷ Koutsoukos, 2000.

Table 3. The population of western thrace presented by Ismet İnönü in the Lausanne Conference

Spatial Unit	Armenians	Turks	Greeks	Jews	Bulgarians
Komotini	360	59.967	8.834	1.007	9.997
Ksanthi	114	42.671	8.728	114	552
Aleksandroupoli	449	11.744	4.800	253	10.227
Sufli	-	14.736	11.542	-	5.490

Source: Osmanlı Belgelerinde Batı Trakya, 2009.

The multicultural character of Komotini through the historical evolution

It is important to be mentioned the peculiarity that it makes the city of Komotini interesting and dynamic. The population of Komotini constitutes a society of unique complexity and specificity. This is due to the particular historical evolution of the area. This factor combined with the location of the city, the proximity to other countries, the multiple historical layers and the deliberate policies or even spontaneous developments have created a social -political- religious mixture of Turkish, Christians, Muslims, Pomaks, Gypsies. They are the most significant cultural groups that live and reside in Komotini.

But there are other groups: These are the groups of the Jews and Armenians, who even in small number, they continue to be residents of Komotini for many years. Following this work takes ethnic and multicultural analysis of these groups.

Policies toward the Muslim Minority of Western Thrace

The Muslim Minority of Western Thrace is the only minority within Greek territory that the Greek State recognizes officially.

The presentation of the current Muslim minority of Thrace is the result of the rules of the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923 which established the compulsory exchange of population between Greece and Turkey, with the exception of Muslim Turks of Western Thrace and Greek Christians of Istanbul. The criterion of population exchange was religion and the definition of exchangeable population as non-minority was done with religious terms.

The minority of Western Thrace was defined as Muslim independently of race which belong or the language they speak for its members. The majority of the population belongs to the religion of Islam, the use of Islamism has been a key feature and ensured the particularities of this society. Concerning, the population of minority of Thrace living in Komotini, Turkish was for-

med to 57.60%, Pomaks 26.0% and Gypsies 16.05%. In the Rhodope prefecture and the city of Komotini was settled the most of the Muslim minority population.⁸

The total population of the minority of Muslim of Western Thrace is about 103.000, the population coexists over 87 years in peace with the Christians of Greek Thrace. After the Treaty of Lausanne from 1923 to 1950 according to the researchers, Greece maintained with dignity the terms of contract to protect the minority, but after 1955 the conditions for the minority had changed, from then governments started to implement restrictive policies on minority and for about 50 years, the members of the minority were in bad condition because of the changes and violations of human rights, had completely changed their way of life.⁹

The main problem that it caused tension was the state policy was implemented which provided for the removal of Greek nationality by members of the minority of Muslim. The removal was in accordance with No. 19 of Law 3370/1955, and was aimed at people with Greek nationality with non Greek ethnic origin, as a result, they left from Greece with the intention of not coming back again. This provision has caused fury and reactions to a large extent in the Muslim population. From 1955 to 1998, removal of citizenship number reached 46.638.¹⁰

The minority is not only facing identity problems. In the daily life, they encountered many obstacles. The citizens of the minority-who the most of them were farmers-, they could not to obtain licenses in order to use tractors for agricultural purposes, could not get hunting license and could not to be employed in the public sector (excepting the teachers of minority). In addition, the few graduates of the higher faculties from the universities of Greece or Turkey, they met many bureaucratic problems in order to make a work permit.¹¹

⁸ Chousein, 2005

¹⁰ Lalenis et al., 2010.

⁹ Chousein, 2005, Salim Gökçen

¹¹ Lalenis et al., 2010.

According to rights to acquire the real estate, the minority encountered many bureaucratic obstacles. The law 1366/1938 posed restrictions to the population of minority about the land purchases. For example, they could not to building new structures or rebuilding the old houses and mosques. One more basic problem was the government's exercise of eminent domain to acquire the property of minority, mainly bought lands of the agricultural productivity.¹²

However in 90s, after many attempts and mass mobilizations of Muslim Turks, in the era of globalization, the political position of the Greek government differs against the Muslim minority. Of course, until this change, those of the minority members participated in demonstrations and defended their rights were punished by the state. Some of them were imprisoned and some were deported from Greece for many years.

The new policy for the minority is more objective and democratic for all Thracians. This approach is now the reference point for the progress of the Muslim minority. Today, in the decade of 2000 the minority is moving "freely", growing secular, socially, the members are increasingly educated, studying, graduating from Universities and trying to enforce the same positions with fellow Christians.

Urban area in Komotini

Today, the city of Komotini presents economic development, characterized by an image of urban modernization and meets the highest construction activity on Greek territory. The image of the city center and in most districts has changed very rapidly. The specific political of reorganization and gentrification as well as the private initiative in sector reconstruction influenced the image of urban area. Despite all the above changes, the city continues to present strong peculiarity due to the social geography, also the configuration of the residential development based on the diversity of its residents. At this point it is appropriate to analyze the urban characteristics.

The Multicultural Residents and Districts of Komotini

Muslim Turks

For Muslims in plain of Rrodope there is no doubt that the population is left over from the exchange of populations according to the Lausanne Treaty of 1923. Also, is considered that the population migrated during the Turkish occupation and in the period of Asian

destruction which the area was in the possession or under the influence of the Bulgarians. The poor Muslim Turks resorted in the fertile plains of Rrodope and became employees of aghas (ağa), who abounded in the region.

So these populations by passing the years were settlers and built entire villages or strengthened other smaller settlements. As mentioned before, this ethnic group consist the largest segment of the population of the minority of Western Thrace and especially the prefecture of Rrodope. The years of living in Western Thrace is estimated to be over 500 years.

The natives of Muslim Turks of Gkioumoultzina (Komotini) in the years of Ottoman occupation with the least Christian population lived in the city center and get involved in trade and agriculture. The first urban concentration of this population is in the city center, at Serdar district (Serdar Mahallesi) and Tabakhane district (Tabakhane Mahallesi). These districts were the basic locations for Muslim Turks during the Ottoman Empire. With the passing of time the new population moves to north and east of the center because the administrative offices and the Christian population settled in the area. After the decade of 1967, one part of the population of Turkish districts left the area and migrated to Turkey. Now, the former Muslim neighborhoods are inhabited by a few locals of Turks and many of Orthodox Christians.

Moreover, this ethnic group lived in characteristic neighborhoods that the houses with high walls and narrow streets prove the existence of Muslims (Yeni Mahallesi, Yenice Mahallesi) which are north and around of the town center (Fig. 1). The population which lived in the northern districts (Mastanli and Kir Mahallesi) of the city - especially those who came and were settled from Bulgaria-mostly were occupied with agricultural crops (e.g cotton, tobacco) and farming. These districts mainly consist from illegal buildings because of unplanned construction, also, the public open spaces are absent in neighborhoods.

Pomaks

Pomaks constitutes a community who language is a Bulgarian dialect, consisting of Greek, Turkish and Slavic words. Regarding to national identification there are three different theories about it. Their origin is disputed by Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey. The Pomaks are different from those of Turks in national terms, Islam is the only common denominator. Specifically, the Pomaks are the descendants of the indigenous community of Thracians who latterly were hellenised and con-

¹² Chousein, 2005.

verted to Christians, and eventually were converted to Islam violently under the Ottoman Empire.¹³

In reference to the traditional, rural and pious religious character, occupy a marginal position than Turks. Traditionally, Pomaks followed a very isolated way of life which is modeled on the Islamic faith. Their main economic activity is agriculture (tobacco). The conservative society and cognate solidarity are some of the characteristics of this target group, and nowadays, it is almost impossible to encounter a society like this. But, in a Greek society so strict religious faith, lifestyle, combined with the low level of education have made the Pomaks until today to remain isolated and uneducated. The Pomaks of Komotini are people who came after 1970 from the mountain villages of the Rhodope and Evros and were settled in the north eastern suburbs. The district of Pomaks is located eastern of city. It is the region with a strong trend towards illegal building. The district is “cut off” from other Muslim neighborhoods due to the breed and different way of life of its inhabitants. The houses do not differ from those of Turkish and, because of illegal building there are not the adequate infrastructures, specifically, the educational units, open spaces and places of worship are still missing from this Muslim district.

Roma (Gypsies)

Roma there are in Thrace from the 11th century. The features of their language and religious traditions, suggest that after settled in Thrace embraced to Christianity and were under the influence of Greek language and culture. Today, the Roma in Thrace are Muslims, unlike those living in other places of Greece. It is one of the minority groups who encountered extreme expressions of economic and cultural exclusion. Theirs oral and musical culture is stronger and more consistent form of cultural self-expression and empowerment because of nomadism, poverty and low educational level.

The community of Gypsies is the poorest ethnic group, they often survive through begging or commerce. Their communities are usually located on the outskirts of large cities or in small, remote villages. The biggest part of the population of Gypsy in Komotini resides in the settlement of Ifaistos, while a small part of them resides southeast in the city of Komotini, in an illegally area. Their houses are made of sheets and wood, have recently started to build houses from concrete material.¹⁴

Greeks from the Formerly Soviet Union

Greeks from the formerly Soviet Union have the

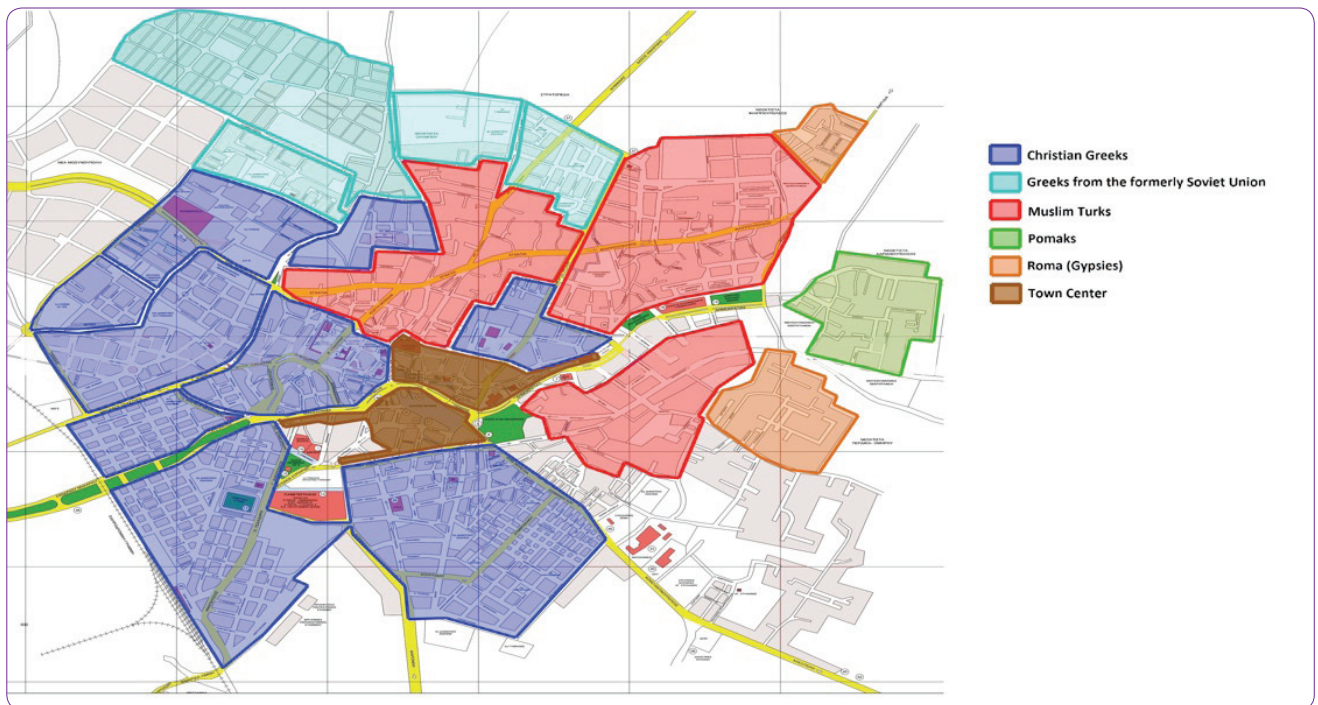


Figure 1. Mapping of multicultural districts of Komotini.

¹³ Chasapis, 2007.

¹⁴ Zaimakis, 2005, Kaprani, 2005.

same nationality as the Greeks living in Greece, but we have a different Greek Culture because were influenced from their previous habitant places. The Greek state adopted for these people the word of Greek-Pontians resettlers, meaning who were repatriated or returning back to their country of nostalgia.¹⁵

Most of the immigrants from the former Soviet Union arrived in Greece during the period from 1990 to 1993. They mostly come from Georgia, Kazakhstan, Russia, Armenia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and in smaller numbers from other countries. Only 15.000 Greek-Pontians resettlers registered from the Greek Rehabilitation Institute of Homogeneous Greek, which is resided them in the housing clusters in Thrace. The members of this ethnic group come from Georgia, Kazakhstan, Russia and they encountered great difficulties because non-use of Greek language and low level of education. The bulk of this population lives in refugee region of EKTENEPOL, few of them live in central locations. The district is located in the northwest of the city, it is an area for six thousand houses and occupies an area of 1.400 acres. The houses consist of two-or three-storey with similar architecture to each other. The area is characterized by high quality urban and architectural environment, with full technical and social infrastructure. The individual residential complexes are connected by web walkways, which is the backbone of the region. In the area there are many public open spaces.

Jews of Komotini

The presentation of Jews was randomly in Komotini. Due to lack of evidence for the existence of Jews in Thrace before the 16th century did not know if there was a Jewish community in Byzantine times. The first appearance of Jews in the city of Komotini is just after the conquest by the Ottoman Empire around 1483. Jews fleeing from Iberia took refuge in the Ottoman Empire, so settled in many cities, the one of these was the Komotini. They were formed in a Spanish-speaking Sephardic Jewish community.¹⁶

Komotini, due to geographical localization consisted major commercial and transportation hub at the time, it played an important role in the establishment of the Jewish population, the Ottomans would benefit from the activities which undertaken by the Jews. They were involved on the sector of textiles as apparel suppliers in the Ottoman troops. The Jews in the 17th century continued their activities in the sector of textiles, both wool and silk, but the interest of some of them gra-

dually moved to the sector of tobacco, since that was allowed the free consumption of it then began to be imported in bulk and legally in the Empire. The Jews were renowned as tobacco merchants in Komotini.

This district, known as “evraigia” presents an introvert in spatial organization. Main features of this area are the defensive layout of housing, sheltered and controlled access to the inside and uncleanliness, which conducive poverty and lack of space. The two Jewish neighborhoods while abutting were considerably different. The outside area from the castle was the residential area of higher income classes while the area in the castle was inhabited of traditional and low income classes.

After 1920, once Thrace was included in the trunk of Greek Jews who lived in Komotini were consisted officially the Jewish community of Komotini, until 1941 just before the city was occupied by German troops, the concerns began for the Jewish community. With the entrance of the Bulgarian army in Komotini, began to run the plans of German which had planned the end of the Jews. Many of the Jews of Komotini not escaped the arrest and people who escaped from this, they were hidden or did not in the town on that fateful night. Officially, the Jewish community of Komotini disbanded in 958 and had remained only 22 people.¹⁷

Armenians of Komotini

Firstly, the Armenians were appeared during the decade of 1881-1893 in Thrace.¹⁸ The presentation of Armenians in Komotini is in mid 18th century. Armenians who were settled in the Ottoman Empire were classified as “natives” of the Armenian community. Others, who came between the era of the Balkan Wars until the end of World War II in 1918, they were established as the first Armenian refugees, and they marked “giampatzides” (foreigners). After 1945 members of the Armenian community migrated to the then Soviet Republic of Armenia and Armenians in Komotini many were abandoned the city after the tragic decade of 1940-1949 searching for a better life in other cities-countries.¹⁹

Their houses are built with one storey and two-storey, some of them had courtyards which were lapped by high walls. With the installation of Armenian refugees in the district a cultural life in this region is flourished. All houses of refugee are organized in the period 1928-1930 and then the city for a first time

¹⁵ Chasapis, 2007.

¹⁶ Papastratis, 2010.

¹⁷ Papastratis, 2007.

¹⁹ Chatzopoulos, 2009.

¹⁸ Chatzopoulos, 2009.

confronted with the idea of planned structuring. The area is developed with modern structures; the large number of public spaces in the area shows the planned structuring of the region.

Land Uses

Regarding the land use prevailing in the city, the habitation collects a larger proportion of total use. Other uses are Trade (wholesale-warehouses), services (offices-management-banks), tourism-entertainment, manufacturing, public areas, education and sport. In the center, which is the historic commercial center, also, around the main square there are commercial activities, recreation and services. In addition, we move away from the center, we meet mixed uses of commercial and residential while in neighborhoods we have a pure residential with scattered shops mainly commodity (dairies, bread shops, grocery stores) (Fig. 2). There are few open spaces in the center with little or no in neighborhoods, exactly where needed. At the northeast districts which inhabited by the Muslim Turks, be observed that public areas and green spaces (playgrounds, parks, squares) absent because of out of city plan construction.

West of the city center in EKTENEPOL, which is the Greek-Pontians neighborhood there is a shopping mall Kosmopolis park that was built to from 2003. Its pre-

sentation in the district was an important factor for the upgrade and development of the region.

In most cities, like in Komotini the construction activity, is observed at the entrances and exits. The industry and manufacturing is concentrated along the entrances to the city of Xanthi and Alexandroupolis. Isolated from the town, two major functions are sited few kilometers of the city. These functions are the industrial area and campus. The organic connection with the city is a major problem. The Industrial Area of Komotini is located near the road Komotini - Alexanropolis, southeast of Komotini is about 12 kilometers from the city center. However, the industrial area has absorbed the industry, the result that there are not the disturbing uses within the city.

The City Center - The “Old Market” in Komotini

In the center of Komotini concentrated all commercial activities as like happens in most Greek cities. Since the Ottoman occupation in the city center attracts the management services and use of trade. In the central part point the banks of river were erected the first shops-inns, along with outdoor bazaars and several tanneries. In the following years, to be continued to grow in the same area on one side of the river. The shops had their back side to the river because the river had begun to be a source of pollution due to uncont-

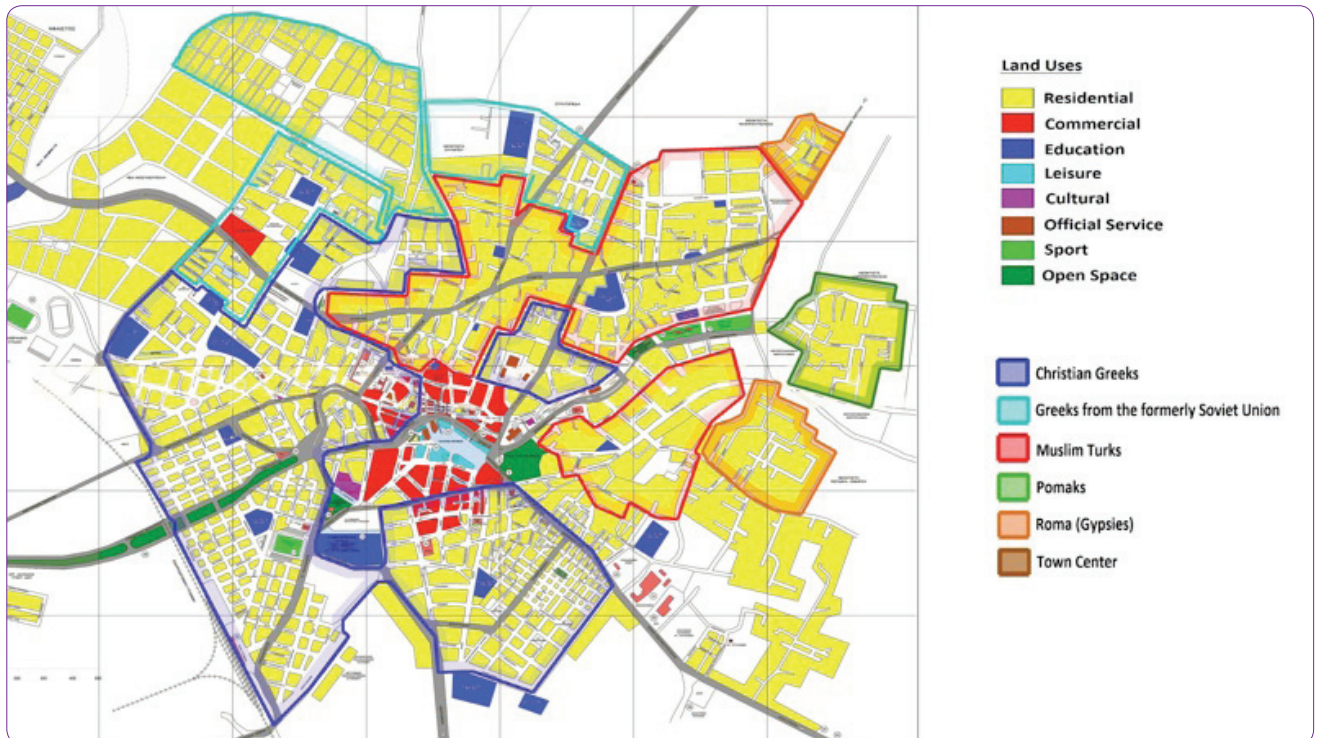


Figure 2. Map of land uses and multicultural districts of Komotini.

rollable rupture of waste of the entire city. Along the road there were scattered shops from one side of the river were only the Christian shops and the other mixed of Muslim, Jewish and Christian.

In 1867 the big fire burns about half of Gkioumoultzina, it opens major wounds to shop owners at the time. Apart from the shopping center burned and several homes in the near neighborhoods. The damaged neighborhoods are redesigned. In this way appears in the irregular town of Komotini a rectangular area with perfect regularity.²⁰

From 1920 and then the market continues to be at the same point of the center. The area is taking place and the administrative, economic and cultural services of the city, as they moved into existing buildings in the center. Also the political authorities make opening new roads while the old roads are covered by asphalt, so that connect the exits with the center of the city, thus facilitating the movement and the development of trade.

During the decades of 1968-1969 for one more time the fires are manifested from the city center. One part of the old market is destroyed in a fire. Today, the city center including the historic commercial center, which is located in the same place, near to Eski Mosque, it is changed and evolved from to 1200. The pedestrian area Venizelos where is located Imaret, this area is the most cosmopolitan market of Komotini, as most shops are consisted of brands and operated by Christian merchants.

The modern Komotini maintains its particular multicultural character with strong references from the past. The small commercial properties in the historic center are climaxed in the urban area in the traditional pedestrian Ermou Street (Fig. 3). In a small area amid the narrow streets small single-storey shops are springing up in area. The traditional cobblestones of Gkioumoultzina are still in this area. Previously the best known shoppers accommodated there, now these little shops are used as coffee shops, tailors, shoes corrections and as cafes.

Multiculturalism and Social Segregation in the Urban Area of Komotini

The Coexistence of Different Cultures

In the city of Komotini be encountered the different cultures, which describe it, as a multicultural society. The coexistence of different cultures -ethnic- religious

-groups in the urban area of the city and the development of partnerships, cohabitation, solidarity affect smoothly the social needs of these groups. The freedom of expression, equality and tolerance help the coexistence of these cultural groups within the same society on equal terms.

These five different cultural groups with different cultures, mentalities and different customs shape the cultural character of Komotini. In particular, the development of different cultural and social activities in each region is mainly done with the participation of members of the same group. One example is the organization of local cultural events and festivals in the city which are organized from the population of minority, of course, always with the support of local authorities. Could the organization be made by particular groups does not exclude the participation of others. The groups of Greek-Pontians resettlers, Muslim Turks and Orthodox Christians are the most active groups of the society which organize many social and cultural events. The ability and the right to create cultural and educational institutions in each group contribute to the existence of the element of multiculturalism in the city.

Results

Follows from the analysis was able to define the phenomenon of social segregation is a phenomenon due to the existence of the element of multicultural population of Komotini. Each ethnic group concentrated in a particular part of town. The fact that every ethnic group is inhabited in a specific area in the city, creates separate neighborhoods-areas that the each of these groups lives and develops. The first item is concluded from the research and was found the first time is that the social segregation is a real phenomenon which is a part of the special identity of Komotini.

So starting the research was observed the concentration of services and administration in the city center. Orthodox Christians and Muslims of Turks have the direct contact with the center of the city. Therefore, we conclude that the Gypsies, Pomaks and Greek-Pontians resettlers are cut off from the central services of the city mainly because of the decisions of local authorities and the policies which pursued. Thus, the similar services were not created in the other districts. Beyond the administrative services the social groups have not to access to recreation and entertainment center as well as these uses are missing from the districts. So the effect of spatial segregation was felt, as far as the central services, administration and enterta-

²⁰ Koutsoukos, 2000.

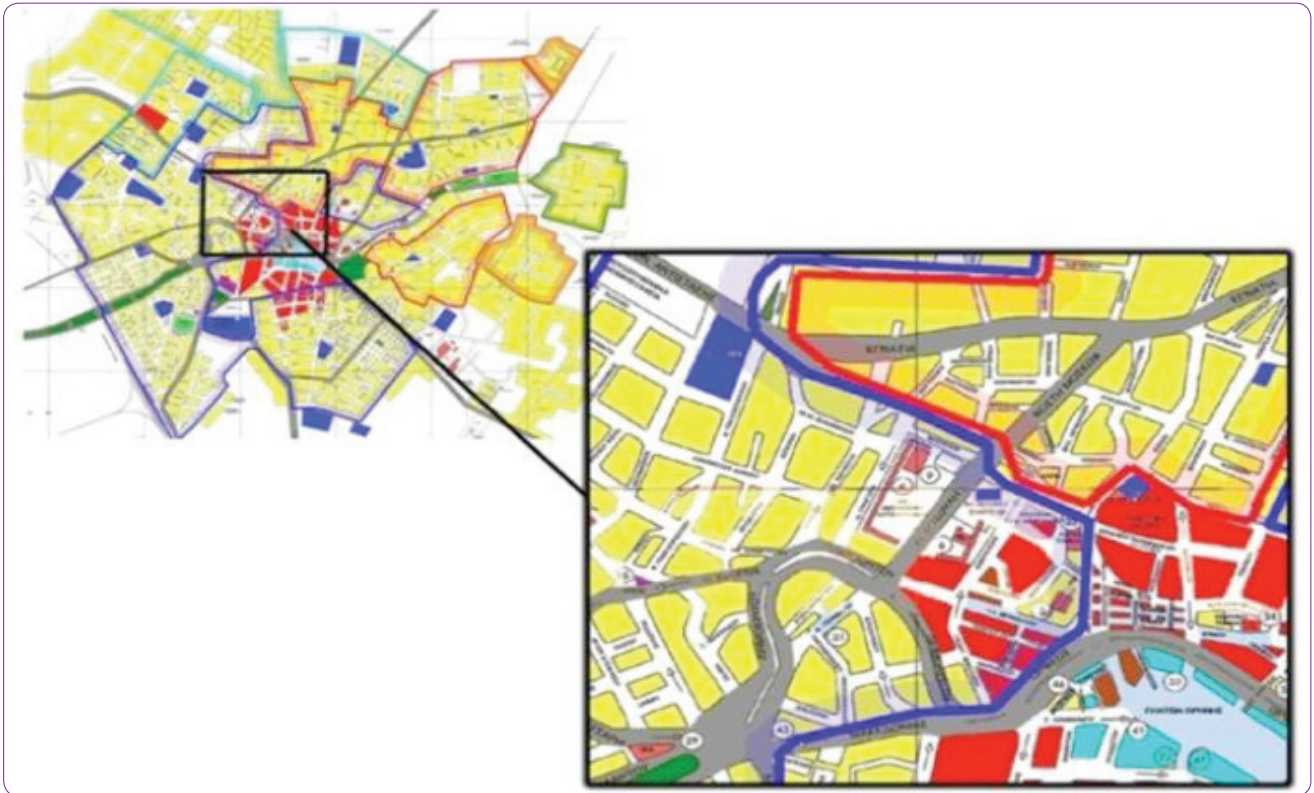


Figure 3. The historical commercial center.

inment. The configuration of neighborhoods features the culture, mentality, lifestyle and financial situation of social groups. As observed the districts of Muslims (of Turks and Pomaks) are quite different from the other districts. The functions between districts differ than the other social groups. In the minority group of Roma observed very strong segregation of residence. The significant particularities of behavior, cultural norms, living and working conditions differ from other groups in society. These differences help to create a negative climate towards this group and make them undesirable within the remaining residential units, but also the same group members choose to live together in a spatial entity. Also, the minority groups (of Turks, Pomaks, Gypsies) show significant internal differences as to lifestyle, culture and degree of religiosity. They form distinct communities that for an outside observer may be looked as a part of the same community. Among these minority groups is seemed to distinguish the group of Turks, with many social activities which they include and organize.

The phenomenon of social segregation enhances the competition among ethnic groups. The Christian group as the dominant ethnic group since 1920 and as a holder of the central power, constitutes important

factor for determining the distribution of groups in the area of the city. This group encourages or discourages the taking of the symbolic, important and central areas of the city. Also, they determine directly and indirectly the organizational structure of the urban fabric.

The occupation of major sites (from a symbolic point of view) of the urban fabric of the city gives prominence to the segregation. In 1960 at Rrodope, the conquest of the lands which belongs to the minority affected the relations between these groups and the distribution of housing in the urban fabric. One act that shows the competition is the priority of inclusion of arbitrary regions, where the city plan aims to integrate retrospectively, the existing areas. The case of integration of district of Greek-Pontians resettlers against to the old districts of Muslims shows the existence of segregation.

Conclusion

Summing up all political, economic, social and historical factors we conclude the phenomenon of social segregation perceived from the past even minimally the following forms in the urban fabric of Komotini. The implementation of restrictive policies which made in the past mainly against the minority groups contri-

buted to the first indication of segregation in the city. Specifically, the violation of human rights of the minority, the bureaucratic obstacles for the purchase of land, work and building permits were as main factors to stimulate the segregation in the area.

As for urban issues, the expropriation of minority property, violation of land of minority from the military authorities, the reparation of Muslim and Jewish cemeteries, and the closure of minority institutions, the city plan estimates openings primarily in residential areas of minority, these facts characterize the spatial variations that occur in the urban area of Komotini.

Today, the multicultural population of Komotini is still able to choose as a residential area, the districts with the same group members. But, as to the degree of concentration in particular neighborhoods is changing, because that the young population of ethnic groups seem to be unaffected by historical events and select places of residence with criteria to the economic and social environment and quality of life.

Now, in the city was observed the habitation of members of different ethnic groups in the same areas even in the same housing complexes, the fact that the segregation in the urban area of the city was increased.

Finally, it should be pointed out that for reducing these factors in the urban fabric of the city, there should be a contribution of the relevant principles and policies will be followed by creating the right conditions to forestall any social and spatial segregation.

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