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Settling down the crisis: planning and implementation of the immigrant settlements in the Balkans during the Late Ottoman period

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ABSTRACT

Since the Crimean War (1853–56), the Ottomans encountered with the problem of settling the Muslim immigrants and it was initially resolved by establishing new towns and villages on vast arable plains in the Balkans and Anatolia. However, it became a necessity to let the immigrants settle in the cities after the massive influx of refugees in 1877–78, when available agricultural lands to assign remained limited in the empire. With the consent of the Sultan, a new urban typology emerged at the outskirts of the cities, which were called immigrant (*muhajir*) neighbourhoods. This article aims to explore the spatial development of these settlements by the close examination of two cases based on archival materials. Mecidiye, which was established after the Crimean War, stands as an archetypal example and acted as an experimental laboratory. The success of Mecidiye case encouraged the Ottoman bureaucrats for further in post-1878 period. Hence, immigrant neighbourhood in Üsküb demonstrates us how the experience of Mecidiye was disseminated in the empire to establish a new planned settlement at the edges of an existing city. The close examination of Üsküb case provides us with the necessary tools to understand how the resettlement of refugees had cross-geographical spatial patterns.

Introduction

The victims of forced migration are on display every day through the social and conventional media especially in the context of the Syrian civil war. As a consequence of civil war, more than 11 million people were forced to displace; about 5.6 million of those had to flee their country and are now trying to resettle in a neighbouring country. Thousands of refugees embarked on a tortuous journey in search of a welcoming home in Europe or other destinations.¹ However, for the Middle East and the Balkans, substantial application of forced migration, and therefore becoming refugee are not recent phenomena. Millions of people were subjected to forced migration, who were the victims of ethnic cleansing and civil massacres in the 20th century. The historical roots of massive immigration in the

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¹'Syria Emergency' UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees official website, <http://www.unhcr.org/syria-emergency.html> (accessed September 5, 2018). Please note that the estimations depend on the number of registered refugees.

region go back to the nineteenth century at a time when the imperial dynasties and new nation-states were in favour of creating homogenized countries for their people, and the consequences were catastrophic for the people of the Balkans, Crimea and Caucasia.

Immediately after the Treaty of Paris (1856), which documented the victory of the Ottoman Empire and its allies against tsarist Russia, the Ottoman port cities and border towns were shivered by the influx of thousands of Muslim immigrants who fled Russia. Actually, this was a new chapter in Turkish—Russian military and politic conflicts, which initiated at the beginning of the eighteenth century. In less than a century, the Ottomans and the Crimean Khanate were unable to stop the Russian expansion so that Russia annexed the northern side of the Black Sea coast in 1783. This event marked the end of the Tatar Khans' reign in the region and triggered beginning of the catastrophes for the Muslim communities living in the region. Since then, the nineteenth century witnessed the fierce competition between the Ottoman and Russian Empires due to the increasing influence of Russia on the Balkans. The Ottoman frontiers pulled back in the nineteenth century after successive losses in the battlefield and consequently this result encouraged the independence movements of Greek and Serbian nationalists. As stated above, the only exception was the Russo-Turkish War of 1853–56 (the Crimean War), when the Ottomans could push the Russians away by the alliance formed with British, French and Sardinian armies. The Russian government was in favour of colonizing Crimea with Christian population since the beginning of the Russian domination in the region. Consequently, the doubts about the support of the local Muslims to Ottoman army persuaded the Russian government to apply drastic measures against the Muslims to assure security, which included the forced move of Muslims or at least encouraging their emigration from the Crimea (since 1856) and Caucasia (since 1864).² In result, according to the estimations, the total population of Crimea fell around 40% in the 1850s and 1860s, which is equal to the move of 700,000 immigrants from these regions.³ (Figure 1)⁴ The arriving refugees (*muhajirs*) were settled in various parts of the Ottoman Empire. They significantly changed the demography and economic structure of the regions where they had resettled. This would be a great burden for the Ottoman treasury to accommodate the fleeing people, who expect secure shelters for themselves. Later on, the Sublime Porte (the Ottoman government) had to encounter with the continuous move of millions of people from the Balkan Peninsula after successive defeats in the battlefields as well.⁵ Despite the economic burden it posed, the Ottoman government considered the resettlement of refugees as an opportunity in the

²On the one hand, there are many academic accounts discussing the colonization policies of the Russian Empire in Crimea and the immigration of local Muslims. See, Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821–1922* (New Jersey: The Darwin Press, 1995); Kemal H. Karpat, *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Etnik Yapılanma ve Göçler* (Istanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2010); Hakan Kırımlı, 'Emigrations from the Crimea to the Ottoman Empire during the Crimean War', *Middle Eastern Studies* 44, (2008): 751 and Alan W. Fisher, 'Emigration of Muslims from the Russian Empire in the Years After the Crimean War', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* (1987): 361 and Ali Eminov, 'Turks and Tatars in Bulgaria and the Balkans', *Nationalities Papers* 28 (2000): 29–164. On the other hand, there are some accounts which are suspicious about this statement and put counter arguments forward. See, James H. Meyer, 'Im Migration, Return, and the Politics of Citizenship: Russian Muslims in the Ottoman Empire, 1860–1914', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 39, no. 1 (2007): 15–32.

³Mark Pinson, 'Russian Policy and the Emigration of the Crimean Tatars to the Ottoman Empire, 1854–62', *Güneydoğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi* (2012): 109 and Alan W. Fisher. 'Emigration of Muslims', 364.

⁴Authors' drawing.

⁵The statistical sources counting the number of refugees in the 19th century are various and for most of the time represents the outlook of the author. For a general account of records, see Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population, 1830–1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985).



Figure 1. The map demonstrating the routes of the Muslims from the Crimea and Caucasia to Balkans, Istanbul and Anatolia in 1850s and 1860s.

Balkans and Anatolia: the vast empty lands suitable for cultivation were granted to the refugees in order to increase revenue.

In the academic literature, the immigrant resettlement question has mostly examined in terms of demographical, social and administrative perspectives so far. The immigrant settlements were also examined in some urban monographies as a new characteristic feature of late Ottoman city and the society. This article posits immigrant settlements as the tool of urban modernization in the late Ottoman Empire and aims to focus on spatial patterns of the new immigrant settlements and space articulation of the refugee residences in a cross-geographical approach by the critical investigation of the archival sources. This study foregrounds two distinctive cases to understand the physical emergence and propagation of the immigrant (*muhajir*) settlements as a new urban form in the Ottoman Empire.

After the first shock: the precautions and official regulations for the immigrant question

One of the stalemates of the Ottoman experience of modernization was the lack of enough population for agricultural production. Different from its European counterparts, the rural areas of the Ottoman Empire were sparsely populated. This was mostly due to the decline of the rural population after long-lasting wars. The practical result of this phenomenon for the treasury was about the drastic level of the size of taxable cultivated lands, which generate the majority of the incomes of the pre-industrial economy of the empire. Although it would increase the expenses of the treasury in short term, the Sublime Porte encouraged the immigration of the Muslim population from Russia.⁶ For

⁶Abdullah Saydam, *Kırım ve Kafkas Göçleri, 1856–1876* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1997), 96–9.

long-term benefits, the Sultan issued an imperial consent allowing the government to negotiate with the representatives of the foreigners, who would like to move to the Ottoman Empire to establish modern farmlands. Accordingly, the Ottoman government issued a public call in European newspapers in 1857 to welcome volunteers for negotiations. The call underlines incomparable advantages for the new settlers: vast arable lands free of charge, provision of some building materials, exemption of taxes for a certain period, free practice of religion were the most distinctive conditions among many others.⁷ These advantages were the reminiscent of the ones already provided for the Muslim refugees, who had been leaving Russia since 1856. Even though foreign settlers' move into Ottoman frontiers remained limited in numbers, it was a challenge of survival for the Muslim ones and they did not have an alternative option. Besides, it is likely that the conditions in their new homelands seemed to be favourable for many Muslim refugees: having exemptions from taxation and recruitment for a certain period, provision of free farmlands, grains, seeds and animals. Besides, there would be a financial support for the poor, who were unable to build their houses. These appealing offers should have stimulated thousands of Crimean and Caucasian settlers to move. The government expected the Anatolian and the Balkan territories to become more populous and this would lead to significant increase at the number of taxable lands and number of people eligible for military service after the termination of the exemptions. In addition, a side effect was the change of demographic composition of the Balkan territories in favour of Muslim population.⁸

In a short time, the Ottomans understood the necessity of regulations and official institutions to manage the resettlement of the immigrants. In 1860, the Sublime Porte issued a regulatory document concerning the resettlement policies and, accordingly, established a supervisory commission (*İskan-ı Muhacirin Komisyonu*) for the efficient management of the immigrant resettlement question.⁹ This commission constituted local branches with local officials in the landing points and final destinations of the refugees. The local refugee commissions registered thousands acres of farmland hitherto owned by the state and assigned them to the refugees free of charge. It is generally argued that the commission ran efficiently until its abolition in 1865 due to the decreasing number of refugees.¹⁰ The urgent problem was the provision of shelters for the refugees. For this, the commission granted financial aid of 500 piastre (*kuruş*) for the construction of each unit when the estimated cost for each unit was 2,800 *kuruş*.¹¹ Therefore, in order to compensate more, the Sublime Porte let the local governorate to

⁷The public call welcomed everyone who would respect to Sultan and his laws regardless of their religion. See, Hakan Kırımlı, 'Emigrations from the Crimea', 766; Başak Kale, 'Transforming an Empire', *Middle Eastern Studies* 50, no. 2, 258–9 and Kemal Karpat, 'Ottoman Immigration Policies and Settlement in Palestine', in *Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History*, (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 785–786.

⁸Abdullah Saydam, *Tanzimat Devrinde Dobruca'da İskan Faaliyetleri*, 199 and Kemal Karpat, *Ottoman Population*, 61–2.

⁹Before the foundation of the commission, Ministry of Commerce and Public Works (*Ticaret ve Nafia Vekaleti*) and *Şehremaneti* institutions which were in charge of the settlement of refugees until 1860. The commission restructured many times after its foundation. For details see, Abdullah Saydam, *Kırım ve Kafkas Göçleri, 1856–76*, 105–19.

¹⁰For a detailed account of the service of the commission see, Ahmet Cevat Eren, *Türkiye'de Göç ve Göçmen Meseleleri Tanzimat Devri, İlk Kurulan Göçmen Komisyonu Çıkarılan Tüzükler* (İstanbul: Nurgök Matbaası, 1966); Başak Kale, 'Transforming an Empire: The Ottoman Empire's Immigration and Settlement Policies in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries', 252–71, and Ella Fratantuono, 'Migration Administration in the Making of the Late Ottoman Empire' (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 2016), 128–66.

¹¹Kemal Karpat, 'Ottoman Urbanism: The Crimean Emigration to Dobruca and the Founding of Mecidiye', *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, no. 1, (1991): 12.

charge the local workmanship for construction when necessary, and raising money through donations, and obtaining timber from state forests nearby. Dobruca region (remains in the borders of Bulgaria and Romania), which was known for arable lands for cultivation, was the primary place for resettlement of thousands of refugees in the second half of the 1850s and 1860s. The immigrants were mostly landing on Balçık and Varna ports due to their proximity. Therefore, it was practical to settle those people in Dobruca region. The major responsibility of local commission was to register the boarding or incoming refugees, and to provide survival aids before they move to the new lands, where they would be resettled.¹²

An experimental trial: foundation of Mecidiye (Medgidia) town

Based on the official documents, it is evident that the Sublime Porte considered the resettlement of refugees in the rural areas as a convenient tool of centralization of the state in a modern sense. Instead of allowing the immigrants to settle in the cities, the government preferred to settle them in new towns and villages founded in the rural areas. As Christoph Herzog pointed out, migrations provided the opportunity to the central government to increase its peripheral control by means of counting, registering, regulation and identification of the population.¹³ Therefore, the new towns and villages should have been formed accordingly. After the Crimean War, the government issued a number of documents to regulate the resettlement policies. Some documents demonstrate special emphasize for the physical characteristics of the refugee towns and houses. In May 1856, an imperial decree (*irade-i seniyye*) addressed to the governor of Silistre (Silistra) to allow the fleeing refugees to resettle in Dobruca region¹⁴ it principally lists the strategies about the provision of many social aids and tax exemptions to relieve the immigrants. Beyond them, this document explicitly defines the physical standards of new immigrant houses and towns. The new houses should be in the same style when possible (*mümkün mertebe bir tarzda*) and in a row (*bir sıradada*) and the streets should be identical and wide enough (*müsavat ve vüs'at üzere*).¹⁵ Therefore, rationalization and standardization of the living units and streets became one of the main concerns of the Sublime Porte hereafter. They manifest the appropriation of modernity in space, which had already been on the agenda of Ottoman bureaucrats. In other words, this phenomenon was not very new and unique to Ottoman officials of that time. Inspired by the European layouts as a reference, the modernization of the cities was on the agenda of Ottoman bureaucrats since the first half of the 19th century. The urban reforms were physically characterized by orthogonal street layout avoiding cul-de-sacs; standardization of the building plots, building heights, and construction materials. For instance, the new Selimiye neighbourhood nearby the Selimiye Barracks in Üsküdar had already founded on an

¹²Abdullah Saydam, *Kırım ve Kafkas Göçleri, 1856–76*, 119–121.

¹³Christoph Herzog, 'Migration and the State: On Ottoman Regulations concerning Migration since the Age of Mahmud II', in *The City in the Ottoman Empire: Migration and the Making of Urban Modernity*, ed. Ulrike Freitag et al. (New York: Routledge, 2011), 117.

¹⁴Presidential State Archives of Turkey, Ottoman Archives Section (OA hereafter), İ.DH 343–22622 (3 May 1856). This document was introduced and examined in detail by many scholars before. See, Ahmet Cevat Eren, *Türkiye'de Göç ve Göçmen Meseleleri*, and Abdullah Saydam, *Kırım ve Kafkas Göçleri, 1856–76*..

¹⁵The other provisions for construction are: The new houses would be financed by the Ottoman government. In order to reduce the cost of the construction, locally available materials (timber) will be used. The local people may be employed for construction. The expenditures of construction and payments for employees should be recorded properly.

orthogonal layout at the turn of the nineteenth century. Cana Bilsel examined the earliest implementation of orthogonal pattern of Armenian and Frankish Neighbourhoods in İzmir after the fire of 1845¹⁶ and Zeynep Çelik and many other scholars examined how these urban reforms were implemented after the Great Aksaray Fire of 1856, Hocaşaşa Fire of 1864 and Pera Fire of 1870 in Istanbul.¹⁷

Though, as the examined cases above suggest, earlier planning activities remained partial in scale since they were mostly implemented for fire victim neighbourhoods in the cities. The Sublime Porte and the local governors were dreaming about drafting comprehensive master plans, but they mostly remained intact or could be partially implemented until the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁸ However, being able to start from scratch, the statesmen had the flexibility to implement their urban reforms without any major difficulty by the foundation of new towns and villages for the refugees. Especially, the new town of Mecidiye (Medgidia in Romania) became an urban laboratory for the reformers to test their ideas for model cities based on rational urban layouts.

Following the imperial decree of May 1856, the Sublime Porte issued another decree in September 1856 and approved the foundation of a model town to make the local centre for the emerging refugee villages around. The peculiar condition of this town can be traced through archival materials.¹⁹ Silistre governorship officials were in charge to find a suitable place for the new town: it would be built on the site of abandoned Karasu town, which was plundered by the Russian army many times in late 18th and early nineteenth century. The plan of the town was originally drafted by an engineer, who was sent for land survey. The plan was expected to be aligned with the new planning regulations (*Tarz-ı cedid üzere*) of the Tanzimat era.²⁰ Said Pasha, the Governor of Silistre, immediately sent the plan to Istanbul for approval. Even though the plan has not found in the archives yet, the official correspondences regarding the foundation of the town reveal many details about its spatial features. The textual description of the town plan illustrates the implementation of the Tanzimat urban regulations. In reference to the Code of Roads and Buildings²¹ (*Turuk ve Ebniye Nizamnamesi*) of 1848, the plan was reviewed by the Board of Buildings (*Ebniye Meclisi*) and they suggested some minor corrections about the measures of the streets. In the original plan, the width of the streets was fixed to 18.5 m (25 *zirâ*²²) for the main one, 7.5 m (10 *zirâ*) for the secondary

¹⁶Cana Bilsel, 'The Ottoman Port City of İzmir in the Nineteenth century: Cultures, Modes of Space Production and the Transformation of urban Space', in *Seven Centuries of Ottoman Architecture, A supra-National Heritage*, eds. Afife Batur and Selçuk Batur and Özmel Akın (Istanbul: Yapı Endüstri Merkezi, 2000), 231.

¹⁷Zeynep Çelik. *The Remaking of Istanbul: Portrait of an Ottoman City in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

¹⁸İlhan Tekeli defines this phenomenon as 'inhibited modernity', which corresponds the utilization of planning as a tool in the early phase of Turkish modernization and institutionalization before the republican era. See İlhan Tekeli, *Modernizim, Modernite ve Türkiye'nin Kent Planlama Tarihi* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2009), 135–37 for the in-depth analysis of this concept.

¹⁹Kemal Karpat introduced the documents regarding the foundation of Mecidiye in academic scholarship. Later, many scholars emphasized the significance of Mecidiye by referring to Karpat's work. See, Kemal Karpat. 'Ottoman Urbanism', 1–25.

²⁰OA, A.İMKT.NZD 186–58 (June 17, 1856).

²¹Osman Nuri Ergin's *Mecelle-i Umûr-i Belediyeye* is the seminal source compiling the official documents of 19th century urban reforms. See Osman Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i Umûr-i Belediyeye* (Istanbul: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür İşleri Daire Başkanlığı, 1995).

²²*Zirâ* was a length measuring unit widely used by the Muslims communities for centuries. In time, the basic unit took some variations depending on the things to measure. In the nineteenth century, the Ottomans used the architectural one (*mi'mari zirâ*) for construction works which corresponds to 75,8 cm. For detailed information see, Mehmet Erkal 'Arşin/zirâ', *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi* 3, 411–13.

ones on right and left sides of the main one, 6 m (8 *zirâ*) for the remaining streets. The board agreed to keep the width of the main street but made revisions to enlarge the streets.²³ The sultan himself (Sultan Abdulmecid, r. 1838–1861) was also in charge. He oversaw the site plan and eagerly approved the final draft on 2 September 1856²⁴ by emphasizing the importance of the implication of the plan already drawn (*Kasaba-i mezkûrenin harita-ı mezkûreye tatbikân inşâsı*). The implementation of the project became a priority for the Sublime Porte. The naming of the new town reflects its privileged condition. It was named Mecidiye, which indicated a direct reference to the royal power and image of the ruling Sultan, who enthusiastically supported the implementation of the project.

The perceptual gap caused by the missing original plan of the town can be partially filled by some recent plans of the town: a number of old drawings remaining from the late nineteenth century to mid-twentieth century are still available. Moreover, based on the textual descriptions, postcards, and photographs, one can draw a reconstruction plan of the town for its formative years. (Figure 2)²⁵

In plan, the main street in north-south direction stretches from the railroad station (north) to the Muslim cemetery (south), which define the physical edges of the town. In addition, the original approved plan must have defined the place for the civic centre (*memleket beyni*), where the necessary public buildings were located at the hearth of the town, near the main street. The archive documents record the construction of a mosque²⁶ honoured to have the name of the sultan, a primary school²⁷ (*mekteb*) nearby the mosque, and a public bath²⁸ built at the earliest phase. However, due to the financial shortage, the government was able to construct the other public buildings later. Among them; a government house,²⁹ a courthouse,³⁰ a secondary school (*rüştiye*),³¹ and a jail³² were completed in the 1860s. The public buildings were allocated to constitute a civic centre to make the government visible in the eyes of the citizens. Except the mosque, other public buildings were either completely demolished or reconstructed to have larger ones in the following decades.

Here, it is remarkable to note that, this formation marks a radical brake in a spatial manner. For centuries, mosques, and other public service buildings constituted the core of neighbourhoods in Ottoman cities, however, at this stage, it is about modern use and image of the other public buildings. The civic centre formation became one of the characteristics of the new towns and neighbourhoods in the Ottoman Empire in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It was also

²³Kemal Karpat, 'Ottoman Urbanism', 10. Karpat refers to a document stored in the Ottoman Archives (OA, İ.DH no 2326) for this information. There was a typographical error, which also remained in later publications about code number the archival material. Aforementioned information is in Minister of Commerce Saffet Pasha's letter to the Sublime Porte, filed in İ.DH 352–23226. (June 30, 1856).

²⁴OA, İ.DH 352–23226 (June 30, 1856).

²⁵Based on a partial city plan of Medgidia drawn in the scale of 1:5000 in 1953 (stored in State archives of Romania Constanta Branch, Medgidia Municipality Files, #1953/391), redrawn and indexed by the authors after conducting site surveys for double checking.

²⁶OA, İ.DH 357/23609 (October 21, 1856).

²⁷OA, İ.DH 357/23609 (October 21, 1856).

²⁸OA, İ.MVL 382–16743 (November 21, 1857).

²⁹OA, İ.DH 503/34184 (January 29, 1863).

³⁰Ibid.

³¹OA, A.İMKT.MHM. 313–51 (October 1, 1864).

³²OA, İ.DH 503/34184 (January 29, 1863).

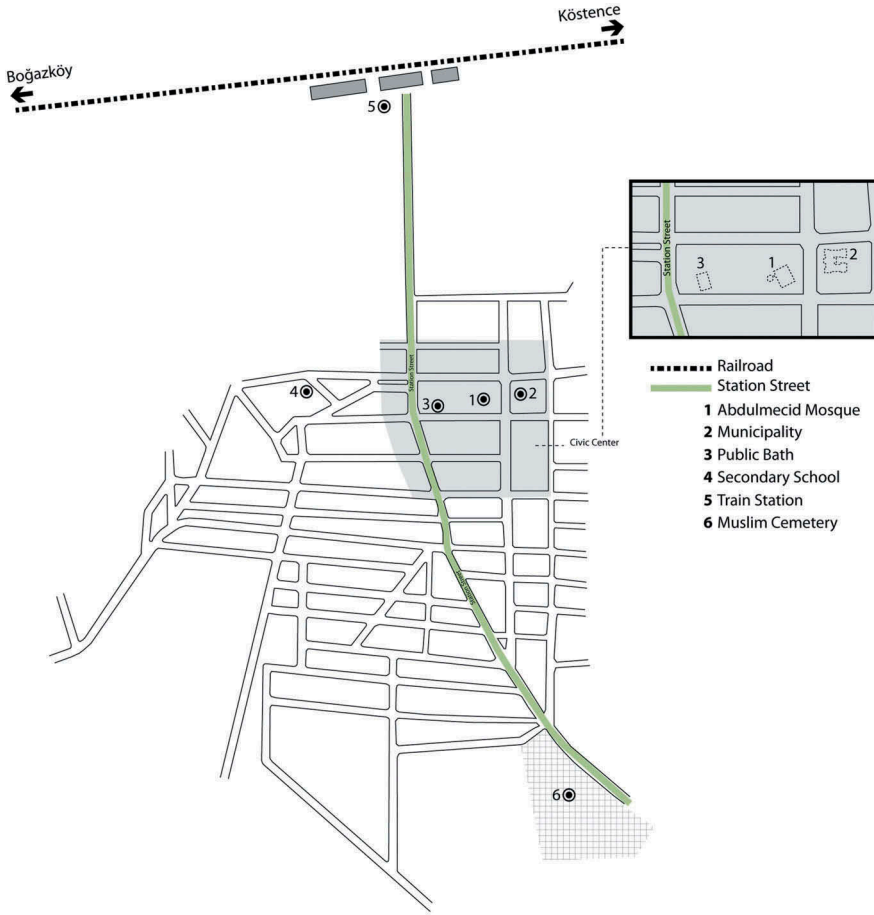


Figure 2. A reconstruction Plan of Mecidiye shortly after its foundation, drawn by the authors based on a partial sketch plan of the town dated 1953.

adapted for the redesign of the governmental centres of the old cities.³³ The more-secular urban core of Tanzimat cityscape had both practical and symbolic functions. First, the physical proximity of the public offices aimed to provide efficiency of service. Second, they made up the image of the government and the sultan and visually built up the state authority in the eye of the citizens.³⁴ Being influenced by the city beautiful movement, the local administrations paved the streets leading to the governmental core and planted trees in row on the sidewalks. Furthermore, a government square and/or a recreational park was attached to the civic centre where possible. Therefore, the emergence of the civic centre in Mecidiye can be also considered as an archetype of this innovation, which repeated itself numerous times all around the empire since the second half of the 19th century.

³³Yasemin Avcı, *Osmanlı Hükümet Konakları; Tanzimat Döneminde Kent Mekanında Devletin Erki ve Temsili* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2017).

³⁴Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains; Ideology and the Legitimization of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876–1909* (London: I.B.tauris, 2011), 16–43.



Figure 3. Sultan Abdülmecid Mosque in Mecidiye, authors collection.

In Mecidiye, the only remaining building from the inception of the town is the mosque (Figure 3),³⁵ which was inaugurated in 1860. It is a rectangular two-story high masonry structure covered with a pitched roof. There is a minaret located at the north-western side of the mosque and near the minaret, there is an ablution fountain.

In just less than a year, the number of houses built in the new town exceeded 1000 with the stimulus of public aids and exemptions.³⁶ Although the estimations vary, in 1878, when the Kingdom of Romania annexed the town, the total population of the town was about 8000 to 10,000 constituted by the majority of Crimean immigrant population.³⁷

After having many references to idealized townscape through the archival materials, the primary question is whether the reformist approach is implemented on-site or remained on paper. Actually, visual materials give some information about how the city looked like in the early years. The earliest visual record of the town was a lithograph remaining from 1867. (Figure 4)³⁸ In the image, the secondary school and Sultan Abdülmecid mosque are easily distinguishable. It was drawn from western end of the town. The image reflects two different urban tissues in the town. On the foreground (west), there are single houses and storage spaces in an irregular pattern. They are not on a regular layout and do not demonstrate any identical characteristics. However, we observe the existence of a spatial formation on a uniform layout around the neighbourhoods near and behind the mosque. There are rows of houses parallel to each other and they have front and backyards, which are demarcated by parallel

³⁵ Authors' collection.

³⁶ Hakan Kırımlı. 'Emigrations from the Crimea', 765.

³⁷ Kemal Karpat. 'Ottoman Urbanism', 17–18.

³⁸ Adran Ilie, *Comunitatile Turca și Tatara Din Medgidia* (Constanta: Ex Porto, 2015), 104.

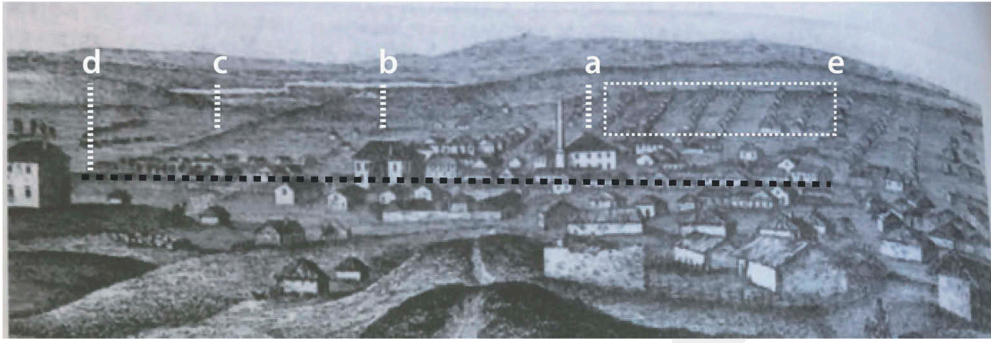


Figure 4. General view of the town, c. 1867.

Legend: a-Mosque, b: Secondary School, c: Railroad, d: Station Street, e: regular layout of houses

streets. The route of the railroad and the main street leading to the railroad station are partially visible too.

Postcards and photographs from the early twentieth century also identify the presence of the orthogonal plan, decades after its foundation during the Romanian Kingdom. Although the plot size and street pattern did not change, many of the refugee houses were replaced with more elegant, durable and bigger ones (Figure 5³⁹ and Figure 6⁴⁰). It should be noted that the major physical changes were implemented in



Figure 5. A post card showing the general view of the town from the minaret of Abdülmejid mosque to east, c. 1900s.

³⁹Local Library of Medgidia town visual materials collection.

⁴⁰Local Library of Medgidia town visual materials collection.



Figure 6. The general view of the town from the minaret of Abdülmeçid mosque to west, no date.
Legend: a:High School, b: Secondary School, c: Church

1950s and 1960s when the city witnessed intensive urban regeneration projects with the establishment of the socialist government in Romania.

The economic push

Social and economic development of the town and its environs were triggered by a number of concurrent events happened simultaneously with the formation of the new town. Conceptualizing the foundation of Mecidiye only as an idealized town within the frame of new urban policies may limit our vision. Thus, it should be interpreted together with other concurrent events within a broader socio-economic perspective.

After the Crimean War, the British capital benefited from the expulsion of Russian influence from Dobruca region and designated some projects to import the agricultural products and raw materials by proposing a canal or railroad from Danube River to the Black Sea coasts since the mouth of the river is not navigable for high-tonnage steamships. Initially, it was the idea of opening a canal between River Danube and Köstence (Constanta) for the ease of naval trade. In early 1856, a group of European capitalists were able to receive the concession of constructing a canal of 40 miles from the city of Boğazköy (Chernovoda) located on the southern bank of Danube River to Köstence on Black Sea shores by passing through mostly flat and arable terrains. However, after the Treaty of Paris (1856) the foreign entrepreneurs preferred to build up a railroad line instead. As their land surveys had shown, the construction of a railroad on the same route would be much more profitable along with the inclusion of a great port in

Köstence into the project.⁴¹ The site works initiated in 1857 and the line opened to service in October 1860. The designation of the route coincided with the foundation of Mecidiye and it is clear that the parties of the concession agreed on having a stop and merchandise sheds in Mecidiye to stimulate the economic growth of this strategic town while the Dobruca region was introduced to world markets through British capital.⁴² Besides, a considerable number of Muslim immigrants were employed in construction sites, since they provided cheap labour for the company. It is important to note that this was the first railroad ever completed in the Ottoman Empire after many other failing attempts.⁴³ Shortly after, it was followed by another railroad project by the British capital again between Varna port on the Black Sea and Rusçuk (Ruse), which was inaugurated in 1866.⁴⁴ (Figure 7)⁴⁵

Second, in order to increase the efficiency of public administration in the region, restructuring the provincial government became a crucial step for the sake of other reforms. Abrogating ineffective old institutions and the founding of new ones based on European model stimulated many public projects. By re-establishing provincial administration based on province order following French regulations, the mentality of the Ottoman government implies a strong emphasis for a centralized and efficient state device. The Code of Provinces (*Vilayet Nizamnamesi*) was issued in 1864, and as a pilot project, Tuna Province (*Vilayet*) was established encompassing the territories of Rusçuk, Vidin and Niş eyalets, which corresponds to the area of modern Bulgaria, to apply the new provincial reforms.⁴⁶ The provincial centre was the city of Rusçuk and Midhat Pasha, the famous reformer of his time, was appointed the first governor-general of the province (*vilayet*) (1864–68). During his service, the province witnessed revolutionary projects in education, public healthcare, transportation and other public works. It is important to note that the first two railroad projects in Ottoman Balkans were realized in Tuna Province and he was one of the influential actors for the realization of public works projects.⁴⁷

⁴¹The official title of the concessionaire company was *The Danube and Black Sea Railway and Free Port of Küstendjie Company*. The company included the British financial group, Thomas Wilson, S.Cunard, P.Price, G.B.Paget, J.Lewis and J.Newal in London and had the right of operation for 99 years.

⁴²For a detailed account of Boğazköy- Köstence line, see Mihail P. Guboğlu. 'Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Karadeniz-Tuna Kanalı Projeleri ve Boğazköy-Köstence Arasında İlk Demiryolu İnşası', in *Çağını Yakalayan Osmanlı; Osmanlı Devletinde Modern Haberleşme ve Ulaşım Teknikleri* eds. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu and Mustafa Kaçar (Istanbul: IRCICA, 1995), 217–47 and Ali Akyıldız, 'Bir Teknolojik Transferin Değişim Boyutu; Köstence Demiryolu Örneği', *The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 20, (2000): 313–27.

⁴³Excluding Kahire (Cairo)-İskenderiye (Alexandria) line which was formerly realized by the British capital as well. The concession to construct a railroad from İzmir to Aydın was granted shortly before this line but it was inaugurated after Köstence line.

⁴⁴For Varna-Rusçuk line, see Ali Akyıldız, 'Balkanlara Osmanlı'dan Miras Bir Çağdaş Medeniyet Ürünü: Rusçuk-Varna Demiryolu', in *Balkanlarda İslam Medeniyeti Milletlerarası Sempozyumu Tebliğleri* 21–23 April 2000, A. Çaksu ed. (Istanbul:2002), 123–46.

⁴⁵Based on 'Colton's Turkey in Europe', in *Colton's General Atlas, Containing 180 Steel Plate Maps And Plans, on One Hundred And Eight Imperial Folio Sheets*, (New York: 1865), redrawn by the authors.

⁴⁶For the reorganization of provincial government during the Tanzimat period see, Bernard Levis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 381–84, İlber Ortaylı, *Tanzimattan Sonra Mahalli İdareler, 1840–1878* (Ankara: Sevinç Matbaası, 1974); and Roderic H. Davidson, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856–1876* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 136–71.

⁴⁷For a detailed account on the foundation of Danube Province and reforms of Mithat Pasha see, Gökhan Çetinsaya, 'Midhat Paşa', *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet Birikimi*, eds. Tanıl Bora & Murat Tekingil vol.1 (Istanbul: İletişim, 2001), 60–5; Selda Kılıç, '1864 Vilayet Nizamnamesinin Tuna Vilayetinde Uygulanması ve Midhat Paşa', *Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi* 24, (2005): 99–112 and Skender Rızaj, 'Midhat Paşa'nın Rumeli'de Vilayetler Kurulmasındaki Rolü', in *Uluslararası Midhat Paşa Semineri Bildiriler ve Tartışmalar Edirne, 8–10 May 1984*, (Ankara: TTK, 1986), 59–60.

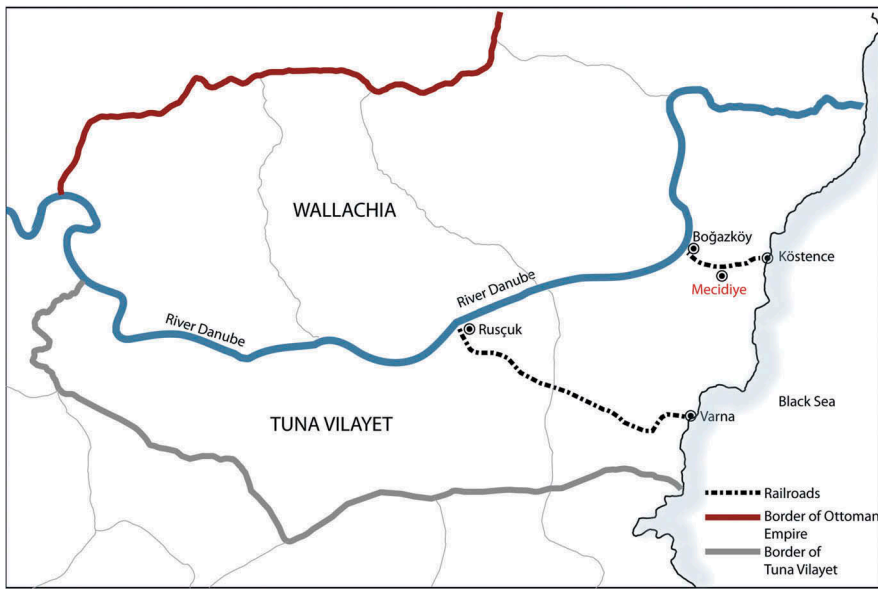


Figure 7. Map of Lower Danube River, and its surroundings showing the new railroads and boundaries of Tuna vilayet, drawn by the authors.

The common leitmotif behind the reform projects in the Balkan territories was to restore the state authority in the region where the economic conditions were becoming worse and the sense of belonging of the non-Muslim subjects was becoming looser. To achieve expected results, the empire was adapting the regulations learnt through the European agents and noted the efficiency of the use of the nineteenth-century innovations (such as telegram lines, steam ships, railroads) for re-establishing centralized state order. As a result, the Ottomans tried to use same tools consciously for the territorial unity of the empire: they started to establish an extensive telegram network since 1850s and used steam ships for trade and military purposes since 1840s. Parallel to these innovations, establishing an extensive railroad network in the region became one of the priorities of the Sublime Porte since 1850s. The government's conscious efforts to claim neglected territories can be conceptualized as the emergence of the central state in the Ottoman Balkans after a long period of decentralized structure.⁴⁸

In the nineteenth century, the centralization of Ottoman Balkans was more than the military or economic objectives. The Tanzimat bureaucrats initiated administrative reforms, issued new regulations and laws to reinforce the efficiency of government in the provinces. During this period, the Ottoman bureaucracy significantly expanded due to the establishment of new institutions, and it was supported by training many specialized officials and developing a new administrative system. Thus, starting from Istanbul, the new class of bureaucracy from different ranks spread all over the country in order to secure the state authority in peripheries, to provide public works at a local level,

⁴⁸ Mahmud II (r. 1808–1839) initiated the political reforms for the sake of territorial unity of the empire. His successors issued many regulations as well. Among them, The Land Code of 1858 (*Arazi Kanunnamesi*), and the Law of Provinces (*Vilayet Kanunnamesi*) of 1864 were the milestones of the conscious effort to control provincial territories.

and to raise up tax revenues. Accordingly, these efforts can be read as economic and political control projects.⁴⁹ From an architectural point of view, the state authority became visible in local centres by the construction of European model new institutions of the new administration such as government office, courthouse, police or gendarme office, telegram and post office, town hall and monopoly administrations. In other words, the political centralization had a significant spatial dimension: it was the emergence of new building types and construction of many buildings in the public domain that had never been seen before. Thus, during the foundation of Mecidiye, the presence of the state was emphasized with the planning and implementation of many features of the public spaces.

The living units

In order to settle newcomers, one of the major works undertaken was the provision of necessary materials, tools and workmanship to build immigrant houses as soon as possible. The government estimated to build 3,000 houses in the region in the first phase. The prime ministry sent directives to the governorate of Silistre to obtain timber and other necessary tools and materials in advance so that the buildings would be constructed before the winter. They would be single-story buildings made of two rooms.⁵⁰ In accordance with the official correspondence, the eyewitnesses record the implementation of identical buildings in Dobruca for the refugees in the early years. They were simple-structures, easy and cheap to build. Although there were some variations in plan, they were mostly symmetrical single-story buildings having two rooms flanking an entrance hall.⁵¹ One of the engineers of the railroad construction company, Henry Barkley, stayed in one of the immigrant towns close to Mecidiye as a guest and described the spatial features of a typical one in detail⁵²

The houses are all made of hurdle-work plastered inside and out with mud and cowdung, and roofed by a great thickness of reeds, which keeps them cool in summer and warm in winter. They are beautifully clean... All the houses are made on the same model. You enter through a room which is only used as a passage. On the right hand is a door leading down a few wooden steps into the room where all the family live and all the household work is done... At the end is a great open hearth, and on the other a small window in the gable... the left of the entrance is a good-sized room above the ground, which is rarely entered by the family except to clean, and is of as much use as the 'best parlour' used to be in some of old-fashioned English farms. This room is heated by a mud stove in the shape of a huge beehive, which is fed from a hearth in the entrance room through a hole in the wall...

⁴⁹For the in-depth discussion about the increasing operative activities of the Ottoman Bureaucracy, see Roderic H. Davison. *Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, and Ali Akyıldız, *Osmanlı Bürokrasisi ve Modernleşme* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2009).

⁵⁰OA, A.)MKT.UM 240-74, (June 26, 1856).

⁵¹There are many studies on the architecture of refugee houses in Turkey, which were built in the 20th century. For instance, Fuat Dündar, 'Balkan Savaşından Sonra Kurulan Muhacir Köyleri', *Toplumsal Tarih* (October 2000): 52-4; Ali Cengizkan, *Mübadele ve Konut Yerleşimleri* (Ankara: ODTÜ Mimarlık Fakültesi, 2004); Nilgün Kiper, 'Resettlement of Immigrants and Planning in İzmir During the Hamidian Period', (PhD Diss., İzmir Institute of Technology, 2006); Zeynep Eres, 'Türkiye'de Planlı Kırsal Yerleşimlerin tarihsel Gelişimi ve Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi Planlı Kırsal Mimarisinin Korunması Sorunu', (PhD Diss., Istanbul Technical University, 2008).

⁵²Henry C. Barkley, *Between Danube and Black Sea or Five Years in Bulgaria* (London: John Murray, 1876), 43-4. The emphasize belongs to author.:

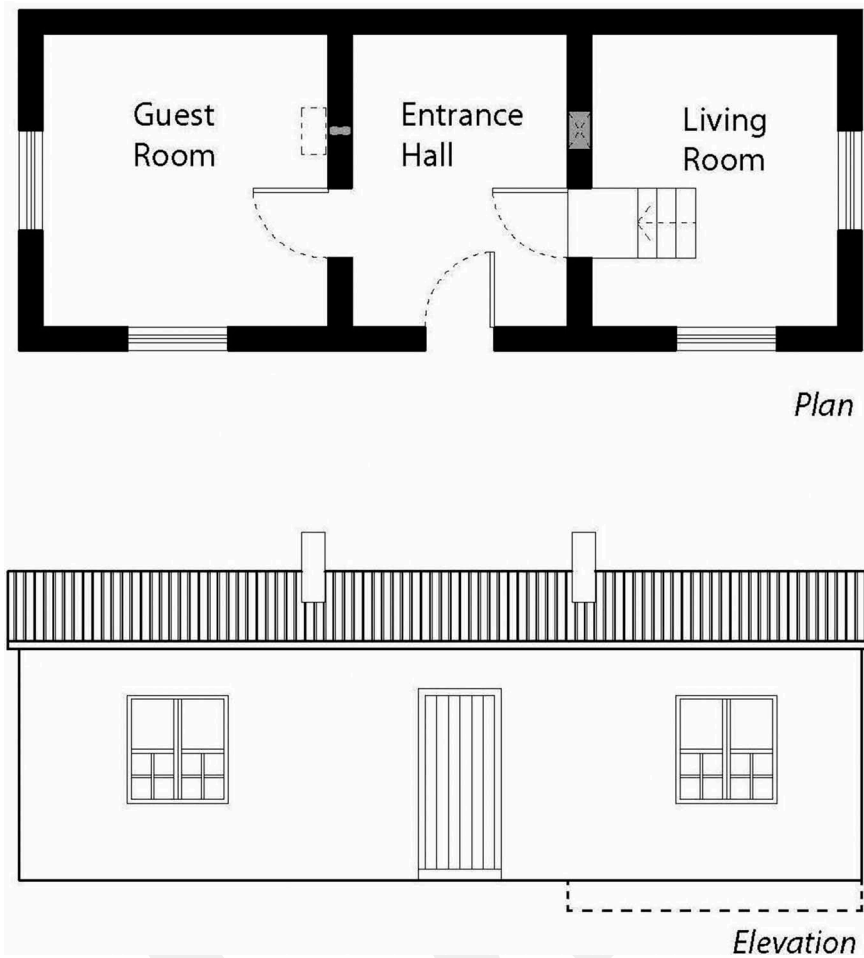


Figure 8. Reconstruction drawing of a typical refugee house, based on the written and visual materials drawn by the authors.

Based on this narrative, we may propose that the living units in Mecidiye had also similar physical properties. However, since the private residences are widely open to physical changes in time, there is any remaining example of earliest residential units to physically prove the validity of this written record. Nevertheless, photographs of old immigrant houses may test the validity of this testimonial. The reconstruction drawing (Figure 8)⁵³ of a typical house and the photograph of a real one (Figure 9)⁵⁴ have many similar physical features. Even though residential units are constantly prone to change due to the emerging requirements of their users, building techniques or spatial typologies may remain longer than the buildings. For instance, the local branch of the National Archives in Constanta, which accommodates the building documents of Medgidia Municipality, stores many recent building projects from 1920s and 1930s. These houses still convey

⁵³Based on Barkey's text and a number of house plans found in the National Archive of Romania Constanta Branch, Medgidia Municipality Files, drawn by the authors.

⁵⁴Corneliu Marinescu, *Medgidia; Studiu Monografic* (Constanta: Editura Dobrogea, 2006), 145.

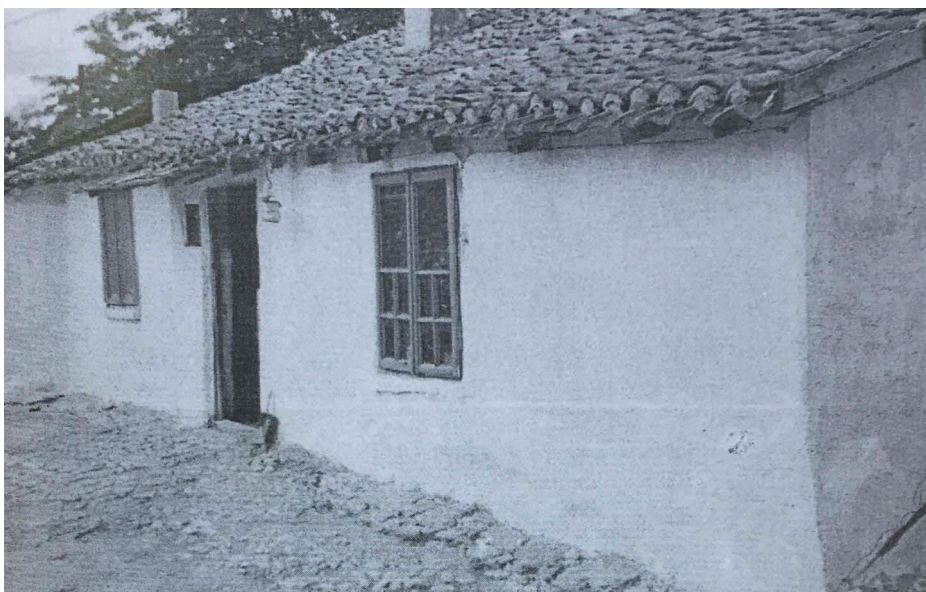


Figure 9. A typical immigrant house in 1960s, (the house is possibly from the nineteenth century).

similar spatial organizations in their designs with more durable materials and better workmanship. (Figure 10)⁵⁵

Dissemination of the experience through the empire

Mecidiye case should not be considered as a peculiar attempt for an ideal urban type. This experiment was a successful trial for the Ottoman government in many aspects and therefore made it a versatile template to implement in urban and rural cases. In 1861, a model town was founded near Rusçuk and honoured by deriving the name from the sultan (Sultan Abdülaziz r. 1861–1876) with an imperial decree, and called Aziziye. Similarly, another central town was named Mahmudiye to commemorate Sultan Mahmud II (r. 1808–38) near Tulça (Tulcea).⁵⁶

In decades, many immigrant settlements popped up in different parts of the empire, stretching from the Balkan Peninsula to the Levant.⁵⁷ Especially, during the second great influx of the immigrants after the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877–78 provided the reformist authorities with the opportunities to meet the urgent demand of new shelters for the newcomers. So far, many urban monographies written on the Ottoman cities have mentioned about the immigrant settlements in their own cases as a significant urban development at the turn of the twentieth century. However, what is missing is the

⁵⁵National Archive of Romania Constanta Branch Collection, Medgidia Municipality Files, No. 4 (1931–1942).

⁵⁶Abdullah Saydam, *Kırım ve Kafkas Göçleri, 1856–76*, 119.

⁵⁷Yasemin Avci. 'The Application of Tanzimat in the Desert: The Bedouins and the Creation of a New Town in Southern Palestine, 1860–1914', *Middle Eastern Studies* 45, no.6, (2009): 969–83; Vladimir Hamed-Troyansky, 'Circassian Refugees and the Making of Amman, 1878–1914', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 49, no.4 (2017): 605–23; Chris Gratien, 'The Ottoman Quagmire: Malaria, Swamps, and Settlement in The Late Ottoman Mediterranean', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 49, no. 4 (2017): 583–604.

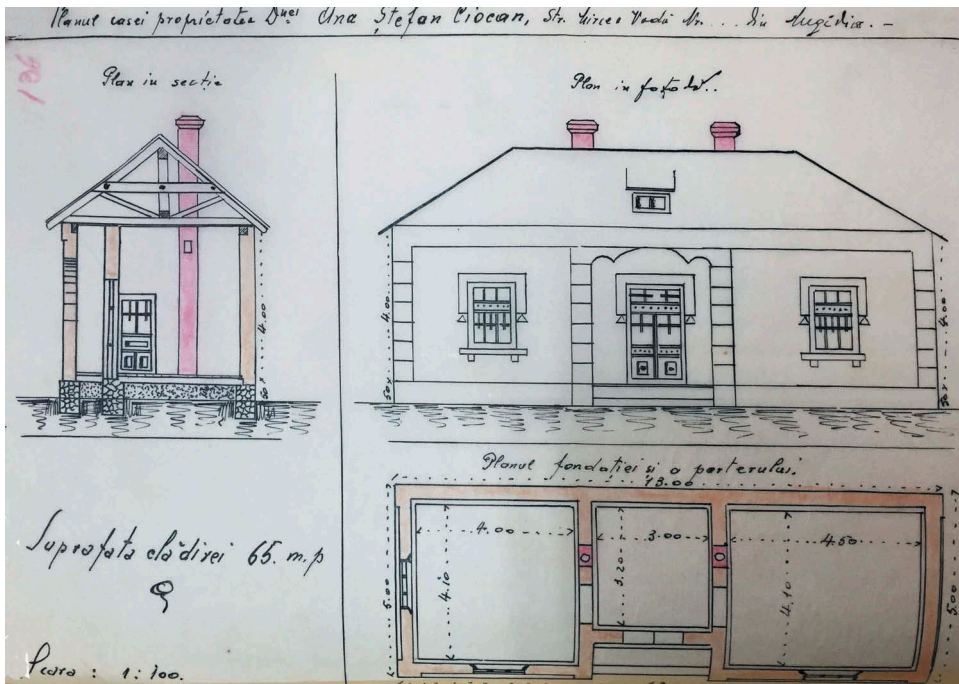


Figure 10. A house project from 1935 showing some spatial characteristics in Mecidiye.

necessity of cross-geographical perspective examining general and peculiar aspects of this new phenomenon. This section of the article will address the question of founding new immigrant neighbourhoods in an urban context and introduce some overarching design patterns in the light of Mecidiye example.

While the new wave of immigrants was flowing into Ottoman territories during and after the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877–78, the empire had to leave a significant part of its Balkan territories including Dobruca region to the new nation states. Immigrants with different ethnic origins were piling at the outskirts of their first stops and some were trying to survive in very miserable conditions in the cities. In 1878, the Sublime Porte had to issue a decree allowing the settlement of immigrants in the cities, which hitherto had been suspended.⁵⁸ For this, each city would host one-tenth of its population. Abandoned, state and charity owned lands were (*arazi-i hâliye-i mîriye ve metruke ve mevkufe*) given priority to build two or three-room simple houses for the immigrants if all available living units were occupied in a city.⁵⁹ The decree underlines the implementation of Tanzimat urban reforms for the new immigrant neighbourhoods. In a short time, many immigrant neighbourhoods (*muhacir mahallesî*) emerged around the cities.

In accordance with the urban reforms already implemented in Mecidiye, the layout of these neighbourhoods was also based on an orthogonal form. Therefore, in addition to

⁵⁸OA, Y.A.Res, 1–41, (June 14, 1878). Before that, only limited number of craftsmen were officially allowed to reside in the cities. Compared to the number of refugees, the available land was limited in the Ottoman Balkans and Anatolia; therefore it became a practical necessity to let refugees to reside in the cities.

⁵⁹Regulation of the Resettlement of Refugees (*Iskan-ı Muhacirin Talimatnamesi*), Article no. 29.

the redevelopment of the fire victim areas in the city centres, a secondary pattern of orthogonal layout was practiced through the resettlement of the immigrants in the new neighbourhoods.⁶⁰ They were mostly located outside the physical edge of the cities, where the local governors did not come across with the problems of insufficient empty space or expropriation costs by choosing the state-owned lands for construction. In the centre, there existed a civic centre accommodating a mosque, a primary school, a public bath and some other public facilities depending on the size of the neighbourhood. Their standardized and rational pattern can be discerned from the organic urban tissue of old city centre side by side by observing late nineteenth and early twentieth century plans of the cities.

Even though the physical pattern of the immigrant neighbourhoods was quite identical, they had many peculiar aspects in terms of their planning, development and further expansion. The local authorities had to consider about many questions before the construction of the new neighbourhoods.

Here, Üsküb (Skopje) immigrant neighbourhood stands as a physically generic example, and it is worth to analyse in order to understand how a new neighbourhood emerged and developed nearby an old city in time. It would also provide us necessary tools to understand the realization of the new settlements and how the new neighbourhood was elaborated by the local authorities as a reminiscent of Tanzimat reforms. This example enables us understand the basic physical patterns employed for the constitution of the immigrant neighbourhoods all around the empire.

Since the establishment of the Ottoman reign in the region, Üsküb turned out to be a regional centre.⁶¹ It was an important trade node on the caravan routes. During the upheavals and wartime conditions in the late 1870s, it was among the principal stops for thousands of Muslim immigrants before they were resettled at another place in the empire. The city was located on the northern bank of Vardar River. Until the arrival of the railways in 1870s, the city did not expand towards the southern bank of the river, where the railroad station was located.⁶² Like many others on the same line, the principal passenger station was located on a remote area, which was once registered either by the Civil List (*hazine-i hassa*) or by treasure (*mir'i* lands owned by the state) in order to minimize the expenditures.⁶³

At the beginning, the local government allowed the immigrants resettle in the old neighbourhoods, namely Katip Şahin, Hacı Yunus, Tabbak Şahin and Harac-ı

⁶⁰Sevgi Aktüre introduced the new phenomenon through cases in Ankara (Bosnian Neighbourhood) and Afyon (Hamidiye and Mecidiye neighbourhoods). See, Sevgi Aktüre, *19. Yüzyıl Sonunda Anadolu Kenti Mekânsal Yapı Çözümlemesi* (Ankara: Ortadoğu Teknik Üniversitesi Mimarlık Fakültesi, 1978).

⁶¹For the monuments of Ottoman period see, Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi, *Avrupa'da Osmanlı Mimari Eserleri, Yugoslavya*, vol. 3, (İstanbul: İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti, 1981); Mustafa Özer, *Üsküb'te Türk Mimarisi, XIV.- XIX. Yüzyıl* (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2006) and Ladiya Kumberacı-Bogoyeviç, *Üsküb'te Osmanlı Mimarisi Eserleri* (İstanbul: Mas Matbaacılık, 2008).

⁶²Üsküb was initially connected to Selanik (Salonica) in 1873 and then to Nish and Belgrade in 1885 with the railroads.

⁶³Üsküb was a stop on the Oriental Railway's (*Compagnie Chemin de Fer De La Turquie d'Europe*) route starting at İstanbul, it also had a branch line to Selanik and it terminated near Austrian border in Bosnia. However, the contractor company was unable to finish the construction on time, the route altered, and the railroad line terminated at Mitroviça. According to the convention between the company and the Sublime Porte, the station yards were provided by the Ottoman Government free of charge. Therefore, in order to abstain from expropriation costs, the stations were mostly located at the outskirts of the cities. For more information about the Ottoman railroads in the Balkans, see Basil Gounaris, *Steam over Macedonia, 1870–1912: Socio-Economic Change and the Railway Factor* (Boulder, Eastern European Monographs, 1993), and Vahdettin Engin, *Rumeli Demiryolları* (İstanbul: Eren, 1993).

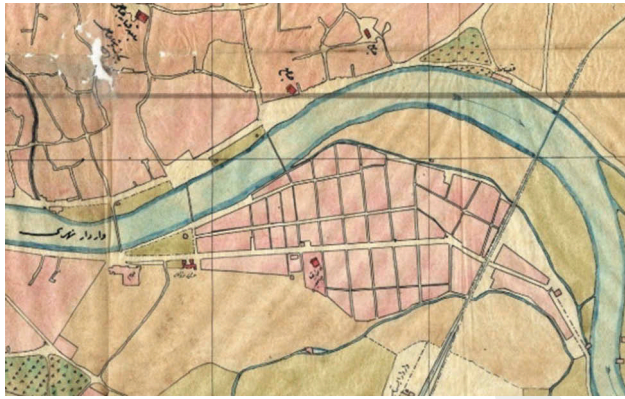


Figure 11. City Plan of Üsküb, ca. 1880s, partial view of the plan showing Muhajir neighbourhood with its surrounding.

Selahattin.⁶⁴ Later on, the government proposed two neighbourhoods to accommodate the new citizens. One was near Cedid İsa Bey neighbourhood, which located on the northern bank of the river, accommodated 55 immigrant houses. This neighbourhood was named *Teşvikiye* with an imperial decree.⁶⁵ Later on, it was expanded to accommodate more immigrants at the turn of the century.⁶⁶ As a second attempt, majority of the new citizens were resettled in the newly developing zone of the city at the southern bank of the river nearby the railroad tracks. Similar to many other cities, in Üsküb too, the arrival of railroad attracted the attention of local entrepreneurs and they made investment for many modern facilities including hotels, patisseries, coffee shops, restaurants, taverns in newly built modern looking masonry buildings on the station street since its inception in 1870s. Therefore, by being on the same side of the river, the emergence and development of a railroad neighbourhood and station street must have pushed the growth of the immigrant neighbourhood positively.

The physical development of the neighbourhood can be traced through the city plans. The earliest plan documenting the immigrant neighbourhood is dated the second half of 1880s. (Figure 11)⁶⁷ The scale of the plan is 1:5000 and it shows some of the landmarks and public places in the city. The immigrant neighbourhood can be clearly distinguished in the plan by its regular and orthogonal fabric. A main street stretches from the east to west end of the neighbourhood and connects it to a landmark, the stone bridge, which remains from the sixteenth century. The secondary streets cross vertically. The plan gives no detail about residential building patterns or sizes and only illustrates the shape and size of the plots.

⁶⁴Yakup Ahabab, '93 Harbi Sonrası Muhacirlerin Üsküb Sancağında İskanı', *Gazi Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 3, no. 5, (2016): 6.

⁶⁵OA, İ.Ş.D. 70-4144, (September 22, 1884) *Teşvikiye* (the promoted one) is also another common name given to the new immigrant settlements.

⁶⁶OA, BEO. 1534-115045. (August 17, 1900) This document was initially introduced by Yakup Ahabab, 'Sonu Gelmeyen Misafirlik: Muhacerat; Bosna Muhacirlerinin Kosova'da İskanı', *Osmanlı Medeniyeti Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no.1, (July 2015): 5-6.

⁶⁷OA, Hrt_h_1891, scale: 1:5000, no date. This copy of plan was published in *Salnâme-i Vilayet-i Kosova*, h.1310 (1892-93).



Figure 12. City plan of Üsküb dated to 1899, partial view of the plan showing Muhajir neighbourhood with its surrounding.

Legend: 55: Faik Pasha Mosque, 56: Public bathhouse, 57: Primary School, 58: Military Building, 59: Coffee House, 60: Muhajir Bridge, 64: Steam Bath.

The only public building identified in the neighbourhood plan is Faik Pasha Mosque,⁶⁸ which was commissioned by the governor (*mutasarrıf*) of Üsküb and later governor-general (*vali*) of Kosova province (*vilayet*). The inauguration of the mosque is dated 1883–84 (h.1301), which coincided with the last period of his governorship in Üsküb.⁶⁹ At the western end of the neighbourhood, a military office is also marked on the plan. The plan demonstrates the route of the railroad line and its complementary buildings. After the inauguration of Üsküb- Niş (Nish) line connecting the city to the European railroad network in 1880s, a secondary station, called Vardar Station was taken into service. It was located nearby the immigrant neighbourhood.⁷⁰

Secondly, a more-recent plan dated 1899 gives more detail about the growth of the neighbourhood.⁷¹ It is printed in German and the scale is 1:10,000. It indexes 82 places and the buildings in the city. (Figure 12)⁷² This plan is more precise about the details including the immigrant neighbourhood. The name of the district (*Stadttheile*) is 'Vardar' and south part of the neighbourhood (*Viertel*) is 'Hamidiye' and north side is 'Muhacir' on the plan. Mill races define the northern and southern edges of the neighbourhood, which were used to provide energy to run cord yarn (*Gaytan*) factory and several flour mills. In addition to Faik Pasha Mosque (#53 on plan), there are two more buildings

⁶⁸This mosque was one of the victims of the devastating earthquake of 1963. A brief description of formal characteristics of the mosque is recorded in many sources. See Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi, *Avrupa'da Osmanlı Mimari Eserleri*, 249; Mustafa Özer, *Üsküb'te Türk Mimarisi*, 202–4; and Ladiya Kumbarcı-Bogoyeviç, *Üsküb'te Osmanlı Mimarisi Eserleri*, 210–13.

⁶⁹*Salnâme-i Vilayet-i Kosova*, h.1318 (1900–1901), 92–3.

⁷⁰Current railroad station in Skopje was designed by Kenzo Tange after the devastating earthquake of 1963 Vardar Station yard on the place of Vardar station.

⁷¹Plan von Skopje (Üsküb), stored in State archives of the Republic of Macedonia, Cartographic Material Section. Scale 1:10,000, with an index of 82 buildings in the city.

⁷²National Archives of the Republic of Macedonia, Cartographic Materials Collection, #649. Scale 1:10,000, 1899.

indexed on the plan, namely a public bath⁷³ (#56) and a school (#57). Being located on the flanks of the main street, they constitute the civic centre of the neighbourhood by adopting the legacy of Mecidiye case.

The local government was proud of the existence of new neighbourhoods on the southern bank of Vardar River. For them, the new neighbourhoods added value to the cityscape. The yearbook (*salnâme*) of 1892–93 (h.1310) depicts the new neighborhood enthusiastically:

the houses, which were built for the refugees (*muhacirin*) on the other side of the river almost exceeds two thousand in number. The uniform (*muntazam*), smooth (*müstevi*) streets constitute the most elegant (*dilrûbâ*) part of the city. A new face of advance and prosperity (*ümran*) is granted by the Sultan, the progress-giver (*Saye-i terakkivâye-i hazreti padişâhi*), numerous water mills and cotton tread (*gaytan*) factories and were built up to flourish on the sites of old tobacco and grain fields.⁷⁴

In contrast to Mecidiye, immigrant neighbourhood in Üsküb did not develop into its final scale at a time, several immigrant flows made the neighbourhood expand in decades. For instance, at the turn of the twentieth century, immigrants coming from Bulgaria were resettled in the area and the new part of the neighbourhood is honoured by adopting the name of the sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876–1909) as *Hamidiye* with a decree.⁷⁵ Here, by following up similar attempts done before, toponomy, like many other signs and symbols, becomes an important tool again to represent the reigning sultan or commemorate the old one and to glorify the neighbourhood.⁷⁶

Unlike Mecidiye, the immigrant houses in Üsküb were not identical since the lack of constructional provision and financial support of the local government. The immigrants built up their own houses on the assigned lots, therefore the economic level of the owners defined the quality of the buildings. Despite the lack of a spatial typology, an architectural analysis of the immigrant houses revealed some characteristics of the living spaces.⁷⁷ There were 12–16 houses in a plot and each building lot differs in size probably due to inheritance and purchase of properties in time. On a building lot, there is a house and some other additional units such as storage spaces, stable or any rentable spaces. In general, these spatial units constitute a courtyard formation in the middle. Among them, the owner's house faces to the street side and the lot is encircled by a perimeter wall to provide visual privacy. Depending on the wealth of the owners, the house is one or two-story high and can be made of mixed technique or solely masonry. (Figure 13)⁷⁸

⁷³It is recorded as *Vardar Hamam*, *Karşıyaka Hamam* or *Muhajir Hamam* in different sources. Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi, *Avrupa'da Osmanlı Mimari Eserleri*, 299; Ladiya Kumbaracı-Bogoyevič, *Üsküp'te Osmanlı Mimarisi Eserleri*, 363.

⁷⁴*Salnâme-i Vilayet-i Kosova*, h.1310 (1892–93), 109–10.

⁷⁵OA, Y.PRK.UM 54–88 (July 23, 1901).

⁷⁶In the recent years, there are many international publications examining the use of signs and symbols of authority in the public space and the representation of the sultan image during the late Ottoman Empire. See, Selim Deringil "Legitimacy Structures in the Ottoman State: The Reign of Abdulhamid II (1876–1909)", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 23, no. 3 (1991): 345–59; Selim Deringil, "The Invention of Tradition as Public Image in the Late Ottoman Empire, 1808 to 1908", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 35, no. 1 (1993): 3–29; Hakan T. Karateke, "Interpreting Monuments: Charitable Buildings, Monuments, and the Construction of Collective Memory in the Ottoman Empire", *Wiener Zeitschrift Für Die Kunde Des Morgenlandes* 91 (2001): 183–99, Hakan T. Karateke, *Padişahım Çok Yaş! Osmanlı Devleti'nin Son Yüzyılında Merasimler* (İstanbul: İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2015).

⁷⁷Tatjana D. Alensovka, *Zaumuma I Peşumanusa Ha Cmapo Tpađcho Jađpo Bo Skonje—Maşup Maano* (Protection and Revitalization of Old Town Neighborhoods in Skopje—Madžir Maalo.) (Graduate Thesis, Cyril and Methodius University, 1988).

⁷⁸Skopje City Museum Collection.



Figure 13. A typical street leading to Vardar River in Muhajir neighbourhood in Skopje, c. 1960s.



Figure 14. Partial view of the plan of Skopje showing Muhajir neighbourhood with its surrounding, 1929.

The city was captured by the Serbian army during the First Balkan War (1912). Since then, the local government introduced a number of master plans (Figure 14)⁷⁹ for the redevelopment of the old neighbourhoods. However, they either remained intact or the plans were partially implemented at most.⁸⁰ The urban tissue of immigrant neighbourhood remained

⁷⁹National Archives of the Republic of Macedonia, Cartographic Materials Collection, #364.

⁸⁰The first plan was drafted by Dimitrije Leko in 1914, shortly after the city was captured by Serbian Kingdom. The author of the second plan (1929) was Josif Mihailović, which proposed a ring road, many public spaces in the centre and straight streets connecting the public spaces.



Figure 15. The current view from the streets of the neighbourhood showing older and newer buildings.

almost same for decades until the devastating earthquake of 1963, that enabled the redesign of the majority of the city in a contemporary sense. Kenzo Tange won the international urban design competition and proposed a radical change that could also affect the immigrant neighbourhood.⁸¹ In accordance with his design, the new elevated railroad station was built on the place of old Vardar station and another modern public building which is now occupied by the National Bank was located on the south-western side of the neighbourhood. However, the inner core of the neighbourhood remained intact and the high-rise residential units to replace immigrant neighbourhood were never realized. Therefore, the building scale of the neighbourhood preserved for longer, even though the original buildings were replaced by the enduring ones in decades. Nevertheless, the old immigrant neighbourhood in Skopje has been under the constant threat of speculative rush of construction in single building scale in the recent years, despite some of the buildings were registered as cultural heritage property. (Figure 15)⁸²

Concurrent with Üsküb case, many immigrant neighbourhoods mushroomed around the peripheries of the Ottoman cities in the late nineteenth century. In Manastır (Bitola) a new immigrant neighbourhood was established at the edge of the city on a state-owned land. Like Üsküb, the primary school and the mosque constitute the urban core of the settlement and the regular layout visually differs it from the rest of the city. Similarly, the archival materials recorded the foundation of three neighbourhoods for Muslim immigrants in Selanik (Thessaloniki). Like the previous examples, royal names were given to the neighbourhoods: Selimiye, Hamidiye and Mecidiye in 1883.⁸³ Being an

⁸¹For a detailed examination of Kenzo Tange's Project, see Jasna Stefanovska and Janez Koželj, 'Urban Planning and Transitional Development Issues: The Case of Skopje, Macedonia', *Urbani Izziv* 23, no. 1 (2012): 91–100.

⁸²Authors' collection.

⁸³OA; İ.DH. 889/70731 (June 26, 1883). The petition sent from the governorate of Salonica recorded their approximate locations in the city. There are 67 houses built near *Mehmed Çavuş Bağçesi*, 81 houses in the *Kale-i Bâlâ* (upper castle) and 62 near *Gölcük* neighbours. According to Dimetriades comprehensive urban monography, these were all densely inhabited old neighbourhoods in the upper town, however, the official petition recorded that they had no physical connection with the other neighbourhoods nearby. For the historical survey of these neighbourhoods see Vassilis Dimitriades, *Topografia tis Thessalonikis kata tin Epohi tis Tourkokratias, 1430–1912* (Thessaloniki: 1983), 90–6. (in Greek).

important centre for the Balkan Jewry, it attracted hundreds of Jews to itself after anti-Jewish pogrom in Russia in 1890s. The local Jewish community provided relief for the newcomers and asked for help from the government to resettle them. The local government provided free space to constitute neighbourhoods at the eastern and western sides of the city. The new buildings were funded by the generous donations of Alliance Israélite Universelle and Baron Maurice de Hirsch.⁸⁴

The Balkan Wars (1912–13) marks another milestone for the influx of immigrants. The loss of the majority of the Ottoman Europe pushed thousands of immigrants to Anatolia and the Levant. For some, it was their second migration when they had to resettle in their new destinations. Here, Üsküb case, as a second-generation settlement founded after 1878 decree, provided us some key concepts to understand how the principles inherited from Mecidiye example were disseminated and adapted to existing urban settings. For instance, as observed in Mecidiye and Üsküb cases, the central government was in charge for the development of new immigrant neighbourhoods to a certain extent since the foundation of a new neighbourhood necessitates the approval of the sultan. In addition, public property lands in various legal forms were utilized to allocate immigrant neighbourhoods (*mir'i*, *vakıf* or *hazine-i hassa*) to limit the expenditures, and besides, the new building codes were forced to be implemented in the planning and physical construction of the neighbourhoods. The urban monographies based on primary sources already documented the presence of immigrant settlements in similar physical features.⁸⁵ Immigrant neighbourhood established at the northern end of Damascus, Aziziye neighbourhood in Konya, Selimiye neighbourhood in Bursa, Mecidiye and Hamidiye neighbourhoods in Afyonkarahisar, Bosnian (*Boşnak*) neighborhood in Ankara share similar physical features. (Figure 16)⁸⁶

It is important to note that the emergence of a spatial generic layout does not always correspond to have a similar pattern in the social life among the immigrant neighbourhoods. Based on social dynamics of their host cities, some of these neighbourhoods developed into prosperous districts, which were functioned as the modernist interface of the cities or sometimes they remained as poor shanty towns for a long time. The fate of each neighbourhood was mostly sealed by the local agents in each city. Therefore, despite their repetitive identical character of regularized/rationalized urban layout; each neighbourhood stood as a peculiar example in terms of providing unique cultural and social zones of living. In this regard, the unique characteristics of immigrant neighbourhoods have neither examined well as a microhistory theme nor their agency role in the change of urban landscape in many cities. Still, they require further research. Furthermore, the immigrant resettlement policies of the Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti*)

⁸⁴Dilek Akyalçın-Kaya, 'Immigration into the Ottoman Territory: The Case of Salonica in the Nineteenth Century', in *The City in the Ottoman Empire: Migration and the Making of Urban Modernity*, Ulrike Freitag et al. ed. New York: Routledge, 2011), 185–6.

⁸⁵There are many urban monographies, which elaborate the emergence and development of refugee neighbourhoods at the turn of the twentieth century. For instance, for the city of Damascus, two important monographies are very informative: Jean-Luc Arnaud, *Damas Urbanisme et Architecture, 1860–1925* (Arles: Sindbad, 2006) and Stefan Weber, *Damascus Ottoman Modernity and Urban Transformation, 1908–1918* (Århus: Aarhus University Press, 2009).

⁸⁶(1) 'City Plan of Bursa' in *Konstantinopel, Balkanstaaten, Kleinasien, Archipel, Cypern. Handbuch für Reisende von Karl Baedeker, mit 18 karten, 50 plänen und 15 grundrissen*; (Leipzig, K.baedeker, 1914); (2) Sevgi Aktüre, *19. Yüzyıl Sonunda Anadolu Kenti*, 202; (3) Jean-Luc Arnaud, *Damas Urbanisme et Architecture*, 170; (4) Sevgi Aktüre, *19. Yüzyıl Sonunda Anadolu Kenti*, 134. The chart is designed by the authors.

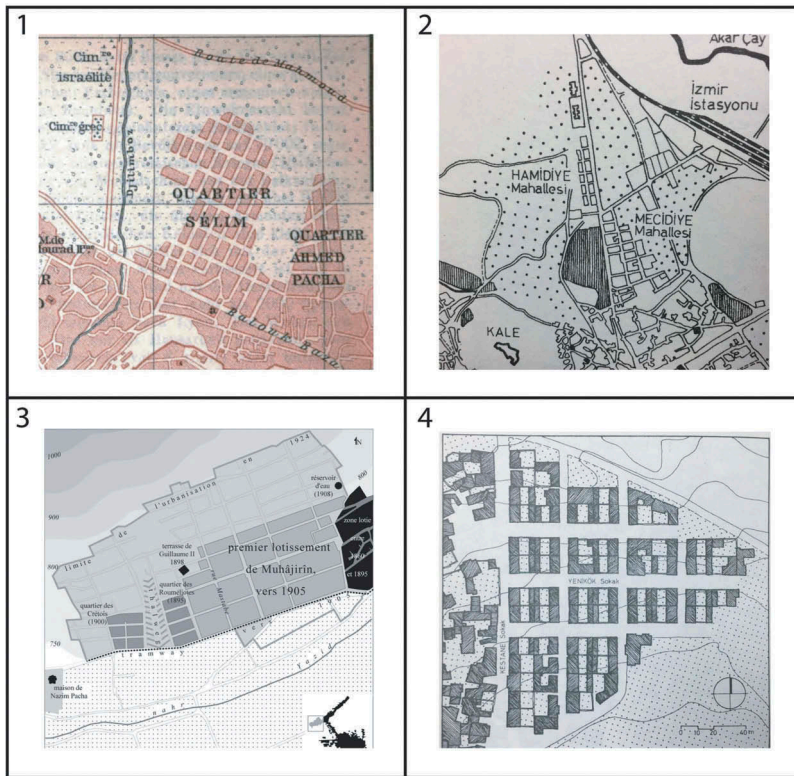


Figure 16. Muhajir Neighbourhoods founded in the late Ottoman Empire in different ottoman cities: (1) Bursa, (2) Afyon, (3), Şam, (4) Ankara.

era and Early Republican period were studied to a certain extent, but they should be revisited to examine the spatial practices.⁸⁷

Conclusion

So far, the academic literature has mostly examined the politic, social and economic dimension of the immigration in the Ottoman Empire and the urban planning and architectural implementation features remained mostly limited. In this perspective, this study constitutes a model for the formation of the immigrant settlements in the nineteenth century. This model explains the development of the immigrant settlements in the empire in two phases. The first phase coincides to the foundation of rural settlements in the scale of villages and small towns and the second one corresponds to establishment of new neighbourhoods at the peripheries of the Ottoman cities.

As demonstrated, in the first phase, the central government responded the question of the settlement by means of establishing new towns and villages in the middle of vast arable lands. In this context, Mecidiye town stands out as a distinctive case, an archetypal example, to understand administrative decisions, planning and implantation of a new town

⁸⁷Fuat Dündar, 'Balkan Savaşından Sonra', 52–4; Ali Cengizkan, *Mübedele ve Konut Yerleşimleri* (Ankara: ODTÜ Mimarlık Fakültesi, 2004).

for the newcomers. Mecidiye case also illustrates the implementation of rational, functional planning principles in the city scape, centring the constitution of a standardized and feasible settlement. It was also the earliest example of the implementation of the orthogonal street scheme for the foundation of a new city, which had been formerly applied only for the rebuilding of fire victim areas in the cities. Despite the ambitious effort shown for the realization of a large settlement, Mecidiye remained as a single example in this scale. The rest of the earliest planned settlements were in scale of villages.

The massive influx of immigrants to the Ottoman cities after the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877–78 marked the second phase of the establishment of the immigrant settlements. The imperial decree allowing the settlement of the newcomers in the cities enabled the emergence of a new urban formation in the Ottoman cities, known as immigrant (*muhajir*) neighborhood. To understand the formal characteristics of this formation, this study lays Üsküb immigrant neighbor under examination. As discussed above, this neighborhood inherited the planning decisions from Mecidiye case and adapted them to the urban context and constituted a generic example for its contemporaries and successors. The planning and implementation illustrate the functional standardization approach by an orthogonal scheme to minimize the cost of the project. The new neighborhoods were located at the outskirts of the cities mostly owned by the state or registered by the Civil List and a civic center provided the basic requirements of the residents. Due to the poor economic conditions, the central government was unable to fund the construction of the new living units, therefore there were local initiatives of fundraising to make conditions better. These spatial and administrative approaches epitomize the endeavor of the local and central governments in a rational and efficient manner. Therefore, Üsküb case provides us with the necessary tools to understand the dynamics of foundation of immigrant neighborhoods in the late Ottoman Empire.

Until the First World War, although the estimations vary, millions of immigrants were forced to move to the Ottoman Empire from its old territories. Besides, the flow of the immigrants from Caucasia, Crimea and Balkan Peninsula continued at the beginning of the twentieth century. Later on, the 1920s witnessed the exchange of millions of Greek and Turkish residents between Greece and Turkey and the experience gained from previous cases taught the politicians and officials a lot in terms of managing the immigrant resettlement question.

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