

## **GEOGRAPHICAL FACTORS EFFECTIVE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CITY KARDZHALI IN SOUTH-EASTERN BULGARIA**

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### **Introduction**

When analyzing the city with a geographical method, its relationship with the natural and the geographical environment should be investigated and specified. Such geographical conditions as geographical position, site and environs of a city are factors highly helpful to understand, explain and describe the facts on its foundation, historical development and present condition. It would not be wrong to consider these factors as fundamental elements of a city (Tanoğlu, 1944).

It is impossible to overlook the effects of geographical factors on development of a region. Land formations, climatic and soil characteristics and water resources are influential in the emergence and sustainability of economic activities primarily like agriculture and tourism. The better such natural characteristics as position, land formations, climate, water resources and such human characteristics as structure of the population and developmental aims and objectives are described and analyzed, the more successful the region's development goals will be (Akova Balcı, 2008).

### **Methods**

As mentioned above, the geographical position and environmental and human characteristics of a settlement are highly determinative in its foundation and development. To this end, print and digital sources have been reviewed, and a field survey has been conducted for the purpose of the present study which intends to reveal geographical factors influential in the foundation and development of the city Kardzhali.

### **Discussion**

Geographical boundaries of the Ottoman Empire were very wide. Territory of the Empire had spread on three continents, namely Asia, Europe and Africa. A large part of the Empire's European territory was on the Balkan Peninsula. With the spread of the Ottoman Empire on the Balkan Peninsula, major changes occurred in the settlement geography of this region. Important social, economic, cultural and spatial changes occurred in the previously established settlements and new villages,

towns and cities had been established across the peninsula by the new comers from Anatolia. In the eastern part of Rhodope Mountains, which is located in the south of Bulgaria and spread on both sides of the Valley of Arda River, the city Kardzhali was founded by the Ottoman Turks who came from Anatolia in the 14th century.

### **Geographical Position of the city Kardzhali and its Environs**

The city Kardzhali is located in the south eastern Bulgaria in the eastern part of the Rhodope Mountains. It is founded at 300 m. high off the sea level on both banks of the Arda River. The Arda River, which passes through the city, is one of the major tributaries of the Maritsa (Merich) River and is the most important stream which drains the eastern part of the Rhodope Mountains. There are two dams to the west and east of the Kardzhali city. The one found in the west is called the Kardzhali Dam and the other located in the east is the Studen Kladenets (Soguk Kuyu) Dam. These dams were constructed in the 1950s and now are used for irrigation and electricity production.



*Figure 1: Location map of study area (www.googleearth.com)*

The city gathers certain activities and services within a narrow or large area of influence, and is at the centre of a region which economically, socially and administratively makes up a whole together with its area of influence. It is understandable that the city develops along with the area, meets its various needs and provides some certain services for it (Göney, 1995). The city Kardzhali administratively, commercially, industrially and culturally is the biggest and most

advanced city in the eastern part of the Rhodope Mountains. It is 259 km away from the Bulgarian capital Sofia, 100 km from Plovdiv – the most important city on the Upper Maritsa Basin, 57 km from the Bulgarian-Greek border in the south and 132 km from Bulgarian-Turkish border in the south east. The Pan-European Transport Corridor 9 (PETC 9) runs through Kardzhali and then the Makaza Passage and reaches Aegean Sea's coastline. The city is centre of the county and province, both called Kardzhali.

The location of a city is based on the balance between the site and situational factors. Site is the local characteristics of a town or city, whereas situation is regional ones. Some cities rise as a result of such geographical locations. Cities generally rise and develop along the line formed by two different cultures or physical areas, for instance land and water, woods and steppes, mountains and plains (Tümertekin and Özgüç, 1998).

Site and situational characteristics of the city Kardzhali have been effective in the foundation and development of the city. The fact that it has been founded on the banks of the Arda River is closely related with the city's site characteristics. It is located at a relatively higher elevation like the eastern part of the Rhodope Mountains and at a lower level in the Arda River Valley. Agricultural and underground resources of the mountainous area and low plateau around the city have transformed it into a storing and processing centre, which is associated with its situational characteristics.

### **Natural Environmental Characteristics of the City Kardzhali and Its Environs**

As stated above, natural environmental characteristics surrounding a region are of prime importance in the foundation and development of a settlement. Such characteristics could be listed as geological, morphological, climatic, edaphic, hydrographical and vegetational characteristics (Yalçınlar, 1967).

In this part of the research, natural environmental characteristics of the area surrounding the city Kardzhali are discussed in terms of their effects on its foundation and development of the city.

### **Geological Characteristics**

The Rhodope Massif is based on metamorphic rocks of Palaeozoic and pre-Palaeozoic Era, which are primarily made of granites. This basement is covered with volcanic rocks such as rhyolite, trachyte and andesite and such sedimentary rocks as schist, limestone and marble of Palaeogene period. Block structure of the Rhodope Massif was caused by deep fluvial erosions and vertical tectonic activities of the Alpine Orogenesis that occurred in the Miocene and Pliocene. The Rhodopes Mountains, which contain layers of different geological periods, are rich in mineral resources. Such minerals as zinc, lead, copper, pyrite, gold, silver, chrome, uranium,

tungsten, fluoride, asbestos, perlite and zeolite are mined in the Rhodope Mountains (Yosifov et al., 1988).

This richness in mineral resources has enabled to establish of mineral processing industry and metallurgical plants in the city Kardzhali in and after 1955. Rapid increase in industrial activities in the city had led to population growth and spatial enlargement (Figure 2). This profusion of exploitable minerals was also made use of during the Ottoman Period. Moreover, inhabitants of the Rhodope Regions have benefited from sedimentary rocks widely distributed in the region for constructional purposes.

In the Rhodope Mountains, such carstic formations as doline, uvala and caves are found spread across the marble fields, while chimney and pedestal rocks are abundant across volcanic rock fields. These natural resources are potentially available for tourism sector, which is yet to develop in the Kardzhali Region.

### **Morphological Characteristics**

The Rhodope Mountains, which cover the south of Bulgaria, are divided into two main sections, namely the Western and Eastern Rhodopes. The border which separates these two sections passes through the valleys of the Kajalijka, Borovitsa, Madanska Creeks and the Arda River. The Western Rhodopes with an average elevation of 1098 m are higher than the Eastern Rhodopes with an average elevation of 320 m. Topography of the Eastern Rhodope Mountains is generally characterized by low hills and valleys of the Arda River's tributaries. Lower area where the city Kardzhali is located is surrounded by hills with an elevation range of 350 to 400 m. Valleys of the Arda River's tributaries separate these hills.

### **Climatic Characteristics**

The Eastern Rhodope Region, where the city Kardzhali is located, has a transition climate which is characterized by continental and Mediterranean climate. Because elevation is lower in the Eastern Rhodopes, effects of the Mediterranean climate could penetrate into the region, though the effect is not widespread. Rainfalls prevail in the region and climate is milder than the north of the country. The summer is hot and dry in the region. The number of sunny days is higher than rest of the country. The Kardzhali and Studen Kladenets Dams make the climate milder in study area, where the annual temperature average is 12,2°C – 0°C in winters and 24°C in summers. The annual average precipitation in Kardzhali city and its environs is 687 mm., generally in the form of rain. Precipitation in the form of snow occurs less than in the north. Precipitation is evenly distributed throughout the year in study area. The average precipitation is 202 mm in winter, 175 mm in spring, 138 mm in summer, and 172 mm in autumn. It is clear that the precipitation in winter accounts for 30%, in spring 25%, in summer 20% and in autumn 25%. Maximum amount of precipitation occurs in winter and spring, while the minimum is observed in summer and autumn. The region receives the least amount of precipitation in

August and the highest in December. Annual average humidity in Kardzhali is 72%. The northern (N) and southern (S) directional winds are the prevailing winds in the study area.

Climatic conditions are quite favourable for people to inhabit Kardzhali and its vicinity. As stated above, the monthly and annual average temperatures are higher and it has more sunny days than the country average. Additionally, winter is milder in the region than in the north. This allows people to conduct agricultural activities for 200 to 210 days a year, which is a longer period when compared with the rest of the country. In the Eastern Rhodope Region, farmers grow primarily tobacco, wheat, potato, grapes and apple, along the valleys and on the lower plateaus. Farmers widely grow vegetables on the banks of the rivers thanks to easy irrigation. Irrigation is necessary due to inadequate amount of precipitation in summer. Therefore, dams and hydroelectric power plants have been constructed on the Arda River to prevent floods, irrigate crops and plants and produce electricity.

Climatic, soil and topographic characteristics of the region offer the most favourable conditions in Kardzhali and its environs to grow tobacco, especially a high-quality variety called Oriental Tobacco (Cebel Basma). Tobacco growing is vital for the region. Even when ruled by the Ottoman Empire, Kardzhali was among the regions where tobacco growing was an important agricultural activity. This issue will be mentioned in detail later.

Today as in the past, Kardzhali Region is the area where the highest quality tobacco is grown in Bulgaria. Although tobacco growing, which has been subject to quota recently, brings low income in the rural areas of Kardzhali Region, it is the main income source for the farmers today.

Climatic factors in Kardzhali Region are very favourable not only for agriculture but also for animal husbandry. Farmers in the region also deal with apiculture besides livestock and goat and sheep breeding. The Eastern Rhodope Region was a significant animal husbandry centre during the Ottoman Period and used to supply meat and wool needs of Istanbul and Ottoman Army.

### **Soil Characteristics**

Eastern Rhodope Region has reddish brown forest soil and alluvial soil in the stream valleys. Arid and permeable soils in Kardzhali Region are highly convenient to grow tobacco. Today, soil erosion is at alarming levels in the Region where forests are devastated.

Fertile soil remarkably increased income obtained from agricultural activities and contributes to the development of the city as a centre of agricultural commerce.

### **Hydrographical Characteristics**

There are many material and moral factors that lead to the emergence of urban settlements. Monuments, city walls, religious buildings, roads, rivers, lake and sea shores and mountains are material factors that are influential in city and settlement planning. On the other hand, moral factors are cultural elements including religious ones and effects of colonialism. Rivers are among the material factors more or less decisive in planning cities and arranging settlements. All these are closely related with the features of the riverbed (from the Urban Geography Lectures of Prof. Süha Göney). From this viewpoint, the Arda River plays a remarkable part in the foundation, planning and arrangement of the city Kardzhali (Figure 1).

Proximity to water resources, fertile soils along the rivers feasible for agriculture, and easy transportation thanks to valleys play important roles in inhabitants' selecting river sides as settlement areas. Settlements in the Eastern Rhodopes are generally found on the slopes and in the valleys of the Arda River and its tributaries.

The Arda River, named as Ardakos or Arpezzos in ancient documents, was a vital water resource for people in the ancient times as well. The stream network formed by the Arda River and its tributaries like Virbitsa and Krumovitsa is of utmost importance to drain the water from the western and particularly the eastern part of the Rhodope Mountains. The source of the Arda River is found on the Golyam Perelik Hill (2191 m.), the highest peak in the Western Rhodope Mountains (Velikov and Stoyanova, 2007). The Arda River crosses the Turkish-Bulgarian border and flows into the Maritsa River together with Tundzha River in Edirne.

As aforementioned, Kardzhali and Studen Kladenets Dams are situated on the Arda River in the east and west of city Kardzhali. Hydroelectric power plants are found nearby these dams. There are no natural lakes in the region but a lot of springs in the carstic areas.

### **Vegetational Characteristics**

As expressed in the "soil characteristics" part, reddish-brown soil prevails in the Eastern Rhodope Region. Short-trunked trees like oak tree, Oriental beech and hornbeam, shrubs and bushes are dominant in the region. There are also relict forests of East Mediterranean pine (Lubenova et al., 2011). Elevation in the eastern part of the Rhodopes is not very high. Thus, Kardzhali and its environs are covered by short trees with broad leaves. The relatively low elevation has caused the settlements to gather around water resources and nearby the forests of oak trees. Forests supply firewood, lumber and such food as walnut and linden to inhabitants of the Rhodope Mountains.

The Rhodope Mountains are rich in relict, endemic and rare plants. It is possible to find such relict plants of Tersier period as silivriak, orchid, Rhodope rye, Rhodope thistle and white abies in the Western Rhodopes, while mullein and Thracian holmoak are endemic to the Eastern Rhodopes. The relict, endemic and rare plants

in the region are among the natural resources that are likely to contribute to the development of nature tourism in Kardzhali Region.

Natural environmental characteristics of the Region have been promoting the economic activities such as agriculture, industry, mining and tourism in the vicinity of the city. This situation gave rise to agricultural surplus and transformed the city into an agricultural trade centre before the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Natural environmental characteristics of the city Kardzhali and its environs played important roles in the emergence and development of industry in the city in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially after the mid-50s. As a result, the city became the most important administrative, commercial, industrial and cultural centre of the Eastern Rhodopes Region.

### **Human Characteristics of the City Kardzhali and Its Environs**

Settlements – villages, towns and cities – have a distinguished place in geography because they are created by humans and are major elements of cultural landscape (Tanoğlu, 1954). The present part on human characteristics of the city Kardzhali and its environs is concerned with the settlement history, demographic characteristics and economic activities of the study area.

### **Settlement History of the City Kardzhali and Its Environs**

The Eastern Rhodopes Region, where the city Kardzhali is located, has been inhabited since the Late Neolithic Period. Perperikon, Tatul and Belintash are archaeological sites, where vestiges of prehistoric settlement can be found.

Signs of settlement dating back to the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC and the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC were discovered around the rocky area 15 km northwest of city of Kardzhali. The area which comprises Palaeogene tuffs is called Perperik (Perperikon), also name of the village located nearby. In the area flows Perpereshka (Perperik) Creek, one of the tributaries of the Arda River. Inhabitants led their lives by farming around this massive rock and by the water resource.

This region, inhabited by Thracians as from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, was the border line between Thracians tribes Besis and Odrysians. At the end of the Bronze Age, the settlers of the region carved and shaped the rocks in the area and built a ritual area, consisting of castles, altars, acropolises, palaces, cisterns, graveyards and streets. It measures 491 m in height and holds a more fortified and advantageous position than the surrounding area.

There are vestiges of a gold mine in the area which was worked in the antiquity and where today the Stremtsi Village is found 2 km away from Perperikon. Many finds dug out by the Bulgarian archaeologists' show that Thracians forged a great number of items with gold and silver they mined in the Rhodope Mountains. The mine was also worked by Byzantines between 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century (Available at [http://www.perperikon.bg/flash/index\\_bg.html](http://www.perperikon.bg/flash/index_bg.html) - [Accessed 20 July 2012].), (Raduncheva, 2008; Atanasov, 2002).

In the following centuries, the Rhodope Mountains and Thrace were populated by Greeks, Persians, Romans, Byzantines, Slavs and Proto Bulgarians coming to the Balkans from the north and such Turkic tribes as Avars, Patzinaks, Uzes and Cumans (Mansel, 1993). Perperikon and its vicinity were ruled by Greeks, Romans and Byzantines after Thracians and as a result the rocky area changed over time. Perperikon, no longer as important as it was in the antiquity, served as the heart of episcopacy of the Ahridos Region in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century. From time to time, the region was attacked by several nations. Some of these attacks were conducted by Arabs and Goths in 378 AD, who were displaced by the Huns.

In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Gallipoli castle was seized from the Byzantines by Suleyman Bey in 1354, which made it possible for the Ottomans to attack and conquer Thrace. In 1361, Dimetoka was conquered and then Edirne was captured and made the capital city of the Ottoman Empire in 1365. Thrace was seized under the rule of Murat I (İnalçık, 1993). Today's Bulgarian lands were totally under the control of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Later on, Konyars, Turkmens, Yoruks and Tatars forcibly or willingly left Anatolia and populated the Balkan Peninsula (Gökbilgin, 1957, Barkan, 1952). Yoruks, who were placed within the boundaries of present Bulgaria, were Naldöken, Koçacık, Vize, Selanik and Tanrıdağ (Karagöz) yoruks (Gökbilgin, 1957).

Ottomans built public houses, foundations, Islamic lodges to facilitate the settlements of willing tribes and to quicken the cultivation process of the soil. As a consequence, Thrace and the east of Bulgaria, Maritsa (Merich) Valley and Dobrudja Region were turkified at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Şahin et al., 1990).

Some of the Turks migrated to Bulgaria settled and formed new quarters and districts in the existing cities, while some settled near the old villages and made them towns and cities in Ottoman Period. They sometimes founded new settlements.

Turks living in rural areas named the newly founded villages after their original settlements, Oghuz clans, dervishes and tribe leaders having fought in the conquest, while they also gave new names to them. Among these names are Saruhanlu, Tokatlu, Karasili, Bahadirlu, Salurlu, Koca Salih Yoruks, Harmanlu and the like (Aktepe, 1953; Halaçoğlu, 1989; Acaroğlu, 1988; Acaroğlu, 1994).

The Eastern Rhodopes Region was conquered between 1360 and 1361 by Lala Şahin Pasha, Gazi Evrenos Bey and Balaban Bey. Kardzhali was founded by the newcomers from Anatolia under the leadership of Gazi Kirca Ali, who commanded during the conquest. Therefore, the city was named after him. According to some views, a village had existed before the conquest upon which nucleus of the present city was established.

The city, which was established as a small settlement, grew bigger and larger thanks to the surrounding favourable geographical conditions. Kardzhali Region still remains to be the region in Bulgaria most densely populated by Turks.



### **Historical Development of the City Kardzhali**

Turks inhabited the Eastern Rhodopes Region in the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and founded Kardzhali and surrounding villages. Then, this unpopulated low mountainous area got crowded by the coming of Turks and the number of new settlements increased across the regions. Some of the settlements, like Kardzhali, in the Eastern Rhodopes Region grew into towns and cities thanks to geographical conditions suitable especially for transportation. In the region, Turks settled on the slopes of the Rhodope Mountains and along the valleys of the Arda River and its tributaries. Turks used to raise cattle, sheep and goats, practiced sericulture and, after the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, grew tobacco.

Another liability expected from young males who live in Kardzhali Region was to join the Ottoman army. Kardzhali Turks, a member of Rumelian Yoruks Organization, were also a part of "Evlad-i Fatihan Organization" and was exempt from some taxes. Besides, they were liable to serve in army either as a sekban – a kind of civil soldiering, and a guard or as a castle guard cavalryman. Soldiers of Kardzhali Region were included in "The Balkan Ottoman Army". Inhabitants of Kardzhali Region used to serve as soldiers receiving monthly payments in the Ottoman Balkan Army and send 5.000 soldiers to the army.

Agriculture and trade of tobacco started in the Ottoman Empire in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century and spread all over the Empire over time. However, it has been observed that tobacco growing centred around certain areas at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century; the ones in the Balkan Peninsula are Yenice-i Karasu (Genisea) and Yenice-i Vardar (Giannitsa) in the fertile Macedonian Plain in the south of the Rhodope Mountains and Kardzhali Region at the northern foot of the Eastern Rhodope Mountains and Dimetoka and Komotini (Gumulcine) at the southern foot (Yılmaz, 2005).

Tobacco growing, which started in certain areas of the Ottoman Empire, spread across the Empire and accordingly commercial activities increased, which came to develop tobacco transportation by land, river and sea. Thus, certain land, river and sea route networks showed up for tobacco trade. Cities and towns especially at each end of these routes became notable tobacco trade centres, among which are Durres (Drach), Drama, Yenice-i Karasu (Genisea), Yenice-i Vardar (Giannitsa), Selanik (Thessaloniki), Kavala, Gumulcine (Komotini), Dimetoka (Didymoteicho), Kardzhali, Uzuncaova Haskoy (Haskovo), Edirne, Enez, Tekirdag, Izmir, Samsun, Iskenderun, Lazkiye, Cairo and Alexandria. Tobaccos grown in Kardzhali Region were transported to the Aegean Coastline via the route over the Rhodope Mountains and to Edirne via the valley of the Arda River; then from Edirne to Enez by river transportation on the Maritza River and finally from Enez to Izmir by sea (Yılmaz, 2005; Arslan, 2009).

In the Ottoman Period, Kardzhali was an important centre of tobacco trade and agriculture. Thanks to tobacco agriculture incomes and welfare of inhabitants of Kardzhali Region were increased. Economy in the city Kardzhali was invigorated by the tobacco experts and merchants who used to come to organize the tobacco warehouses and transportation, and by merchants who deals with tobacco

transportation. This situation played a striking role in the development of the city Kardzhali as a trade centre based on tobacco growing. Trade of tobacco also became effective in shaping the spatial landscape of the city due to tobacco warehouses built in the city Kardzhali.

### **The Balkan Peninsula, the City Kardzhali and its Environs in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and the First Half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

Due to their geographical positions, the Rhodope Mountains separated the Ottoman Empire's Bulgarian and Greek territories from each other and combined them via some mountain passages, which had required the Ottoman military troops stationed in and around the city of Kardzhali in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and beyond.

The building once used as spinning factory was transformed into military hospital in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Besides this military hospital, there were some barracks around the city Kardzhali. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, municipal organization was established in the city. A city hall was built and primary (*sibyan mektebi*) and high schools (*rushtiye*) were established.

It is possible to state that the city Kardzhali was a centre to the neighbouring settlements the Rhodope Mountains in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, yet because it was not located on the Ottomans Empire's main routes such as Sag Kol (Right Route), Orta Kol (Centre Route) and Sol Kol (Left Route), it remained as a local centre and small-sized city. Although it was not as big as Plovdiv (Filibe), Thessaloniki (Selanik), Skopje (Uskup) and Bitola (Manastir), Kardzhali was a town which had a class of artisans and bazaar (*charshi*) where wide varieties of handicrafts were made. It can be stated that the city Kardzhali had characteristics of Turkish-Ottoman city until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Göney, 2011; Bayartan, 2005).

The 19<sup>th</sup> century, also called "the longest century of the Empire", is the period when non-muslims nations on the Balkan Peninsula rebelled against and seceded from the Ottoman Empire by proclaiming their independence or becoming semi-autonomous (Ortaylı, 2008; Aydın, 1992). Balkan countries became independent one by one and the Empire lost a great deal of territory on the Peninsula. Russian declared war against the Ottoman Empire on 24 April 1877. The Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878), also known as "the 93 War", was ended with the defeat of the Ottoman Empire (Aydın, 1992; Oğuz, 1987; Köse, 2006).

During the War, Russians crossed the Danube, moved quickly across Bulgaria and invaded Edirne and proceeded towards Istanbul, which forced some Turks living in Eastern Rumelia Province to refuge in the Rhodopes Region, which includes Kardzhali as well. Turks had settled particularly in the Province Danube and Maritsa Basin started to migrate to Istanbul (Şimşir, 1989; Kocacık, 1980). 400.000 immigrants arrived in Istanbul from Rumelia in September 1879 (İpek, 1999).

Only two regions densely populated by Turks remained after the 93 War. One is the Province Danube in the north and the other is the Rhodopes Region in the Province Edirne in the south. Turks and military units in these two regions firmly stood

against the Russians and Bulgarians. However, Shumnu (Shumen) and Varna in the north was given to Russia without any resistance. In the south, Russians were forced to stop by Turks and Pomaks and not able to enter the Rhodope Mountains. Nowadays these are the two regions where Turkish population is densely found in Bulgaria.

In 1885, Bulgaria annexed the Eastern Rumelia Province which was founded according to the Berlin Congress. However, because Turkish insurgences could not be quelled in the Rhodopes over 7 years, Bulgaria had to give away Kardzhali and Rupchoz to the Ottoman Empire (Aydınli, 2011).

When Kardzhali was a part of the Province Thessaloniki, it was included in the Province Edirne together with other small towns in the Rhodope Mountains in 1886. According to 1892-1893 Almanac (*salname*) of the Province Edirne, Kardzhali was a small town of Edirne Central District (*sanjak*). Bulgaria proclaimed independence in 1908, but Kardzhali remained to be a town of Edirne Central District (*sanjak*) of Ottoman Empire till the end of the Balkan Wars in 1913.

After Edirne was retrieved from Bulgaria at the end of the Balkan Wars, eastern part of the Maritsa River was totally seized by the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Army did not cross the Maritsa River. But a group of volunteer militia under the command of Teshkilat-i Mahsusa lieutenants resolved to go on proceeding and seized Kardzhali, Gumulcine (Komotoni) and Iskece (Xanthi) regions. Firstly, these soldiers established “the Western Thrace Provisional Government”, which then proclaimed its independence on 25 September 1913 and founded “Turkish State of Western Thrace”. Yet Ottoman Empire pestered by the pressures of European countries, primarily Russia, had to withdraw its support to this state. Thus, Western Thrace was left to Bulgaria as required by the Istanbul Treaty signed on 29 September 1913. It was resolved by the Treaty that the region would be handed over to Bulgaria by Turkish State of Western Thrace by 25 October 1913, whose political existence of 57 days came to an end (İpek, 1999; Bircudak, 2008; Aydınli, 2011).

The city Kardzhali and its environs stayed within the border lines of Turkish State of Western Thrace till the end of October 1913. Then, Kardzhali and its environs were left to Bulgaria and Gumulcine (Komotoni) and Iskece (Xanthi) to Greece. 333.321 Turks used to live in the Western Thrace in 1913 (Shaw, 1980; Halaçoğlu, 1990; Şimşir, 1989; AI, 1992).

The city Kardzhali became district centre in 1934 and region centre in 1949. Today, the city Kardzhali is the centre of the Province Kardzhali, which has seven towns; Kardzhali Centre, Ardino (Egridere), Cebel, Kirkovo (Kizilagac), Krumovgrad (Koshukavak), Momchilgrad (Mestanli) and Chernoochene (Yenipazar).

Today the municipal government of city Kardzhali and the other six towns are primarily in the hands of the mayors of Turkish-dominated political organization “Movement for Rights and Freedoms”. There are 117 rural settlements in the territory of the central town Kardzhali governed by 48 Mukhtars (head of a village) (Available at <http://www.kardjali.bg/?pid=7,6->[Accessed 13.08.2012]).



*Figure 2: A view of city Kardzhali, Arda River, Rhodope Mountains and Lead-Zinc Complex*

### **Demographical Characteristics of the City Kardzhali**

When demographical characteristics of the city Kardzhali are analyzed, it is observed that the population increased between 1934 and 1985, but decreased according to census data in and after 1992. The population was only 9.075 in 1934, but rose to 12.069 in 1946 after the World War II. The increase over 12 years accounts for 2.994 inhabitants. According to Mladenov and Dimitrov (2009), migration from rural areas to cities started between 1934 and 1946 in Bulgaria, though the number was not remarkable. During this period, the city Kardzhali also received migrants. As in the rest of the world, in Bulgaria death rates declined and population increased thanks to medical advances made after the World War II.

Between 1946 and 1956, the population of the city grew by 11.174 and accounted for 23.246 inhabitants. During this period, metal processing, food and textile industries were launched and construction sector rapidly grew. These booming sectors gave way to dramatic changes in the city's population. Increase in the number of new factories in the following years spurred migration to cities. Kardzhali's population grew by 12.298 in ten years (1956-1965) and reached 35.541. The population continued to grow between 1965 and 1975. In this ten-year period, 12.964 more inhabitants joined the population, which rose to 48.505. From 1975 to 1985, population increased by 7.401 inhabitants to reach 55.906 inhabitants. It is evident that the population of the city exceeded 50.000 in 1985. The number of

Turks increased more than the Bulgarian thanks to higher birth rates of Turks across the region as in the city Kardzhali.

Table 1: Number of inhabitants in Kardzhali city, County of Kardzhali and Province of Kardzhali

Years	1934	1946	1956	1965	1975	1985	1992	2001	2011
City	9075	12069	23243	35541	48505	<b>55906</b>	<b>45793</b>	45659	38895
County	41625	48737	63364	82846	92778	<b>105993</b>	<b>76155</b>	69830	67460
Province	169913	195844	225294	267657	273507	<b>289376</b>	<b>203251</b>	164019	152808

Source: National Statistical Institute of Republic of Bulgaria

Muslims, first Pomaks then Muslim Romanies were renamed against their will with Bulgarian names by the Bulgarian State in 1970s. Between 1984 and 1985, Bulgarian government adopted an assimilation policy to eradicate the sense of national belonging to Turkish culture and destroy Turkish identity in Bulgaria (Acaroğlu, 1993; Atasoy, 2010; Atasoy, 2011). This policy continued until 1989, when some 300.000 Turks, suffered from the assimilation, had to migrate to Turkey. Most of the migrants were inhabitants of the city Kardzhali and Eastern Rhodopes Region (Mladenov and Ilieva, 2012). This population flow into Turkey caused a decline in the number of inhabitants living in the city. Its population decreased by 10.113 in 1992 in comparison with the data obtained in 1985. A drastic decline not only in the population of the city but also in the Kardzhali County and Kardzhali Province (Table 1).

Whereas 289.376 inhabitants used to live in the Province Kardzhali in 1985, the population dwindled by 86.125 as result of external migration to Turkey between 1989 and 1992 and fell to 203.251 inhabitants. Turks in Bulgaria migrated also to Turkey between 1950 and 1955 (Tanoğlu, 1952-1953), in 1972 and 1978 though number of the migrants was lower than the great migration that started in 1989.

The city of Kardzhali as well as all the Kardzhali Region lost a large part of trained and specialized Turks during and after 1989 as a result of large migration wave towards Turkey. It can easily be said that this migration had devastating effects on the social, economic and cultural structure of the city and Eastern Rhodopes Region.

Furthermore, privatization of all state-run facilities, agricultural production complexes and soils after 1990 thoroughly changed the economic structure of the Bulgaria and the Kardzhali Region. It was not just service and industrial sectors in

the city but also agricultural sector in the Kardzhali Region that got negatively affected by the migration of tobacco growing farmers to Turkey and the national quota imposed on tobacco growing.

Some of the metallurgy and textile facilities in the city Kardzhali were bought and reactivated by private companies after 1990, but insufficient employment opportunities caused the active manpower to leave Kardzhali city and region and migrate to other cities of the country or other EU countries.

The population in the city continued to decline after 1992. In 2001, the population was 45.659 inhabitants. When the 2001 data on the population of the city is analyzed, it can be realized that population was 134 inhabitants less than it was in 1992. According to 2011 census data, the population was counted to be 38.895, which are 6.764 inhabitants less than 2001.

According to 2011 census data, 6.680.980 people live in Bulgaria. It has been revealed by this census also providing data on ethnic structure of Bulgaria that 5.664.624 of the total population were Bulgarian, 588.318 were Turks, 325.343 were Romanians, and 49.304 were of other nationalities. Ethnic origins of 53.391 were not provided. The Province Kardzhali was populated by 152.808 inhabitants.

According to the same census (2011), 38.895 inhabitants live in the city Kardzhali, including 23.737 Bulgarians, 13.578 Turks, 517 Romanians, 218 inhabitants of other nationalities. Ethnic origins of 845 were not provided. Pomaks, which is a Muslim community, are regarded as Bulgarians by state in the censuses. Densely populated Pomak settlements in Bulgaria are found in the Provinces Smolyan (Pashmakli) and Kardzhali in the southern Bulgaria and the Province Lovech (Lofcha) in the north-central Bulgaria. However, a small number of Pomaks live in other regions of the country. They inhabit the mountainous areas in the south particularly near the Greek border in the east and west of the Rhodope Mountains. Some regard themselves as Turks and some as Bulgarians. When demographical characteristics of Kardzhali Province and city are discussed, it should be stated that Pomaks are regarded as Bulgarians by the state. Thus, it is possible to claim that Muslim population in the country is higher than officially declared.

## Results

Favourable geographical conditions of the region stand out as the most significant factor for people to prefer the eastern part of the Rhodope Mountains - in which the city Kardzhali is located - as a suitable settlement area since the prehistoric ages. Geographical position, natural environmental and human characteristics of the city Kardzhali and its environs have allowed the city to be the administrative, commercial, industrial, social and cultural centre of the Eastern Rhodopes Region. Yet undesirable and unfortunate events happened in the city and the region in the 1980s owing to governmental interventions. The population in the region declined because of the migrations to Turkey in and after 1989, which caused economic depression. The region lost a great majority of the educated and specialized labour

force as a result of the migration at stake. Economic plights that appeared as a consequence of regime change in the country during the transition to free market economy brought about financial problems. Population in the Kardzhali Region incessantly decreased due to insufficient and inefficient new investments, unsatisfactory operation of the available facilities and economic problems that the city Kardzhali and region faced as the entire country did in 20 years. Bulgaria became a full member of the EU in 2007. It is possible to suggest that the social, economic and spatial situation of the Kardzhali city and region and other town centres have gradually but not significantly ameliorated thanks to the EU funds. Still, rural settlements in the region could not socially, economically and spatially benefit from these ameliorated conditions. It has been observed over the last years that the migrants from Bulgaria in Turkey - especially the retired in Turkey -, most of which hold dual citizenship, invigorate the economy in the Kardzhali city and region by spending their holidays in the region, organizing fairs, renovating their old houses and practicing some agricultural activities for his/her own.

In the light of aforementioned statements, taking into consideration its favourable geographical position, convenient natural environmental and human characteristics, though caused some problems in the recent history, one can readily express that the Kardzhali Region has been an area where Turks, Pomaks and Bulgarians have lived together for centuries notwithstanding their cultural differences.

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