

# The contemporary Greek city: urban growth and change in the city of Thessaloniki 1950-2010

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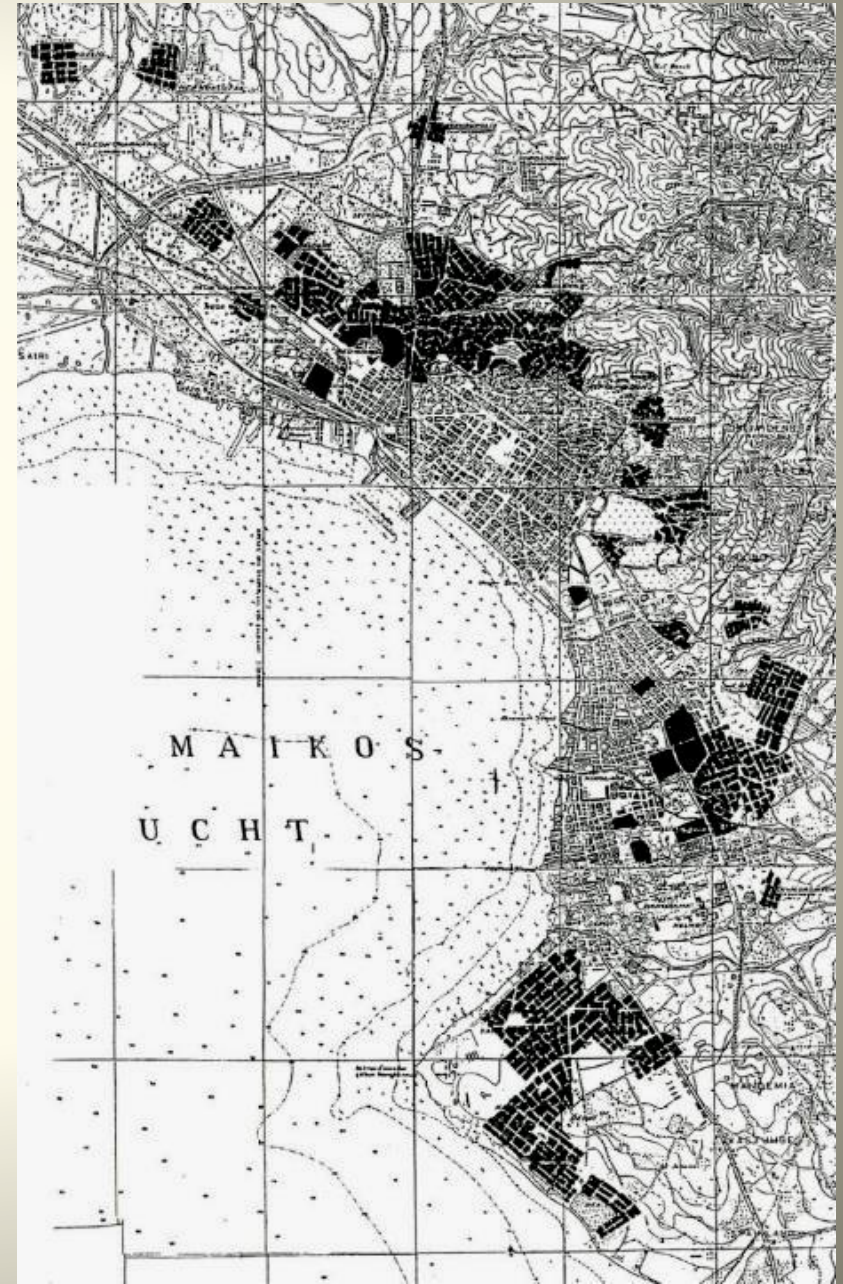
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# Urban growth in the pre-war period

- Contemporary urban growth in Greece and hence the contemporary Greek city is connected with **the inflow of refugees** after the Asia Minor disaster and the exchange of population between Greece and Turkey.
- The inflow of refugees was the main fact that led to a rapid increase of the country's population and its urban population in particular.
- The rehabilitation of the “urban refugees” led to the **first large expansion of the cities, outside their historical core.**
- In the period 1920-28:
  - The country's population increased by 23,7%
  - Urban population increased from 23% in 1920 to 31% of the total population in 1928
  - The population of Athens and Piraeus was doubled
  - The population of Thessaloniki increased by 37,5%.
- A number of new settlements emerged around the two big cities (Athens + Thessaloniki) as well as smaller ones (Parta, Volos, Kavala etc.), which became the geographical locus of urban expansion in these cities.

# The post 1920 extensions of the city

- Urban refugee settlements in the periphery of Thessaloniki



# A post 1920 urban refugee settlement



Αεροφωτογραφία του προσφυγικού συνοικισμού της Κάτω Τούμπας, 1962  
A photomap of the refugees' settlement at Kato Toumpa, 1962

Source:

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10201732119660883&set=p.10201732119660883&type=3&theater>

# Urban growth in the period 1950- mid 1970s

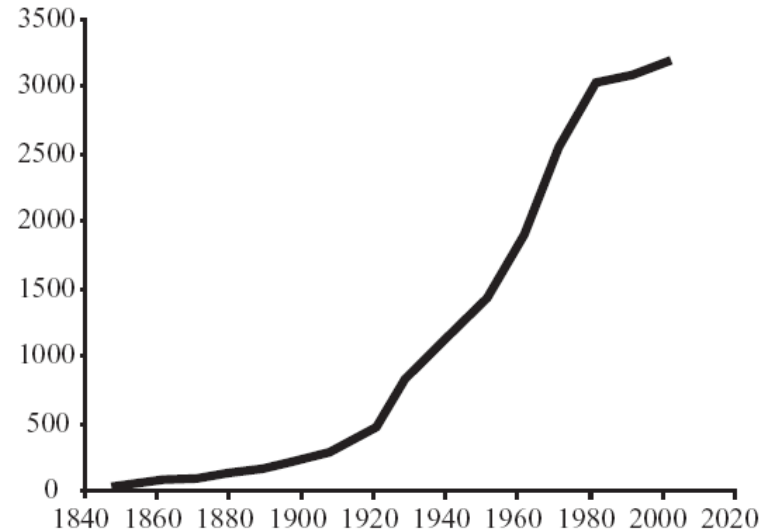
## three main features

- Big outflow of the rural population and rapid growth of the two major urban centers (Athens and Thessaloniki)
- High rates of building activity in the planned parts of the two cities (today's inner areas)
- Urban expansion in the outer fringe adjacent to the planned area with informal self-housing forming the then informal settlements

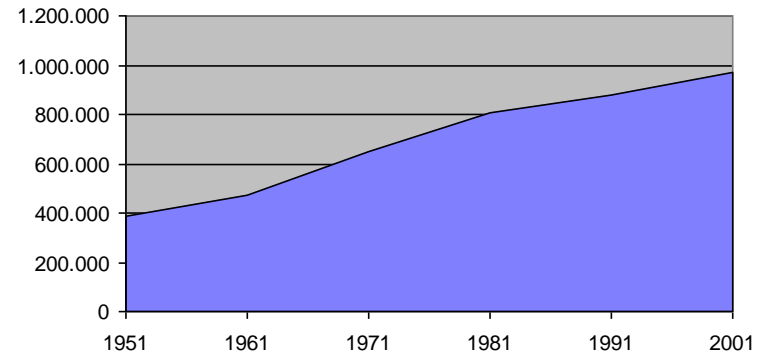
# Urban growth rates until 1970s

- In Athens post-war growth rates had no precedent in the city's history : In 1961 only 1 in 4 inhabitants were born in Athens.
- In the 1960s Thessaloniki grew by the highest ever rate (nearly 4% a year) and from a city of 303,000 became a city of 706,000 inhs in 1981.
- Until the early 1970s **only the two big cities (Athens and Thessaloniki) were gaining population and not the small urban centres.**
- Nevertheless this increase was not enough to recoup the losses from the Greek rural periphery: External migration and urbanization together absorbed the number of people who fled from rural and other urban and semi-urban areas

Fig. 1: The population of Athens 1848 - 2001



Wider Area of Thessaloniki: Population change 1951-2001



# The main development patterns:

## a) development of the planned areas with high densities

- Post war economic development was based to a large extent on the housing -and in general- the construction sector
- At the heart of the post-war housing boom was the domination of small landownership and the so-called system of *antiparohi* by which an owner of a plot provides this plot for the developer and gets in return a percentage of the developed property.
- “*Antiparohi*” contributed to rapid reconstruction of the central (planned) parts of the cities with high densities and covered to a large extent acute housing needs at a period when savings and housing loans were very limited:
- As a result: almost the entire old housing stock (regardless of its architectural quality) was replaced in the older parts of the city.

# The system of “antiparohi” in a diagram

marketed
property
by
the
developer
rate of
antiparohi

marketed
property
by the
developer
rate
of
antiparohi

marketed
property
by the developer
rate
of
anti-
parohi

Post-war period – 2009: a period of a continuous increase of the “antiparohi” rate over time



# The compact and high density city – development with the *antiparohi* system



# Thessaloniki in the 1960s and today



Πηγή: <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=769229543191314&set=o.395469423904836&type=3&theater>

# The main development patterns:

## b) Self-housing and urban expansion through informal building

- Self-housing through informal building was perhaps the most important feature of the integration of the rural population in the rapidly growing urban agglomerations
- The **dominant model of informal building**: a household was buying a small plot (average size of aprox. 200 sq.m.) derived from the informal subdivision of a rural allotment around the perimeter of the city (in the case of Thessaloniki these rural allotments were distributed for refugee settlement in the mid-war period).
- Only in some cases informal building was taking place on appropriated municipal (or other public) land
- Through this mode of housing production extensive residential areas of informal -and outside the official plan- buildings were formed, without any infrastructure (technical, social, etc.)
- These neighborhoods were characterized by elementary layouts of 'building' blocks

# An informal settlement

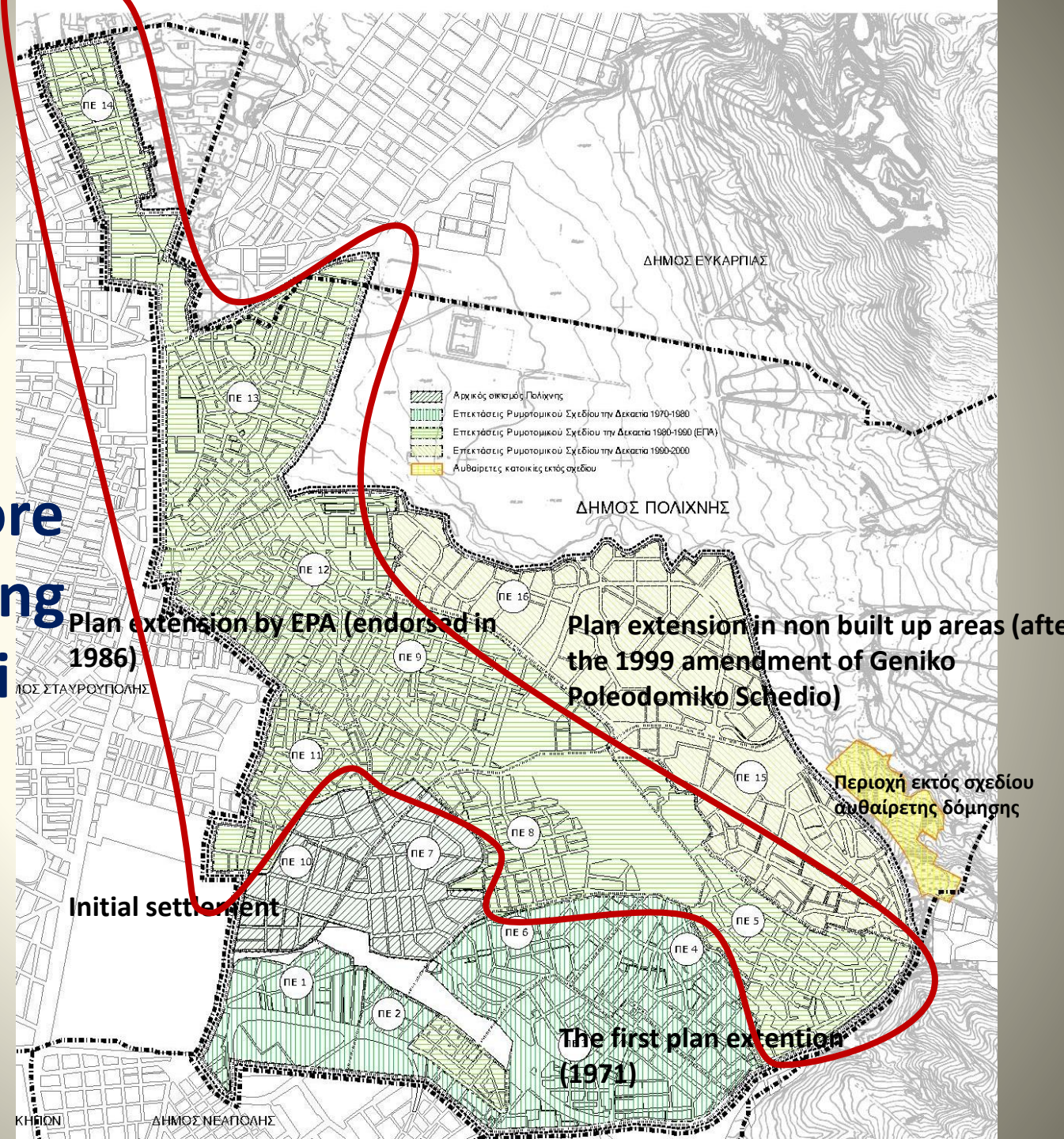


## Thessaloniki – Meterora (Polichni)

Source:  
<http://www.greekscapes.gr/index.php/2010-01-21-16-47-29/landscapescat/54-2009-07-31-09-44-13/216-meteora-thessaloniki.html>



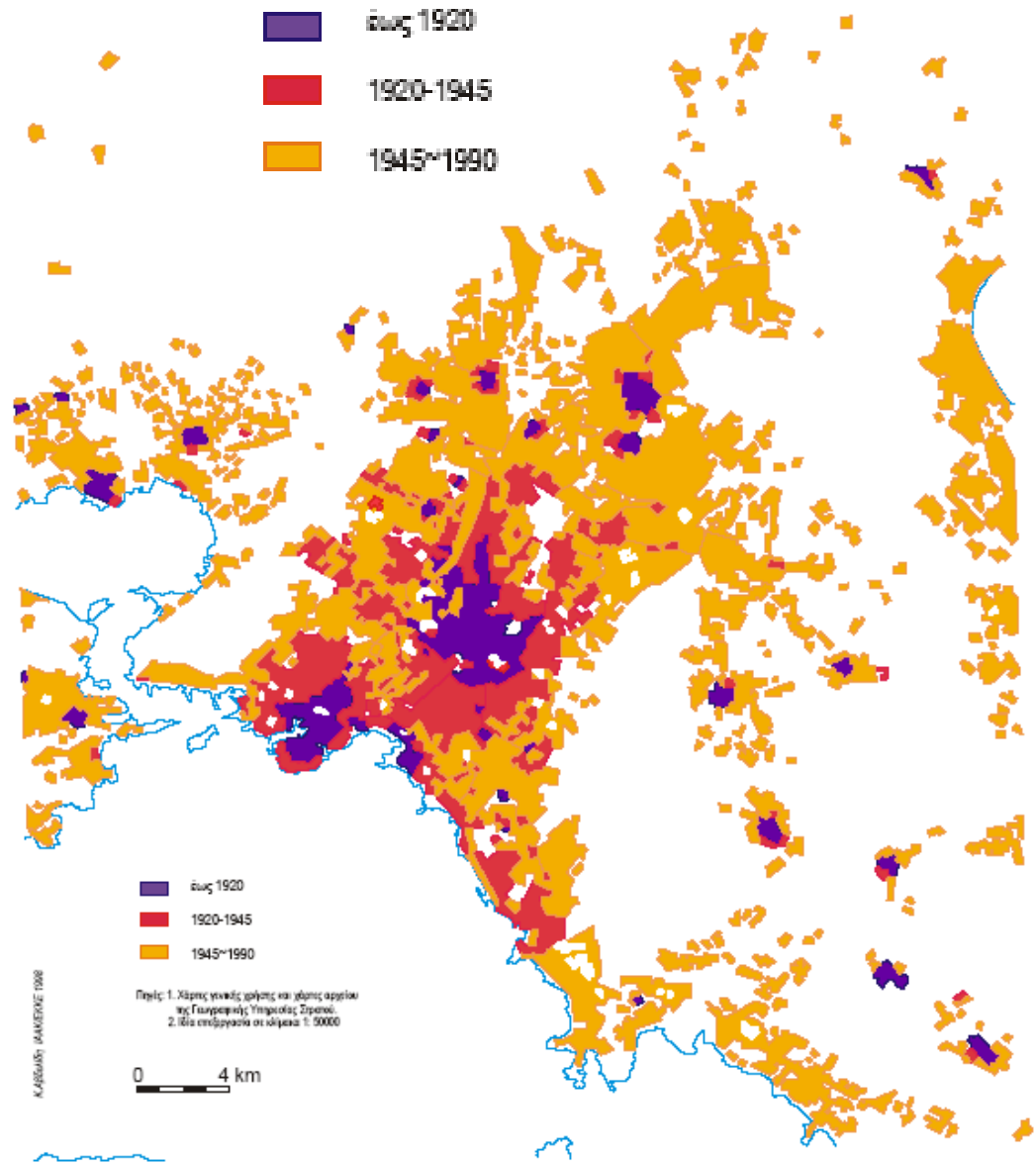
# Informal settlement before the 1983 planning reform (Polichni Municipal Unit)



# Urban growth in the period mid 1970s-1990: first signs suburbanization trends

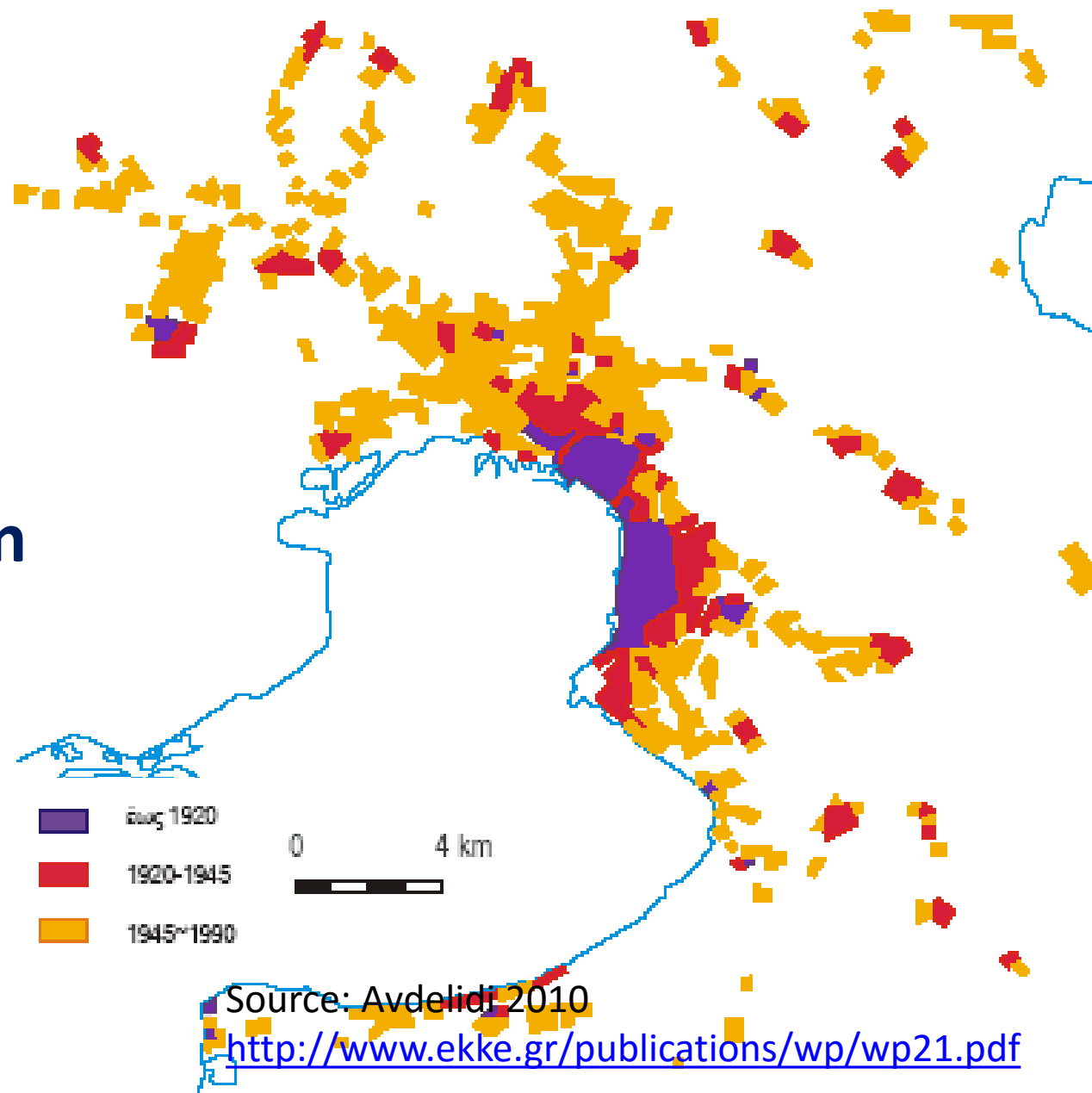
- In the 1970s in Athens and in the 1980s in Thessaloniki growth rates decreased
- During this period, medium and smaller cities began to recover and earn population attracting rural population of their surrounding regions.
  - The main development pattern: the “*antiparohi*” system
- During this period, but mainly since the 1980s, the suburbanization Athens and Thessaloniki emerges, a phenomenon which was intensified from the 1990s onwards.

# Urban expansion in Athens 1920-1990



Source: Avdelidi 2010

<http://www.ekke.gr/publications/wp/wp21.pdf>



- έως 1920
- 1920-1945
- 1945-1990

0 4 km

Source: Avdelidi, 2010

<http://www.ekke.gr/publications/wp/wp21.pdf>

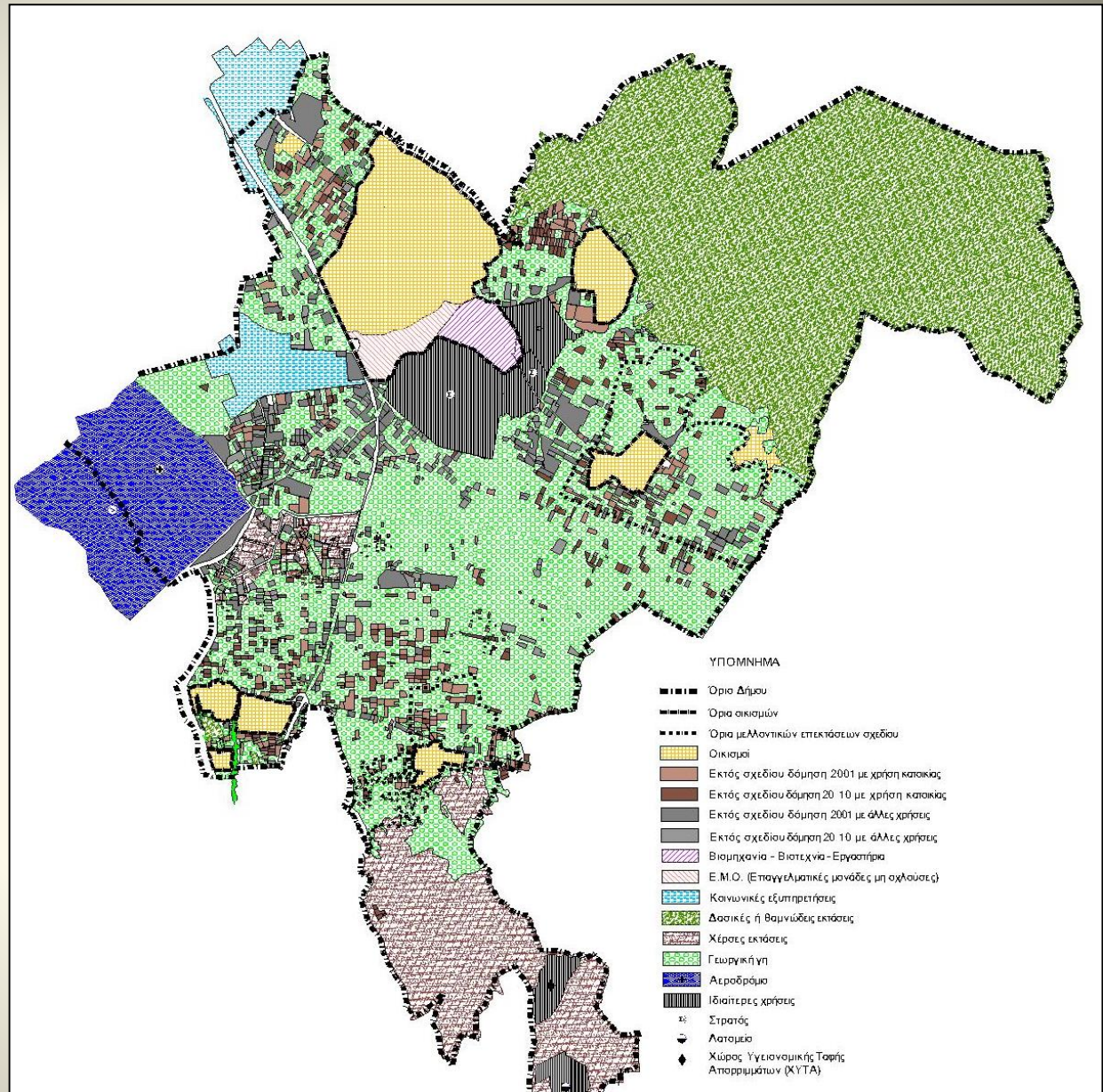
# Urban expansion in Thessaloniki 1920-1990



# Urban growth in the 1990s and 2000s: Suburbanization and the property boom

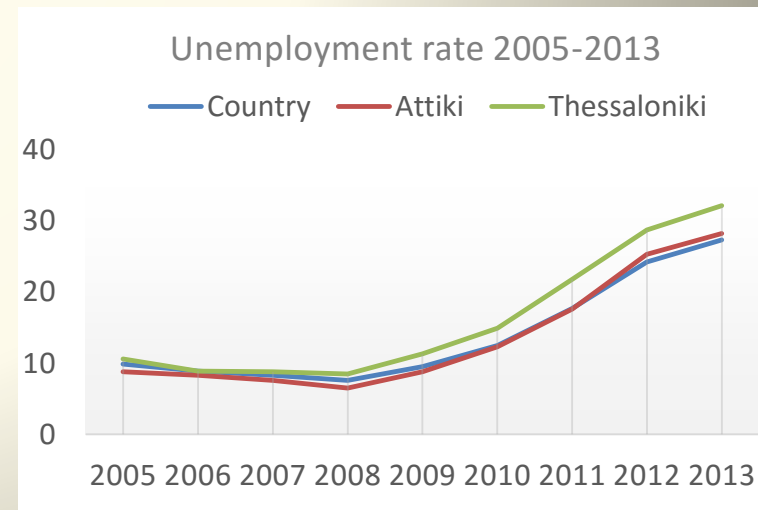
- Since the mid 1990s drastic changes occurred in the hitherto prevailing mode of urban development of Greek cities, that is, the compact and high density city. The same holds for both the bigger urban centres (Athens and Thessaloniki) and the smaller ones.
- Suburbanization and sprawl trends across the suburban area with the development of both suburban residence and all other urban activities and functions.
- These urban growth and development trends took place in a period of about 15 years from the mid-1990s until the late 2000s, i.e. a period of fast growth in the country until the official start of the economic crisis (In the period 2000–08 the country reached a yearly average growth about 4%).
- They coincided with intense building activity and a new cycle of property boom
- A considerable part of this activity also took place outside the planned areas with detached houses.

# Urban sprawl in the south-east zone of Thessaloniki

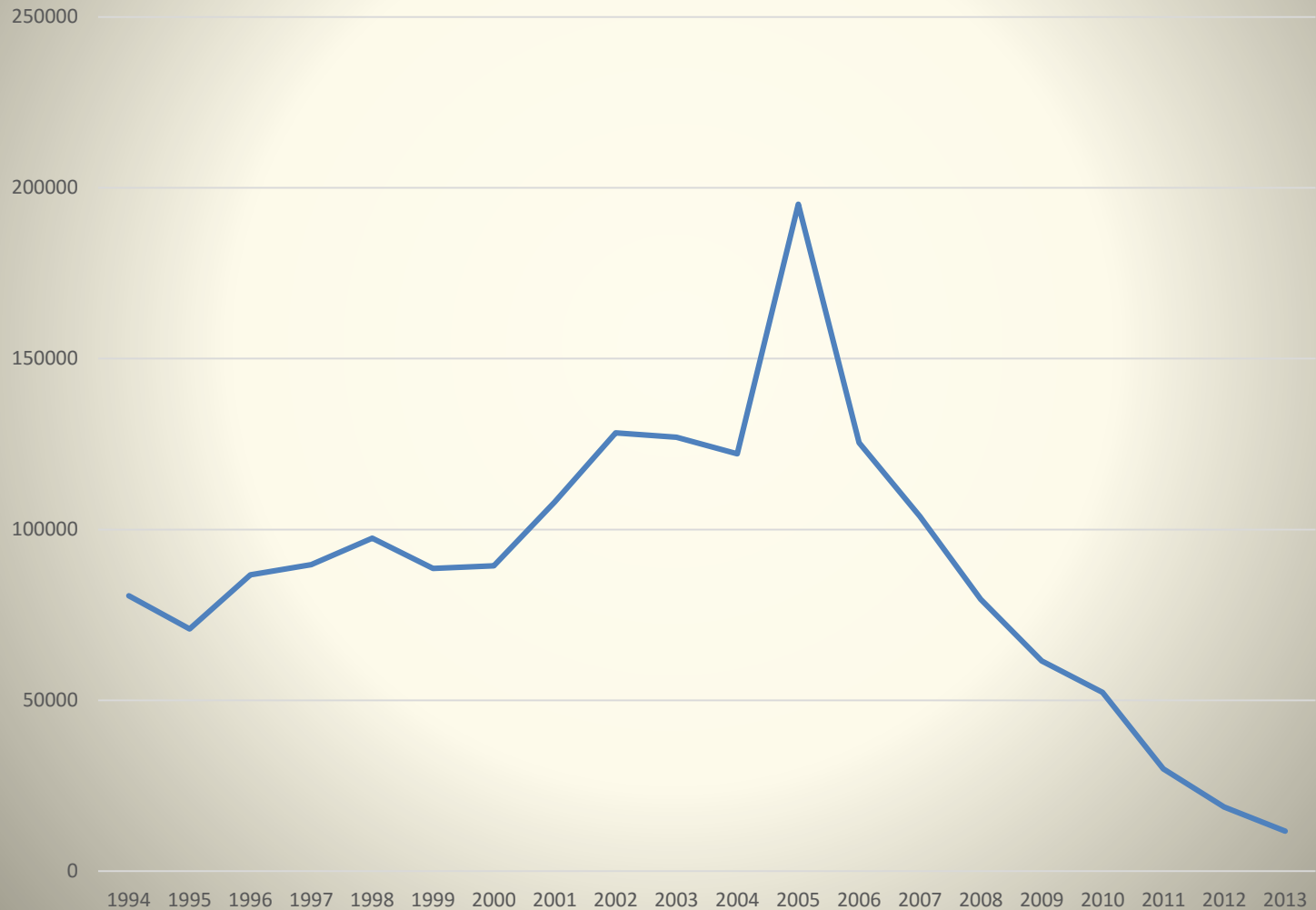


# Urban growth in the recession period (after 2009)

- Crisis/recession affected in various and different ways the Greek cities
- For the first time in the contemporary history the population of Athens (2011) decreased but not that of Thessaloniki (not until 2011...).
- **Two kinds** of out migration
  - younger + well educated work force
  - former economic migrants
- High rates of the unemployment increase
- Large number of closures (business, shops)
  - Vacant shops in Athens: from 18% (2011) to 30% (2013)
  - Vacant shops in Thessaloniki: from 10% (2011) to 27,5% (2013)



# Housing production 1990-2012: from the boom to the collapse of the housing sector

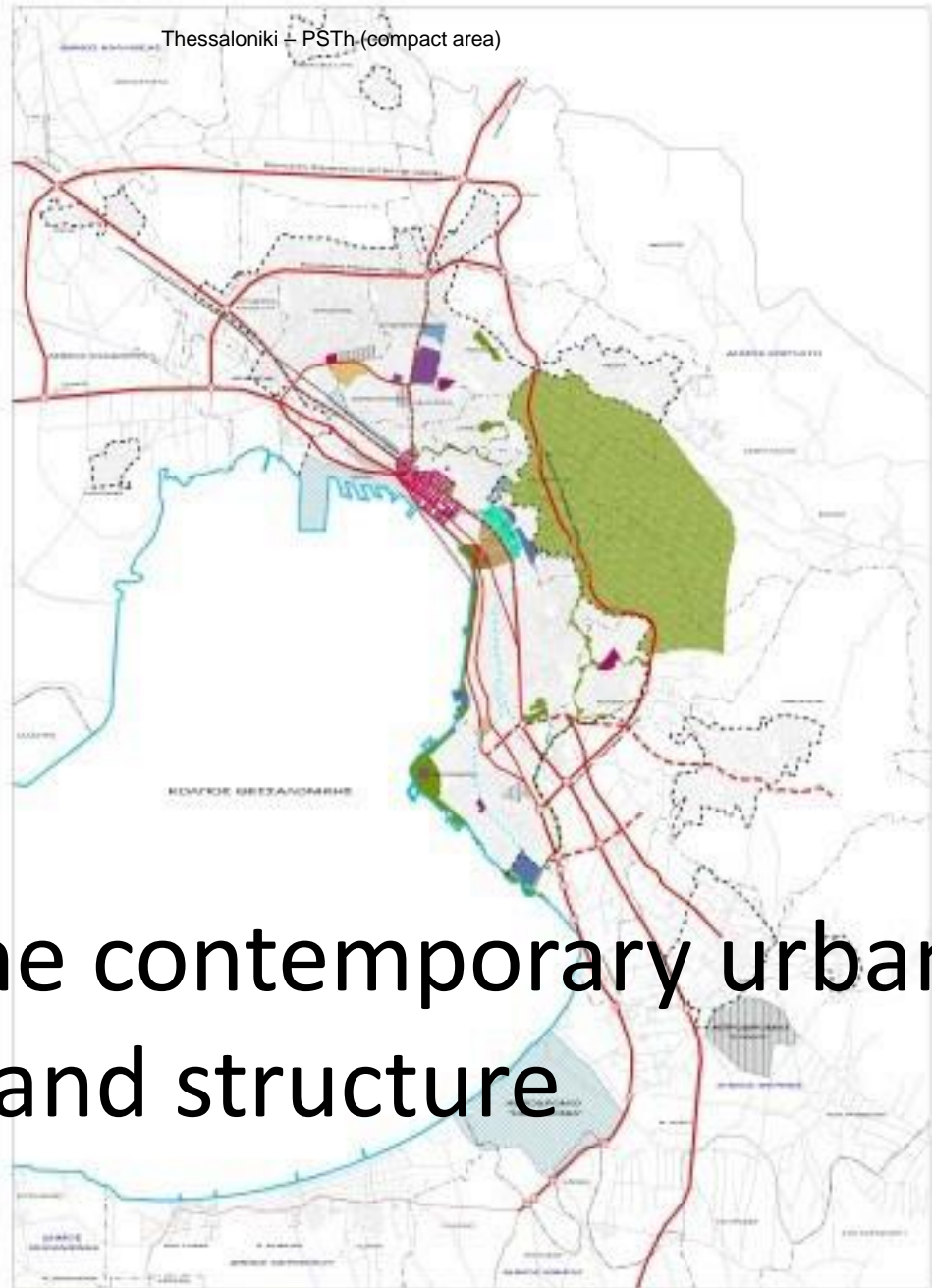


# Recession and urban change

- Degradation of the city centre (a recorded situation in parts of the central area in Athens).
- However, some crucial change are observed.
  - In Thessaloniki in many respects the city centre has become more “alive” than it has been in the 2000s and the decade of the flourishing new malls and new centres in the outer part of the city.
- Features and location of vacant shops, vacant houses, vacant work premises:
  - small premises / mixed land uses / dispersal of location / dispersal of vacancies / scattered large empty premises in the outskirts.
- Closures have been followed by **critical changes in the city centres.**



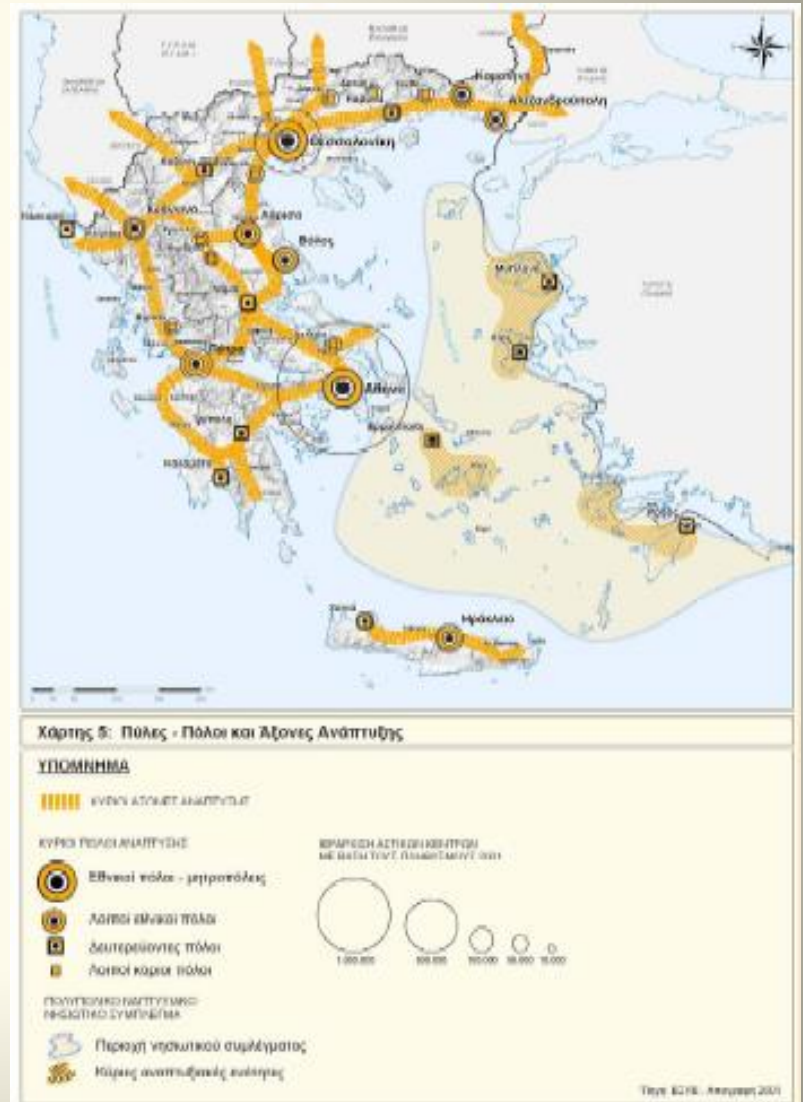
Thessaloniki – PSTh (compact area)



Thessaloniki: the contemporary urban form and structure

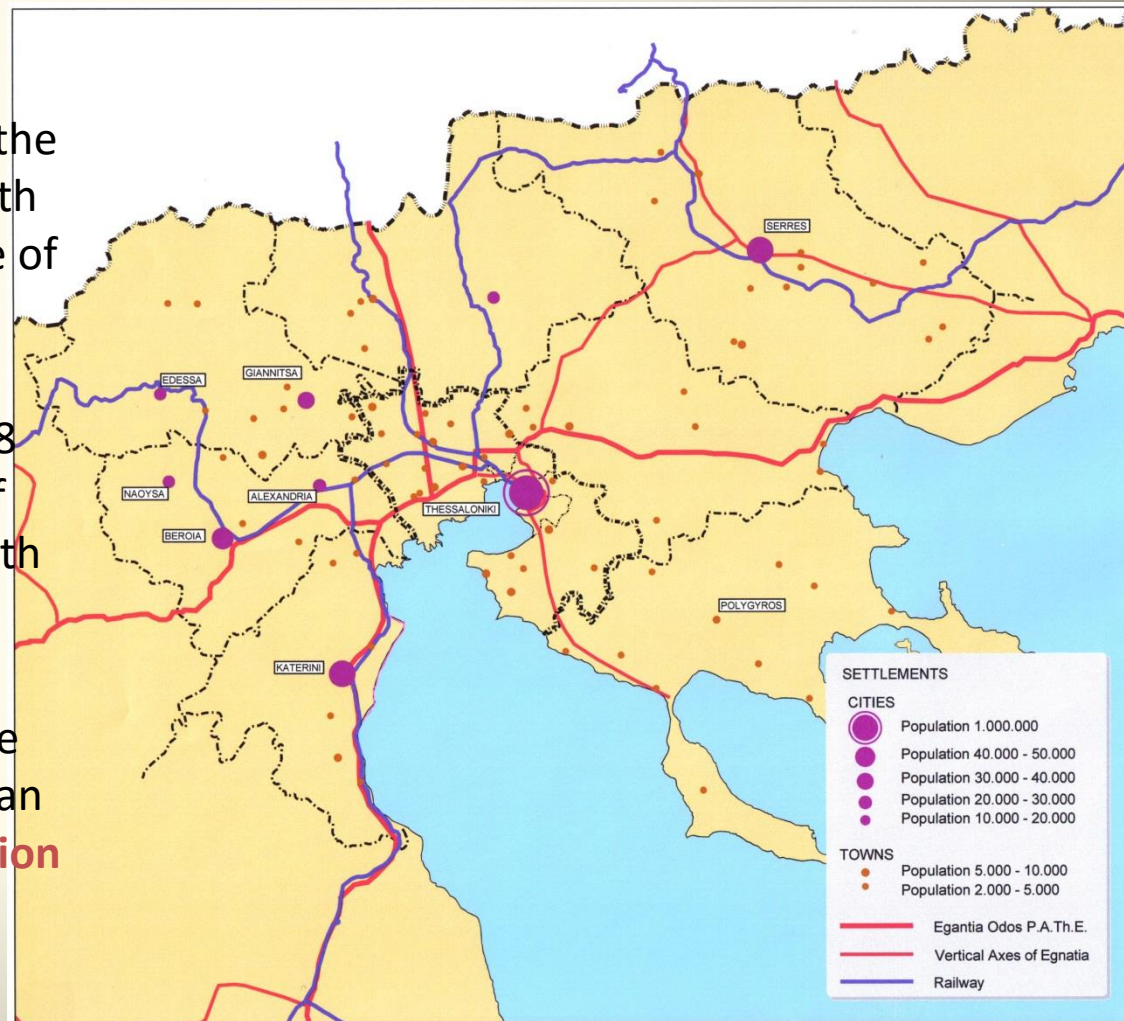
# Thessaloniki in the national urban system

- Thessaloniki is the second largest city in Greece with more than 1 million people, representing nearly 1/10 of the country's population.
- According to the national spatial plan, along with Athens it is as a **metropolis** - a pole of national magnitude.
- The European Spatial Observatory Network-ESPON classifies Thessaloniki as a **Functional Urban Area** (FUA) of translational/national significance among 261 other such areas in Europe.
- In terms of its size it has reached the size of what P. Hall defines as a **sub-global city**. Although it does not perform notable global functions for specialised services, two of its functions are of European significance: tourism and higher education.



# Thessaloniki in the regional urban system

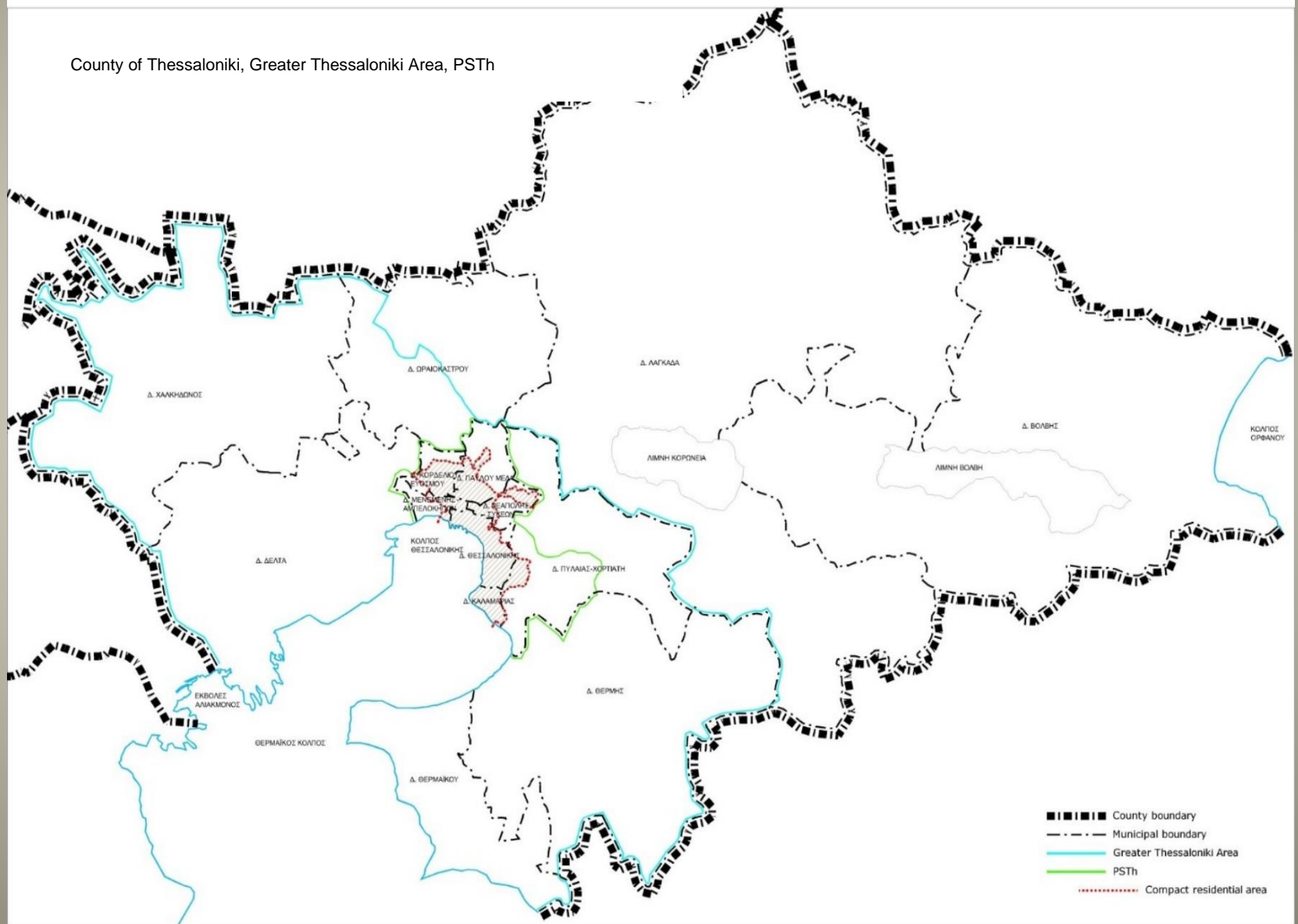
- Thessaloniki is the capital of the Region of Central Macedonia (RCM) representing **more than half** of its population. RCM performed –until the mid 2000s- the most dynamic growth trends in Northern Greece, because of the role and the significance of the Thessaloniki.
- The urban system of RCM includes 8 other small-size cities, with a size of 15.000 up to 55.000 inhabitants, with strong functional linkages with Thessaloniki.
- In terms of spatial development, the largest part of Central Macedonia can be considered as a wider **urban region** with the city of Thessaloniki at its heart.





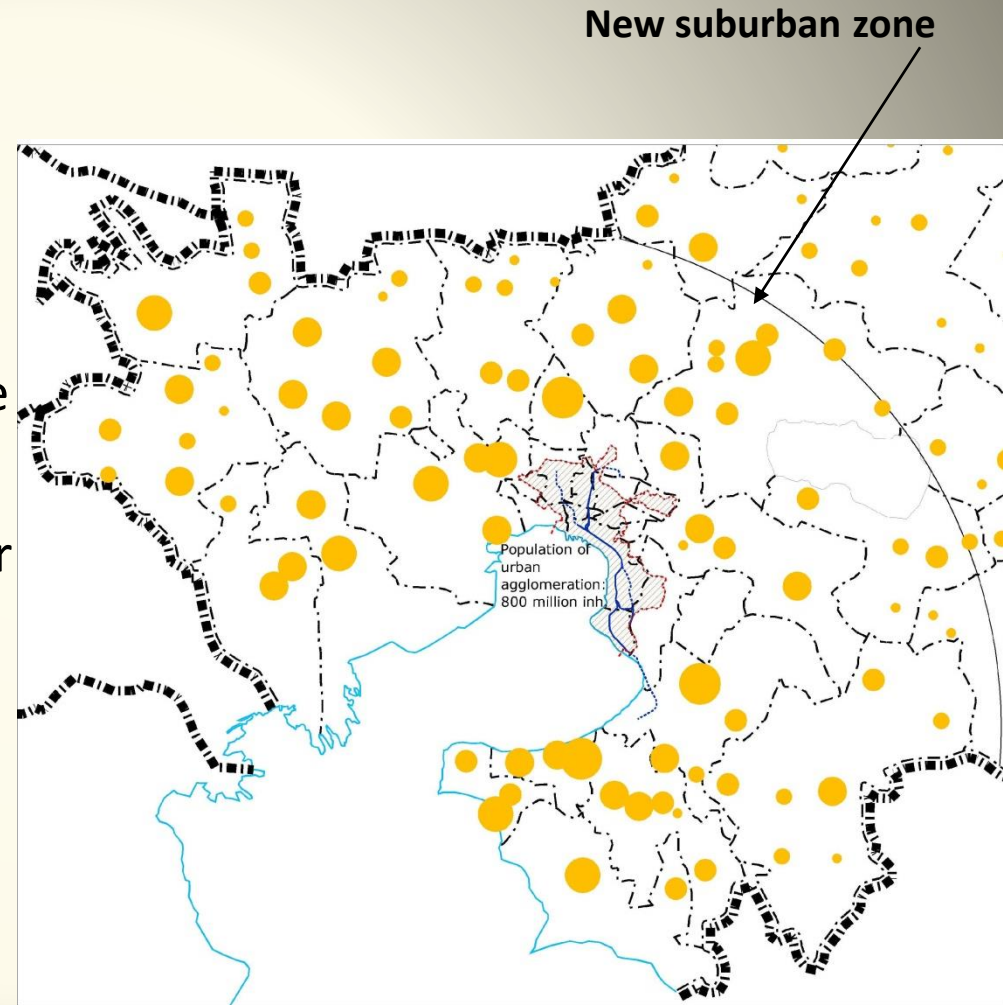
# The county of Thessaloniki and its different zones

County of Thessaloniki, Greater Thessaloniki Area, PSTh



# The new urban area

- The contemporary urban structure has changed dramatically as a result of rapid suburbanization and urban sprawl and the consequent fast growth of the surrounding area.
- Rapid urban sprawl occurs within the boundaries of the “peri-urban zone”, the rest of the wider area especially in the southern parts as well as other parts of the county of Thessaloniki.
- Thus the city since the 1990s and up until the end of the 2000s was **expanding rapidly with all kinds of urban functions** (residential, industrial, commercial and service functions).



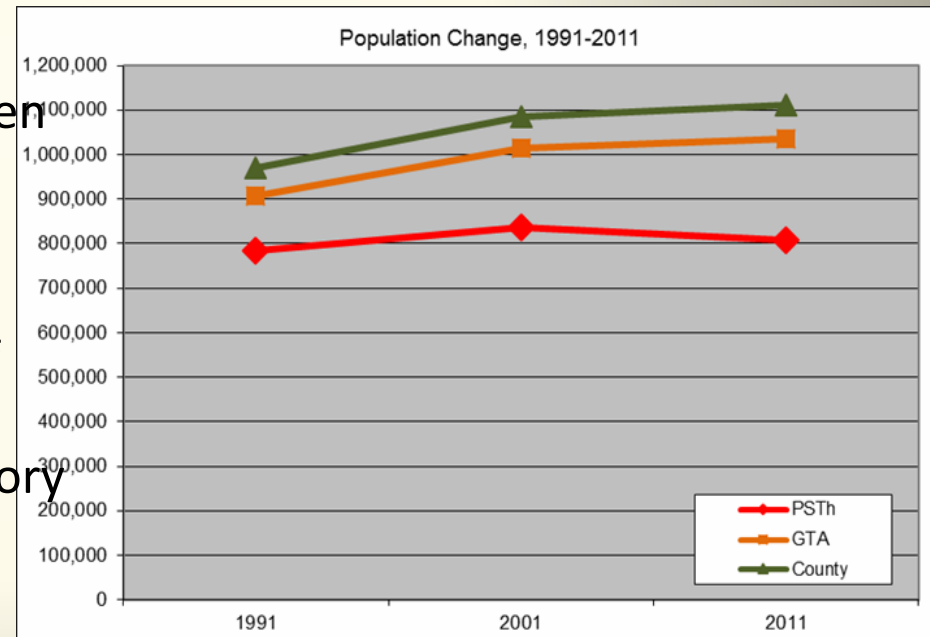
County of Thessaloniki

# Thessaloniki: some basic facts

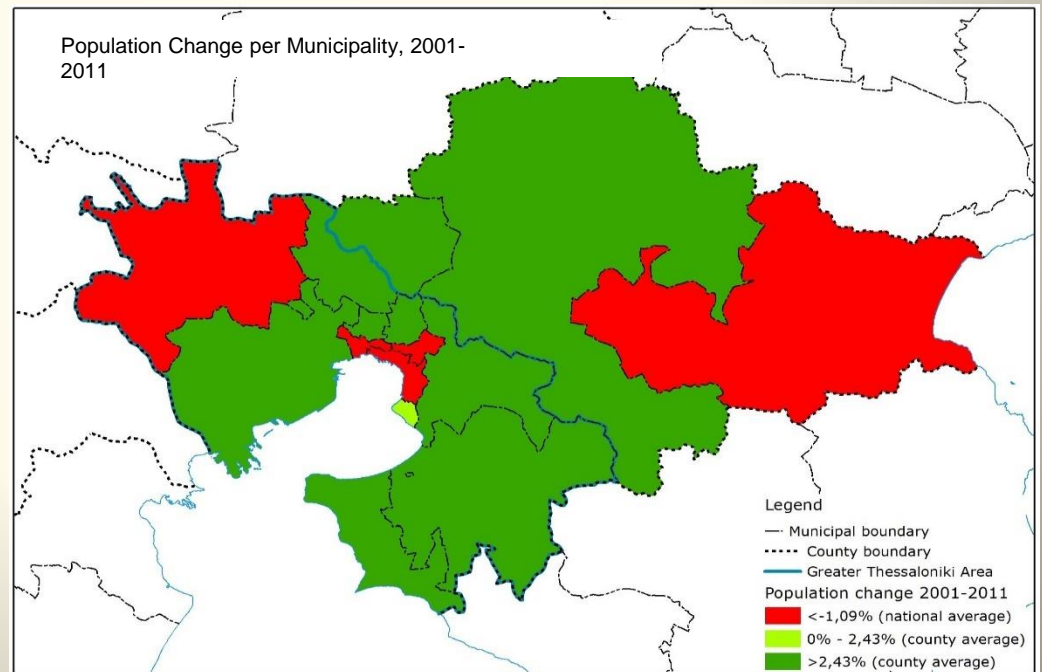
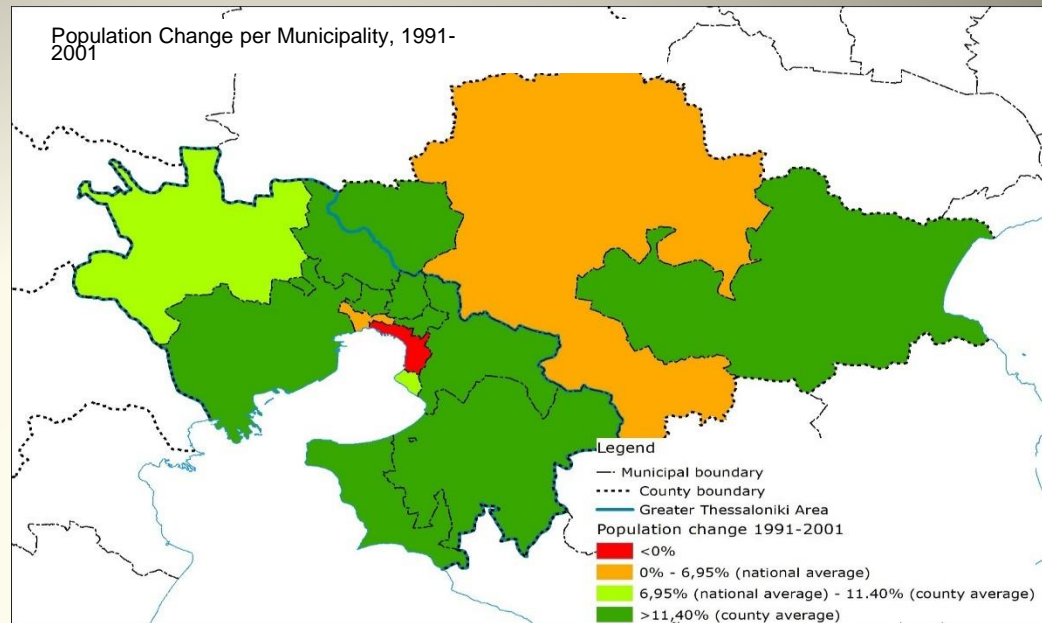
- Population size (County of Thessaloniki, 2011 Census): 1.110.312 inhabitants  
Population size per zone 2011
- Urban agglomeration (PSTh): 806.396 inhabitants
- Peri-urban + rest County of Thessaloniki: 303.916 inhabitants
- Compact area/Total County of Thessaloniki
  - 1991: 80%
  - 2001: 77%
  - 2011: 72%
- Gross Domestic Product per sector (County of Thessaloniki)
  - Primary sector: 1,7%
  - Secondary: 16,1%
  - Tertiary: 82,3%
- Employment structure per sector (County of Thessaloniki)
  - Primary sector: 3,4%
  - Secondary: 19,2%
  - Tertiary: 77,4%

# Population trends 1991-2011

- 1991-2001: high growth rates (11,5% or 1,13% yearly), higher than the average national rate (6,7%).
  - The suburban area recorded among the highest growth rates in the country: 3,5% per year.
  - Growth rates of the urban agglomeration: 0,67% per year
- 2001-11: increase but at a much lower rate of 2,4% on the whole (a period when the country's population has decreased for the first time after decades).
  - further suburbanization
  - The entire compact zone records loss of population for the first time
- 2011: For the first time in the city's history 30% of its population lives outside the urban agglomeration



# Population change per municipality 1991-2011



# The «physical» structure of the city

- The entire GTA is structured by the following systems
  - The urban area (compact and dispersed)
  - The Thermaikos gulf
  - The mountainous massif of Hortiatis
  - The Anthemountas valley (south),
  - The Axios plain (west)
  - The Migdonia basin (north + north-east)



# Spatial structure of the urban economy

The major economic activities:

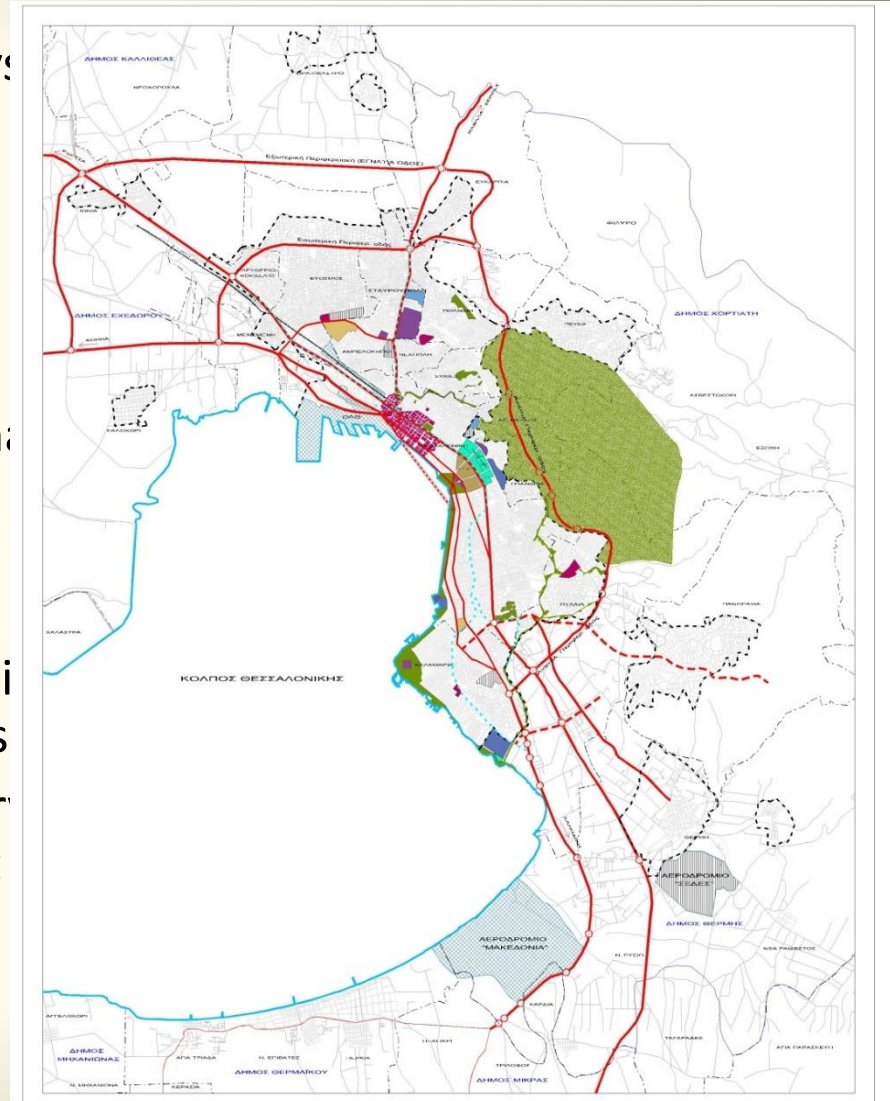
- Industry – Wholesale commerce, transport services
  - Located mainly in the west edge of the city.
- Commerce - Services
  - Located in the historical centre as well as outside the urban tissue in dispersed locations. The southern out-of-town centres (malls etc.) concentrate most of the commercial and entertainment uses developed since the mid 1990s. Many other service functions such as education, administration etc. are also dispersed in the outer parts of the city.
- Production services
  - A number of important enterprises and other production services, research centres etc. are also located in the southern areas outside the compact urban area.
- Tourism
  - Tourism is a very important activity. Thessaloniki functions as an international connection node for the resort areas of Halkidiki and Pieria, which accept large numbers of tourists every year.
- Agriculture
  - Agriculture is an important branch since part of the west GTA belongs to the large basin of Central Macedonia.



# The city and the transport system

Thessaloniki is **a transport node**

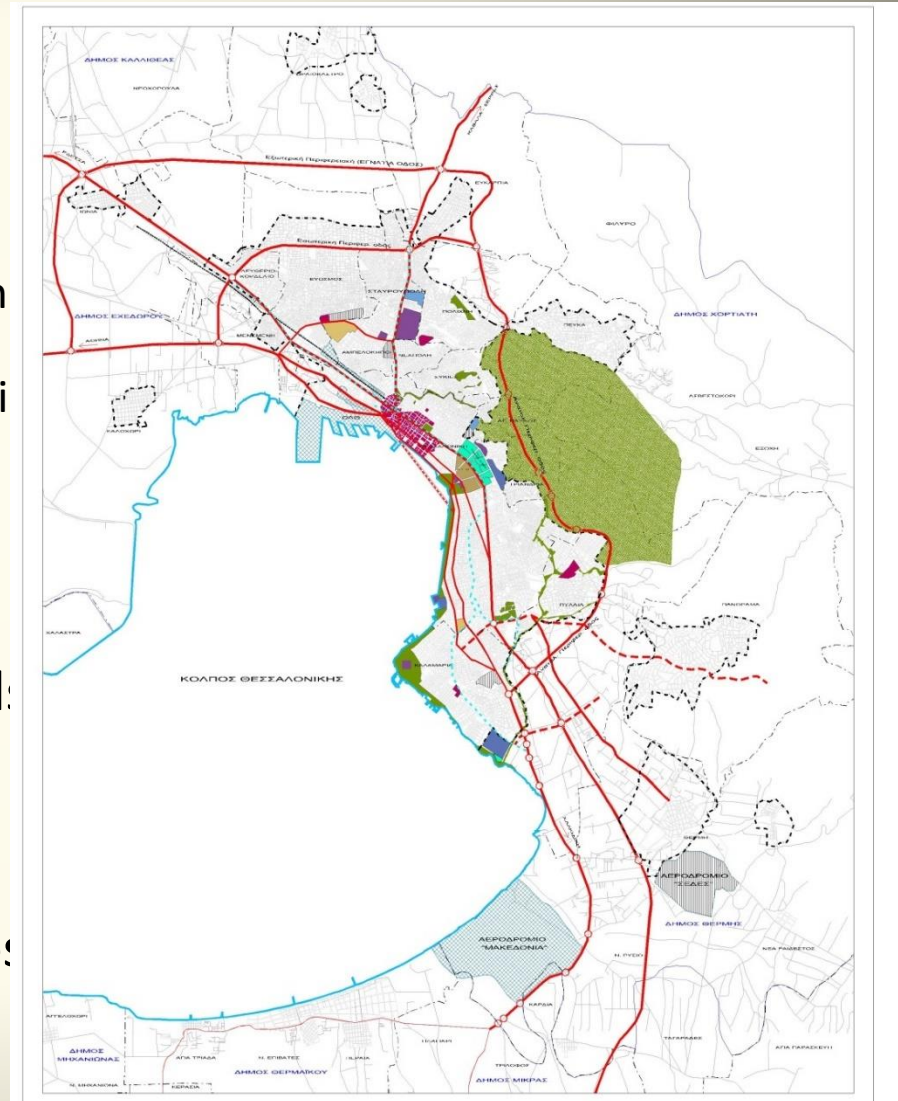
- It is connected to the two major motorways: PATHE and Egnatia Motorway.
- A major road axis, the outer ring road, is under study and will connect the Engatia Motorway with the southern suburbs, the airport and the resort areas of Halkidiki)
- Thessaloniki is the node of all major national rail lines. The rail station is located right in the outer part of the historic city centre.
- The airport (classified as international) is located between the compact part of the city and the southern suburban neighborhoods
- The port is the second largest in the country and serves mostly commercial transport. It is located within - and at the edge- of the compact part of the city.





# The social geography of the city

- The central area and the inner urban zone:
  - The area of the city (historic) centre is characterized by mixed land uses and has higher proportion of residential uses than other European cities.
  - The inner city is inhabited by a mix of social classes.
- The “west” (incl. the north) neighborhoods:
  - mostly working class areas
- The “east” (incl. south) neighborhoods:
  - mostly middle class areas
- The west suburbs
  - mostly working class areas
- The southeast, east and north suburbs:
  - mostly middle class areas

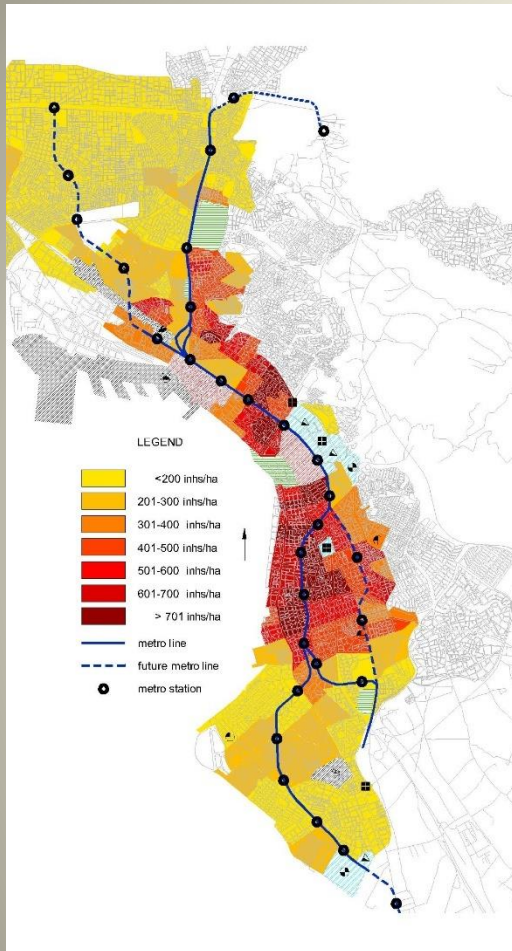


# The quality of the environment

- Pollution problems (air, water, soil)
- Traffic congestion and noise especially in the inner urban areas and all main transport axis
- Lack of open spaces
- Very important natural eco-systems
- Outstanding historical heritage



# The city form: From the linear / compact / high density city of the previous decades....



Densities in the compact zone of the city vary from 100-200 inhabitants/Ha, in the outer parts, to more than 700 inhabitants/Ha in the inner zone

# The city form: ...to the dispersed city of today



# Spatial structure of the urban economy

*“The city of Salonika, Greece, incorporates many elements that planners in the US could refer to as smart growth. The country’s second-largest city, this Aegean port town is compact, with residential settlement characterized by apartment buildings of 5 to 8 storeys. Mixed land uses are the norm. The ground floors of apartment building ion streets of any significance tend to be devoted to restaurants, retail, and other business. Pedestrians flood the streets and plazas virtually around the clock. While enjoying these benefits, the city also struggles with disadvantages of density, including roadway congestion, scarcity of open space, noise, and a heat island effect” (Levine J., 2007, Zoned Out, Washington DC: Resources for the Future p. 171).*

