

Minez, Berk; Erdogan, Nevnihal

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## Public Participation in the Revitalization of Kütahya's CBD in Turkey

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# **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE REVITALIZATION OF KÜTAHYA'S CBD IN TURKEY**

<sup>a</sup>B.Minez, <sup>b</sup>N.Erdoğan

<sup>a</sup>Berk Minez, Trakya University, Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, Department of Architecture, Edirne, TURKEY, berkminez@mynet.com

<sup>b</sup>Nevnihal Erdoğan, Trakya University, Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, Department of Architecture, Edirne, TURKEY, nevtrakya@hotmail.com

**KEY WORDS: Public Participation, Revitalization, CBD and Kütahya**

## **ABSTRACT**

Kütahya has been the cradle of many cultures throughout the history. Especially, its population grew after Turkish occupation and the city expanded beyond the walls of the city. Traditional life characteristics and traditional production styles survived till now such as ceramics, textile, leather, carpets and handcrafts. Thus, Centre Business District (CBD) continues to preserve the business vitality together with religious, social and civil architecture examples and its conservative people. The historical areas between Ulu Cami (Ulu Mosque) and Sadettin Cami (Sadettin Mosque) present the historical trade center which exists vitally today of Kütahya. Participation of users/owners of traditional shops are needed in order to obtain data for revitalization project of Ulu Cami Street which is one of the important trade streets in conservation plan.

A survey was conducted to users/owners. The results of the survey related with changing function approach of owners to the preservation studies, the alternatives for new function, the physical conditions of shops, restorations, environmental problems of the street, the social and cultural structure of past. And finally, a proposal is developed to rehabilitate the existing the character and condition the street.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Many cities in Turkey, especially is also the experience of Kütahya have a rich and significant cultural heritage, within which the old Central Business District (CBD) are specially important as they form the historic urban sites. Today many of these old CBD are faced with a problem of use. The problems which are created by utilization are varied, in relation to the cultural social and economic characteristic of users/owners. The combination of all of these factors has caused the historical city centre to lose its function of being the central business district (CBD). Many historical shops have disappeared because of these problems. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to explain to revitalize the old CBD with participation of public (owner/users).

There are several approaches to the revitalization of declining CBDs, which is a common problem (Frieden and Segalyn, 1989, Porter, 1995; Tiesdale et al., 1996). In The United States, the Main Street Program and the Business Improvement Districts are successful programs in inner city revitalization (Keister, 1990; Robertson, 2004). The Main Street

Program is a compressive program focused on local opportunities in four areas; economic restructuring, organization, promotion and design. This program has been implemented hundreds of cities.

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When the city of Kütahya was a province and was the commercial center of the surrounding towns and settlements, it was a rich city and population was growing but when the city lost its governmental authority and population started to decline towards the middle of XIX.th. century, the rise and/or decline of population effected the development of the city of Kütahya (Aktüre, 1975).

Although the small shops which exists in Pekmezpazarı where caravanserai (han) and covered bazaar (bedesden) takes place in Kütahya, had lost their old character a few, they still preserve the traditional vitality. The historical areas between “Ulu Cami (Ulu Mosque)” and “Sadettin Cami (Sadettin Mosque)” presents the historical trade center which exists vitally today of Kütahya (Figure1).

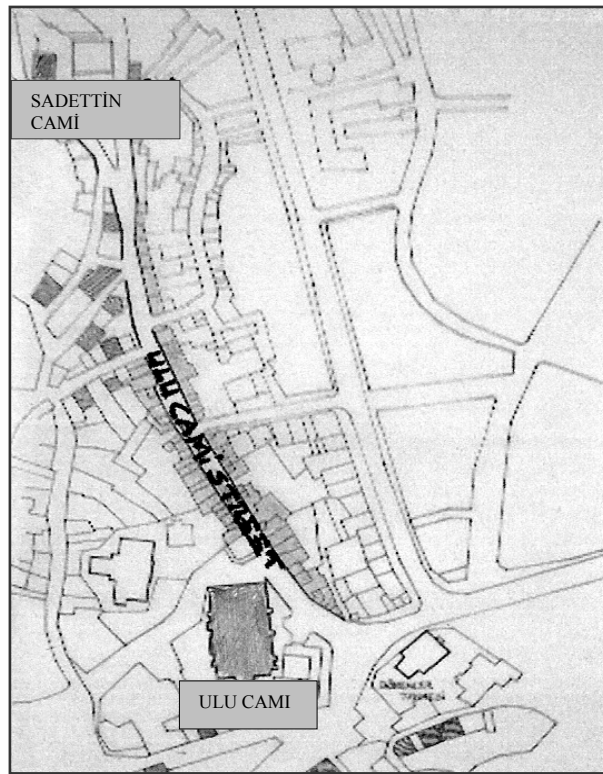


Figure 1. Historical Trade Centre in Kütahya

The historical settlement occurs with union of the streets which progress spontaneously in the east part of Kütahya Castle and around trade and religion centre. The settlement groups which usually progress related to Mosque center, creates the districts. The street between “Ulu Cami” and “Sadettin Cami” which are the most important, of these centers, presents the trade center of Kütahya that still survives today (Figure2).



Figure 2. Views from the Ulu Cami Street

Although the traditional small shops in this street, which is connected to Pekmez Bazaar (Han and Bedesten take place) and Cumhuriyet Street (trade center of today), lost their old character a few, they still preserve the traditional vitality. There exists 55 traditional shops in the street. They are lined up in double direction through the axle of Ulu Cami-Sadettin Cami. The survey could be applied to 42 ( 76%) traditional shops.

Conservation plan of Kütahya was prepared between 1980-1982 and approved in 1987 by the Minister of Culture. One of the historical street which is Germiyan Street was proposed as one of the important streets to be restored and revitalize by the Minister of Culture. Minez and at all (2005) was investigated in revitalization project of Germiyan Street of Kütahya. The Project was not influential in the surrounding areas yet. Since it was not well understood by public due to lack of participation and lack of education.

Participation of users/owners of these shops are needed in order to obtain data for revitalization project of Ulu Cami street which is one of the important trade streets in conservation plan. With this point of new, a survey was conducted in Ulu Cami Street of Kütahya in order to distinguish the socio-economic, cultural and physical structure of area. The result of survey related with changing function, approach of owners to the preservation studies, the alternatives for new functions, the physical conditions of shops, restorations, environmental problems of street, the social and cultural structure of past. The survey questions were asked to the public/users in the area in order to determine the social, economic and cultural structure of the users, and physical situation of shops. As a result of the descript statistical analysis of the data obtained by the application all survey and the information obtained by face to face interviews.

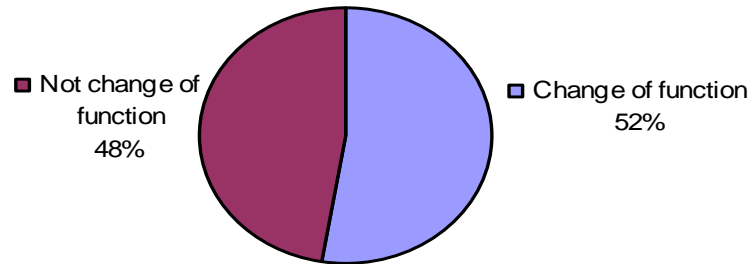
The present paper deals with the revitalization of the old CBD of Kütahya, which is a problem in many cities in Turkey. The organization of the paper is as follows: Research findings are explained in the second section. Final section is devoted to result and conclusions.

## 2. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The study bases on the shops, which is a total number of 55 in the street. But the survey could be applied to 42 (76%) of them. In 90% the shops, it was interviewed with boss and in 10% it was done with the worker.

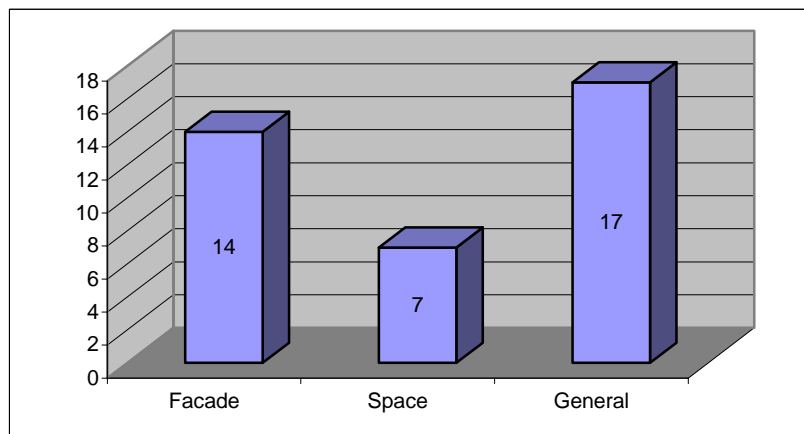
### The Situation in the Past

Although loosing the vitality in the past, the region that was the historical trade center of city, maintains the property of being trade center. It is visilde that 100% of these traditional shops still continues trade. The function have changed in 52% (22) of these work shops but not changed in 48% (20)of them (Figure 3) .The former function were most of, cupper good seller, tin made, shoe production & sale usage and small handcraft workshops. Today, different functions like restaurant, bakery and electrician took place instead of former ones.



**Figure 3.** Situation of changed function in time

Facade restoration was done for 33% (14) of the buildings in the areas. In these restorations windows have been changed generally. Save buildings have lost their original facades after restorations windows. 7% (3) of buildings have been restorated over their plans. During these restorations, the spaces in the ground floor were separated with dividing walls and save service places like wc, kitchen and store were organized according to their function. General modifications like painting installations were made for 41% (17) of buildings (Figure 4).

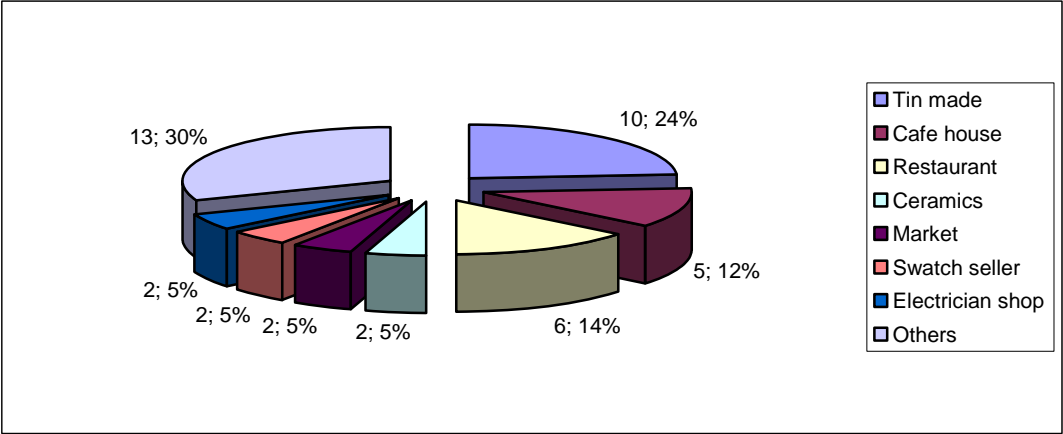


**Figure 4.** Modification situation

48% (20) of shop owners know about history of the street. According to these datas, it is obvious that this region was trade center in the past and was a place where the newcomers from surrounding countries first dropped by.

**The Situation of Present**

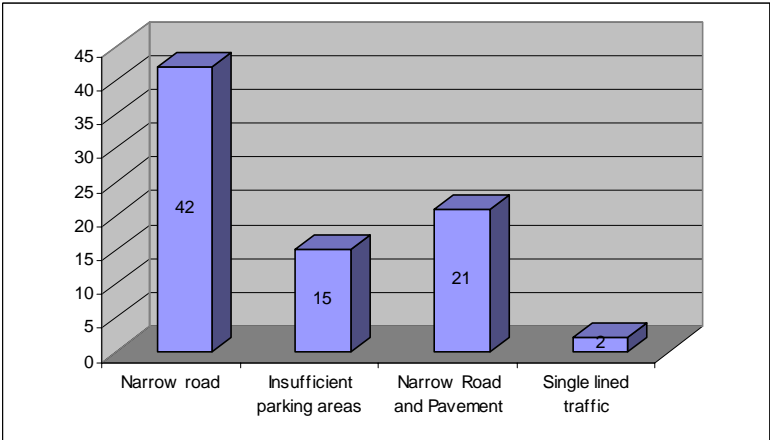
Present day 10 work place is used as tin mader, five shops as cafe house- tea house and six shops as restaurant, in the area-covered bazaar these, there exists ceramics, market, swatch, electrician shop, barber and two caravanserai in the area (Figure 5).



**Figure 5.** Distribution of function in shops

There are differences between the usage of ground floor and upper floor in 15% (6) of the buildings. The architecture of 93% (39) buildings in the street aren't approved. The biggest reason of this is the inharmonious façade modifications.

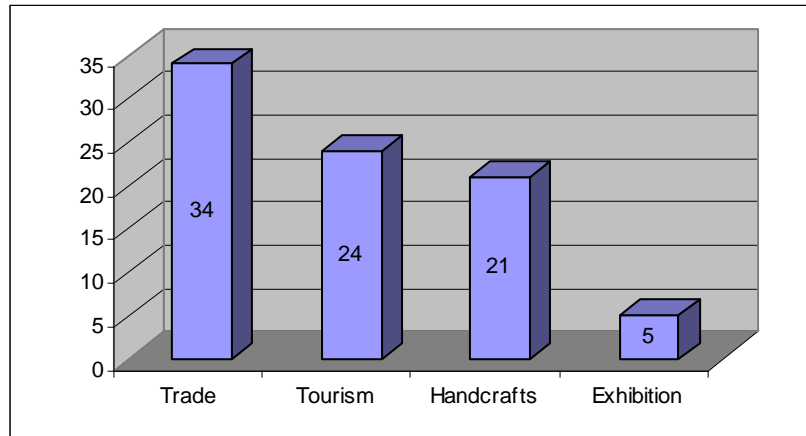
All the shop owners think that the road and pavement are narrow. 36% (15) of them owners think that parking areas are insufficient, 51% (21) pedestrian pavemant are narrow and 4% (2) single lined traffic becomes an environmental problem (Figure 6).



**Figure 6.** Environmental Problems in Ulu Cami Street

## Expectations from future

The answers to the question about the new function after restorations and modifications are : 81%(34) the same function (trade), 59% (24) tourism function, 52% (22) handcrafts function, 11% (5) exhibition function (Figure7).



**Figure 7.** Distribution of expected new function in shops

The expectations of users from restorations are: 100% thinks that trade vitality will increase, 44% (18) thinks that values of buildings will increase, 59% (25) thinks that they will have a better environment visually, 24% (10) thinks that pedestrian areas will be an alternative to environmental problems. Beside these, modification for improving streets with pedestrian areas are expected.

## 3. CONCLUSION

The results of survey shows the social, cultural and economical structure of the street is determined. So when the results are interpreted :

- While trade function of the street still continues present like the past, the type of trade has changed today.
- Because of the original architectural character of the shops in the street become depraved after wrong restoration and modification in their facades and space. For these reasons, shop owners who mostly know about the history of the street disapprove the inharmonious aesthetic of buildings.
- In general, infrastructure, traffic and lack of maintenance are seen as the main problems of the environment . All the owners think that the road is narrow, and among the other environmental problems parking area problems, narrow pedestrian pavement and single lined traffic are most common problems which decreased the sales.
- Most of people who do not have an idea about the history of the physical environment around them, think that those buildings should be preserved. Although not knowing anything about the process of preservation, people will participate to the process if there will be a restoration activity in the area.
- The functions expected from revitalization project are trade, tourism, handcrafts, exhibition which are thought to make trade vital, environment more qualified, and with pedestrian areas as an alternative to traffic problem.

All the traditional shops are proposed to be cleansed in the Ulu Cami street which takes place in conservation plan (Conservation Plan, 1987). We suggest the followings against the project which denies the traditional urban tissue : A new facade design should be developed taking consideration of less qualified materials used in the shop facades in inharmonious way. In this so, it is consistent to arrange the facades as a reflection of traditional Kütahya architecture with a definite “built high”. It is possible which suits trade approach of today with continuing traditional trade function. Considering the increase in the pedestration with application of proposed project the street should be used as pedestrian road by cancelling of traffic when the trade is too dense.

As a result of the proposal, the street will become one of the attraction points of centre Business District, which effect gentrification in a positive was, provide economic gain to the whole city and therefore, the street physically, economically and socially revitalized, will be sustained.

Although commercial street rehabilitation, which is certainly the most important evidence of gentrification improves the city’s physical health by fore stalling further decay of the commercial stok. This proje was not influential in the surrounding areas yet. Since it was not well understood by the public due to lack of participation and lack of education

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