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RESEARCH BRIEFING

Transformation in Retailing Behaviour, Patterns and Spatial Settings: The Case of the City of Trabzon

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ABSTRACT *This paper investigates the spatial distribution and transformation of retailing and services in the city of Trabzon, which is historically a monocentric city and which has been in a process of changing into a polycentric form following the population and spatial growths of the city and the development of its trade and commerce. A questionnaire survey was conducted by Aydin in 2001 in 26 neighbourhoods of the city to quantify the distribution of central functions among them in order to understand the transformation in time, and comparisons were made with the findings of earlier studies made by Aydemir* (1978, Doğu Karadeniz Bölgesi Trabzon Alt Bölgesi (TBAB) Kentsel Etki Alanlarının Saptanması İçin Yöntem: Etkileşim Esası *(İstanbul: İTÜ, Mimarlık Fakültesi)) and Trabzon Analytical Study (1968, İller Bankası, Ankara, Güzel Sanatlar Matbaası A.Ş.) to show the transformations in terms of quality, quantity and spatial dispersion. However, the transformation is ongoing since 2000 in the form of first shopping markets then shopping centres and the large shopping malls. The main findings of the paper are the changes in the number and quality in retail shopping, increasing specialization in central functions and spatial dispersion towards sub-centres which are not planned according to the current development plan. Therefore, there is a need for a planned development of these sub-centres and shopping centres in order to prevent a misuse of scarce land, which will be needed for further use in the future.*

Introduction

Increasing population growth including migration in the urbanization process accelerates and proliferates the urban central functions that get specialized and organized by time, which are important factors in urban growth. In recent years, economic transformation process has been experienced on a global scale. The traditional role of cities has been

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changing, and preferences about the locational choices which are related to the increase in a variety of urban functions display structural changes as well (Berköz, 2005). Berry observed that central functions are placed in different parts of the city depending on the function that take part along different main roads, specialized fields or sub-centres. They change in quality and quantity in time (Berry & Horton, 1970).

As the economies of the cities progress, so do their services sectors. Services sector contains transportation, wholesale and retail trade; banking, finance and consultancy; insurance services, estate dealing, law, health, education and personal consultancy (Berköz, 1994). Generally speaking, specialization and increase in services based on urban growth are seen more in retail trade and personal services. With the rapid development of the services sector in the metropolitan areas of the developed countries after the World War II, further changes in city centres took place. As the services sector gained more importance, the proliferation of office buildings to accommodate the emerging needs began to change the appearance of the city (Ergun & Dundar, 2004). On the other hand, the city centre is increasingly getting crowded, pedestrian and vehicle traffic is increasing, car parks and roads are becoming insufficient; visual and physical pollution, and other environmental effects are increasing; and sometimes this development causes the central functions to move outside the city centres (Kubat, 1985).

The sphere of influence of cities is in parallel with the growth of cities, which forces the centres to grow by extending outwards. The required spaces for urban functions which increase in quality and quantity in time are provided by renewing/transforming the buildings or places available in the area for central functions. Functions that cannot afford paying higher rents either move to the fringe areas of the city or are closed down (Bölen *et al.*, 1993). In this process, the increasing traffic jam and decreasing accessibility to the centre play an important role.

Consequently, this fact occurs as a "Centre Crisis" and the process of change starts in centres (Doxiadis, 1961). As cities grow and communications systems develop, polycentricism becomes inevitable (Dökmeci & Berköz, 1994; Ciraci & Kerimoglu, 2006). For example, in Istanbul, which has been the heart of the national and international economic activities in Turkey, the rapid population growth after the 1950s has caused a rising density, congestion, pollution and scarcity of urban lands. At the same time, because of the insufficient space in the historical central business district (CBD), new office functions took place in the periphery and so Istanbul gained a polycentric structure (Çiraci & Kundak, 2000).

The Transformation of the City Centre of Trabzon During the Process of Urbanisation Since 1960

The City of Trabzon is situated in the northeast of Turkey and it is the gateway to Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Asia. Trabzon also has been a port on the ancient Silk Road (Aydemir & Aydemir, 2007), and is on the Black Sea Ring Road (Figure 1). It is the centre of the Eastern Black Sea Region, which has been experiencing transformations in retail trade: in quality as well as physical and functional diversity. According to the 2000 population census, the population of the city of Trabzon is 240,000.

Throughout history, Trabzon has been developed especially as a city of trade in the Black Sea Region. The fact that it is located on the trade route between European and Asian countries and that she has had commercial relations with them have made her as

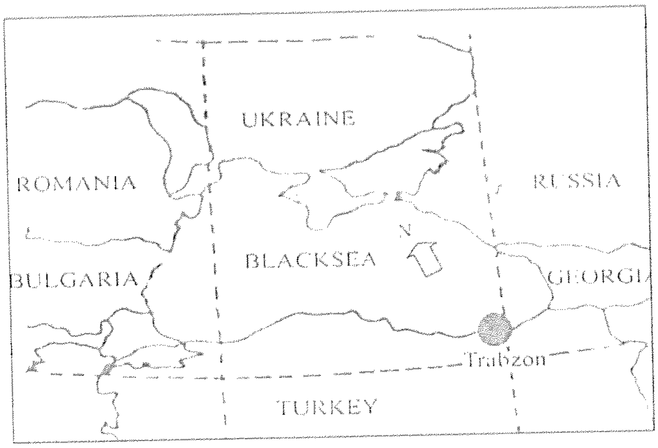

Figure 1. Location of Trabzon city in Turkey

an important trade centre. In parallel with the developments, the variety of services has increased and sub-centres have emerged in the city in time in the form of polycentric development extending in the east–west direction (Figure 2).

Generally, as in major city centres, changes in the scale of consumption, production, contemporary business relations and "traditional trade activities" result in the development of modern marketing systems and thus, various business activities such as banking, insurance, stock market, consulting services and modern offices are intensely placed in the centre (Dökmeci *et al.*, 1993). Office functions that generally require face-to-face meetings in areas such as law, consulting, banking and insurance services, bookkeeping and real-estate dealing are often placed in the city centre or are moved to newly emerged centres.

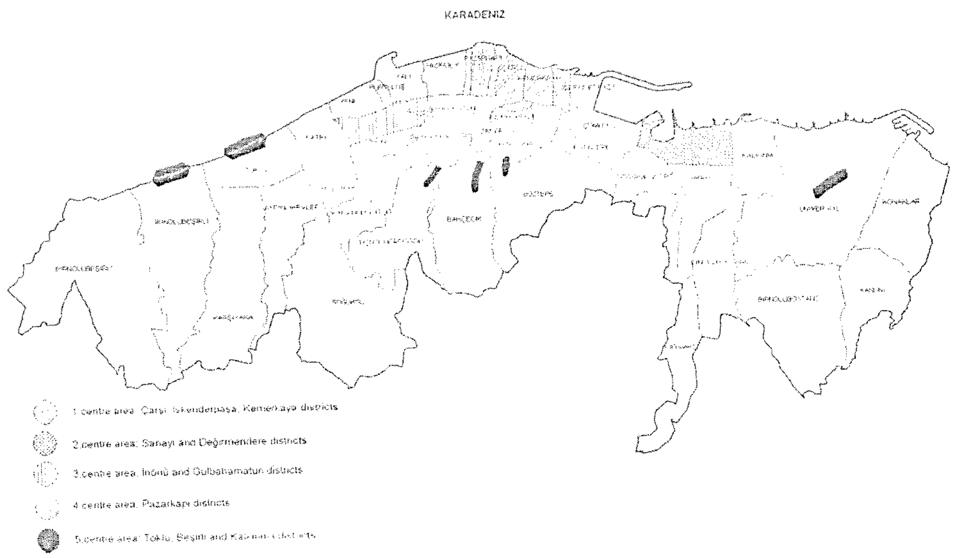

Figure 2. Centre and new born sub-centres

In this process, functions such as wholesale trade and light manufacturing in the city centre are moved to the industrial areas at the fringes that are developed for this purpose.

In Trabzon, the opening of Georgian–Turkish Border Gate in the 1990s caused some of the functions in the centre to change their places and types. Places that were previously empty in some sub-districts like Çömlekçi and Değirmendere were started to be occupied by business companies such as leather wear, quality ready-made clothing, consumption-oriented electronic goods, etc. The small industrial districts and their vicinities were occupied by cheap hotels, shuttle trade and trail trade. In comparison with the newly developing sub-centres, the main centre has more dense and specialized retailing and services which have been attracting almost 30.000 visitors daily from the neighbouring provinces and districts (Aydemir *et al.*, 1993). Trabzon keeps its primacy with her central functions in the Eastern Black Sea Region as a buffer zone since the 1960s and she still maintains this position (Aydemir, 1978; Aydemir *et al.*, 2000; Dokap, 2001), which has a sphere of influence of approximately 250 km.

Method

An area analysis was used to study the transformation of the city centre, and a questionnaire was administered in 26 neighbourhoods (neighbourhood = Mahalle) (Figure 3) to identify the existing functions, retail and business, their functional changes (including type and date) and their spatial distribution in the city.

Quantitative, qualitative and spatial transformations in the functions of the centre were studied by making comparisons with the earlier studies done in 1967, 1968, 1978, 2001 and 2007, and with the data obtained from the findings of the questionnaire surveys conducted in 2001 and 2007. A detailed survey of the area was conducted in 2001 in order to determine the transformation of the area. The functions that were found in the area were coded according to the "International Standard for Economic Activity Branches" and the data were entered into Excel files and then findings were marked on

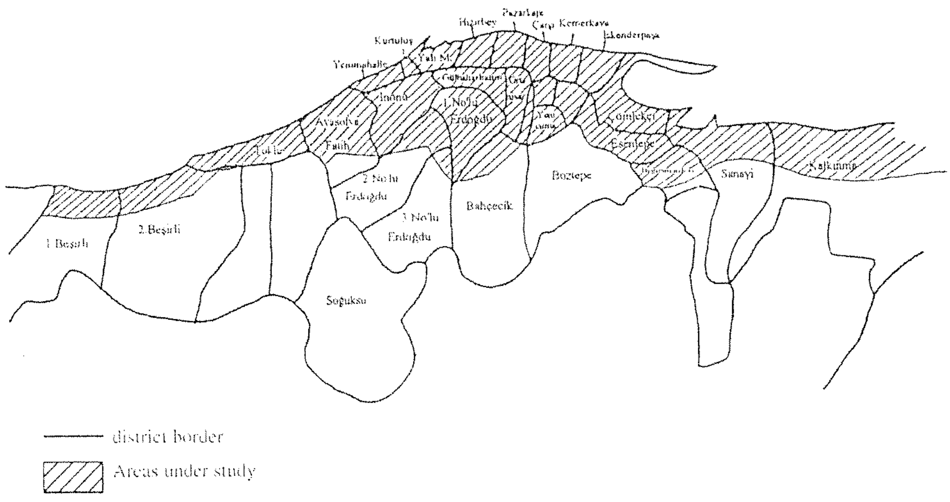

Figure 3. Areas under study

maps and graphics. Furthermore, the centrality indexes of the functions and the centrality of the districts were created by using SPSS.

In all, 132 central functions were identified in the city. Depending on the centrality, the districts were ranked in a hierarchy by taking into account the within- and between-group variances (Table 1) (Davies, 1967), indicating the highest order as 6, and 1 the lowest.

The distribution of the central functions among the districts is shown in Figure 4. The majority of the central functions are intensified in the sixth and fifth order centres, namely Çarşi (sixth), Kemerkaya and İskenderpaşa neighbourhoods (fifth), which have long been the historical centres of the city. However, Sanayi neighbourhood has the most workplaces at the fringe of the centre (Figure 4). The reasons for the accumulation of so many trades and services in this area are the diversity of cheap hotels, second-quality shopping and entertainment facilities which started to operate after the opening of Georgian–Turkish Border Gate, mentioned earlier.

Physical and Qualitative Changes in Retailing and Services

Due to the development of Trabzon, it has been observed that some physical, functional, quantitative and qualitative changes have been taking place in the city centre.

Table 1. Centrality indexes of districts and the hierarchy among them

District	Centrality index	Rank
Çarşi	1851	6
Sanayi	1180	5
Kemerkaya	1064	
Iskenderpaşa	1030	
Gülbaharhatun	558	4
Pazarkapi	555	
Cumhuriyet	553	
Inönü	528	
Fatih	507	
Ortahisar	399	3
Çömlekçi	344	
Kalkinma	226	
Gazipaşa	220	
2. Beşirli	188	2
Toklu	180	
1 Nolu Erdoğdu	148	
Değirmendere	131	
Yenicuma	106	
Esentepe	91	1
Bahçecik	89	
2 Nolu Erdoğdu	73	
Yali Mah.	59	
Yeni Mahalle	55	
1. Beşirli	48	
3 Nolu Erdoğu	19	
Hizirbey	17	

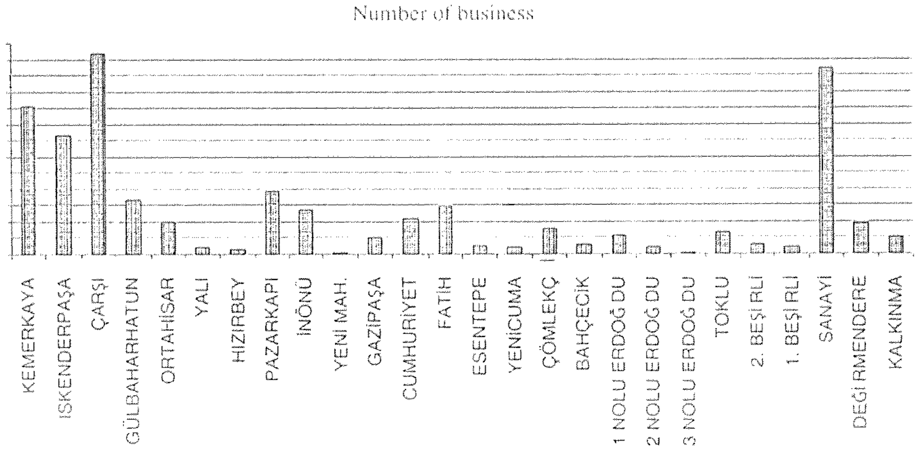

Figure 4. Spatial distribution of central functions

Physical and Qualitative Changes

Today, retailing and services are in the traditional centre (CBD) in the Çarşi neighbourhood. In the past, trade developed along the streets namely Kunduracilar Sokak (Street), Uzun Sokak and Maraş Street. Maraş Street developed as a banking and insurance street (Figure 5). In time, the city centre has expanded in size and the functions increased in number along the streets, spreading westward along the Maraş Street and Uzun Street (Figures 5–7).

At the same time, the transformation process continued by invading the ground and upper floors of buildings for use in retailing (Figure 8).

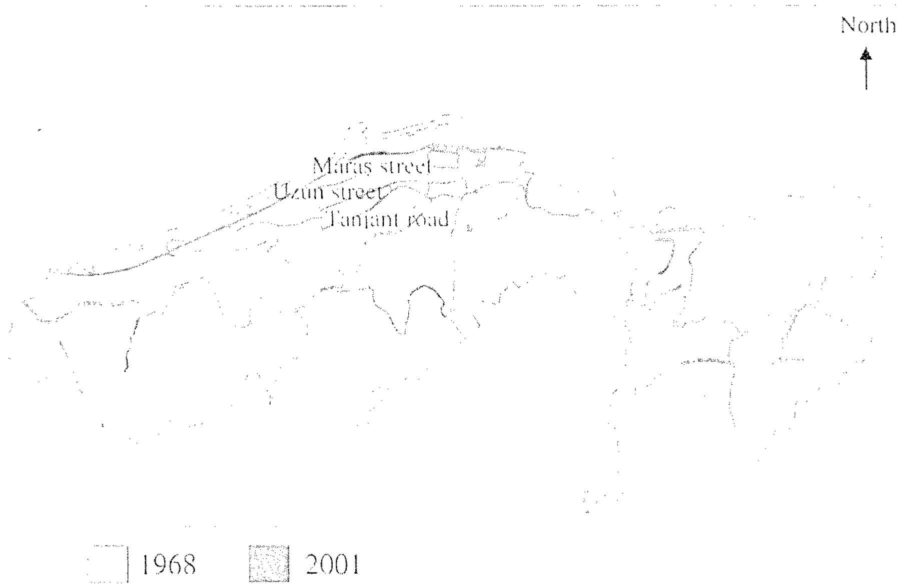

Figure 5. Spatial distributions of retailing and services: shopping street and strips

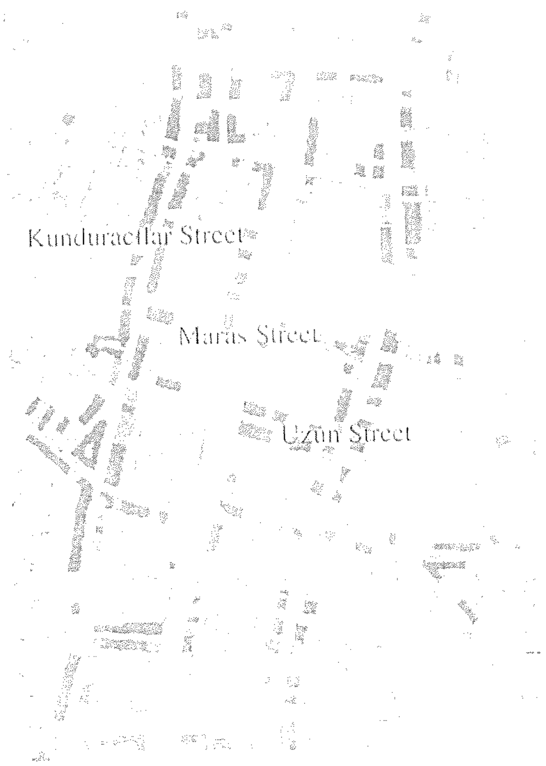

Figure 6. Roadside trade in 1968 (Trabzon Analitik Etüdleri, 1968)

However, change is a dynamic process. Ground floor premises have been changing hands among banks, insurance companies, computer shops, software services and private courses, etc. On the other hand, Tanjant Road, which is one of the newly constructed main arteries of the city, is surrounded by houses, new offices, shops, eating-drinking places, cafés, etc. (Figure 5).

The conversion of Uzun Sokak and Kunduracilar Sokak into pedestrian districts made the region more attractive for retailing and other services.

Qualitative Changes

Since 1968, the number of urban central functions increased from 78 to 135. The increase is generally seen in the field of plastic stuff, services, computer hardware and software sales, decoration materials, brand new clothing, leather wear, durable goods, etc. While trade-related functional enterprises which could afford to pay high rents stayed in the centre, some of the enterprises which could not afford to pay high rents moved out of the centre.

Today, there is an increasing tendency towards markets, supermarkets and shopping malls. Such kinds of change, from shops to market type retailing, generally take place

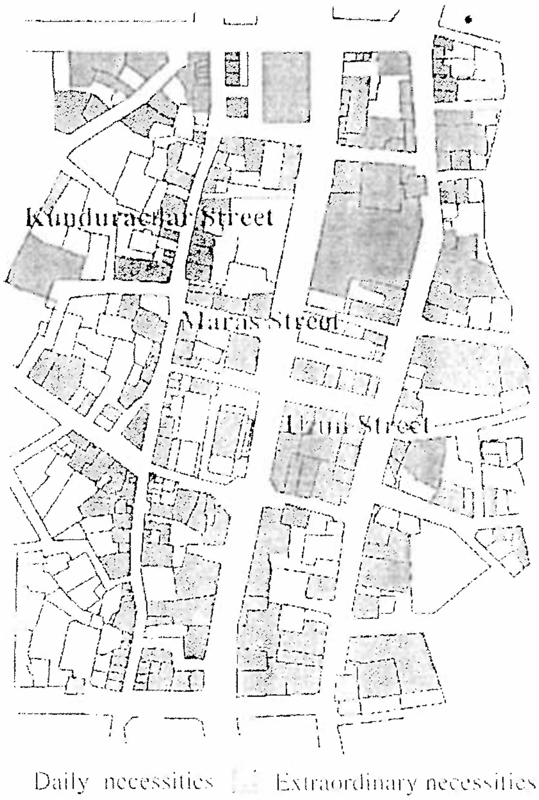

Figure 7. Extension of retailing and services in 2001

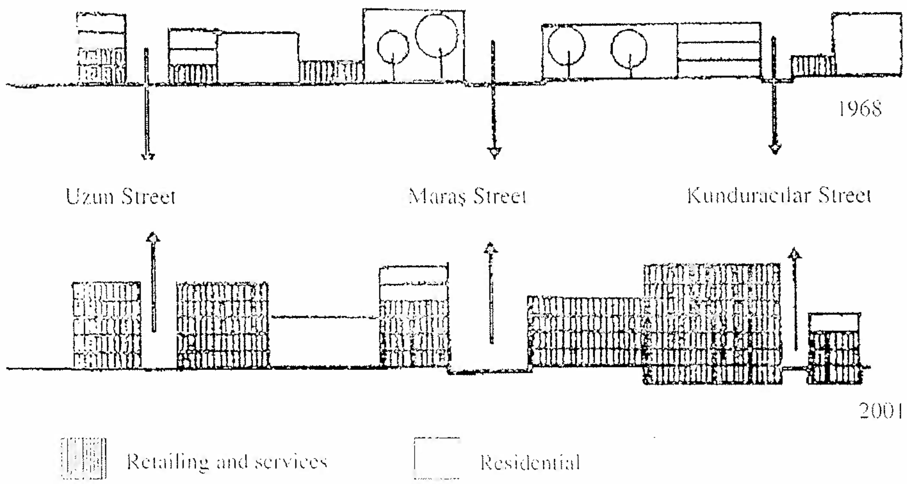

Figure 8. Transformation of retailing and services in the centre

in different parts of the city since 2000. The process started with the opening of Gima (Swiss chain store), which is one of the first examples in the Turkish food market, and has been spreading throughout the country. Moreover, by the entrance of foreign retail chains into the Turkish market and by the growth of demand towards foreign goods, middle-sized shopping centres like Mira Park, World Trade Centre, Forum Shopping Mall and hypermarket chains like Kiler, Carrefour and Migros (Figure 9) focused on a variety of goods. Big shopping centres, which offer thousands of products in one building for customers—especially appeal customers who have cars—and which provide them with car park/parking spaces, are generally located outside the city.

The increase in the numbers of markets and shopping centres has increased competition. Thus, some of the small enterprises have been replaced by the shopping–retailing centres that provide a variety of products and can meet the needs of all customers (Reardon *et al.*, 2003). Similar changes have been experienced in Western countries in the last 50 years; while people were buying most of the food products from market places or markets specialized in one product (greengrocer, butcher's shop, fishmonger's) (Baudrillard, 1997), today such kind of shopping is done in shopping centres and 58% of the money spent for vegetables and fruits has gone to supermarkets. Globalization of retailing creates wide effects over the market structures in the developing countries (URL, 2005). The change towards supermarkets continues in most of the developing countries (Humphrey, 2007).

Change has been experienced in the retail sector within the framework of goods and food products as a result of the effect of European-centred retail dealers in the last two decades in Turkey, although it has not yet reached the level of Western Europe. According to a recent study, Turkey has 18 national and international chain stores and some 400

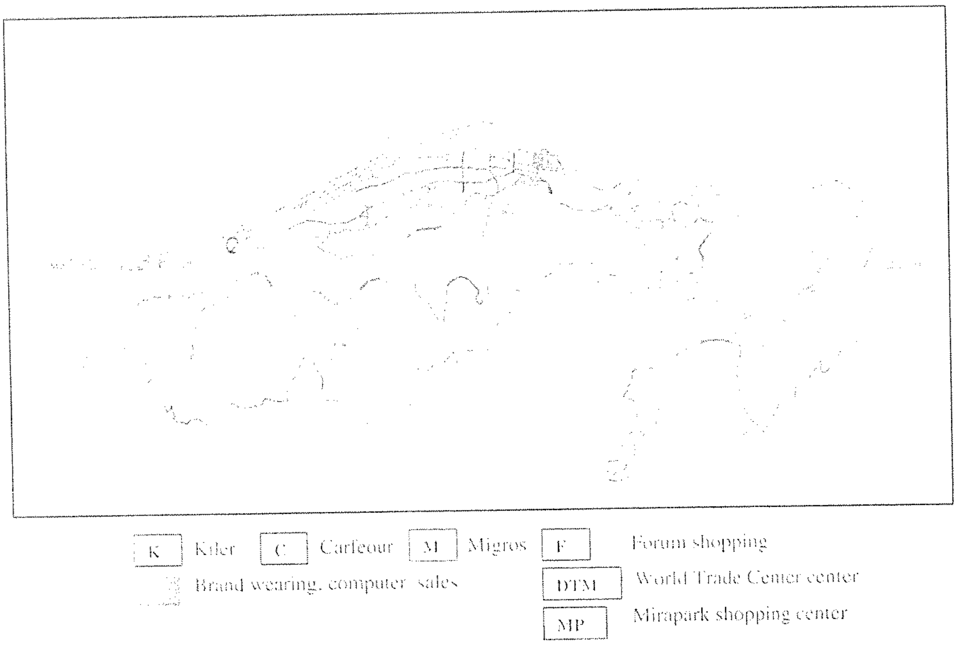

Figure 9. The location of new shopping centres in the city

Table 2. Comparison of population threshold for retail trade and services

Functions	Threshold population (Berry & Horton, 1970) (person)	Target population: Trabzon (Aydin, 2001) (person)
Grocer	450	354
Doctor	380–480	1134
Hairdresser	380–650	1185
Perfumery	400–500	5532
Pharmacy	460–850	2148
Clothing	750	431
Narrow goods	550–1350	951
Cinema theatre	2230	91,276
Stationery	12,298	2006
Photographer's shop	8785	4681

branches (Ozcan, 2000). As stated earlier, there is a transformation from open and closed bazaars, markets, small shops to supermarkets and modern shopping malls (Ger, 1992). The number of shopping malls has been rapidly increasing with various international brands and leisure patterns to meet the needs with higher standard shopping spaces that emerge for the social classes that are affected by global values. Continuous expansion of the city, the development of multi-centre urban structure, the decaying inner city, changes in population density and life styles have all affected the spatial distribution of needs, purchasing power and demand for retail facilities (Ertekin *et al.*, 2008).

Thresholds in Retailing and Services

Urban central functions in the city centre need support from a threshold population to continue their existence economically. For instance, for a greengrocer to live on the business, the customer potential should not fall below a certain level. Similar type of a business can survive as a profitable business unit only if its customers increase. However, in Turkey, in general, nearly all ground floors of the buildings along the roads are occupied by shops and stores, without evaluating the customer potential. Licensing for opening a business is not ruled strictly. This is true for Trabzon, too. Therefore, in some parts of the city, some of the businesses have to close down or change hands in a short time after their openings because of the lack of sufficient customers to support them (Table 2) (Berry & Horton, 1970).

Conclusions

In Trabzon, like in other cities, transformation of the central functions, retailing and businesses in the centre is ongoing. In this process, central functions are increasing in types and numbers, and then functional specialization becomes a sine qua non. Urban development and related transformations have affected the city centre more than the other parts. Expansion from the inside to the outside of the city became inevitable, and thus sub-centres began to emerge.

The change that has affected Turkey for the last 30 years with the emergence of European-based retailers in the retail sector has been effective on the centre and central functions of Trabzon. Such physical, quantitative and qualitative transformations in the retailing and services sector have taken place. During the transformation from shops and markets to shopping centres and supermarkets, some small businesses such as groceries, butchers and bakeries either closed down or moved from the centre.

Big shopping centres that offer a variety of products to the customers in the centres also provide large parking spaces that are eased from traffic jams, have easy access and have parking amenities and pedestrian areas.

It is also observed that there is no lack of meeting the daily needs of the customers for goods and foods in retail and services. Before the opening of businesses and functional changes of the businesses, careful inspection is essential in giving licenses. Close monitoring of the market dynamics that lead to such changes will contribute positively to the process of plan implementation and planning.

To secure the viability of the urban central functions to be profitable to the producers/operators and consumers is an important matter. Transformation in consumer behaviours, changes in the variety of goods sold and the floor spaces needed should be in accordance with the contemporary trends in retailing: market places, shopping centres, shopping malls and supporting threshold populations, which all are matters for plan changes or plan transformations of healthy cities.

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