



# Cittaslow Movement as a Tool to Strengthen the City Image: Case Study of Osmaneli (Bilecik)

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## Abstract

Intense urbanization movements, unconscious usage of energy sources, along with rural-urban migration based on various reasons and rapid population growth are the common problems of today's cities. The natural results of such problems can be summarized as the emergence of environments that are naked of aesthetics, changes in the habits of urban-dwellers with regards to their life styles and cultures, along with the negative impacts on the life quality of people. With this study, it is aimed to analyze the suitability of Osmaneli town to be a part of the Cittaslow Movement through the questionnaires to be conducted, along with identifying the physical effects of participating in this movement on the development of Osmaneli's urban image, and developing planning & design suggestions. The historical and natural landscape elements of Osmaneli surviving to date, along with its characteristics that strengthen the city image, are analyzed within the scope of the study. Field surveys have been carried out within the scope of the study method. In this direction, questionnaire study was carried out in order to detect the elements that bear the city image characteristics and brand value, while also measuring the participation and compliance rate of the public in case of becoming a part of Cittaslow Movement. A city that wants to join the Slow City Movement must meet certain conditions and undertake to provide others. Osmaneli settlement is in a lucky position in this context. Since it is a small settlement in Bilecik, it was not affected much by urban interventions and preserved its original texture. In addition, strengthening the city image of Osmaneli and increasing its tourism potential will provide economic development to the city. In this context, various determinations and suggestions have been developed and a tourism route has been created for the identity elements of the city.

## Keywords:

Urban image, identity, cittaslow, Osmaneli

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## INTRODUCTION

The main characteristics a city that distinguish it from a rural area can be defined as the replacement of agricultural activities with industrialization, formation of business lines towards this aspect, settlement of an order where individuality gains more importance in social practices, systematical processing of the life itself, and emergence of different income groups. The desire to have a high quality of life, while having financial difficulties and the urban life dream created by the visual media urge people to migrate from rural regions and villages to metropolitans. So this paves the way for the dense structuring in cities as the days pass, along with the emergence of infrastructure and security problems. The main reason for any individual to maintain his/her life with his/her family is the limited employment opportunities in rural areas where he/she lives. Finding a job and starting a new life is quite challenging, particularly for the young population living in rural areas.

There is an interactive compelling relationship between urbanization and ecological environment (Zhou et al., 2020). Urban areas typify very critical regional entities shaped by intense human activities affecting urban ecosystems (Tarsitano et al., 2020). Leading the urban microclimate to go under changes, thus causing impacts on the health of people in the hand, the process of global urbanization forces the paces for the population growth in cities (Wang et al. 2015). Preserving mental health and well-being in urban settings is particularly difficult, partially due to reduced interaction with green space among some urban residents (Coldwell and Evans, 2018). Cittaslow Movement comprises of a valuable approach in terms of providing urban development for small towns. The studies to be carried out in these small towns wishing to protect, maintain their identity and local values while ensuring development, will pave the way for noteworthy gains towards cities.

In Osmaneli, as a town in Bilecik, there are 90 registered houses, and 201 traditional architecture structures in total in the center of town, where the historical texture that is certified to be a historic archeological area (Ergöz Karahan, 2017). However, it has been conferred that 9 of these houses have been consumed by various reasons such as fire, etc., despite being registered in the books. Accordingly, there are 90 registered structures, involving 81 registered traditional Osmaneli houses, 4 religious structures, a government office, a historic fountain, a Turkish bath, an old town tavern and a primary school, in the area which was confirmed to be an urban archeological area in 2003 (Okuyucu and Somuncu, 2012).

In today's world, where the living conditions, construction techniques and traditions are swiftly changing, Osmaneli's streets and houses managing to protect its spatial characteristics and elements, have survived to date as an historical data thanks to its construction techniques, architectural identities displayed and spatial designs (Pamir and Yücel, 2005). Formed as per the silk farming and cocoon business activities in particular, which were the main means of living in 17th

century, Osmaneli houses are remarkably attention-grabbing with the architectural properties they possess (Okuyucu, 2011).

### **City Image**

How people perceive urban spaces has been an interesting question for city planners, policy makers, psychologists and even marketing researchers for years. Kevin Lynch published his seminal book *The Image of the City* in 1960. Since then, it has had a tremendous impact on the disciplines of urban design, environmental psychology, marketing, and social science. (Jiao et al. 2018). The image of a city comprises of the whole ideas and experiences of that city, while also varying from person to person in terms of perceptual aspects (Firat and Kömürçüoğlu, 2015). The cities to have certain form and characteristics towards specific purpose bring along the matter of bearing identity-borne aesthetical values, thus creating a town image and holding a moving qualification for emotional memory (Oğurlu, 2014). There are a number of factors that affect the image of a city and perception of the same by those not from that city. Among these factors can be named the following: the characteristics of the urban-dwellers, their status and political power, population density, crime rate, socio-economical structure and employment situation, number and characteristics of the national institutes located in the city, its location and history, movies and TV series shot in the city, attention of the media towards the city, the atmosphere created, recreational opportunities, touristic and cultural values & physical presence (Avraham, 2004). However, the perceived image of a place is highly subjective. For this reason, it can differ between individuals or different population groups, as in the perceived images formulated, for example, by tourists and residents of a city (Priporas et al. 2020).

Examining the term “image” from the perspective of urban branding, it can be said that many cities take steps in the direction of introducing themselves with the help of iconic structures nowadays (Riza et al., 2012). This shift in the basic understanding of place branding and its role in the development trajectories that communities open to them coincides with a similar transformation of urban planning practices (Cleave and Arku, 2020). Branding of cities is ensured oriented at increasing the number of people visiting the city, paving the way for the investments to be made on the city, enabling people to prefer the city for living or educational purposes. These efforts are oriented at creating the difference in the city, while contributing with positive values and strengthening the image accordingly within the axis of the weaknesses and strengths of the city (Can and Başaran, 2014). In particular, image destination activities aim to create a positive sense of place by conveying physical, emotional and functional quality choices from one place (Widayati et al. 2020).

### **Cittaslow Movement**

The interactions created by the global world, the rate of urbanization, industrialization, technological developments, wars and migration movements have led to great changes in cities. As a result of this situation, cities turn into places that have damaged historical areas, are disconnected from their past, and have no unique identity, where urban elements do not contain a holistic design approach. (Perihan and Aşur, 2020). Globalization has create a “fast-moving world”, where landscapes with more and more changes, yet resembling each other despite these changes are present, where the feeling of characteristic space is not satisfactorily protected, and where public social life make its presence felt less. This fast-moving world is substantially the product of capitalism expanding in global scale (Knox, 2005). The combination of technology and speed is recognized as a significant political and economical both by the systems and the individuals (Carp, 2012). Western societies in the center of the industrialization attribute defective and negative meanings to the term “slow”. Moreover, slowness is recognized as a mood of idleness which needs to be avoided in today’s world where speed and timeliness are declared to be the ultimate goals of our modern era (Doğrusoy-Türkseven and Dalgakıran, 2011). Penetrating in our lives, timeline and environment with its negative and dark side, “speed” started to damage the spirit of time (zeitgeist) and spirit of space (genius loci), bearing and narrating the traces from the past (Polat, 2011). In the global economical system, the conception that states “time is money” is predominant, and as a consequence, there is always an acceleration in our lives thereupon. The fast-moving world is defined as a presence comprising of modern communication systems, along with materialist consumption and international communication & entertainment, and where people and spaces are directly included as the producer and consumer, within an industry going beyond national borders (Knox, 2005). This is how an international movement came into being, founded on the idea of improvement of the quality of life of residents, savouring “slow”, healthy lifestyle, drawing on the tradition and history and respecting the natural and cultural environment of small towns (Jaszczak and Kristianova, 2019).

Urban social movement research explored struggles over mass consumption sites such as housing, public space, public and community services, and the environment (Taylor, 2020). In addition to all these concepts, Slow movement is recognized as the effort or desire of individuals to spare time for “doing something meaningful” under the domination of speed (Güven, 2011). Today, As an international network comprising of small towns, Cittaslow objectifies the slow food philosophy, while correlating it with the urban design and planning which is in a war with the problems related to the twentieth century cities. Cittaslow Movement focuses on a series of objectives that aims at improving the life quality of both citizens and the visitors (Elovich, 2012). While Cittaslow movement is an international movement, the local

authorities is endeavoring to gain resistance against certain forms of globalization since this movement has developed a model within the framework of local-oriented initiatives (Pink, 2009).

On the global world, the problem of losing the uniqueness is seen in metropolitan urban centers, but it also concerns the small towns, as well (Grzelak-Kostulska et al., 2011). Thanks to being a slow city (Cittaslow), the city will be able to exist with its own identity, while ensuring that the urban dwellers will lead a healthy and happy life, that the nature will be protected, and that the resources will be sustainable (Günerhan et al., 2010). Cittaslow has started as an actional movement seeping into Italy, and it encouraged the towns for using a series of urban design and planning tools oriented at re-addressing the challenges related to “fast living” (Semmens and Freeman, 2012). The idea behind the International Cittaslow movement is to promote a culture of good and harmonious living in small cities as an alternative to metropolitan bustle and advancing globalisation (Farelnik 2020). The movement underlines the use of new technologies, gastronomical sources, and the quality of local environment in order to achieve the ultimate welfare level jointly (Miele, 2008). Cittaslow attempts to focus on urban and regional plans by means of protecting the subjects that comprise of the unique characteristic of each and every urban area within the main presence of area-based identity within the organized network of small towns (Radstrom, 2011).

Applying various development methods in the cities that are included in this network within the framework of the Cittaslow configuration, it is aimed at ensuring a local sustainable development by means of adding new attraction points alongside the unique characteristics of a city such as its nature, history, culture, economy, gastronomy -as its existing potentials-, while also providing a high-quality and comfortable living environment not only for the urban dwellers, but also for the visitors (Yalçın and Yalçın, 2013).

Cittaslow has prescribed a number of rules that are to be followed based on the commitments undertaken by all the cities and towns joining in the unity from all the continents, and which are regularly controlled as per certain standards (Anonymous, 2011):

- Applying an environmental policy that substantially aims to improve the characteristic of the region and urban texture, along with protecting and developing the same by means of comprehending the recycling techniques.
- Implementing infrastructure policies that comprise of region-related functional analyses.
- Utilizing the technologies with the objective to improve the environmental quality and urban texture.
- Freshening the production and use of food products that are manufactured through the use of natural methods and are eco-friendly, while avoiding the use of transgenic products, as well as establishing facilities in order to ensure the protection and development of characteristic products that are under danger, where deemed required.

- Protecting the autochthonous (local) production that are deep-seated in terms of cultural and traditional aspects, contributing into the standardization of the same by means of the utilization of regional areas and methods, as well as organizing events and areas that are qualified to gather the consumers and high-end producers.
- With the removal of physical and cultural barriers related to the widespread use of the city, it is encouraged to create a real communication network with quality hospitality and social qualities.
- It is encouraged to raise awareness on living in Cittaslow by means of providing systematical tasting trainings to rising generations in schools, along with the citizens and the business owners.

Cittaslow movement has chosen “snail” as its symbol. The snail represents slowness and resting, which is the main philosophy of Cittaslow Movement (Keskin, 2010). Snail is gifted with all the opportunities to enjoy life with ultimate comfort (Jackson, 2007). Cittaslow criteria are gathered under seven main subjects. There are approximately 70 articles under these subjects, which are deemed as a must to be fulfilled for a town that aims to be a Cittaslow.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The research area is Osmaneli district, located in Bilecik province, 34 km North of the city centrum. The historical and natural landscape elements of Osmaneli surviving to date, along with its characteristics that strengthen the city image, are analyzed within the scope of the study. Osmaneli district has been selected as the research area, for its capacity to meet the requirements of Cittaslow Movement with its historical houses, quality urban texture, local products and city image.

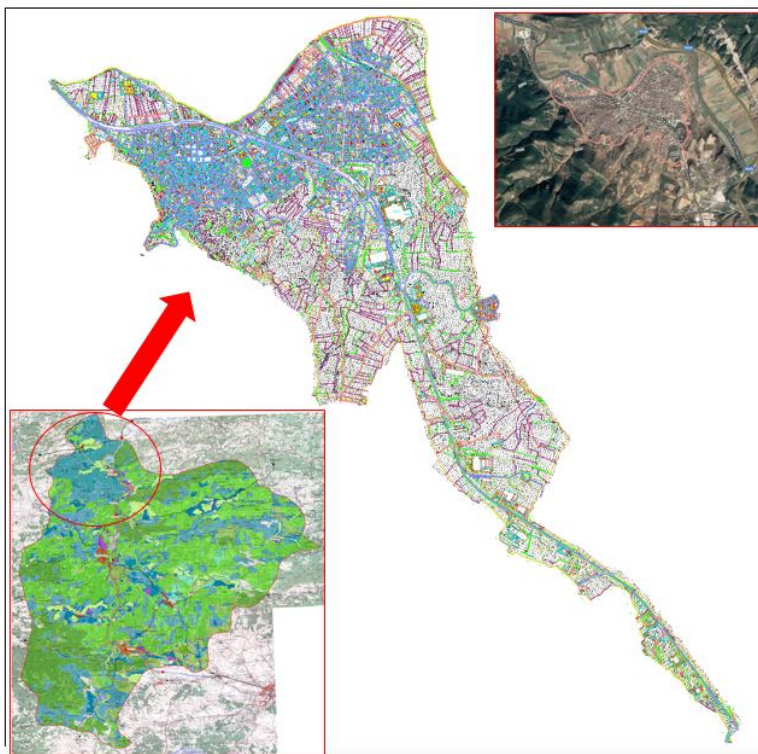


Figure 1. Location of Osmaneli

Field surveys have been carried out within the scope of the study method. In this direction, questionnaire study was carried out in order to detect the elements that bear the city image characteristics and brand value, while also measuring the participation and compliance rate of the public in case of becoming a part of Cittaslow Movement. The survey and evaluation studies are based on the perceptual and visual evaluations of the people living in the city. The decisive point here was that especially the people residing in the city filled out the questionnaire. Because the group that will observe the change in the city emotionally and cognitively is the people living in the city and their experiences of the city are determinative because it provides a projection for the past and the future. Participation and perceptual determinations of people who will be directly affected by the change that will occur if Osmaneli joins the Slow City Movement is an important focus point that guides the study.

Various resources have been analyzed within the scope of identifying the questionnaire-related sample size, Since the population of Osmaneli is stated as 21,071 according to the current data of the District Governor's Office, it was determined as 244 at p 0.8 significance level (significance value) based on the 25,000 limit with a 5% sampling error in Table 1, but it was studied with the aim of reaching the maximum number of people which was settled as 244 with a sampling error of 5% as per Table 1, while, on the other hand, the study was carried with the objective to contact with the highest number of people possible. In this context, the questionnaire study was carried out on 296 participants, and 274 of the questionnaires have been found to be in compliance. The number of those to participate in the questionnaire study was determined with a sampling error of +5% on a significance level of  $\alpha=0.05$ . The data obtained has been transferred into the SPSS data analysis program using a computer. The data transferred has been interpreted with the help of supporting tables.

**Table 1.** Various target group sizes, and sample sizes that are deemed required for error levels (Baş 2003)

| Size of Target Group<br>(N) | Sample sizes for $\alpha=0,05$ |                |                             |                |                              |                |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|----------------|
|                             | $\pm$ %3 sampling error (d)    |                | $\pm$ %5 sampling error (d) |                | $\pm$ %10 sampling error (d) |                |
|                             | p=0.5<br>q=0.5                 | p=0.8<br>q=0.2 | p=0.5<br>q=0.5              | p=0.8<br>q=0.2 | p=0.5<br>q=0.5               | p=0.8<br>q=0.2 |
| 100                         | 92                             | 87             | 80                          | 71             | 49                           | 38             |
| 250                         | 203                            | 183            | 152                         | 124            | 70                           | 49             |
| 500                         | 341                            | 289            | 217                         | 165            | 81                           | 55             |
| 750                         | 441                            | 358            | 254                         | 185            | 85                           | 57             |
| 1000                        | 516                            | 406            | 278                         | 198            | 88                           | 58             |
| 2500                        | 748                            | 537            | 333                         | 224            | 93                           | 60             |
| 5000                        | 880                            | 601            | 357                         | 234            | 94                           | 61             |
| 10.000                      | 964                            | 639            | 370                         | 240            | 95                           | 61             |
| 25.000                      | 1023                           | 665            | 378                         | 244            | 96                           | 61             |
| 50.000                      | 1045                           | 674            | 381                         | 245            | 96                           | 61             |
| 100.000                     | 1056                           | 678            | 383                         | 245            | 96                           | 61             |
| 1.000.000                   | 1066                           | 682            | 384                         | 246            | 96                           | 61             |
| 100.000.000                 | 1067                           | 683            | 384                         | 246            | 96                           | 61             |

Examining the data obtained in the town and the above mentioned data, along with the results therewith, various analyses have been made concerning the procedures to be followed in case of participating in the Cittaslow Movement. Additionally, the town-oriented design suggestions are developed, thus being supported with planning strategies in this context. In addition to these, an image route of tourism and travel has been established through the elements of the town with prestige and identity value via the questionnaire results and face-to-face interviews.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

According to the table revealing the survey participant profile (Table 2); 59.9% of the participants are female and 40.1% are male. In addition, in terms of age group, it was determined that the highest number of participants was from the 25-34 age group with a rate of 28.5%. When the educational status of the participants is examined; It is determined that the majority of the participants with a rate of 42.3% are university graduates and 41.6% of them have been residing in Osmaneli for more than 25 years.

**Table 2.** Results concerning the participant characteristics obtained through questionnaire study.

| Participant Profile                          |                   | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|--|-------------------|---------------|----------------|
| SEX  | Female            | 164           | 59,9           |
|  | Male              | 110           | 40,1           |
| Age Group                                    | Younger than 24   | 48            | 17,5           |
|  | 25-34             | 78            | 28,5           |
|  | 35-44             | 74            | 27,0           |
|  | 45-54             | 47            | 17,2           |
|  | 55-64             | 25            | 9,1            |
|  | Older than 65     | 2             | 0,7            |
| Educational Background                       | Primary school    | 44            | 16,1           |
|  | Elementary school | 30            | 10,9           |
|  | High school       | 76            | 27,7           |
|  | University        | 116           | 42,3           |
|  | Master/PhD        | 6             | 2,2            |
|  | Other             | 2             | 0,7            |
| Employment                                   | Public sector     | 90            | 32,8           |
|  | Private sector    | 43            | 15,7           |
|  | Retired           | 10            | 3,6            |
|  | Student           | 18            | 6,6            |
|  | Unemployed        | 96            | 35,0           |
|  | Other             | 17            | 6,2            |
| Period of living in the research area (Year) | 0-5               | 42            | 15,3           |
|  | 6-10              | 28            | 10,2           |
|  | 11-15             | 29            | 10,6           |
|  | 16-20             | 22            | 8,0            |
|  | 21-25             | 39            | 14,2           |
|  | More than 25      | 114           | 41,6           |

The answers for the question “Can you check three of the most important elements that represent the image of your town?” are as



follows as it is seen in Table 3: According to the questionnaire study, the most important elements that represent the image of Osmaneli are the Osmaneli Mansions, Sakarya River (including the facilities therein), İçmeler Region and the related Facilities in this area.

**Table 3.** Order of importance of the elements that represent the city image

| Elements of image            | Density (N) | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Osmaneli Mansions            | 204         | 74,5           |
| Rüstem Paşa Mosque           | 107         | 39,1           |
| Aya Yorgi Church             | 91          | 33,2           |
| İçmeler                      | 190         | 69,3           |
| Sakarya River and Facilities | 196         | 71,5           |
| Other                        | 13          | 4,7            |

Analyzing the answers for the question “What are the three words to describe Osmaneli to describe it to a friend/relative of yours, who has never seen Osmaneli before?” directed to those participating in the questionnaire study, it can be seen that these words are “relaxing, peaceful, natural, having a historical texture, convenient Daily life, etc.”.

**Table 4.** Order of importance of the products and elements of Osmaneli bearing marketing (brand) value

| Elements with brand value | Density (N) | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Turkish delight           | 203         | 74,1           |
| Quince                    | 207         | 75,5           |
| Watermelon                | 227         | 82,8           |
| Osmaneli Mansions         | 135         | 49,3           |
| İçmeler Facilities        | 144         | 52,6           |
| Other                     | 22          | 8,0            |

The answers for the question “What are the products of Osmaneli that bear the brand value?”, directed to the participants, along with the graphical distribution, are as follows (Table 4). In this context, the most important product that lay the brand value of Osmaneli in the center is the watermelon. Then comes the quince and Osmaneli delight. Additionally, lefke fabric and Osmaneli tomato paste are the other elements with brand value, which were included in the “Other” section of the answers.

**Table 5.** Order of importance of the characteristics of Osmaneli that come to forefront

| Characteristics of the town that come to forefront | Density (N) | Percentage (%) |
|--|-------------|----------------|
| Agricultural products                              | 121         | 44,2           |
| Nature Tourism                                     | 60          | 21,9           |
| Sakarya River                                      | 209         | 76,3           |
| Historical Mansions                                | 197         | 71,9           |
| Local dishes                                       | 31          | 11,3           |
| Natural beauties                                   | 109         | 39,8           |
| Other  | 11          | 4,0            |

Examining the answers for the question “What characteristics of Osmaneli come to forefront in terms of its image?” directed to the participants, it can be seen in Table 5 that the first one is Sakarya River, followed by the Historical Osmaneli Mansions.

In the last section, which was drafted as per the requirements of Likert Scale, the rate of agreement of the individuals to the suggestions that are laid out in line with the Cittaslow Movement has been settled concerning the development of the town. In conclusion, it has been conferred that these individuals substantially agree with some of the suggestions, while they do not with some other suggestions. The answers directed within the questionnaire study have been analyzed as follows in Table 6, with regards to the suggestions given on the changes projected for the physical structure of the town.

**Table 6.** Evaluation of the Osmaneli Citizens concerning the urban development and participation in Cittaslow Movement

|   |   | I completely agree | I agree | I'm undecided | I disagree | I completely disagree |
|---|---|--------------------|---------|---------------|------------|-----------------------|
| I believe that the identity elements of the town (the ones that define the town, such as social, historical characteristics, etc.) are satisfactorily preserved.                  | N | 46                 | 128     | 53            | 34         | 13                    |
|   | % | 16,8               | 46,7    | 19,3          | 12,4       | 4,7                   |
| I believe that the historical structures of the town are protected.   | N | 48                 | 137     | 54            | 22         | 13                    |
|   | % | 17,5               | 50,0    | 19,7          | 8,0        | 4,7                   |
| I believe that the amount of green areas in the town are is satisfactory (parks, playgrounds, etc).   | N | 47                 | 96      | 59            | 49         | 23                    |
|   | % | 17,2               | 35,0    | 21,5          | 17,9       | 8,4                   |
| I believe that the in-town forestation is on a satisfactory level.  | N | 33                 | 94      | 66            | 55         | 26                    |
|   | % | 12,0               | 34,3    | 24,1          | 20,1       | 9,5                   |
| I believe that the amount and size of the assembly areas (squares) in the town are satisfactory.  | N | 35                 | 72      | 83            | 51         | 33                    |
|   | % | 12,8               | 26,3    | 30,3          | 18,6       | 12,0                  |
| I believe that the building façades in the town are to be renovated.  | N | 72                 | 124     | 62            | 12         | 4                     |
|   | % | 26,3               | 45,3    | 22,6          | 4,4        | 1,5                   |
| I believe that the fitting equipment in the town (lighting, garbage dumpster, benches, etc.) are on a satisfactory level (in terms of amount, quality, aesthetics, density, etc.) | N | 29                 | 81      | 80            | 56         | 28                    |
|   | % | 10,6               | 29,6    | 29,2          | 20,4       | 10,2                  |
| I believe that the in-town transit systems (bus, train, etc.) are to be improved.   | N | 91                 | 104     | 53            | 18         | 8                     |
|   | % | 33,2               | 38,0    | 19,3          | 6,6        | 2,9                   |

|   |   |      |      |      |      |      |
|---|---|------|------|------|------|------|
| I believe that the bicycle trails and bicycle parks in the town are not on a satisfactory level.  | N | 89   | 86   | 56   | 26   | 17   |
|   | % | 32,5 | 31,4 | 20,4 | 9,5  | 6,2  |
| I believe that the parking areas in the town center are satisfactory.   | N | 23   | 55   | 69   | 76   | 51   |
|   | % | 8,4  | 20,1 | 25,2 | 27,7 | 18,6 |
| I believe that the promotional efforts for the town are to be increased.  | N | 120  | 110  | 37   | 5    | 2    |
|   | % | 43,8 | 40,1 | 13,5 | 1,8  | 0,7  |
| I believe that joining in an urban network (Cittaslow Movement, Smart Cities Union, etc.) will provide positive contribution in the social structure of the town (festivals, organizations, meetings, etc.) | N | 131  | 81   | 53   | 5    | 4    |
|   | % | 47,8 | 29,6 | 19,3 | 1,8  | 1,5  |
| I believe that joining in an urban network (Cittaslow Movement, Smart Cities Union, etc.) will provide positive contribution in the tourism activities of the town.   | N | 118  | 97   | 47   | 7    | 5    |
|   | % | 43,1 | 35,4 | 17,2 | 2,6  | 1,8  |
| I believe that joining in an urban network (Cittaslow Movement, Smart Cities Union, etc.) will provide positive contribution in the development of the town   | N | 104  | 100  | 62   | 2    | 6    |
|   | % | 38,0 | 36,5 | 22,6 | 0,7  | 2,2  |
| I support Osmaneli to join in an urban network (Cittaslow Movement, Smart Cities Union, etc.)   | N | 110  | 95   | 58   | 1    | 10   |
|   | % | 40,1 | 34,7 | 21,2 | 0,4  | 3,6  |

The last four suggestions directed to the Osmaneli citizens were basically oriented at measuring and analyzing the thoughts and participation level of the citizens in terms of joining in the Cittaslow Movement. The answers given in the questionnaire study (in Figure 2) show that majority of the citizens consider joining in an urban movement such as Cittaslow Movement would provide positive contribution in the social structure, tourism activities and development of the town. (Figure 2).

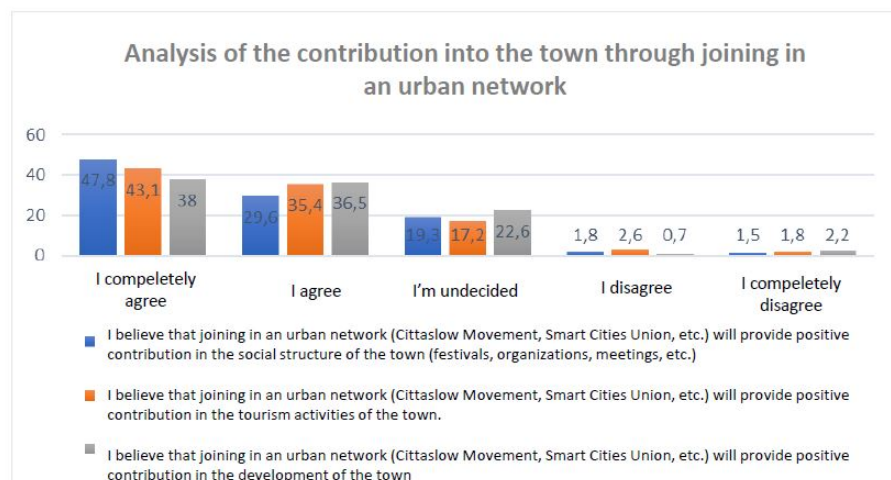


Figure 2. Graphical distribution of the answers given concerning the contribution to Osmaneli in case of joining in an urban network

### Assessment of Conformity to Cittaslow Movement Requirements

Osmaneli district in Bilecik province is an important settlement area with both its historical texture, architectural characteristic, and its local products, along with the elements that develop an identity for the town. It is aimed at carrying out an assessment of conformity to Cittaslow Movement Requirements for Osmaneli within the scope of the project. In this section, you can find the direct and indirect parameters oriented at strengthening the city image and identity of Cittaslow Movement. In addition to explaining these parameters, the suggestions and analyses to strengthen the current status and city image of Osmaneli can be found as detailed in Table 7.

**Table 7.** Table of analyses for Osmaneli with regards to the parameters of Cittaslow Movement towards city image and identity

| Parameters directing the City Image                                     | Descriptions  | Status of Osmaneli   | Suggestions   |
|---|---|--|---|
| Minimizing the visual pollution and traffic noise                       | In general of the slow cities, it is supported to use a uniform signs and boards for stores that are in harmony with the aesthetics of the area in order not to lead to visual pollution. The use of car horns is restricted, while also controlling the vehicle entrance to the city centrum, within the scope of the traffic noise. | Despite having certain examples within the criterion of visual pollution, there are some stores that use similar boards made of natural wood materials.<br><br>Since it is a quiet area in general, there is no inconvenience with regards to traffic noise. | It is deemed suitable to standardize the use of all the store boards by means of generalizing the boards and signs used in certain areas.   |
| Minimizing the public light pollution                                   | This criterion represents the chaotic environments caused by cast lights, business boards and related lights in the general of the town.  | No specific problem has been detected in the town within this context. The light variance problem in certain areas can be conveniently solved.   | The standardization to be applied on the signs and boards within the town will render lighting more convenient.   |
| Efficient bicycle trails that are under the control of public buildings | Establishing bicycle trails in the cities, as well as ensuring the active use of the same, will ensure the use of motor vehicle in the city to be minimized, thus granting positive effects into the ecological system.   | There is no bicycle trail in the city that is actively used.   | A bicycle transportation plan can be developed for the town. The topographical structure of Osmaneli, along with the close distances between main areas, makes it possible to establish and use bicycle trails in the town. |
| Bicycle parking areas in transit centers such as subway and bus stops   | This criterion represents the required areas for the bicycles to be parked within the city.   | There is no bicycle parking area in the town.  | The bicycle parking areas should also be specified within the framework of bicycle transportation plan.   |

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| <p>Programs for improving the city-specific values, as well as increasing the value of the city centrums and public buildings</p> | <p>This criterion represents the strategical studies and practices to be carried out oriented at the improvement of elements such as urban squares, structures, etc., which identify the urban aesthetics and city image.</p>   | <p>It can be said that the town texture in Osmaneli has been fundamentally preserved. Moreover, certain part of the registered structures in the town have been subjected to restoration in different period of time.</p> <p>There are also certain elements in the town, which damages the aesthetics, thus not being in harmony with the unique identity.</p> | <p>Some of the design suggestions oriented at the town's aesthetics can be seen in Figure 5.17 and Figure 5.18.</p>  |
| <p>Establishing and/or enhancing the social green areas using fertile plants and fruit trees</p>                                  | <p>Use of endemic species and/or naturally-grown plants and fruit species in the forestation of the urban areas in compliance with the requirements of the urban ecosystem.</p>   | <p>The ground cover of Osmaneli is suitable for planting various types of plants. Various fruit and plant species are grown in and around the town.</p>   | <p>The social green areas have been diversified with plants that complete the green texture in general. The design suggestions oriented at green areas can be seen in Figure 5.25 and Figure 5.26</p>  |
| <p>Improving the inhabitability of the city</p>   | <p>Carrying out studies to make the city more inhabitable. (i.e. shifting the entrance and exit times based on the working hours for schools and public institutes in order to minimize the traffic jam; encouraging the establishing of day-care centers in the workplaces, etc.) (Anonymous, 2020a)</p> | <p>Osmaneli is a town with its spirit in compliance with the Cittaslow requirements. Socially and physically, it is a town where life is convenient for all.</p>  | <p>Improving the transit systems and increasing the number of social events in the town will surely improve the life quality of citizens.</p>  |
| <p>Re-evaluating and using the marginal areas</p>   | <p>Re-arranging, renovating and functionalizing the idle areas in the city</p>  | <p>There is no specific data for Osmaneli with regards to the presence of such areas.</p>   | <p>Osmaneli Aya Yorgi Church (Figure 4.6) is not classified as a marginal area, and it is not open to visit for danger of collapsing. A restoration, preserving the originality of the area, in order to open it to visit will surely be a significant gain.</p> |
| <p>Monitoring and minimizing the pollutants</p>   | <p>This criterion comprises of the measures to be taken oriented at monitoring and minimizing the systems that lead</p>   | <p>There is no notable major problem in the town within this scope.</p>   | <p>Audits &amp; inspections can be carried out through environmental project in cooperation with</p>   |

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|   | pollution, such as noise and electricity.  |  | the University and BEBKA.  |
| Supporting the social infrastructure  | Increasing the practices to improve the social life in the city.   | Watermelon Festival is organized annually in the town, however it is not deemed satisfactory.  | Artistic and social events (concerts, cinema days, etc.) will have positive contributions into the social life in the town.  |
| Encouraging the public sustainable urban planning   | Following up of sustainable approaches in urban planning. Encouraging the use of Technologies such as passive home, smart home, etc. | There is no study that is conducted in the town within this scope.   | There is no building-based sustainable works & studies carried out in the town. For a sustainable town, the use of sustainable energy in the public buildings, as well as increasing the number of bicycle trails thus minimizing the use of motor vehicles are the prioritized practices that also need to be encouraged. |
| Utilizing the manageable green areas in the town with fertile plants                          | Growing local-specific plant species and/or fruit trees in the green areas of the city   | Osmaneli is a district with substantially fertile soils, where a number of fruit and vegetable species are grown. There is no fruit-tree planting practice in the green areas of the town. | Planting fruit trees in particular within the parks and green areas in the town, thus selling the products (i.e. jams, etc.) to be cultivated with these trees under a cooperative will provide income to the town budget.   |
| Protecting and increasing the values of workshops – establishing natural/local shopping malls | Supporting traditional butchers, bakeries, grocery stores, etc. located in the historical city centurms (Anonymous, 2020a)           | There are few stores where such local products as quiche delights and lefke fabrics, produced in the city, are sold.   | The local products, along with the ones produced by women living in rural areas of the town will not only strengthen the economy of the town, but it will also increase the popularity of the local products of the town.  |
| Amount of concrete used in the green areas  | Detecting the amount (m <sup>3</sup> ) of concrete used in green areas   | The number of green areas is quite high in Osmaneli. There is no study conducted with regards to the amount of concrete in such areas.   | There are a wide green area in Osmaneli. Detecting the amount of concrete used in such areas can be performed with remote-detection systems of direct land surveys.  |
| Protecting hand-crafted and labelled or branded craftsman/artist products                     | Supporting the local products produced in the city   | Courses are provided for woman entrepreneurs in order to increase the production of local products in the town within this scope (the production of lefke fabric in particular).           | Branding of local products can be encouraged through cooperation in the town. Identifying the local products in the town with the potential for protection, a  |

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|  |   |  | number of promotional events can be organized accordingly.   |
| Protecting local and traditional cultural events, as well as increasing their values | This criterion comprises of the studies & works oriented at the protection of local and traditional events in the city. | Osmaneli sustains a Greek culture, originating from a Turkish, Ottoman periods layered through interchanges. | Local events and dishes can be supported and sustained with various festivals  |
| Possessing slow routings   | Establishing slow travel routes in the city, as well as introducing the same both in hard copies and electronic media.  | There is no slow routing in Osmaneli, since it is not a part of Cittaslow Movement yet.                      | A travel route suggestion has been developed within the scope of the project for the town, as can be seen in Figure 5.27.                  |
| Presence of areas and a youth center where youth activities are carried out.         | Presence of youth-specific areas and organizing events accordingly  | There is no specific area in the town within this scope.   | Such areas will ensure the youth to have more quality and enjoyable time in the town, while increasing the participation in the town-life. |

## CONCLUSION

Bilecik is one of the smallest scaled provinces with lowest population in Turkey. It displays a resistant structure with regards to the protection of historical and cultural texture in terms of town centrum and the settlements in the town borders. As one of the districts in Bilecik, Osmaneli is a settlement with substantially preserved historical silhouette, along with a high branding value with a great variety of agricultural products and local dishes. Hosting various civilizations in the past, where the silk farming and cocoon business activities were carried out, along with the fact that Ottoman Empire ruled over an ear in Bilecik and its surrounding, including the influence of Greeks settling in the interchange period, displays an architectural and cultural mosaic.

Within the scope of the Scientific Research Project, various observations have been conducted concerning the research area in different timelines between 2019 to 2020 with the objective to analyze the potential of Osmaneli settlement in Bilecik Province to join in the Cittaslow Movement through its city image, while also taking photos and conducting questionnaire studies. Data related to Osmaneli such as visual resources, letters and reports have been obtained by means of utilizing the publications of various organizations and institutes, while also carrying out face-to-face interviews with the local authorities, citizens and visitors. An ordered database has been constituted by means of subjecting the obtained findings to a systematical classification.

Within the scope of the study, the results of our analyses are as follows, setting forth the participant profile following the questionnaire studies conducted with the citizens living in Osmaneli:

- According to the Table 2, which sets forth the participant profile, 59,9% of the participants are male, while 40,1% are female. Notwithstanding that the number of female participants is higher in

terms of gender-participation ratio, it can be said that the gender distribution is balanced. Additionally, there is no significant age group that comes to forefront in the participants.

- The numeric data concerning the educational background shows that majority of the participants have Bachelor's Degree. This reason for this is thought to be that Osmaneli Vocational School of Higher Education, affiliated to Bilecik Şeyh Edebali University, is located in this area.

- People from various business groups have been interviewed, and majority of the participants have been living in Osmaneli for a long time.

Thanks to having historical and natural beauties, standing out with its agricultural products, Osmaneli possesses a number of factors that bear the city image characteristics. In this context, the participants have been directed certain questions with the objective to set forth the city image. The analyses conducted based on the answers given concerning the perspective of local citizens are as follows:

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**Figure 3.** Products manufactured from Lefke fabric (Anonymous, 2020)



- The most distinct element that forms the image of Osmaneli is the historical mansions that comprise the architectural texture. Notwithstanding that a certain part could not be preserved, while the rest has been preserved through restoration, these mansions are recognized as the structures identifying the unique architectural characteristics of the area. Another important matter is the Sakarya River passing through Osmaneli, along with the facilities established by the riverside. Moreover, İçmeler Facilities, which is known to have healing waters, is one of the areas that is thought to be effective in terms of city image.

- Another significant indicator of the city image is the identification of marketing-value bearing products, as well as setting forth their brand values. Additionally, the local turkish delight products of Osmaneli, made of quince and various fruits, bear branding value, as well. Also, it was stated during the face-to-face interviews that the textile product, produced from the textile product “Lefke Fabric” mostly by local producers and woman entrepreneurs, bears high branding-value in Osmaneli.

- The characteristics of Osmaneli that stand out are also the elements of directing its identity and image. The answers given to this question in the questionnaire are supporting the ones given in the previous questions. In this context, Sakarya River and Historical Mansions are selected the most in the questionnaire. Then comes the agricultural products and natural beauties.

In the next section, which was drafted as per the requirements of Likert Scale, the rate of agreement of the individuals to the suggestions that are laid out in line with the Cittaslow Movement has been settled concerning the development of the town. While drafting this question group, the main qualifications that are expected from a slow city are taken as basis. The analyses on the answers given to these questions are as follows:

- According to the questionnaire study, it is believed by the participants that the identity and historical structures, as the important elements that identify the city, are preserved. Since the most important subject of this study is the development of city identity and image, Osmaneli, where its identity is protected, meets the requirements of this standard.

- Additionally, it is believed by the participants of the questionnaire that the amount of green areas and forestation is on a satisfactory level. Slow cities bear the characteristic of having high quality of life. Given that the green areas are vital elements increasing the life quality in terms of social, psychological and physical aspects, this is a critical finding that needs to be analyzed in the event that Osmaneli is accepted in the Cittaslow Movement.

- The assembly areas in the city are the ones that make it more convenient for people to socialize. It can be said that the local citizens are undecided about whether these areas are on a satisfactory level, or not.

- The sufficiency of the fitting equipment in the city, along with meeting the related requirements in a manner contributing into the city aesthetics, is a vital parameter in terms of slow cities. Notwithstanding that “I agree” option is the highest in terms of amount, quality, aesthetics sufficiency, etc., there is still a certain part of participants that went with “I’m undecided” or “I disagree”.

- Another one of the critical parameters of slow cities is the active and proper operation of transit systems. With the properly and conveniently operating transit systems, the traffic will be cleared of motor vehicles to the extent possible, thus providing significant contribution for the environment. Additionally, non-motorized vehicles, such as bicycles, are encouraged to be used in this context, as well. According to the results of the questionnaire, the transit systems are to be improved, and the number of bicycle trails are not on a satisfactory level. Moreover, it is of vital importance to lay out the in-town parking systems accurately and sufficiently in terms of settlement areas, and it can be seen from the numeric data that the participants feel negative on this section regards to Osmaneli.

- In addition to setting forth the image value of the town, increasing the town-related promotional activities will not only improve the popularity of the town, but it will also ensure economic development with the visitors. According to the questionnaire results, the promotional activities oriented at the popularity of Osmaneli are to be increased.

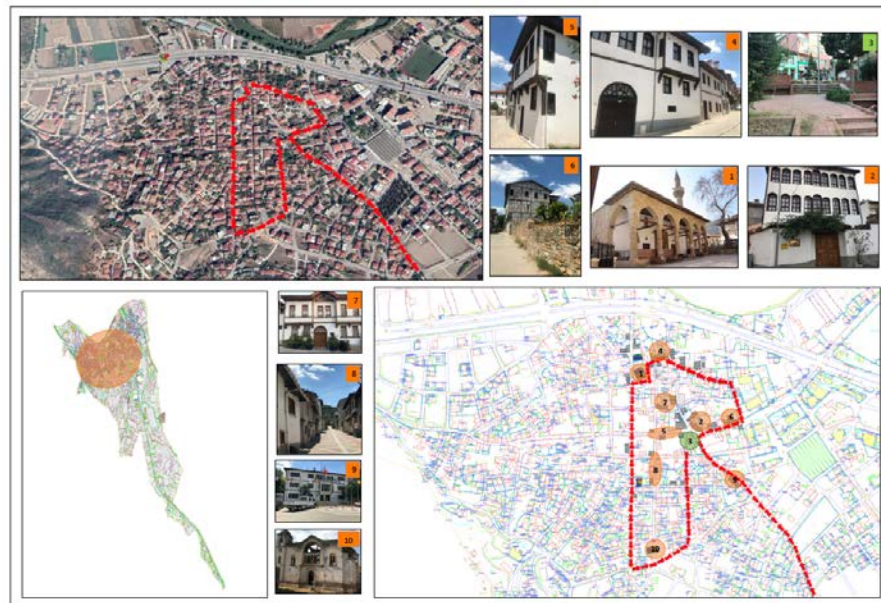
- The last four suggestions directed to the Osmaneli citizens were oriented at measuring and analyzing the thoughts and participation level of the citizens in terms of joining in an urban network. In this context, the idea of joining in an urban network to contribute in the development, social structure and tourism activities of the town is more prominent. Given that the agreement ratio in the last suggestion “I support Osmaneli to join in an urban network” is 74,8%, it can be seen that the citizens clearly agree with such action.

### **Suggestions**

As mentioned in the above sections, it is a must for a town, wishing to join in the Cittaslow Movement, to meet certain requirements, as well as undertaking to meet the others. Osmaneli town is in a lucky position in this context. Due to being a small district in Bilecik province, it was not that much affected from the urban interventions, thus preserving its unique texture. Additionally, strengthening the city image of Osmaneli, while increasing the tourism potential, will surely ensure economic development in the town. In this context, the following suggestions are presented in order to underline the image of Osmaneli and to ensure that Osmaneli becomes a Slow City:

- Informing the municipality and all the local authorities in detail with regards to joining in the Cittaslow Movement, and organizing this process in cooperation with Bilecik Şeyh Edebali University.

- Organizing informative meetings and workshops oriented at the local citizens,
  - Carrying out studies in order to identify and eliminate the deficiencies in the town
    - Taking the inventory of the banners, documents, etc., that comprise of data concerning registered historical buildings & structures or those suggested to be registered
    - Taking tourism inventory by means of analyzing the characteristics of the town all together oriented at strengthening its image
  - Drawing up a travel touring for introducing the town to the visitors, and preparing the required documentation for this process (Figure 3)
    - Drawing up introductory brochures that highlight the nature tourism, and establishing tourism routes
    - Establishing bicycle trails for Osmaneli,
    - Serving the introductory videos and images to media in cooperation with the local and national press units
    - Communicating all these inventories both through digital media and in hard copies to people by means of the kiosks to be established in the strategic points of the town.



**Figure 4.** Travel route oriented at strengthening the touristic image of Osmaneli (Original, 2020)

As a result, the data, evaluations and observations obtained within the scope of the study show that; The reasons such as the fact that Osmaneli is a small settlement, has a historical texture, and is on the shore of the Sakarya River give it an advantage in being a Slow City. However, in addition to such positive features, as in many local settlements it is a fact that unplanned urbanization and partial rent concerns are experienced in Osmaneli. In addition to the traditional housing pattern, some carelessly built buildings, unaesthetic urban furnishings, floor coverings,

visual pollution created by the signboards of the shops, irregularities in the public transportation systems and the like affect the city negatively. The determinations made within the scope of this study reveal the dynamics that physically direct the city and improving the image of the city will provide a development input potential to the city. In this context, the Slow City Movement should be seen as a road map and the determinations made within the scope of this study should be used as a guiding and effective tool for local governments and should be included in urban practices.

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### Resume

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