

THE CONCEPTUAL GROUNDING OF OVERTOURISM AND OVERTOURISM-DRIVEN CHANGE: OLYMPUS CASE

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ABSTRACT

Heritage tourism destinations (HTDs) in rural places host not only tourists and tourism service facilities but also negative consequences such as urbanization and overtourism-based spatial transformation on the social, economic, and physical landscape. This paper aims to investigate the ontological groundings of a rehashed overtourism phenomenon by employing an integrative reviewing method of related literature with a focus on rural HTDs and reveal the landscape change by extracting the spatial transformation from satellite images and historical orthophotos of Olympos/Turkey by using semi-automatic classification analysis in QGIS. The findings implicate that the indicators of overtourism can be grounded on the latest levels of the Creative Destruction Model, the Vicious Circle, and the Tourismification approaches, however, still there is a need for reconceptualization of the phenomenon. Moreover, the findings showed that the modus operandi of overtourism-based spatial expansion of tourism service units in protected areas follows a path through the gaps between the two inverse philosophies of protection and use which is critical for stage changes in the evolution process of HTD.

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INTRODUCTION

Social sciences began with the idea that we could not merely critique subjective biases and categorize or catalogue the world around us but that we could offer scientific explanations to help understand how human societies work, the variables that influence them, the human ability for change (Lempert, 2015) and to transform the physical, economic and social environment. Scientific explanations/studies show that human interactions

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with the physical environment generally create a negative transformation of tourism destinations through overuse, misuse, crowding, degradation and deformation. As one of the world's top industries, tourism has become a prominent force behind this transformation in tourism destinations where cultural or natural attractions and the tourists -as consumers of the attractions- concentrate. Human mobility has created a distinctive pressure, especially on heritage tourism destinations due to their unique conditions and the delicate balance between "protection" and "use". Before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism destinations witnessed extreme levels such as too much or too little tourism (Milano & Koens, 2022) and pandemic-related undertourism is one of the most challenging issues that the tourism industry has ever faced, however, overtourism is considered a more chronic, deep-rooted and long-established issue.

In recent years, the overtourism phenomenon has become a significant research topic among tourism scholars. The term has been used to provide a new aspect to define the negative impacts of tourismification with case studies in a diverse array of popular tourism destinations. However, it is argued that the term has been neither properly framed nor explained. Koens et al. (2018) underlined that overtourism is a highly complex, and opaque phenomenon that is not well conceptualized, which could be oversimplified by stakeholders. Studies (Capocchi et al., 2019; Dredge, 2017; Perkumiene & Pranskunienė, 2019) indicated that the term is new but the content is a rehash of the previous impact studies. Therefore, it can be said that the attempts to explain overtourism are still far from having a consensus among tourism researchers.

Especially after 2017, there has been a growing body of research papers and media content about overtourism, mostly related to the negative impacts of rapid tourism growth in popular tourism destinations. The low-cost flights and the new technologies are seen as an effective factor that caused the concentration of tourist flows to specific areas (Butowski, 2019) and -as a consequence- over-crowding brought pressure on carrying capacity and sustainability (Namberger et al., 2019). The tourism-based pressure on the environment and social milieu of tourism destinations has become a more visible and significant problem to be overcome by local and/or central managing bodies and stakeholders. In other words, the negative effects of tourism growth have come on the stage with a new term "overtourism" and global and domestic policy factors (Peterson & DiPietro, 2021) or inaction to prevent overtourism through effective policies (Butler & Dodds, 2022) are frequently found a voice as critics in tourism literature.

The groundings of the overtourism phenomenon in the earlier tourism literature are underlined by Capocchi et al. (2020). The most frequently used models are pointed out as Doxey's (1975) "irritation index" and Butlers' (1980) "tourism area life cycle" models. However, there is a need to reveal the groundings of the phenomenon in heritage tourism studies and set forth the connections with particular models and approaches that are emphasizing the specific conditions of heritage tourism destinations.

The assessment of the tourism impacts is an extensive area of research with multi-disciplinary dimensions. The complexity of the tourism system is yet another challenge that makes impact studies necessary to have a more holistic approach. Investigating the change or transformation that has been brought about by tourism is not a new area of inquiry but also still has some gaps that are enough to attract a researcher. From year to year, new studies have been conducted on the phenomenon, involving a more extensive body of indicators, processes, and cases. However, up to now, the tourismification process has not been satisfactorily explained in specific settings such as archeological heritage that are located in rural areas as are frequently observed in the Mediterranean basin. In this sense, the main objective of this paper can be announced as to track the footprints of the overtourism-driven spatial transformations in protected rural heritage sites and the ontological groundings of the overtourism concept in tourism studies. Also, the sub-objectives associated with the study could be listed as; to investigate the definitions related to the "overtourism" phenomenon and reconceptualize what is frequently referred to as a criticism in current tourism studies, to reveal the groundings of overtourism in HTDs assessments and the development of related models and approaches that have been used to examine the transformation of HTDs. This study, therefore, sets out an assessment and monitoring of the process of spatial transformation that is created by overtourism in protected rural areas, such as natural and archaeological heritage tourism destinations, and an in-depth investigation of the groundings of the overtourism phenomenon. To achieve these objectives, Olympos / Türkiye is chosen due to its potential to represent key symptoms of the research subject and the availability of the geospatial data of the physical gentrification. The evidence/symptoms of the phenomenon emerged due to unplanned tourism development and illegal land use forms that are frequently seen in 2nd degree protected areas in Olympos where conservation and protection principles have been ignored for providing provisional solutions to satisfy rapidly growing tourism demand. Overtourism is strongly associated with the number of

tourists. Rapidly increased number of tourists caused faster and uncontrolled growth in the illegal building of tourism facilities and spatial gentrification of a protected area that can be detected through GIS.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: Literature review summarizes the studies on heritage tourism research, emphasizing the transition from impact studies to overtourism approach. The methodology section explains the data-gathering process in Olympos and the GIS analysis of satellite images. The results section includes the groundings of the overtourism research by investigating the development of impact studies and models that are used to measure the change in tourism destinations with a minor focus on HTDs. Also, it underlines the scope of tourismification approach which has been frequently used to examine the transformation of heritage tourism destinations. In the discussions section, the conceptual framework of the issue is structured by considering different approaches to the overtourismification phenomenon. Following this, suggestions have been made for theoretical implications in consideration of the empirical findings in conclusions section. Last but not least, limitations of the study and the suggestions for future research are expressed briefly in limitations section.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Heritage tourism research: From impact studies to overtourism approach

Even though that heritage is a recent phenomenon of the last quarter of the twentieth century, it is difficult to pin down a moment, or even a period when research on heritage began (Harvey, 2001). From the nineteenth century onwards, heritage tourism has been considered a tool for building national identity. Visitor experiences are designed for nation-building projects in landscapes of national history (Franklin, 2003). After the Second World War, there was a significant increase in the diversity of tourism products due to the shifting nature of capitalism from Fordism to post-Fordism. The tourism industry changed from being characterized by relatively homogeneous demand to more flexible and differentiated forms of tourist consumption. Therefore, new forms of tourism have been taken place and termed niche tourism or post-modern tourism. Heritage tourism can be identified as one of the earliest forms of post-modern tourism (Light, 2015). In this manner, definitions of cultural tourism and heritage tourism usually overlap or heritage tourism is seen as a sub-concept of cultural tourism (Timothy & Boyd, 2003). From a management point of view, heritage is shaping tourism activity and needs to be managed by tourism

scholars, on the other hand, heritage scholars need to control and manage tourism activity. McKercher and du Cros (2002) claimed that the historical background of both disciplines -heritage and tourism- evolved independently. There was a lack of communication due to different ideologies and values, sets of stakeholders, objectives, political masters, and roles in society. For instance, while tourism professionals value heritage assets as raw materials for the product, on the other side, heritage professionals value the same assets for intrinsic merits like inventory. Also, cultural heritage management aims to conserve and protect cultural assets as a heritage for future generations in the public sector and non-profit sense. Stakeholders are community groups or representatives of indigenous or ethnic groups. In contrast, the tourism industry is dominated by the private sector and driven by profit with economic objectives. Stakeholders are mostly driven by the commercial sector with commercial purposes. Another distinction can be made based on the backgrounds of professionals. While cultural heritage professionals come from art or social sciences backgrounds, tourism professionals have business or marketing backgrounds or they are from the commercial world. In this sense, managers struggled to apply different strategies in a touristic area to keep the balance between heritage protection and use. Tourism planning strategies are designed with conservation concerns and heritage planners took into account the impacts of tourism on the site.

In the conceptual model of overtourism (Peeters et al., 2018), it has been underlined that overtourism occurred when the tourism impacts transcend the tourism capacity in a destination. Tourism density/intensity, tourism share (GDP), environmental, economic, social, and psychological pressure are bigger than the physical, ecological/environmental, economic, political and governance, social and psychological capacity of a tourism destination, overtourism can be identified through its impacts. The impacts of overtourism can be briefly listed as; declining population, protest movements, loss of destination attractiveness and residents' liveability, a mismatch between the type of visitors and destination/groups of visitors, and gentrification. It can be argued that the impacts of overtourism are a follow-up of the impacts of tourism in general at a more observable and perceivable level. Tourism destinations can be considered complex networks that involve a large number of co-producing actors delivering a variety of products, and services (Pearce, 1989; Buhalis, 2000; Haugland et al., 2011).

To set some examples for the complexity of the overtourism, recent studies revealed that massive events may play a key role to trigger

“tourismofobia” as a consequence of the social negative impacts of tourism. Tokyo 2020 Olympics case study showed that negative emotions such as disruption and fear are escalating in parallel with the increasing numbers of visitors in the city (Duignan et al., 2022). On the other hand, cities are staging not only social negative impacts but also spatial impacts of overtourism due to increasing numbers of short-term rental platforms (Celata & Romano, 2022). In urban areas, the accommodation capacity is used to limit tourism service units, however, short-term rental platforms created an atmosphere where functional systems and tourism facilities coexist in residential areas. The spatial consequences of the overtourism often be associated with the social injustice (Jover & Diaz-Parra, 2022) among tourists and locals where physical environment and social milieu of HTD stages different but interrelated dimensions of the same issue.

Heritage tourism destinations are not different in this sense but also present some additional complexities due to protection and conservation concerns. As it has been abovementioned among the impacts of overtourism, rural gentrification or overtourism-driven transformation of the landscape can be analyzed by identifying the spatial changes, especially in sensitive historical or natural protected rural areas. It can be put forward that the causes and the consequences of overtourism in different environments are interrelated due to the complexity of the tourism system. Overall, the research questions of the study can be expressed as “what are the overtourism-driven spatial transformations in an HTD that is located in a protected rural area? and how the footprints of the physical gentrification can be analyzed by using GIS?” On the conceptual side, “what are the ontological groundings of the overtourism phenomenon with a focus on HTDs and protected areas, and what is the modus operandi of the tourismification process?”

METHODOLOGY

Following the main objective of the research, the development of impact assessment models that have been used to understand the impacts of tourism has been explained in detail. Approaches that focused on the development of HTDs with specific conditions such as protected areas are gathered. Also, the definitions of the term are studied to provide new conceptualizations of the phenomenon, thus, the integrative review method has been employed.

The integrative review method is described as an approach that allows for the inclusion of diverse methodologies and contributes to the

presentation of varied perspectives on a phenomenon of concern. It can summarize past empirical and theoretical literature on a topic of interest and incorporate diverse methodologies to capture the context, processes, and subjective elements of the topic (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005). The method consists of five steps; problem identification, literature review, data evaluation, data analysis, and presentation. Therefore, the steps of integrative review for identification of the groundings of overtourism in heritage tourism destinations can be listed as follows:

- **Problem identification:** Overtourism is a new term but the content is a reconsideration of the former tourism impact studies. As Dredge (2017) and Capocchi et al. (2019) indicated that the phenomenon put forward, especially the negative impacts of rapid tourism growth in popular European destinations such as Venice and Barcelona. The concept has been investigated mostly in urban tourism destinations. The groundings of the phenomenon of former tourism impact studies on HTDs that are located in archaeological or natural rural protected areas are not fully revealed yet. Hence, there is still a need to illuminate various perspectives that constituted the groundings of the new concept.
- **Literature review:** There is a growing interest in overtourism research and the number of papers and media content on the related topic is increasing. On the other hand, existing literature on the assessment of the evolution of heritage tourism destinations are adequate to identify the overlapping themes with overtourism such as social, economic, or environmental impacts that have been revealed in the evolution processes of HTDs.
- **Data evaluation:** Having a specific focus that is limited to the impacts of overtourism in HTDs, it provides a lens to make an analogical assessment to clarify the similarities between formerly specified indicators through researches and latterly conceptualized overtourism phenomenon in HTDs.
- **Data analysis:** Data were extracted based on relativity to their assessments of indicators that are identified during the evolution process of HTDs. Each model, approach, or method to assess the development of HTDs is reviewed and the groundings of the overtourism phenomenon in HTDs are explained by revealing the connections in the related literature.
- **Presentation:** The groundings of overtourism in tourism literature are portrayed by showing the connections of indicators with former models and approaches in a table.

Semi-automatic classification analysis of geospatial data

Empirical data that contain the spatial transformations in Olympos / Antalya are extracted from the satellite images by using GIS techniques to identify the consequences of overtourism on landscape and physical environment. Satellite images from ASTER-MODIS, Landsat, Sentinel 2, Sentinel 3, and historical orthographic data have been analyzed and used to detect the physical transformations. During the first phase, multiband set images (RGB: Red-Green-Blue) have obtained from Landsat, Sentinel 2 and Sentinel 3 satellites and the images are analyzed in QGIS by using a semi-automatic classification plugin. Built structures, soil, vegetation and water are referenced on RGB band images.

The additional data have been gathered from the General Directorate of Mapping of Turkey. The orthophotos are providing better resolution in GIS-based researches. Therefore 0.3m resolution orthophotos from 1977, 1992, and 2015 are analyzed in QGIS. Then the results of semi-automatic classification (Figure 2) are agglomerated in one (Figure 3). Following the program-based analyses on raster files, manual classification is made on vector files. Superimposed files are analyzed manually and the findings that could not be detected during the semi-automatic classification tools are identified manually.

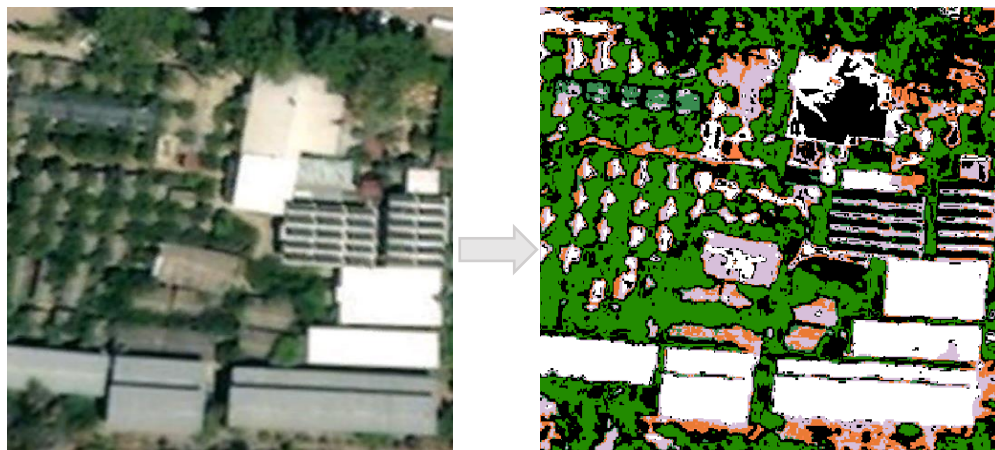


Figure 1. A detail of tourism business on the satellite image and the result of semi-automatic classification on the raster image. (Source: Author, 2019)

During the last section, identified physical transformations on the landscape of the Olympos area and the spatial expansion of the tourism service units are compared with the approaches that are prognosticative referring to the expansion of the tourism service units. Lastly, the modus operandi of the two inverse philosophies (protection and use) in

tourismification of protected areas are portrayed to understand the critical points of stage changes in the evolution process of the HTDs.

RESULTS

Groundings of overtourism phenomenon in heritage tourism studies

To set an example to the transformation of specific tourism destinations, a distinction has been done by Kaspar (1989) about SPA destinations development. In the beginning, there was the unipolar region with tourism mostly focused to accommodation and thermal facilities. However, during the evolution process of SPAs, a multipolar type of spatial organization becomes more and more developed. Tourists are accommodated in several blocks that are not strictly tied to SPA medication but also to the recreational or cultural contents which made unipolar tourism growth into multipolar (Jovicic & Tomic, 2009). Some of the HTDs have similar unipolar tourism in the beginning with a single heritage site and then on, changing into a multipolar destination by incorporating some tourism facilities like thematic events and entertainment or physical structures for accommodation or other service units. Especially in rural places, archaeological sites provide accommodation and service facilities nearby or outside of the protected area. Restaurants, hotels, and other touristic units transform into another center that has no strong ties with the archaeological site. On the other hand, heritage sites can be located close to a tourism center where the dominant attraction is not the heritage (i.e., Sea-Sun-Sand oriented mass tourism centers). Frequent excursions from the tourism center to the heritage site may force a spatial sprawl in/around the heritage site and create a multipolar destination.

In a similar vein, an assessment of the spatial organization of HTDs has been made by Jansen-Verbeke and Russo (2008) by referring to the "core" and "periphery" concepts of Miossec (1977) in tourism systems. Core has been explained as a center of attention for visitor activity, spaces that are holding power on development and reaping benefits from tourism. Also, cores are referring a place where financial capital is concentrated. In contrast, peripheries are identified as territory around a destination and passive players. Also, the peripheries have been cut off from the economic benefits of tourism when compared to the cores. Another dimension in the core-periphery analytic framework is the focalization of the tourist products. Hypothetically, the driving system of attractions, the image of a place and its hegemonic representations constitute the core. On the other hand, the periphery has elements that are not directly related to the core

attributes and has not got components to establish a tourist center to be promoted as attractions.

Heritage assets can be found in rural areas as well as in urban areas. Especially in rural areas, tourism facilities (i.e., hotels, restaurants) can find a place to sprawl easier than urban areas, hence, heritage tourism management and planning should include not only the heritage site itself but also the region at the periphery. To set an example, Russo (2002) created a categorization in terms of tourist regions and functional tourist regions (FTR). FTR refers to hinterland areas with no tourist attractiveness per se but providing accommodation facilities and other tourist services for visitors to the main destination. Tourist centers and heritage centers might be seen as complex and hard to separate one from another. This may occur frequently in urban heritage destinations where historical structures are still in use or have been revitalized for tourism purposes. On the contrary, the distinction between the heritage site and the “periphery” surrounding the heritage site can be more observable in rural heritage sites. Due to protection and conservation principles, rural heritage sites are usually allowed for a limited time of visits and actions (most of them are forbidden to accommodation and urbanization). In addition, Russo (2002) analysed the costs and benefits provided by tourism and verified that urban heritage destinations are going through a “vicious circular” process in four steps. During the first step, demand for the destination exceeds the carrying capacity of the historic center and expands. Tourism activity has spread and created a functional tourist region. The second step refers to the progressive enlargement of FTRs and the leaking out of the tourist expenditure due to increased costs of accommodation in the city center. Also, the number of false excursionists (whose main motivation is the destination for their journey but they spent the night in another place) and the congestion produced by them are increasing. The third step is explained by the deterioration of the quality of products and, as a result, the inefficiency of the tourism cultural system within the destination. Lastly, the fourth step of the model highlighted the linkage between bad quality of the services and non-central visits. Furthermore, this step includes a strong distinction between the area where costs are imposed and the area that captures the benefits of tourism.

The results indicated that another model that is a mainstay of the overtourism phenomenon is the latest stages of the Creative Destruction Model (CDM). The CDM consists of analyzing the indicators from socio-cultural, economic, and physical environments and has been tested and refined for more than ten years in countries such as Canada, Australia

(Tonts & Greive, 2002) and China (Fan et al., 2008). During the primary applications of the model to the Canadian cases, the model consisted of five stages: early commodification, advanced commodification, pre-destruction, advanced destruction, and post-destruction.

Table 1. *Similarities of vicious circle approach (urban) and creative destruction model (rural) in heritage tourism.*

Approaches	Tourism Product	Economy	Socio-cultural Dimensions	Spatial Context
Vicious Circle of Heritage Cities	The quality of heritage tourism product (supply)	Dynamics of regional economies	Mobility of residents caused by congestion	Spatial organization of tourism service units, FTR
Creative Destruction of Rural Tourism Centres	Consumption behaviour of heritage tourists (demand)	Investments profiteers, promoters, and preservationists	Immigration, commodification	Type of dominant landscape

Data source: Author, 2019

Similarly, the vicious circle in heritage cities and the creative destruction model emphasizes stages that have significant indicators such as the immigration of residents after a measurable increase in congestion. Changes in regional economic dynamics and investments are another dimension that can be assessed as indicators to explain the economic environment of an HTD. Also, both CDM and Vicious Circle approaches focus on the consumption behaviour of tourists and quality of tourist products. The vicious circle of heritage cities is based on economic relations between spatial organisations in a tourism area. As it has been explained in FTR, the spatial distribution of tourism facilities and services can be used to reveal the inner dynamics of an HTD and the characteristics of its development in parallel with economic development. CRM (Fan et al., 2008) describes spatial characteristics of an HTD as “productivist rural landscape” during the first stage (pre-commodification) of the destination development. It refers to a period where the community is a part of extractive activities (economically stable or declining form) before tourism activities begin and -in parallel with that- process of commodification emerges. Therefore, the rural space hosts a transformation from a countryside that is designed to produce a limited array of commodities for economic gain, to another one that has functionality derived from a large discourse of preservation, rather than excess profit. The type of dominant landscape in HTDs is an indicator that refers to a change in the productivist landscape into a post-productivist heritage scape and lastly into a neo-

productivist leisure landscape which is described as a particular type of post-industrial landscape of accumulation that is driven by profit rather than preservation.

Another approach that the results indicated as a grounding for overtourism in heritage destinations is the “tourismification” approach. Transformation of heritage sites into HTDs can briefly be expressed as the “tourismification process”. Salazar (2009) used the term “tourismification” rather than “touristification” because it is the mere presence of tourists that are shaping this phenomenon but, rather, an ensemble of actors and processes that constituted tourism as a whole. Tourism research have shifted from analysis of tourism potential and development plans to impact assessment studies by associating the sustainability concerns (Jansen-Verbeke, 2009). During the 1990’s, resource-based tourism development models like Tourism Opportunity Spectrum or Recreational Opportunity Spectrum were used to incorporate relations between settings and activities (Boyd & Butler, 1996) within a limited time and space equilibrium. Latterly, with the help of technological advancements like GIS time-space, the behavior of tourists has been identified by analysis such as Tourist Activity Space. Furthermore, a two-dimensional model, Tourist Attraction Index has been created to analyze tourismification in historic cities based on morphological characteristics of the built environment (architecture, urban forms, and artifacts) and the present functions (public accessibility, attractiveness) (Jansen-Verbeke, 1998).

By incorporation of a territorial approach to previous research, symptoms of tourismification have begun to be evaluated more comprehensively and included rural heritage areas. Linkages between people, place, and environment are evaluated under the cultural landscape concept. Cultural landscapes are considered cultural properties representing the combination of works of nature and human. The recognition of cultural landscapes as carriers of heritage opened new perspectives for rural areas and communities (Jansen-Verbeke, 2009). The territorial approach is used to measure the impacts of tourism or to assess the multi-dimensional and diverse array of indicators brought by tourism. Also, spatial indicators of tourismification are included in assessments in addition to natural, morphological, and natural characteristics, social and political relationships, economic structures, and functional profiles. Yet another innovation in tourismification analysis provided by the territorial approach is, it has enabled the assessment of tourism-induced impacts in specific areas. Inherently, more focused and detailed analysis has been possible on small scales. As a consequence, the driving forces behind spatial

transformation and the social understanding of changing patterns of space use (Jansen-Verbeke, 2007) have become more visible through the instrumentality of new tracking technologies.

Table 2. *Overtourism-driven impacts and groundings in heritage studies.*

	Overtourism-driven Impacts	Related Approaches in Heritage Tourism Studies
Environmental	Increased usage of natural resources (land, water, energy), construction of tourism infrastructure and disturb natural and cultural landscapes, congestion, overcrowding,	Tourismification of physical landscapes, congestion and overcrowding as an indicator in former steps of creative destruction model and vicious circle, environmental negative impacts of tourism in general,
Economic	Increased demand for certain specific tourism goods and services and production factors, gentrification, increased prices for residents and disappearance of supply for inhabitants, Accessibility loss due to overcrowding leading to a reduction of usage of infrastructure, sites and facilities,	Concentration of tourism benefits and activities and deterioration of the quality of products in vicious circle, raising in prices that cause immigration of residents and loss of accessibility in the creative destruction model,
Socio-cultural	Touristification of residential areas, marginalization of residents, increased number of visitors that residents differing from the population (age, ethnicity, gender, moral values), criminality, loss of cultural identity and increased visitation by non-residents of sites, events, and activities,	Increasing crime rates, immigration, and loss of local identity in the later stages of the creative destruction model, commodification and staged authenticity in tourismification of local culture, congestion, and overcrowding as an indicator in former steps of the creative destruction model and vicious circle, socio-cultural negative impacts of tourism in general

(Data source: Author, 2019)

With this aspect, the territorial approach has also expanded tourism impact studies. Especially, environmental impact assessment researches have been influenced by innovation. Jansen-Verbeke (2008) has classified tourism impacts in a framework based on their environments. Location patterns, infrastructure, clusters and trails, transport systems, space use and mobility patterns in a physical environment of territory have been opened to investigate in detail. Policy impact and monitoring researches are continued to focus on policy priorities, government subsidies, public aid programs, legislation, and measures of a political environment in a specific

area. Economic impact researches are explained in terms of macro-meso-micro scale, expenditures, employment, business networks, marketing and local entrepreneurship. Impacts on the social environment have been defined as participation, trends in behavioural patterns, preferences, cultural values, inclusion, and exclusion in socio-cultural impact studies.

To sum up, overtourism term is new, however, the conceptual background of the phenomenon is as old as the impact studies in tourism research. Therefore, the groundings of overtourism can be identified in former impact studies based on indicators and processes that have been investigated in a diverse array of research in tourism literature. To be more precise, as a new inquiry of research, overtourism in heritage tourism destinations can be understood and revealed through disambiguation of its groundings in former approaches to assess the development of tourism in heritage tourism destinations.

Overtourism-driven urbanization pressures in protected rural heritage sites: Olympos case study

In an urban context, the tourismification of the space only concerns the inner historical city (Russo, 2002). However, in rural contexts or destinations where the main heritage site and the tourism area are apart (as mentioned in core and periphery concepts), spatial expansion occurs around the core and through the different directions of protection zones. A distinction can be made by excluding the archaeological site where generally there is no transformation and stability is dominant due to the high level of conservation and protection concerns and outer space with dynamic transformation. Olympos / Antalya is one of the most outstanding examples of such graduations for protection that provide protection against the negative and destructive impacts of tourism development. However, unplanned and fast growth, legal infringements, and lack of governance has led to an awkward development of a tourism destination that can be counted as a significant example of overtourism in HTDs. Graduations such as 1st, 2nd or 3rd degree of archaeological or natural protection zones have different levels of planning and implications.

In Olympos / Antalya, overtourism brought awkward spatial organization of tourism facilities. Firstly, Olympos ancient city is declared as the 1st and 2nd degree archaeological protected area and 1st and 3rd degree natural protected area with decision dated and numbered 13.03.1978 and 8995 in Northern Antalya Environmental Plan by Ancient Arts and Higher Council of Monuments (Antalya Kültür Envanteri, 2005). In 2020, a

new legislative regulation about the graduation of the archaeological site has been issued and the physical borders of each grade have been changed. Therefore, the spatial distribution of the tourism-related units is affected directly by the new regime and the new debate about the urbanization levels in the area has been subject to new discussions in the media.

Seyhan and Russo (2020a; 2020b) underlined that there were no buildings or significant spatial transformations until 1975. However, agricultural lands have begun to host bungalow-type accommodation and service units due to legal gaps which implicate that the bungalows are not counted as structures. Afterwards, the toilets and bathrooms that were in common areas and within accommodation units were begun to be built during the 1990s. As the demand increased, the number of the units with interior or private toilets increased through a decadelong until the 2000s. Consequentially, the consumption level of water and the requirement for sewage disposal has increased. Despite having built in a strictly protected area, the businesses which were built illegally have gained their licence. Notwithstanding, the demolishment decisions -declared long before this date- by legal authorities have neither been applied nor cancelled. A conservation master plan started in 2009, however, bungalow-type tourism units dominated the built environment, and as a consequence, the destination transformed into a shanty or ghetto-style settlement. The bed capacity of the businesses that have been built in the protected area has reached approximately 1500 in 2000 and nowadays it is around 2500. The number of tourism facilities is stated as 70 (Uçkan, 2017).



Figure 2. *Olympos Tourism Area (OTA) and Olympos Ancient City.* (Source: Author, 2019)

Since the announcement of the protection decision in the area, a wide variety of changes have occurred in social, economic and physical environments of the area. In the first place, by the beginning of spatial restrictions such as 1st degree and 2nd degree archaeological sites, new regimes have been brought into force by legal frame which imposed a new phase in the evolution process of the destination. Therefore, the first stage in the development process of OTA as a tourist destination can be stated as the exploration stage before the announcement of the protected area. Following to this, by the beginning of the new legal regime, an awkward development of tourism facilities developed by taking advantage of the legal gap and lack of governance.

The results of the extraction of tourism-based spatial transformations in the 2nd degree archaeological protected area indicates that the abovementioned impacts of overtourism on the environment are observable. The environmental impacts that have been pointed out in the literature such as increased usage of natural resources (land, water, and energy) are significant due to the increased number of accommodation and service units. In the first place, the 2nd degree archaeological site became a periphery of the main ancient city by hosting tourists in pergolas that are latterly transformed into bungalow-type accommodation units. As the periphery developed with the new type of accommodation offerings, it become more popular and staged a rapid occupation of illegal housing. Consequently, the new type of tourism destination that was offering low-cost holidays in shanty pensions to -especially- young tourists took its place in the tourism market. As Miossec (1977) and Jansen-Verbeke and Russo (2008) explained, the core should be the centers of attention for visitor activity, hold power on development and reap benefits from tourism. In OTA case, it can be said that the situation is vice-versa. The 1st degree archaeological protected area and the ancient city were the main attractions for -mostly- heritage tourists in the beginning, however, the rapid and unplanned grown periphery itself started to be the main attractions for the non-heritage-oriented tourists. The note of the tourism destination has shifted from a natural and archaeological heritage-based destination to a shanty urbanized tourism destination. Consequently, the ancient city -as the core- became the least changed (due to different legal basis) and even under the pressure of the periphery.

As it has been emphasized in the vicious circle of heritage cities, a decrease in the quality of heritage tourism products (supply side) have occurred in addition to the discomfort of congestion that is created by tourism density. Also, as it has been indicated in CDM, the consumption

behaviour of heritage tourists (demand side) took shape based on the transformation of the landscape. For instance, in the documentaries of BBC and Discovery Channel on backpackers, bungalow-type pensions have started to be seen frequently and the destination that has developed as a periphery became more popular than the core and the main characteristic of the destination among the international backpacker community. The first hostel that has been built in the 2nd degree archaeological protected area without any legal basis and the necessary infrastructure. In parallel with a rapid increase in the number of tourists, the tourists whose primary purpose of visits were “visiting cultural and natural attractions” have moved out from where the congestion and overcrowding predominate over (see consumption section). Therefore, it can be said that the place where primarily defined as periphery and then became the core of tourism activity that created similar effects with functional tourist region (FTR) which have been frequently pointed out in the vicious circle of heritage cities. In addition, due to commodification and lack of authenticity in local products (i.e., pancake) and handcrafts are seen in accordance with the mass production for tourists. The type of dominant landscape shifted from a natural and cultural landscape into a shanty district which consisted of illegally build-structures as band-aid solutions by taking advantage of legal gaps.

In particular, the spatial development of OTA has followed a path without governance and the tourism supply has increased rapidly in according to satisfy changing tourism demand. It can be stated that the regimes and the legislative regulations which have been intervened in the process to protect the natural and historical landscape have been neither fully implemented nor monitored. Consequently, managing a destination that has already been developed and took a large scale becomes more and more difficult to handle for local, regional, and national managing bodies. The socio-cultural indicators of overtourism such as the increasing rate of crime and diversification in crime types or negative environmental indicators like the construction of tourism infrastructure and disturbing natural and cultural landscapes have become more observable. The spatial development of OTA has shifted from a “base source” dominated destination to a “service source” based destination through the development of the necessary post-hoc services to satisfy increased demand.

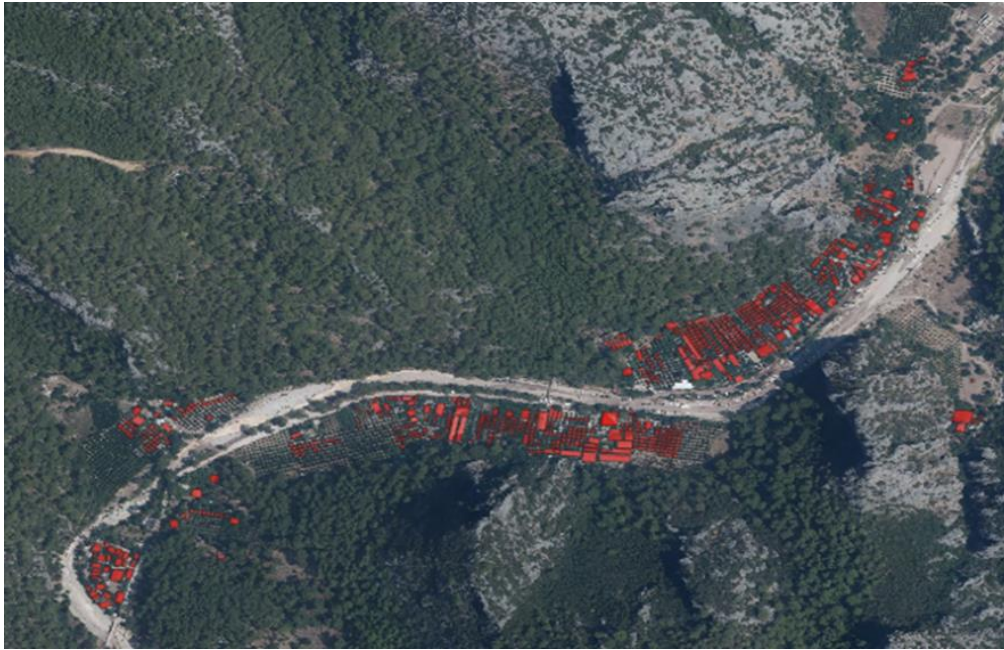


Figure 3. *Overlapping the results of all detected tourism facilities in OTA. (Source: Author)*

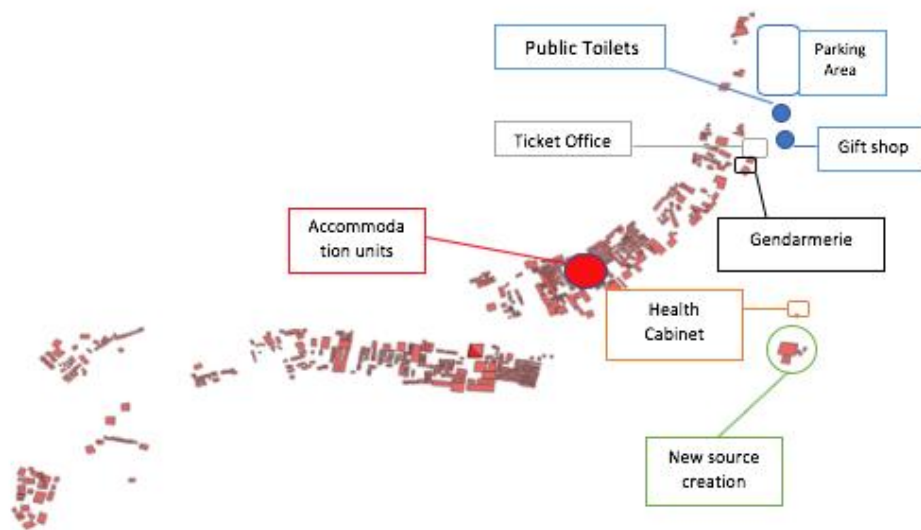


Figure 4. *Classification of spatial transformations in Olympos based on Johnston (2001) and Smith (1988). (Source: Author)*

Figure 4 shows that the service resources that have been built in the 2nd degree archaeological protected area include almost all Tier types that have been indicated in Johnston's (2001) study. The extracted satellite images showed that the majority of the structures are Tier 1 type service units that are consisted of accommodation units, souvenirs shops, food and beverages units that are serving directly to tourists and also discotheque -

new source creation- which has developed separately from the concentration of other tourism units. In addition, the health cabinet can be seen as an example of Tier 2 type of units that are serving both tourists and locals. Furthermore, services such as Gendarmerie and cell towers that are located in different points in the area can be assessed as governmental structures in the protected area.

DISCUSSION

It can be stated that the advancement of the spatial transformations in OTA, proceeded under motivation to have profit from tourism activity which has been begun during the 1970s and continued against to protection concerns and legislative regulations. The stakeholders of the process such as local, regional, and national administrative bodies and local people who are also the owners of the tourism businesses should develop long-term plans that are including principles of sustainable development. More importantly, the implications of created plans should be supervised and monitored by the participation of all stakeholders. Therefore, to achieve success in sustainable tourism development, the participation of local people, professions, and managing bodies should be provided. OTA as a heritage destination has been a stage for negative impacts of tourism through decades and latterly consequences of overtourism should be examined in detail and the recognition of current problems should be done objectively. The most obvious finding to emerge from this study can be stated as the importance of governance and the implications of legal frameworks that have been put forward to protect cultural and natural sources of the protected area. Provisional solutions and perfunctorily legal sanctions that can be count as “staged governance” are frequently led to a “de facto protection” which is affluently spoken and written, however, neither applied nor controlled.

The final phase of the awkward and unplanned development of shanty tourism centers can be stated as overtourism stage which should be explained and defined in detail. However, the results of the integrative review indicated that the definitions of “overtourism” are ambiguous. Even though the term is created and then trademarked by Skift in 2016, it has been used on Twitter back in August 2012 and addressed in UNWTO’s Ministers’ Summit in World Travel Market in 2017 (Goodwin, 2017). It is defined as “the impact of tourism on a destination, or parts thereof, that excessively influences perceived quality of life of citizens and/or quality of visitors experiences in a negative way”. Another definition is made by the Responsible Tourism Partnership as “destinations where hosts or guests,

locals or visitors, feel that there are too many visitors and that the quality of life in the area or the quality of experience has deteriorated unacceptably". As it is seen, the scope of overtourism is based on not only quantitative but also qualitative indicators. Therefore, it involves commonly used approaches such as carrying capacity (Weber, 2017; Muler Gonzales et al., 2018), acceptable change, or sustainability (UNWTO, 2018). In other words, the overtourism phenomenon is related to uncontrolled tourism growth and/or unmanageable concentration of tourist flows -especially in urban tourism destinations- that negatively affects all stakeholders of a tourism destination. Walmsley (2017) pointed out similarities between definitions by exemplifying Weber's (2017) definition "the phenomenon of overcrowded tourism destinations, where the (mainly social) carrying capacity is exceeded" and supported the idea that definitions are referring to concerns about limitation and where it should be set. However, a distinction should be made between former conceptualizations such as carrying capacity that refers to a limit exceeding and the later formulations of the new phenomenon that refers to the whole process itself.

Based on the information given above, it can be argued that the term "overtourism" is insufficient to conceptualize the existing phenomenon which is attempted to be defined and hotly debated by scholars in tourism studies. The reasons for the exigency of reconceptualization can be listed as:

- As it can be seen in definitions, the phenomenon is based on an ongoing process and mutual interaction among stakeholders rather than an excess of a limit which is formerly has become one of the main topics of tourism researches as carrying capacity and acceptable change.
- The term "tourism" has a diverse array of definitions without any consensus or common measurable indicators. Therefore, to identify what is over? Or which indicators to be assessed based on which criteria? are elusive, ambiguous and -even if existing definitions of tourism are considered- complicated.
- In essence, the phenomenon is about the absence of good management and uncontrolled development (UNWTO, 2018). Therefore, the issues that the tourism destinations are facing today are based on neither the concept of "tourism" nor its quantity but how we manage it. To this respect, the determinants such as "over" or "under" are insufficient to indicate mentioned issues and cannot be substituted with an absence of successful management or control of tourism activity.

- Existing definitions and researches are underlining a transformation; social milieu (Milano, 2017), economic (Oklevik et al., 2019; Walmsley, 2017) and physical environment (Milano et al., 2018) of tourism destinations. Starting from this point of view, it can be argued that former conceptualizations such as “tourismification” or “touristification” are more fulfilling to explain processes like transformation. Similarly, from a linguistic point of view, determinants such as “over” and “under” are seen likelier with the words which unambiguously referring a process. Due to these reasons, it can be put forward that the terms “over-tourismification” or “over-touristified” is more satisfactory to conceptualize the phenomenon.

The overall results of the research also showed that the mechanisms of the evolution process have some specific conditions, in other words, modes of operation. The overall results indicated that the driving force behind the transformation is to reap the maximum profit from tourism activity, provide advancement of the process and an increase in the number of tourists’ overtime. However, the operation of tourismification process of naturally or historically protected areas has some distinctive characteristics that help us to distinguish it from the evolution process of other types of destinations. The first characteristic can be announced as the inverse relationship between demand and supply. In tourism destinations -in general-, the increase in tourism supply is seen as favourable to satisfy the increasing tourism demand. In contrast, in protected areas, the same philosophy may lead to some destructive consequences on delicate environments of the HTDs. Therefore, HTDs should form the demand to avoid exceeding carrying capacity limits and to keep the delicate balance between the protection and the use.

As an example of the *modus operandi* of tourismification process of protected areas, the contextual domains such as physical or cultural environments that are preserved by “counter-discourses” through protection regulations, conservation efforts and tight control within a specific legal framework can be given. From political economy and governance perspective, these counter-discourses can be count as efforts to keep delicate balance (Wang & Bramwell, 2012). While legal regulations are aiming to keep the heritage site “static”, tourism economy-based motivations are obligating the development of tourism-based facilities and forcing the destination for a transformation which refers to a “dynamic” process in its nature.

The two inverse philosophies that have been identified in tourismification process of protected areas and the evolution of HTDs can be conceptualized as “transformative” and “preservative” philosophies. The transformative approach emphasizes actions and practices that may have negative consequences on protected areas such as; excessive use of resources, commodification, ignorance of sustainability, legal infringements, exploitation of legal gaps and the object of forming supply dominantly and dynamically. On the other hand, the preservative approach includes actions and practices which are related to sustain and keep static the worth preserving characteristics of the area by providing governance and conservation within a specific legal framework and considering protection and use balance and carrying capacity in a sustainable way against to transformative actions.

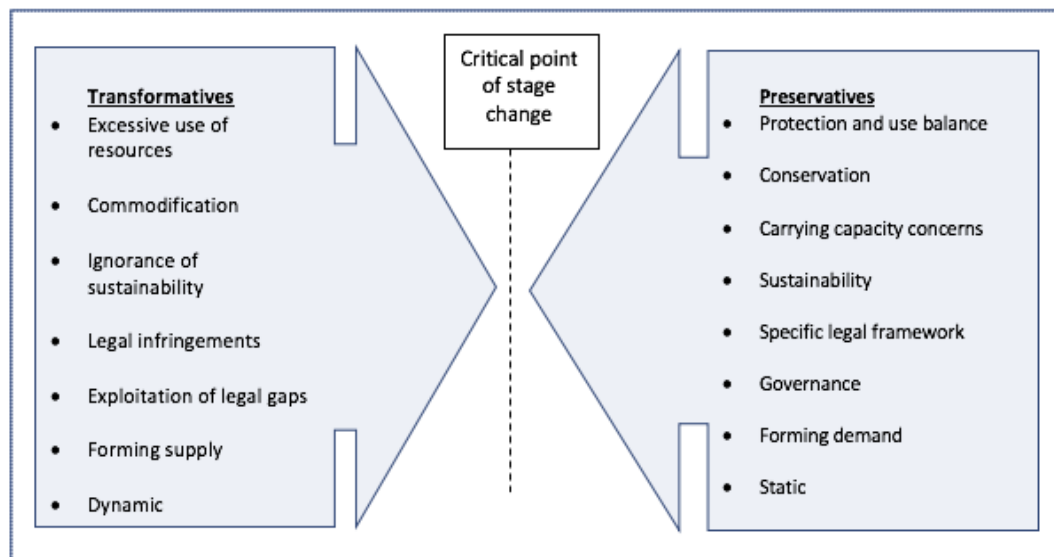


Figure 5. *The inverse philosophies of modus operandi in tourismification of protected areas. Source: Author.*

CONCLUSIONS

The empirical findings of the study provided a new understanding evolution process of HTDs that are located in rural areas. Olympos case study showed that the assessment of the evolution of tourism facilities in protected rural areas should be taken into consideration with a diverse array of external factors. Firstly, rural landscapes require additional efforts and strategies to protect natural environment in addition to historical protection. This may occur through more strict governance of policies or legal implementations than urban areas do. Consequently, even low-level advancements of the tourism related changes are seen unfavourable. This

conflict of the strategies is pointed out in Anton Clave's (2012) classification as the protected areas may require "reactive" strategy implementations to prevent irreversible distortion. Also, as it has been discussed in the former section, the critical point between the two controversial philosophies can be triggered under the influence of "preservative" or "transformative" actions.

The OTA case study showed that the exploitations of the legal gaps have led to an uncontrolled increase in the number of tourism units and awkward development of supply which there is no doubt about the fact it is neither sustainable nor governable. Moreover, the violation of carrying capacity limits in the area which is underlined by Jansen-Verbeke and Russo (2008) in terms of relation with the socioeconomic milieu can be stated as another risk. Also, another generalization of the study outcomes can be made about one of the main criticisms (for instance TALC) that have been done to lack of significant tools to identify stage changes in the process. The employed techniques during the study can be used to identify advanced stages such as overtourism in the evolution path of HTDs. To set an example, overtourismification that have been come insight in HTDs can be identified by through indicators whom the groundings in heritage tourism have been explained. Moreover, as Yates (2011) underlined that the legal frameworks, legislations and their implications related to them are vital for the management of both tangible and intangible assets.

The zoning efforts for classification of the heritage sites require a wide variety of legal measures and governance mechanisms in addition to specific strategies to tackle the emerged issues. Therefore, while top-down approach is considered as vital to establishing these legal frameworks and governance, on the other hand, bottom-up approach is been regarded as necessary to provide community participation to achieve success in the implementations of these established strategies. A diverse array of researches and case studies showed that overtourism is not a new matter of fact but a growing global reality that is strongly related to new technologies such as house-sharing platforms and low-cost flights. Therefore, it has multi-dimensions that are interrelated and involves both local, central and international managing bodies. Tangible and intangible heritage tourism attractions, the delicate balance between the use and the protection of the cultural and natural resources may be affected irreversibly due to the negative impacts of overtourism. Therefore, the experiences and the extensive knowledge of former studies on tourism destinations that have been evolved from identifying tourism potential to impacts assessment and then to sustainability approach through years should be taken into

consideration while estimating the possible consequences of overtourism in the post-COVID-19 era.

Limitations

In spite of its limitations, the study certainly adds to our understanding of the evolution process of HTDs in protected areas. The absence of more comprehensive historical orthographic photos and the rarity in the frequency of yearlong/decadelong satellite images can be count as limitations of the study. Further research should be undertaken to reveal ecologic consequences of overtourism such as gentrification of vegetation cover or soil pollution, and to explore how governance bodies underwhelmed despite of the final verdict of the judicature authorities on legal violations during the overtourismification process.

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