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**Rural Tourism in İzmir: Social, Cultural and Economic
Aspects on Potential and Existing Destinations**

İzmir - Turkey

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Abstract

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Main objective of this research is to determine the social, cultural and economic aspects of already existing or candidate rural tourism destinations. Interviews were conducted with the local populace, government officials and industry professionals. The interviews were then analyzed according to qualitative content analysis method and were supported by findings from relevant literature. The study aims to prove the advantages and the disadvantages of the rural tourism approach on villages and towns that are supported by tourism whether they are new destinations or destinations that are already established and known by the industry and the tourists. The study focuses on experiences of the interviewed individuals that are practicing or affected by rural tourism and the tourism industry in general. These effects are studied in separate topics and the questions were prepared accordingly. The findings are compiled in the last section of the paper, showing the effects of rural tourism and the other relevant alternative tourism types. The results vary between destinations with established destinations being somewhat damaged or overly dependent on tourism and new destinations being left out, requiring more marketing. Established destinations are suffering from over-tourism and switching to rural tourism activities instead of the traditional mass tourism approach.

Keywords: Rural Tourism, Alternative Tourism, Environment, Cultural Change, Green Tourism, Agri-tourism

Öz

İzmir’de -Kırsal Turizm: Potansiyel ve Mevcut Destinasyonların-Sosyal, Kültürel ve Ekonomik Yönleri

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Bu araştırmanın temel amacı, mevcut veya aday kırsal turizm destinasyonlarının sosyal, kültürel ve ekonomik yönlerini belirlemektir. Yerel halk, hükümet yetkilileri ve sektör profesyonelleri ile mülakatlar yapılmıştır. Toplanan nitel veriler daha sonra nitel içerik analizi yöntemine göre analiz edilmiş ve ilgili literatürden elde edilen bulgularla karşılaştırılmıştır desteklenmiştir. Çalışma, kırsal turizm türünün yaklaşımının gerek yeni destinasyonlar, gerekse klasik destinasyonlar, turizm ile desteklenen köy ve beldeler üzerindeki avantaj ve dezavantajlarını ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma, kırsal turizmde ve genel olarak turizm endüstrisinde çalışan veya bu turizm türünden tarafından etkilenen bireylerin deneyimlerine odaklanmaktadır. Bu etkiler ayrı başlıklarda incelenmiş ve sorular buna göre hazırlanmıştır. Bulgular, kırsal turizmin ve diğer ilgili alternatif turizm türlerinin etkileri çalışmanın son bölümünde derlenmiştir. Sonuçlar, yerleşik destinasyonların turizmden zarar gördüğünü veya turizme aşırı bağımlı olduğunu gösterirken, yeni keşfedilen destinasyonların daha fazla tanıtıma ihtiyaç duyduğunu göstermiştir. Var olan destinasyonlar aşırı turizmden zarar görmekte ve geleneksel kitle turizmi anlayışı yerine kırsal turizm faaliyetlerine yönelmelidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kırsal Turizm, Alternatif Turizm, Çevre, Kültürel Değişim, Yeşil Turizm, Agri-Turizm

Text of Oath

I declare and honestly confirm that my study, titled “Impact of Rural Tourism in the Metropolitan Izmir Area” and presented as a Master’s Thesis, has been written without applying to any assistance inconsistent with scientific ethics and traditions. I declare, to the best of my knowledge and belief, that all content and ideas drawn directly or indirectly from external sources are indicated in the text and listed in the list of references.

Sinan Cana

Signature

Date: 29.11.2021

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The main purpose of this paper is to point out benefits and negative sides of rural tourism and effect of tourism on rural areas. This will allow creating a framework for future businesses and local governments to participate in rural tourism. Research will determine if rural tourism is a viable option while preserving the cultural values and the natural resources of a location while being close to a metropolitan center like İzmir.

Smaller establishments like inns, local shops and producers, therefore rural tourism directly affect them. Study will examine rural tourism's positive and negative values on the locals. How it changes their lives or how it benefits/harms them. While rural tourism can be considered a slow and low traffic type of tourism it still has its downsides.

When discussing rural tourism, the effect of cities in close proximity is usually left behind, but in a city where a large part of the economy is dependent on tourism like İzmir, all kinds of tourism are affected by the large population. Especially in the case of rural tourism, where it is based off people's need for escape from the city and experience the nature. There are several hotspots for rural tourism in İzmir like Foça, Seferihisar, and Barbaros village. These places are popular spots for tourists and experience both the advantages and disadvantages of being near a metropolis at the same time. Advantages such as, higher popularity and thus higher income. But sometimes high popularity does not mean an advantageous position. Some destinations cannot hold the amount of tourist traffic and suffer extensively from this. To give an example, Urgup in particular have historically been visited by foreigners for cultural and religious pilgrimage. Local cultural values have been used as a commodity and marketing tool and have been over-commercialized as a result of using them at the wrong place, at the wrong time, and with the wrong standards. Consequently, a false and dubious image has emerged, deliberately or not, about the local community (Tosun, 2002).

Keeping these in mind the study will inspect how tourism affected destinations (Foça, Sığacık, Şirince Village, Birgi Village, Barbaros village) which mainly practices slow or rural tourism as their main type of tourism.

Alternative tourism types such as ecotourism, nature tourism and green tourism are gaining traction within the tourism field. Especially the field of ecotourism which is the wise use of the

resources available in a tourism destination, so that these same resources can be preserved (Kim, Kim, Park, & Guo, 2008).

Sustainability is described as a philosophy where the cultural and natural environment is preserved in such a way that its benefits productivity and economy as much as possible without harming the said environment. Current problems about natural environment such as global warming or the pollution the whole world experiences is caused by policies that does not pay attention to this philosophy (Çeken, 2016).

Tourism has always been a driving force in the development of civilization. It is one of the most valuable tools there is to improve people's quality of life. Many people travel to improve their conditions, for pleasure and experience, in the century we are in, purposes of travel change constantly for each and every person. This also means tourism industry must evolve to meet the emerging needs. These changes are not always positive, rapid use of limited resources will always result in exhaustion or devaluation. Tourism as a field have always been regarded as driven by economic interests. This led to the neglect of the natural environment, and further decline of the local values (Çelik, 2016).

In the modern age humanity perceives itself as “you are what you own”, this notion is also reflected in how they relax. People want to go to bigger hotels, buy expensive drinks etc. But for some people this is just an empty feeling that grant nothing but material happiness. This is where alternative tourism becomes an alternative that changes perceptions about how people relax and have fun. This alternative grant people an escape from the trappings of the modern age. When human relations and culture get replaced by fabrication and industry most people seek novelty and freedom in the countryside and go of the beaten path (Özgen, 2012).

Chapter 2

Tourism Product and Rural Tourism

The word tourism means to “return” or “go around” in Latin. In Turkish the word “Seyahat” corresponds to the same meaning. Tourism as a word was adopted from French from the word “Tourisme”. Tourism is defined as “Tourism is therefore a subset of travel and visitors are a subset of travelers. These distinctions are crucial for the compilation of data on flows of travelers and visitors and for the credibility of tourism statistics.” By the UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organization , 2008). This means that most travels and excursions are considered as tourism. From a purely supplier standpoint tourism can be conceptualized as ‘the aggregate of all businesses that directly provide goods or services to facilitate business, pleasure, and leisure activities away from the home environment’ (Smith, 1988). The term home environment is important in the way that the person must be travelling away from the area they are living in. Local travels can be considered tourism as long as it is done with the aim of traveling for a purpose. UNWTO defines a visitor/tourist as “A visitor is a traveler taking a trip to a main destination outside his/her usual environment, for less than a year, for any main purpose (business, leisure or other personal purpose) other than to be employed by a resident entity in the country or place visited. these trips taken by visitors qualify as tourism trips. Tourism refers to the activity of visitors” (United Nations World Tourism Organization , 2008). Tourism can also be defined as people temporarily moving from their place of residence/work to somewhere else where they can use and experience the tourism services of the host region. It is important to note that tourism is the sum of all the events and relations born from this temporary exchange. These temporary services and experiences can be for example entertainment, sports events, trying new gastronomical experiences, shopping, cultural tours involving getting out of their cities (Kahraman & Türkay, 2014). The tourism industry relies on different key factors to achieve tourism goals, and these can be broadly categorized as, facilities, accommodation, transportation, and attractions.

Tourism was first identified by E. Guyer Freuler in 1905 as “Tourism is an act born of the perfection of transportation systems and advances in trade, industry and small crafts creating a need for traveling for leisure and experiencing different climates, natural environments and different cultures and social classes” (Demir & Çevirgen, 2006).

Tourism had already been practiced throughout the world for millennia for religious and trade needs. Even military campaigns of the ancient world involved some of the modern aspects of tourism. Medieval inns and ancient caravanserais can be some of the examples for the first accommodations. Travels to the first Olympics, the Great Pyramids of Giza are some of the earliest organized travels. With the Renaissance people travelled to see the great works of art and architecture. With the industrial revolution the modern tourism as it is known today was born. Just like with other industries tourism industry improved significantly during the revolution and afterwards. These improvements were heavily damaged by the two world wars but just after the second world war tourism re-emerged. Some of the reasons for this were: people having more and more free time, increased city population, improvements on the transportation technology, relaxed borders, improved income, education (Kahraman & Turkey, 2014).

Tourism is regarded as one of the world's largest industries tourism is associated with the prime sectors of the world's economy. Tourism has had an average annual increase of 6.6 percent over the last half century, with international travel rising from 25 million travelers in 1950 to over 700 million travelers in 2002. Also, popular destinations change as Asia, Africa and Middle East are popular destinations as of today. Because of its size and its reliance to primary, secondary, and tertiary services, and products and because it is interwoven with the everyday life, tourism is a field that is very hard to define (Fennell, 2004). Tourism industry include many economic activities in it and is considered as the only major service sector the developing countries can gain record trade surpluses progressively. Even though usually tourism employees are paid poorly it is undeniable that it creates an important source of employment. Tourism can be considered a sector that empowers women. However, tourism does not always contribute to the local economy even in a country scale because mostly tourism earnings go to multinational agencies, tour operators and hotels, and the people working in the tourism sector gets a miniscule amount of the earnings as a result local economy get a very small portion from the income stream (Oriade & Evans, 2011).

The term "tourist" is defined as; someone who travels with the intent other than gaining monetary gain or acquiring a place of residence and spends money and time on a place different than their place of residence. Because tourism involves people traveling from place to place it also has sociological and cultural impacts both on the tourist receiving and sending countries. Some of the beneficial aspects of the tourism are improving world peace through cultural exchange, advances education and culture, incentives foreign language learning, improves

women's rights by integrating more women in the industry, promotes national pride (Kahraman & Türkay, 2014).

While the act of tourism requires travelling, not every travel is tourism. For travel to be classified as tourism it must be made with the intention of leisure and entertainment. A travel made with the intention of working at the said destination for a long amount of time cannot be considered tourism. The traveler needs to stay at the destination for at least a day for the act to be considered as tourism. This excludes the excursionists as they only displace from their place of residence for only a day to experience leisure at another destination (Demir & Çevirgen, 2006).

2.1 Tourism Product

Developing a product is a must in the tourism industry as it is crucial in the sense that a tourist will seek the product before deciding. Tourism product needs the natural and cultural resources and must be profitable. The product also must meet customer trends and expectations, must be cost effective and be unique enough to attract the tourism demand (Smith, 1994). A product is everything that defines an establishment and benefits the customer and fulfils their needs. Product is everything that is on the market with the purpose of fulfilling needs and wants. It is on the market with the purpose of obtaining. The product consists of physical objects, services, places, organizations, and ideas. On the other hand, tourism product is a package consisting of everything a tourist needs or wants from the tourism suppliers objectively or subjectively from the start of a travel until the end of it. It can also be defined as tourism product is something that is consumption prompting natural, cultural, and social elements. Tourism product is different from the other products because while it can be a good or service it can also be a combination of the two like a hotel room or a meal eaten at a restaurant. It can be summarized that tourism product is anything that is in the jurisdiction of the tourism can be a tourism product (Albayrak, 2013).

By its very nature Tourism product is mainly a product of information. Tourism establishments are obliged to inform the customers about the product beforehand as information is the largest part of the tourism product. In this context, the only way to market or create the tourism product is to have the necessary information (Çolak, 2009).

The main attractive feature of a destination is its physical and environmental values as well as socio-cultural values that surround that destination. The physical and environmental features include a destinations landscape, ecology, climate, and its socio-cultural features are its history,

politics, art, economy, the general way of life, monumental buildings. There might be designated specific touristic features that a destination invested knowingly just to pull more tourists. Destinations require a certain mix of these features, so that it is both profitable and sustainable for a destination to practice tourism. Uniqueness of this mix provide a destination with a competitive edge in the tourism market. A destination may focus on only one product and create a niche market around it, or a destination may try to cover all bases for maximum participation. Diversification of the tourism product can promote “alternative” types of tourism (such as agricultural or rural tourism), this can help create a tourism product that is more defined and specifically tailored for that destination. The way that alternative tourism types involve local owned businesses and native population improves a destinations economy and curb problems a destination is exposed due to tourism (M.Benur & Bramwell, 2015).

Tourists are usually showered in many tourism products in tourism destinations, but most of these products may come off as generic simple market products. This is where specialized tourism product or the alternative types of tourism come in. Tourism academics broke tourism product down to five elements: physical plant, hospitality, service, freedom of choice, involvement (Xu, 2010).

If tourism product examined in the context of this thesis, sustainable tourism product has a few difficulties implementing. This is due to the very nature of the tourism product as it is a perishable product. Meaning it cannot be saved or preserved and must be experienced on the spot. Also, the tourism product contains many diverse suppliers and consist of transportation, accommodation, eating-drinking, entertainment which can truly complicate the matter. Being sustainable cannot be achieved with only one side working towards it, for example if only the suppliers try to develop a sustainable tourism product it will fail unless the destination or the tourists accepts it as well, and vice versa. It can only be achieved if an accord between the supplier, consumer and the destination can be reached. There is a limit to how much of natural, cultural, and social resources can be used to create the tourism product. The main goal should be disallowing any unsustainable elements in the tourism product. Tourism should not destroy the aforementioned resources but rather strive to preserve it. Though resources like oceans and oxygen cannot be regulated as they are not owned by anyone and it is hard to regulate the usage of these resources (Demir & Çevirgen, 2006).

2.2 Sustainability and Sustainable Tourism

In the recent years, the idea of sustainable development gained popularity as more and more people became aware of the nature around them. As the demand for sustainability increased policy makers had to start changing the way societies worked to better suit the needs of the people and the nature around them. Sustainability is defined as a combination of economic, natural, and social norms. The economic aspect has to do with both the consumer demand and the supply of the industry. The ecological aspect requires special care for the natural environment, improving human life through these elements and taking care of all the living beings in and around society. Social aspect combines these elements and makes sure that all the needs of the society is met adequately (Özgen, 2012). Sustainable development can be defined as ensuring economic prosperity while protecting and nurturing the nature, as well as protecting the cultural and social environment of the society. Sustainability accepts the reality that resources of Earth are finite and must be regarded as such. Thus, it tries to protect said resources for the future generations. What makes sustainability important is it does not focus on protecting the economic needs or solely the environment, it tries to balance all aspects of the economic and natural landscape to achieve longevity (Demir & Çevirgen, 2006).

The term itself is defined as “consuming enough to meet the needs of the society meanwhile ensuring that future generations are secured”. It is known that the most common problem the world faces is the uncontrolled consumption that endangers the Earth and the future generations ability to meet their own needs. For most people choosing a lifestyle that focus on ecology or change is not easy as they are constrained by the environment, they live in. This can be due to the economic climate they are in or could be because they cannot focus on things like environment or consuming less simply because they must survive on what is. Therefore, preference of living an eco-friendly life also depend on the persons living conditions. The governments add to this equation too, a government that depend on consumption by the people or one that requires certain types of industry that exploit the nature (Özgen, 2012). The term sustainability may change from text to text, but the major points would be that sustainability aims to protect the “economy, environment and the society”. So, it can be said that it aims to regulate and protect the human-environment relationship (Karaset & Yaşarsoy, 2017).

The style of operation adopted after the industrial revolution may have served well at first, but it was quick to bring about natural and sociological ruin to everywhere it was practiced. Starting from 1970's people started to realize that industrial ways were no longer profitable in the long run. At this point people looked for alternatives in all sectors (Aydın, 2017).

Sustainability in tourism can be defined as developments that benefit both the tourists and the host region at the same time conserving and improving the conditions for the future generations. It is the strategical use of all the resources while maintaining the balance for economic, social, and aesthetic needs of the society. These needs need to be met all the while protecting and improving the same resources and the people that depend on them. These resources can be the wildlife, ecological structure of the region, the human capital, and the cultural framework of the society (Liu Z. , 2003).

Sustainability is often discussed about tourism as it is a major income boost for countries, this is because environmental effects usually impact tourism more than any other industries (Karaset & Yaşarsoy, 2017). The most recent case would be the Covid-19 crisis as it grinded the tourism industry to a halt. It can be said that there can be no tourism without cultural or natural resources. The existence of these assets is imperative for tourism, as such it is very important that they are protected for future generations. The sustainable tourism deals with this problem and considered to be one of the most important issues in modern tourism (Karaset & Yaşarsoy, 2017). Sustainable tourism is seen as a remedy for all the negative impacts tourism have on a destination, especially the mass tourism and ensure the long-term survival of a destination. But because of the deficiencies in the economic practices in sustainable tourism, various precautions must be taken to not cripple the local economic structure because even though it is mostly used interchangeably sustainability is not just about conserving the nature it is also about preserving and improving the local economy and protecting the local lifestyle. For example, UNESCO (1998) proposed that heritage site management, must involve all the stakeholders meaning usage of inter-organizational relationships and collaborations can be used for the protection of the heritage sites from conflicting interests of all parties involved. So, it can be said that the relationships between the different sectors that is all involved in tourism and the environment must be regulated so that it will not spiral out into economic failure or nature exploitation (Oriade & Evans, 2011).

Four reasons can be attributed to the rising demand for sustainability in tourism: dissatisfaction with the existing products; destinations realizing their precious resources and wanting to preserve them; and perception change by the tour operators and guides. Sustainable tourism holds the great potential for addressing the various negative impacts of the tourism industry, thus maintaining the long-term capacity of the regions to practice tourism. This is achieved by maintaining the human and natural resources of a region thus enabling it to maintain and improve its tourism industry (Liu Z. , 2003).

Cultural sustainability is also a very important point when discussing sustainable tourism. While it may not be as tangible as environmental or economical sustainability, cultural sustainability plays a very important role in longevity of a destination and its tourism potential. Even though cultural exchange is still one of the main reasons for tourism, this interaction may damage the local culture or even destroy it. Tourism is often the prime reason for dislocation, destruction, and exploitation of indigenous cultures. Despite this, countries around the world still consider tourism as a tool to develop indigenous cultures, and these cultures use tourism for economic independence and development. The management and sustainable use of indigenous cultural resources can be challenging for these cultures as they are introduced to the tourism industry and the global marketplace. The risk of being consumed by the tourism market at large is the most prominent threat to these locations (McIntosh, Hinch, & Ingram, 2002). It can be easily understood from the work of McIntosh et al (2002) that cultures that are more isolated – just like the villages and rural populations – are subject to tourism exploitation without necessary oversight and guidance. It is impossible to recommend that these destinations should be excluded from the tourism market, as discussed in this paper tourism can be the best tool in the cabinet for rural development in an era that priorities industrial growth.

Some problems faced by these communities when managing their cultural resources include lack of managerial skills, losing authenticity, over-commercialization, intellectual property problems, collective ownership of some local resources and disregard of the way of life by the tourism policy makers. It is also important to note that when utilizing these cultural resources, it is vital that their uniqueness and cultural identity be protected and used as best they could with their potential.

For cultures to achieve truly sustainable tourism, cultural resources play a key role. This can be achieved by the policymakers keeping in mind that these resources are fragile and must be protected. As cultural identity is founded on decades -if not centuries- of traditions, lifestyles, and values of a people, so it can be easy for the tourists who are only just being exposed to these cultures to perform missteps and creating an air of hostility between the host and the guest. Without the education of the tourist the negative outcomes are almost inevitable, and with the exploitation of the local culture coupled with the irresponsible tourism will lead to the destruction of the culture (McIntosh, Hinch, & Ingram, 2002).

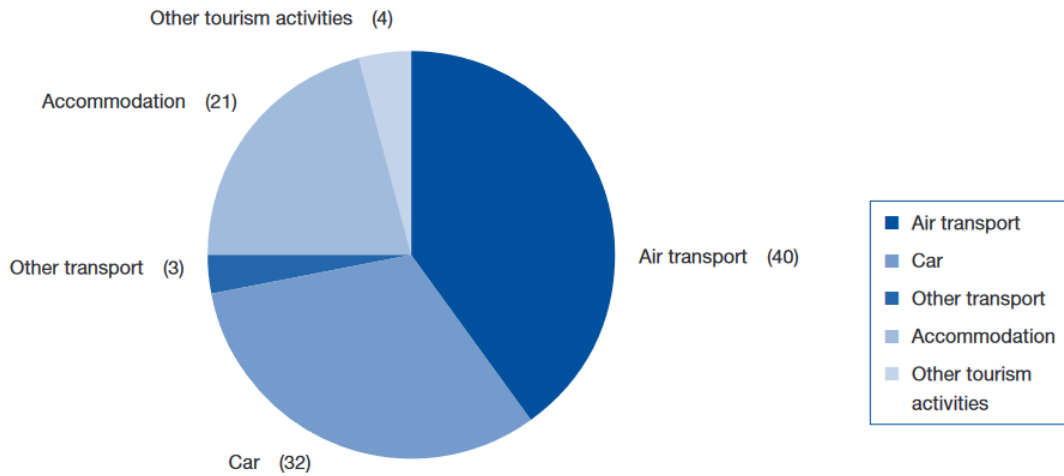


Figure 1 CO2 emissions from tourism activities around the globe represented by % 2005 (UNWTO; International Transport Forum, 2019)

According to UNWTO and International Transport Forum’s 2019 report, even though more efficient fuels and energy methods are being developed, the rising demand for transportation - even if it is mass transportation- will result in carbon emissions grow by %21 and compared to 2016 and reach 8,772 million tons of CO2, representing 23% of all man-made CO2 emissions (UNWTO; International Transport Forum, 2019).

In a sense sustainability is not only an economical or cultural thing but it must also be in sociological level. A system that is sustainable must also be sustainable in social services like education and healthcare. It must cater to gender equality, pay equality, political responsibility, and equal opportunity for everyone (Karaman & Aylan, 2017).

Sustainable Tourism Types	Unsustainable Tourism Types
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecotourism • Cultural Tourism • Renovating old decrepit buildings for tourism • Small capacity rural tourism • Responsible tourism (tourists contributing to the local culture/economy/environment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mass sun-sea-sand tourism • Travels that damage the physical environment • Sex tourism • Hunting/Fishing tourism • Travels to fragile destinations (Jungles/Antarctica)

Table 1 Sustainable and unsustainable tourism types (Demir & Çevirgen, 2006).

Referring to the table above one point that may attract interest is sex tourism being unsustainable. Due to its nature sex tourism usually exploit people in underdeveloped regions. It endangers the general health of both the locals and the tourists and gives way to organized

and violent crime. It also erodes the cultural and sociological aspects of a destination, this is undeniably a direct contrast to the sustainable tourism development (Demir & Çevirgen, 2006).

2.3 Mass Tourism

As humanity developed more and more, increased amounts of leisure time and income created a demand for tourism. Modern tourist had access to more destinations and mobility (Air travel and faster land travel methods) as time progressed. In Europe after the industrial revolution, working humans felt the need to “rest”, preferably at a location other than the one they are residing/working at. It is easy to say that these conditions created what is known as “mass tourism”, especially after the 1950’s as a relative peace was achieved in the world. What is described as mass tourism here is the act of leisure time consumed as fast and as efficiently as possible.

The question of speed is essential when dealing in mass tourism as people participating in it are usually people trying to cram their relaxation in what leisure time they have. It is also true that countries and corporations practicing mass tourism usually try to maximize revenue at any costs. But it must be known that while mass tourism has a great potential for tourism infrastructure and income, it can also cause many issues tied to the amount of people and exploitation of the destination. It is also argued that the trend of consumerism and capitalistic exploitation are also to blame for the negative impacts of the mass tourism (Marson, 2011).

Basically, it can be argued that mass tourism has two main elements; first, as the name suggests it relies on massive amounts of people participating in tourism activities. Second, it requires the tourism activities to be standardized and quick to serve/consume. The main reason mass tourism is so appealing is that it generates a reliable and high amount of income and generates jobs at a huge scale. Mass tourism usually require big resort hotels where the big groups of tourists can be accommodated in the same place. In mass tourism the holiday experience never changes except if the tourists are willing to pay high amounts of money. Meaning one can always expect to live the same experience every year in the same destination. Thus, tourism becomes a commodity, something that is standardized and packaged (Vanhove, 2005).

Mass tourism can be considered a direct opposite to luxury tourism as it aims to generate income from high amounts of demand. Mass tourism destinations are usually around the Mediterranean where beaches and summer weather are more prevalent. The very high amounts of tourists may not always mean more income as mass tourists usually stick to their groups and hotels and do not spend extras as they only came expecting to get what they already paid for.

Mass tourism is usually characterized as concentration of very high amounts of people in a single destination, for example the Santorini Island in Greece or the town of Bodrum in Turkey. Mass tourism usually does not care for the size or the population of the destination, this can be devastating to certain destinations such as the Caribbean Islands as the local fresh water cannot handle the amount of tourism in the region, as well as the fragile ecology (coral reefs) may not respond well to the heavy tourism development. But because tourism usually brings high amounts of income and employment to a region and allows all parts of the population to participate in it, and it is known to stimulate other parts of the economy as more people in a destination will always mean more income for them (transportation, construction, retailers, real estate, etc.) (Theng, Qiong, & Tatar, 2015).

2.4 Tourism Exhaustion and Damage

Pressure from tourism can be quite devastating on a destination if it goes above the limit of its infrastructure, especially on rural regions. Worst outcome (and the most common) is the loss of the rural settlement and the surrounding environment.

As Butler states; it cannot be denied that tourism destinations evolve over time, this can be explained by the changing preference of the tourists or the changing needs of a destination. The gradual exhaustion (or even the destruction) of the destinations physical and natural landscape/resources also contribute to this. Visitors usually come to an area slowly and in small numbers at first, with the eventual exploration and the advent of marketing more and more visitors will start coming. However, this can be a disaster for the destination if its infrastructure is not designed to handle the tourism traffic. Because of this eventually the visitor numbers will decline, this can be due to the declining quality, hostility among the population, overcrowding, higher than usual prices or overall disrepair (Butler, 1980).

As the attractiveness of a destination declines relative to the other destinations it will lose its popularity. Tourist areas, agencies, hotels, and various other tourism establishments does not consider that a destination may not always be a tourism destination. Policies are usually made without considering this, it is always considered that tourism will always be in that destination. This is due to the fact that tourism is perceived to have an unlimited potential for growth. Fallacy of the assumption that a destinations tourist numbers will grow forever usually contribute to its downfall (Butler, 1980).

Another prevailing theory is that psychologies of the tourists contribute to the rise and fall of the destinations. Plog (1973) identifies three different tourist types: the allocentric, the

midcentrics, and the psychocentrics. Allocentric tourists are usually the first to discover a destination, because they tend to be more adventurous and prefer destinations that are not heavily dominated by tourism traffic or infrastructure. As more allocentrics flock to a destination it loses its “new” quality, thus attracting people that are seeking a more developed and well-known destination. Midcentrics are attracted to a destination as its tourism facilities and infrastructure get more developed. This is the general population of the world, predictable, accessible, reasonable, and more comfortable. Through this popularity a destination gets more mature and developed. At this point the destination has reached its peak, it is developed enough to attract the most amount of people possible. This process eventually starts to attract the psychocentrics who are the least adventurous and people who are least open to innovation. These are the people that are least travelled, they do not spend much money at a destination and hardly participate in anything “different”. As the destination gets more developed and attract more and more people it will start to lose the qualities that attracted the people in the first place. In this case the original visitors will depart to find new destinations (Tooman, 1997).

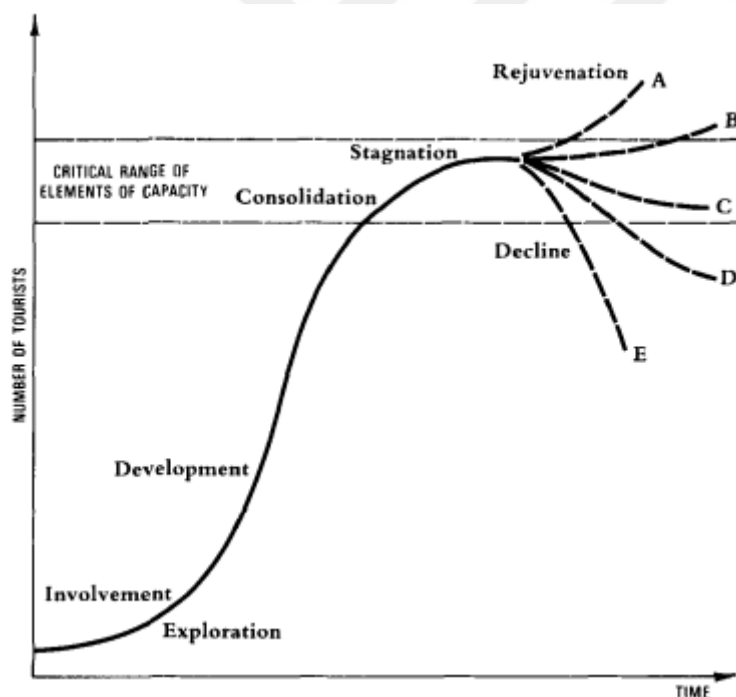


Figure 2 Butler's chart of destination life cycle (Butler, 1980)

In the chart above Butler (1980) determined several points in a destination's life cycle. These can be explained as:

Exploration Stage: The visitation by more adventurous groups (Allocentrics), the visitors are scarce, and they aim to discover the local culture thus the interaction between the locals and the tourists are at its highest.

Involvement Stage: As the number of visitors increase, locals start to provide amenities and accommodation in response, sometimes for the sole purpose of tourism. Local participation is still high, and visitors communicate with the locals. Marketing has started but is still minimal.

Development Stage: A well-defined tourism market emerges, and outside investment starts. Marketing is extensive and intensive, local infrastructure and superstructure is replaced by more modern and up-to-date ones. This marks a decline in local participation and their grip on the destination. Labor is imported and facilities emerge independent of the destination's norms. Artificial attractions replace the local ones due to the immense growth of the tourism industry.

Consolidation Stage: The tourism industry now depends on and owned by big multinational tourism companies; local involvement is almost non-existent. Visitation levels rise but at a declining rate. Marketing efforts are now focused on extending the tourism season and reaching further visitors. Older facilities that were founded in the involvement stage are now considered as second rate and are looked down upon.

Stagnation Stage: The destinations capacity for tourism and its activities are exceeded and this damages the surrounding environment, socio-cultural structure, and the general well-being of the destination. The peak for number of visitors has been reached. The artificial attractions have replaced all the natural and older attractions and the destination is no longer considered "fashionable".

Decline Stage: Destination is now visited by weekend visitors or those that are now can be considered as loyal visitors. Tourism establishments get replaced by other industries as tourism disappears from the scene. Locals start to regain more control over the tourism market.

Rejuvenation Stage: The destination revived by using a previously untapped natural resource or creating new artificial ones.

It can be said that a destination can be revived depending on whether or not the proper steps taken but the damage left by over-tourism can be disastrous (Tooman, 1997).

According to Andereck; tourism is generally marketed as a "Clean" industry that does not create pollution like other industries. But even though the act of tourism itself does not create pollution, the activities surrounding tourism does. Tourism activities require travel, this creates air pollution due to heavy usage of airplanes and land vehicles. Heating systems of tourism related establishment give out considerable amounts of carbon into the air. Water is essential for tourism and usually impacted the most. This is usually due to the tourists own waste and using water for recreational purposes. Massive need for food in the tourism industry also

amounts to this as farms and ranches require immense amounts of water and usually pollute underground water and streams by using fertilizers. Tourism and its related industries generate heavy amounts of solid waste.

Tourists often leave behind litter that can disturb the natural life or put extra weight on a city's waste systems. Another problem is that tourism generally disturbs wildlife by encroaching on their territories and consuming resources that are sometimes required for their lives. Pollution of lakes and coasts sometimes suffocate or dislocate various marine species. It is also obvious that some types of tourism hurt wildlife directly, namely hunting. Poaching for example has been a major problem in Africa. Even just observing or photographing the wildlife disturb their lives as it can get them stressed simply by observing them. This changes their hunting, breeding and even sleeping cycles and risks damage. Because most tourism activities and facilities are close to the seas, oceans, lakes, and rivers their waste generally spill into these places and damage marine life. Boat tours and irresponsible diving sometimes do irreversible damage to the reefs. Vegetation is usually destroyed to create more land for tourism facilities and creating farms that support tourism. Deforestation causes erosion, and the loss of living area for the wildlife (Andereck, 1995).

2.5 Rural Tourism

Most cited source when it comes to the definition of rural tourism is "What is rural tourism?" by Lane. Published in 1994 the paper states that rural tourism, exists as a diverse concept. Destinations close to metropolitan centers are more prone to practice day visitor trade, while destinations that are far away from large towns or cities offer adventurous, pure rural country experience (Lane, 1994). From this point onwards definition of rural tourism is a bit blurred. Concept itself can be hard to define, difference between rural tourism and just rural living can be intertwined sometimes. Not all villages or towns participate in tourism or even want visitors. Also, extensive tourism activities tend to destroy or corrode the cultural structure of the destination. As Bramwell stated before, an important point every developed country struggle is that protection and development of rural areas (Bramwell, 1994). Therefore, tourism activities on countryside must always be sustainable and conservative of not only the environment and natural landscape, but also the cultural and historical structure of the local area. Rural tourism requires a sense of community and participation of the majority of the destination's population to be successful. Aside from the usual tourism attractors, rural tourism also depends on the human capital of a destination. Whether a mountain village, a town near the sea, or an agricultural community the role of the population is of utmost importance. So, it can be easy to

say that the practice of rural tourism cannot be forced upon a destination, rather the local people must be willing and able to develop a tourism infrastructure (Baykal & Ataberk, 2020)-.

Any tourism practice that is practiced in the countryside like, hunting tourism, ecotourism, cave tourism or any lodging in countryside, mountain houses or village houses is considered rural tourism in Turkey. While not wrong, the main point of rural tourism is to have an experience the countryside and attend to events centered on villages and agricultural communities; these subtitles are somewhat different (Soykan, 2003).

Tourism by its very nature can change according to the weather, geography, tourism policy and demand (Soykan, 2003). Rural tourism on the other hand, does not depend on such things. Rural tourism depends mostly on the local culture and customs. The way people live and where they live are the center product, so this cannot change unless faced with something extreme (War, natural disasters, immigration). This makes rural tourism a stable and secure source of tourism for the destination.

Rural tourism also is a low effort type of tourism. It does not need expansive infrastructure or big expensive hotels. Quite the contrary it depends on the everyday life of the villages and communities it feeds upon. In the research of Fleischer and Tchetchik (2003) it was found that a working farm is not a requirement for a rural tourism destination. This shows us that rural tourism feeds of on the “feeling” of a rural setting rather than an actual rural establishment.

Also, it was found that many tourists select destinations that are rich in tourist activities, therefore it is important to note that not every rural destination is a rural tourism destination.

Due to relative underdevelopment and remoteness rural areas have very few options for economic development. To improve the economic situation most rural communities, turn to other areas for development. Tourism being an advantageous field with good income and employment tourism has become a prime choice for rural communities (Liu A. , 2006). Both eulogized and reviled as a development option, rural tourism is increasingly viewed as a panacea, increasing the economic viability of marginalized areas, stimulating social regeneration, and improving the living conditions of rural communities. (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004).

We can easily say that rural tourism is a tool for the rural communities for them to uplift them in dry seasons (e.g., in winter when harvest is done, and no planting can be done). This is especially true if the community is not really depending on any form of agriculture or hard industry.

Rural tourist usually targets undamaged natural sites, travel to the rural areas where natural treasures can be found. For accommodation places where the locals stay is more likely to be picked. The hotels or motels around these places are also a popular pick. Cultural tours, workshops where the local crafts can be experienced as well as places where tourist can experience agriculture activities like farming, herding, or handcrafting increase a locations appeal for the tourist (Çolak, 2009).

Statistics from the European Council shows that rural tourism has the capacity for 200.000 investors and a bed capacity of 2 million. Rural tourism revenue comes close to 26 billion euros. Rural tourism also creates around 500.000 jobs around Europe (Çolak, 2009)

The main motivator for the rural tourism is the desire to experience the rural lifestyle, be one with the nature, and relaxing among the natural resources. Rural tourism can be defined with three viewpoints; geographical and demographical, related to the product and the views of the tourists themselves. In the modern age where working hours are getting increasingly longer, but people being more educated, and they are more aware of their surroundings. As people are usually confined in limited spaces in the city, they seek escape in their leisure time. All of these factors contribute to the people seeking this escape in the countryside. Festivals and events in the rural communities contribute to this increased wonder for the countryside, for an example the Oyuk Festival in the Barbaros Village.

The interest in rural customs as they can seem interesting and different for the city people. Also, people interested in gastronomy usually wonder where their food comes from and may want to acquire fresh ingredients right from the source. This is also supported by the emergence of celebrity chefs all around the world, who like to acquire their ingredients fresh and from the producers (Farrel & Russel, 2011).

Rural tourism is mostly motivated by the type of tourist that is looking for something different and willing to spend to make it happen, these can be families, single parent households, “empty nesters” (i.e., couples whose children have left home), double-income couples without children. These types of tourists will become prevalent in the tourism market (Günlü, Pınar, & Yağcı, 2009) Due to the relative economic power and desire to find new experiences and discover new locations is what sustains the rural tourism. Rural tourism also fits in the idea of “New Tourism”, which is greener, cleaner, sustainable, and preferable in a rural environment where the environment itself is the product and anything that can harm it will also harm the rural tourism product (Günlü, Pınar, & Yağcı, 2009).

International tourism is revolved mostly around sand-sea-sun tourism, but other tourism types like rural tourism which is more about protecting the environment and supporting local cultures and communities are gaining popularity too. Today sustainable and profitable tourism is all about preserving the cultural and natural landscape. While discussing different types of tourism, sustainable tourism such as rural tourism is something that cannot be left behind (Emekli, 2003).

One massive problem with rural tourism is that most governments does not have a separate rural tourism policy, they usually only have an overarching tourism policy. This means that there are no separate rural tourism statistics or data. The main problem with this is identifying the number of people involved (and to determine if they are part-time or full time) is very hard. It is challenging to identify if an establishment is tourism related or not. One of the few countries that have a dedicated rural tourism policy is Finland. The Finland's Rural Tourism Working Group defines rural tourism as "customer-oriented tourism in rural areas...based on rural areas" this includes natural resources, culture and family owned or small establishments. Finland categorizes rural tourism as a tourism type practiced by small establishments and not something practiced by big multinational companies. This creates an intimacy between the term rural and rural tourism, giving it a sense of direction (Nylander & Hall, 2005).

Rural tourism has various benefits such as (Güdücüler, 2012):

- Rural tourism helps alleviate unemployment and immigration problems.
- Rural tourism increases the amount of investment on infrastructure, medicine, security, and economy on rural centers.
- Rural tourism helps preserve the local architecture as well as developing it.
- Rural tourism creates jobs for women in rural areas, contributing to the economic freedom of women in rural areas.
- Rural tourism allows people living in rural centers to be heard by the authority figures by giving them enough influence to express their problems.
- Rural tourism helps unearthing and discovery of archaeological and cultural sites that are in the vicinity of rural areas as well as increasing their value.
- Rural tourism help promote and preserve cultural values such as, weddings, handcrafts, food and sports of a rural area.

So, it can be easily said that rural tourism provides some much necessary economical and sociological support to the rural centers. Though it can be seen as a panacea for rural communities not every village or town can be a rural tourism destination (Güdücüler, 2012).

There are some important basic conditions for a destination to be considered a viable destination for rural tourism, these conditions can be listed as (Güdücüler, 2012):

- Potable water must be present at all times, and being close to a water source (river, lake, sea etc.) is a huge plus.
- Must have an easy access and different options for access.
- Must have options for accessible and attractive areas for tourism activities.
- Must have appropriate and adequate accommodation facilities with enough supporting industries.
- The cultural attractions and activities must be authentic and unique.
- Natural landscape must have been preserved, and the destination must have unique natural attractions.
- The destination must have an agricultural production in place (farming, animal husbandry, fishing, forestry, etc.)
- Must have adequate infrastructure (modern roads, accessible healthcare facilities, water, electricity, and tele-communication lines etc.)
- The destination must have reliable security.
- The population of the destination must be willing to participate in tourism.

From these points it can be said that not every village and town all over the world can be opened to tourism as some of the points mentioned above may not suit every destination. A village that cannot support more than its population would either sacrifice the comfort of the host or the guest, a town that has been plagued by high crime rates cannot attract tourists even if it checks all the other boxes on the list.

<i>Activity</i>	<i>%</i>
Dining	70
Shopping	58
Visit a beach/lake/riverfront	44
Visit historic sites	41
Fish/hunt/boat	32
Attend a festival or fair	29
Ride a bicycle or hike	24
Attend religious services	23
Camp	21
Attend or participate in a sporting event	18
Visit a winery/working farm/orchard	15
Gamble	12
Visit a Native American community	11

Table 2 Activities rural tourists participate in North America (Timothy, 2005).

2.6 Rural Tourism as a Viable Conduct

Rural economies by their very nature are all resource intensive endeavors be it based around forests, agriculture, or fishing. This also makes them very labor intensive and depending on large swathes of land or bodies of water. This in turn makes these economies (and communities attached to them) very brittle as any change in the resources they depend on can make or break the economy. Overconsumption, pollution, misuse are all negative results of unsustainable growth. This model of growth has been the norm for a long time, but it can be easily argued that it cannot continue this way or humanity risks losing the very resources it depends on.

Over the years both the private sector and the state invested in rural tourism as a means of development and economic growth. This is expected as over the last thirty years' rural economies has seen a drastic downturn as countries became more and more urbanized and industrialized. Rural communities were left alone with severe unemployment and loss of income which led to mass migration of the population, especially the young population. Rural tourism is seen as a panacea for the rural populations' economic problems in the modern era by the governments all around the world (Sharpley, 2002).

Even though much has been written about this topic there has not been enough application of sustainable development strategies in rural communities concerning tourism (Gartner, 2005).

As with all other economic development plans, rural tourism requires several components in place to be successful; (1) attractions: natural or man-made attractors must be in place for a destination to attract visitors, (2) promotion: marketing efforts must be made for a destination to be known to the outside world, (3) tourism infrastructure; a destination that is impossible to reach and/or cannot service the amount of tourists it receive will always fail in the long run, this includes transportation services (roads, railroads, public transportation etc.) to accommodation opportunities in the destination, (4) services: places where tourists can eat or shop are imperative for economic growth, (5) hospitality: tourists must be well regarded both by the locals and the tourism employees in a destination (Wilson, Fesenmaier, Fesenmaier, & Es, 2001). While it is clear that these are viable discussions for every tourism destination, for a rural tourism destination to be successful, widespread contribution from the population is a must for rural communities (Wilson, Fesenmaier, Fesenmaier, & Es, 2001).

According to Sharpley; presence of rural tourism means economic growth for the local populace and creating new businesses (tourism related or auxiliary businesses) in the rural centers. This allows locals to branch out and secure additional means of income. Rural tourism also allows a destination to retain its population and attract the younger population back to towns and villages by creating viable jobs. As population decline is prevented the local culture and customs are preserved too. Rural tourism also contributes to a location's infrastructure, improving roads, healthcare, and amenities of more remote areas (Sharpley, 2002).

Though it has been pointed out that tourism provides very little extra income for agricultural ventures like farming, fishing or forestry and exists within itself, this creates the problem of tourism sometimes taking place of the existing agricultural industry in a destination. Also, most of the time investment returns are relatively low and time consuming as most facilities and ventures tend to be smaller in comparison to other bigger tourism destinations. This poses an investment problem as big investments tend to be non-profitable and depend on government subsidies. Another problem is that local population sometimes find service sector hard to adapt to as the destination lived as an agricultural center for decades. And as the destinations transition to tourism the workforce tends to be inexperienced in tourism and service sector in general (Sharpley, 2002).

2.7 Rural Tourism Subtypes

The need to find other types of tourism arose from the search of more unique and cleaner - greener- tourism. This type of tourism was to benefit not only the industry giants but also the locals, environment and in a way even the future generations. Alternative tourism has different approaches: eco-tourism, agri-tourism, community tourism, ethical tourism, and there are many more subtitles under these topics of tourism. All of these alternative tourism types respond to a different need in the market be it a more environment friendly type of tourism or a type of tourism that involves and benefit the people who work in it (Sopheap Theng, 2015). In 1980's the buzzword of alternative tourism could be seen in academic works or in the marketing scene. This was due to the realization that even though it has vast economic and sociological benefits, tourism also has a myriad of problems associated with it. So, it can be easily said that even if in principle most people will be supportive of alternative tourism so that these problems can be curbed. Even when the first mass tourism campaigns had started by the Thomas Cook, more individualistic or "elite" tourists had existed and had a distaste for the mass tourism movement (Butler, 1990).

Alternative Tourism is a highly broad concept. There is not a single defining concept about alternative tourism. But it is important to define it because of its relationship with some of the most important problems like climate change, wealth inequality, irresponsible development. Alternative tourism also grows in popularity as tourist profiles change and evolve. It is known as a clean and greener development tool as well as a profitable tourism sector (Theobald, 2005).

The topic of alternative tourism also questions the development of tourism in general. Tourism is an industry, and it must behave as such. It must be regulated and controlled so that it can become a non or low resource consuming sector and become a sustainable economic model. If this cannot be achieved and tourism continues to consume the local population and resources at a high level it will become a "boom-bust enterprise" and die-out. Such warnings apply both to the mass and alternative tourism models. The mass tourism operation challenges the model of tourism cycle proposed by the Butler (1980) meaning if mass tourism does not change its mode of operation, it will always "consume" the destination. As a conclusion it can be said that whatever the model be it alternative or mass tourism if unregulated and uncontrolled tourism will always be unviable in the long run. However, if steps are taken it can always become a viable, sustainable and economically profitable in the long run (Butler, 1990).

A common problem that alternative tourism is seen as a solution is the commodification of destinations. This problem can be described as tourism being boiled down to simple sun-sea-sand tourism for most destinations. This creates the problem of a destination losing its culture and unique features in favor of more tourism. This creates destinations that are indistinguishable from one another and the only factor for preference being the price range a destination offers. The majority of tourists travel to these destinations from multi-national, huge tour operators. Dependency on these tour operators in a destination affects all parts of the supply chain if the demand fluctuates. The tour operators always strive to create loyal customers to themselves rather than the destination. On a positive side however, lesser-known destinations usually benefit from tour operators as a form of effective marketing tool, accessible charter flights, increased visibility internationally. Keeping these points in mind, it can be said that alternative tourism can be an alternative to destinations that are trying to break away from mass tourism for various reasons. These reasons can be to decrease inbound tourist numbers but increase tourism revenue, conserve the culture of a destination, or readjust its tourism numbers to fit in with its infrastructure (Trunfio, Petruzzellis, & Nigro, 2006).

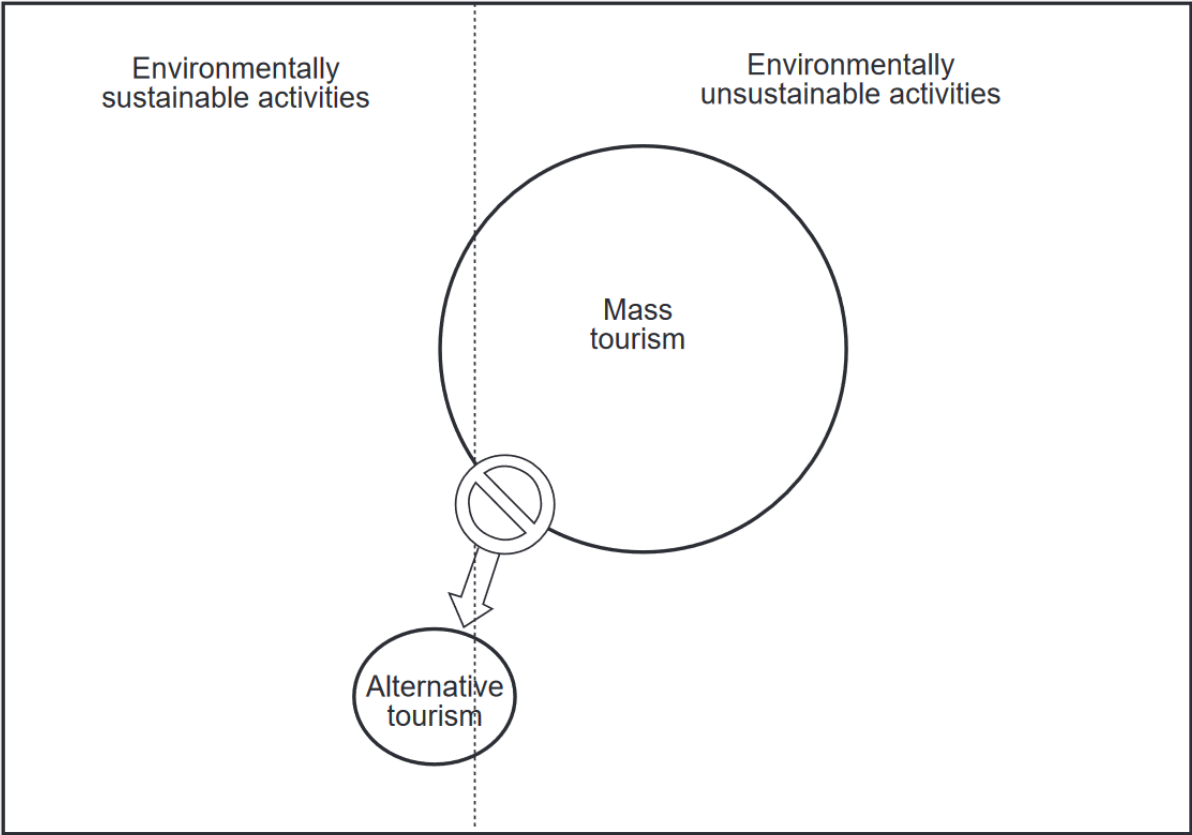


Figure 3 Relationships between mass and alternative tourism (Weaver, 2001)

Some of the common characteristics of the alternative tourism fields can be listed as: small scale development with local ownership emphasis. Minimal ecological and sociological impacts on the destination. Maximum association with the local economy, like agriculture, local businesses thus reducing the need for import. Retention of the tourism income at a local level. Keeping the decision-making process at a local level, involving those that are affected by tourism. Rather than the external factors, local people control the speed of the development (Triarchi & Karamanis, 2017).

2.7.1 Eco-Tourism

Ecotourism is a practice that in its nature aims to understand and preserve the natural and cultural resources of a destination. It is described to be least harmful when it comes to tourism activity. Ecotourism also aims to provide social and economic benefits to both visiting and hosting parties. Ecotourism was developed to protect the natural environment; it aims to assure sustainability and protection of the environment in tourism. Therefore, ecotourism is a type of tourism that protects the nature, culture and provides welfare to the locals. Its main goal to achieve is to reduce the number of tourists and spread tourism to all seasons of a year. Ecotourism due to its nature requires organization of small groups. Needs and wants of the groups should be provided by local establishments (Karadağ, 2016). Ecotourism includes landscapes, wildlife, wilderness exploration, special events in nature, and visitation of natural wonders, with as little impact as possible. It can be said that ecotourism contributes to the promotion of the nature and getting people's attention to its problems. A portion of the income from ecotourism can be used to protect the nature. Ecotourism activities tend to be more conscious, socially, and economically responsible when compared to other types of tourism (Küçük, Güney, Aktepe, & Aktürk, 2017).

Success of tourism largely depend on cultural and natural resources, and protection of said resources. And this can be only achieved by sustainable planning, any resources be they tangible or intangible must be preserved so that next generations can use them too. Sustainable tourism increases the welfare of the locals, helps conserve the resources and cares for the nature (Tatar, 2016). It is imperative that ecotourism must be sustainable for everyone, meaning it must conserve and protect resources and the local culture but it has to be economically viable, if not the destination will suffer a worse fate of bankruptcy and in the end location may die out of emigration or turning to much harmful sectors (Wight, 1993).

Ecotourism is an extension of alternative tourism; it was born out of a feeling of dissatisfaction of mainstream tourism which largely ignored the cultural and ecological impact of tourism. It is also referred as soft-tourism, green tours, nature-based tourism, alternative tourism and responsible tourism. Eco-tourism aims to preserve natural and cultural aspects of the regions, usually those closer to the nature or directly nature itself. It includes training people to respect these values and promote small-scale establishments (Atmıŝ, et al., 2017).

When discussing ecotourism two views stand out. One argues that public interest on environment may be transformed into a product. Other argues that the same interest can be used to protect the resources. The fact that there are two views does not mean they cannot support each other. But it is important for the success of both industry and the ecosystem these two views need to be integrated completely. It is necessary to accept these key principles for long term success of the ecotourism (Wight, 1993):

- It should not destroy the natural resources and landscape, rather strive to preserve them.
- It should provide unique, participatory, intelligent experiences.
- It should educate all participating sides – tourists, industry, local society, government, non-governmental organizations.
- It must recognize that a resource has its limits and must work around this.
- It must be organized and promote partnership with NGO's, government, industry, scientists, and the locals.
- It should improve ethical and moral values.
- It must provide long term solutions and benefits.

The attitude towards environmentalists are beginning to change as governments implement greener policies in their agendas. For example, unlike two decades ago, nowadays environmentalists are working with companies and big multi-national firms. Rather than being a marginalized group they are now a necessary element of many industries. Also, this environmental movement should not be seen as a “fad” or a movement that will go out of fashion any time soon as the effects of many environmental problems are felt today (Wight, 1993). Some very recent examples could be the 2020 sandstorm that hit Ankara Turkey's capitol, this particular sandstorm was the harshest one the city ever experienced and left people shocked and terrified (Enes Kaplan, 2020). In California USA, in 2020 alone there are 8,200 wildfires (as of October) and 3.9 million acres of forest land have been burned down (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, 2020).

According to the International Ecotourism Society, since the 1990's ecotourism has seen a growth between %20-34. In 2004 ecotourism growth has surpassed the global tourism growth by three times the size, in addition to that nature tourism grows by %10 every year. Because sea-sun-sand tourism is now a sated industry, its growth has been halted and this trend makes way for alternative tourism types like rural tourism, nature tourism and ecotourism. Ecotourism is expected to increase even more. The tourist profile for ecotourism tends to be middle aged people (30-59) who has high income levels and high education status. %60 of the Eco tourists are travelling as couples, %15 travel with family and %13 travel alone. %50 of Eco tourists stay around 8-14 days in their destinations and %26 of Eco tourists spend at least around 1000-1500 USD (Kahraman & Türkay, 2014).

2.7.2 Botanical Tourism

Humans have always interacted with plants, starting from the Neolithic age they were used for farming, medicine and sometimes even as a component for cultural interaction. Humans still use plants for the same reasons we used them thousands of years ago. Turkey has the advantage of biodiversity when compared to the European countries with United Kingdom having 1850 species and Holland having 1600 respective species, Istanbul which is just a city on the hand contains 2000 different plant species in its borders. In the European continent there is a total of 13.000 different catalogued plant species while in Turkey there are 12.000 species, almost as much as the whole European continent. This is a huge advantage for Turkey as tourists from all over come to see these ecological wonders. Anatolia is considered as the region where more than 30 farmable species were first domesticated, some of these are: fig, grape, olive, cherry, and hazelnut (Boz, 2014). The first recorded botanical garden was founded in Italy at the city of Pisa by Luca Ghini in the year 1543. In the years past botanical gardens were considered as symbols of prestige and rank, nowadays show how advanced and civilized a country is (Çarbuğa & Pekerşen, 2017).

Botanic has always been a curiosity among humans since time immemorial as various plants were used for religious and/or medicinal properties. Even though people mostly travel to see endemic plants there are many botanical gardens established around the world for this reason alone. Even though this type of tourism were mostly practiced by aristocrats and elites of a country nowadays it is far less expensive and accessible for almost anyone to experience. People tend to choose places that they can relax and see exotic plants that they are unfamiliar with. Botanical tourism also provides these benefits; botanical tourism contributes to the protection of the various endemic plant species, it allows extensive research on endemic plants

because of the funding tourism brings, it has a low bar of entry because of the low amount of investment needed, it improves the overall awareness over the nature among both the locals and the tourists who participate (Haberal, 2015).

Botanical tourists are usually seeking to participate in activities that are seeking tourism activities that won't harm the nature, rather be immersed in it. They are people who are interested in discovery and novelty, spend time in a personal space. They seek to have fun and learn/experience cultures at the same time. As botanical gardens are arranged as protection and exhibit sites one may name them as "open air museums", and they must be treated as such. Activities within a botanical garden are classified as eco-tourism, and tourism activities centered in the gardens can help unburden the natural and cultural heritage sites (Çarbuğa & Pekerşen, 2017).

2.7.3 Highlands Tourism

Highland areas attract people mainly for their natural landscape and fresh air, natural waters. But it must also be noted that visitors also want to experience the highland culture, the way the locals live their lives. Highlands provide the charm and novelty experience most tourists are craving today. Rather than the mainstream city or sun, sea, sand tourism those looking for something new tend to choose these areas for relaxation (Sezer, 2015). Highlands tourism is especially centered around Alpine mountain range, in Turkey it is mostly practiced around the mountains in the Mediterranean region, Black sea region and in the Eastern Anatolia region. For the last ten years' demand for the highland's tourism have only increased. Highlands tourism can be traced back to Ancient Greece where people used to practice harvest festivals and Olympics in the highlands in and around Greece. For the Anatolian people highlands have always been an important part of their culture, the lifestyle and economic choices made by the community have always promoted a life on the highlands. These sociological and economical norms are what kept the highlands culture alive to this day. As tourism industry progress towards the future a need to escape to the nature increases, and that's where highlands and mountains come in (Kaya, Küçükali, & Kızılırmak, 2019).

On the other hand, any development on these areas threaten to destroy the natural environment these facilities and landscapes depend on for tourism. Random and unsupervised developments have destroyed places that tried practicing highlands tourism and ruined their economy at the same time. The development of infrastructure has hindered the waterways that feed these

regions and modern buildings for accommodation are built without considering the civil engineering part of these regions (Kaya, Küçükali, & Kızılırmak, 2019).

Especially in Turkey, highlands tourism creates an alternative for the usual sun-sea-sand tourism of the south and west parts of the country. People mainly prefer highlands for an escape from the hot summer months. Also, the rural highlands culture provides some relief from the hustle and bustle of the crowds of the big city. This process is also natural for some people as travelling from lowlands to the highlands are in their culture. Highlands are usually home to villages and towns as they are generally rural in their nature. Tourist profile that visits highlands tend to be families and friend groups that does not plan their trip. These people also tend to be of lower or middle-income tier, preferring the highlands for its much more affordable nature (Bilici & Işık, 2018). A simple list of attractive factors about highlands can be listed as: mountains, winter, nature, forests, rivers, different climates, eating natural, rafting, observing the traditional highlands life and practicing it (Sezer & Kılıç, 2015). The developments in the rural infrastructure like asphalt roads, reliable electricity and sanitation networks improve the lives of the people living on the highlands and result in more tourism demand on these destinations. This allowed people to shift from solely relying on animal husbandry to hospitality being a reliable and profitable alternative (Usman & Akkaya, 2009).

2.7.4 Caravan and Camping Tourism

Camping being considered a niche tourism market, allows the tourists to be one with the nature and often leave behind technological equipment and be away from the hustle of the cities. It is also popular because of the low cost of camping, needing only a tent and a suitable spot for accommodation. These spots are usually near to natural wonders or places that provide relaxation with a natural landscape (e.g., forests, hills, beaches) (Albayrak, 2013). Camping is defined by the mobile nature of the accommodation and its proximity to the nature. In 2015 there were 376,8 million overnight stays in camping sites in EU-28 countries. This number represents the 13.8% of all overnight visits in EU (Mikulić, Prebežac, Šerić, & Krešić, 2017).

The desire for camping in nature stems from a disillusionment of the mass tourist and needing a more personal and tailored experience, on top of this as cities grow the need to escape the crowds and prefer the long sought-after nature is more prevalent in people than ever before. Especially car camping gained much traction in the modern era (O'Neill, Riscinto-Kozub, & Hyfte, 2010).

2.7.5 Bird Watching Tourism

Bird watching is considered a sport that aims to experience the world through the eyes of the birds. Bird watching has been practiced by many people as a hobby for decades. Naturally due to their habitat bird watching involves places like, lakes, forests, ponds, mountains, and steppes. Visitors especially pick places that are on the migration routes of the birds when selecting their accommodation. This usually involve watching birds travel, fly, eat and mate. Visitors who travel to see the birds usually require a place to stay, eat and resupply. They have to buy various goods and services and finding them in one place is a must as they need to be on time to observe the birds who are constantly moving. This in turn means that these travelers provide a much-needed income for the tourism economy. That is why Bird Watching can be considered a tourism activity (Albayrak, 2013).

Most visitors are young, educated, and wealthy people who are looking to experience nature but also go off the beaten path. While some visitors practice bird watching as a job to most it is a hobby. Bird watching is an important topic when it comes to sustainable tourism. Naturally it is important to protect the areas where birds' nest and rest. It is also important to sustain the forests, ponds and other places birds consider their natural habitats. This does not only protect the nature and safeguard Earth, but also means that bird watching tourism will be profitable in the future. Bird watching by its very nature provides extra income for the locals and provide protection for the both the natural habitats and the birds who are sometimes endangered species. One of the most important destinations for bird watching is İzmir Menderes Delta (Albayrak, 2013).

As birdwatching can become a professional hobby for some people it can be a reliable source of tourism with little risk to it. Bird watching largely depend on climate and seasonal conditions. Even though it is mostly practiced in natural environments, a city can also become a bird watching hotspot (Haberal, 2015).

2.7.6 Cave Tourism

Caves are usually formed by underground water eroding limestone and salt-based rocks or volcanic activity. But it is also known that humans making caves from the volcanic tuff which is easy to work with human hands and simple tools. They are described as underground structures which are deep enough that sunlight cannot reach and can fit at least one human. Being the first-place humans inhabited they attract people for their natural and cultural

properties. Caves have been used for centuries as shelters, depots, barns, places of spirituality (Albayrak, 2013) .

Most caves are used for tourism all around the world. Generally, each cave has unique qualities, this makes cave tourism an economically sustainable activity as a visitor can experience different sensations each time, they visit a different cave. Each cave has different qualities like stalactites, stalagmites and even underground lakes and rivers. This attract people who are seeking a unique adventure that they can only experience in a cave, in turn this creates a niche market for thrill seeking tourists who is willing to visit caves all around the world. Caves by their own nature exist within nature, thus can be considered as rural tourism (Albayrak, 2013).

Usually, visitors who participate in cave tourism have a higher income than the other types of visitors. They usually participate to experience something unique and adventurous (Albayrak, 2013). Caves have a natural mystery surrounding them, this makes them a popular landmark among the people who desire such experiences. Caves also have a recreational and cultural value to the people. Those exploring inner cave systems, boating in cave streams, hiking and even camping in and around the caves can be considered as recreational visitors. While cultural visitors tend to visit for local rituals involving caves, their own fate, traditions of the locals and a general fascination for cultural and historical values of the caves (Kim, Kim, Park, & Guo, 2008).

A sustainable cave tourism practice must involve; not opening caves to the tourists that are still teeming with wildlife as it can disturb the natural life cycle of the species inside, establishments must take the necessary steps to prevent any harm to the cave or the cave systems, as caves usually contain underground water deposits or sources that feed nearby rivers, they must always be kept clean. Caves cannot be seen as pure income banks as they are much more fragile than other natural resources and can be lost forever with no ways of repair or replenishment (Haberal, 2015).

2.7.7 Agricultural Tourism (Agri-tourism)

Agricultural communities always provided humanity with new cultural elements and much needed goods that allowed society to progress to this age. In our times these communities provide a new vocation for recreation and entertainment (Yehong Sun, 2011). Agri-tourism can be traced back to 1800's as cities began to get more and more crowded people travelled to visit their relatives living in rural communities. After the advent of cars, humanity having much more mobility in their hands began to travel more, and this made reaching rural destinations easier to

reach. After 1980's with modern cities getting much more crowded than before and people having more free time than before found release in agri-tourism. One example can be Petra village in Greece, in 1983 The Women's Agri-tourism Cooperative was founded just for the education and employment of village women in agri-tourism (Şekerli, 2018).

Basically agri-tourism can be described as a tourism type dependent on agricultural produce, the sowing and harvesting of the said product and accommodation near and around the agricultural community. Participation in festivals are a huge attractive factor for tourism in rural environments. Also, the gastronomical value cannot be overstated as many people now seek organic products that are grown and cooked locally, this can be due to the growing awareness of health and people wanting to know where their food comes from (Şekerli, 2018).

Some examples of Agri-tourism can be baking, traditional cooking, rug weaving, horse riding, forest tours, olive gathering etc. The general theme is remembering where one came from or learning how to live off the earth. This helps preserve cultures that are on the brink of oblivion and provide income for people that cannot support themselves on farming alone. Also, products that were produced at home can be sold to city dwellers as demand for these products are quite high because they are authentic and of high quality. It would be a mistake to think agri-tourism as only the marketing of agricultural products as local customs like dances, weddings, music, attire are also some of the major attractors when it comes to the tourism. Some periphery activities like school trips to agricultural areas or camping near these places can also be attributed to agri-tourism (Haberal, 2015).

Agricultural tourism can be defined as a practice where ranch or farm owners participate to gain additional income or use agriculture as a main tourist attraction (Desmond A. Jolly, 2005). Agritourism also relieves some of the pressure from the environment caused by the agriculture. It provides an alternative income model for communities participating in agriculture, saving them in case of crop failure, animal diseases or bad fishing seasons etc. This extra income can also help modernize all forms of agriculture by incentivizing them to modernize their equipment or use fertilizers/pesticides to improve their yields. This can also backfire, as tourism may prove more lucrative than agriculture and people may quit it altogether. It can also destroy arable land or forests by establishing hotels and amenities in and around farmlands and forests. In the long term these small agritourism establishments may get institutionalized or get acquired by big tourism corporations (Forsyth, 1995). Any damage done by agritourism is self-harm as it starts to consume the very thing it feeds on. It may ramp up real estate and field prices up and inaccessible to the producers. The locals may decide to stop producing any agricultural produce

altogether and focus on tourism (Karafakı & Yazgan, 2012). Caution must be taken in agri-tourism as it risks damaging the farmlands, fisheries, forests etc. that the rural community rely on (Şekerli, 2018).

On a positive scale agritourism can promote gender equality in rural settings by allowing women to participate in activities that will economically benefit them. This will shatter the social barriers women may face in business/work life in villages or towns as well as increase women's participation in the workforce (Karafakı & Yazgan, 2012).

Being able to create more varied and lucrative jobs can slow down or maybe even stop the rural to city migration, resulting in a more varied workforce. Such different sectors and people working together will create a framework for inter-industry relations. Also being a very clean and eco-friendly type of tourism, it can affect other industries associated with it to be cleaner, this point also applies for tourists who participate as they will grow a new perspective to the natural lifestyle (Karafakı & Yazgan, 2012).

One common point that can be made about agri-tourism is that it is generally practiced in regions that are developing or developed rather than poorer or less developed regions of the world. Due to these agri-tourism practices are usually intertwined with sustainable organic farming practices. Due to this agri-tourism is usually beneficial to the destination it is practiced in. Producers that practice agri-tourism will be advantageous because of this reason (Haberal, 2015).

2.7.8 Religious Tourism

Religious tourist can be identified as either in part of fully motivated to travel because of religious reasons. Religious tourism can be considered a global phenomenon as it is practiced by all the Abrahamic (Islam, Christianity, and Judaism) and Asian Religions (Hinduism, Taoism, Confucionism, Jainism). It can be easily confused with cultural tourism as motivations may overlap.

Pilgrimages and similar visitations to religious sites are usually overlapped by other types of tourism that may be present at the location. Most often than not, cultural or heritage tourism can be included in religious travels. It is common for pilgrims or religiously motivated travelers to free a day or two just to participate in activities besides their intended goals for travelling. A good example for this can be visiting Rome for religious reasons as most religious artefacts and monuments are in the immediate distance (if not in the same building) touristic attractions (Rinschede, 1992).

Religious tourism is as old as religion itself as the practice of travelling to sites holding historical or religious importance is present in most religions. In the ancient world Celts used to visit holy groves for rituals and burials. During festival times Germanic tribes would travel to Uppsala. It can be said that religious travel is much more organized in modern ages and among the religions with higher populations like Islam, Hinduism, Christianity and Judaism. Modern day Hajj's can be considered an organized pilgrimage, the Saudi government governs and regulates the pilgrimage as hundreds of millions of people participate in it every year. This amount of tourism traffic usually promotes growth and development in a region, Mecca now has a population of more than 1.5 million people (General Authority for Statistics, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2020) and it is growing by the day. It can be easily argued this is due to the extremely lucrative pilgrimage tourism potential the city has. Because of the increasing mobility and availability of free time and income lesser-known sites are now accessible to the general public (Rinschede, 1992). Two villages in this thesis fit in this category as while they are not pilgrimage sites, they have recently become sites important to people with religious interest. The village of Birgi in Ödemiş and village of Şirince attract people because of their religious potential as it is explained in their dedicated sections.

Pilgrims and religious tourists usually have special needs, most important being the stewardship of the said holy site, its sanctity is of utmost importance. The religious rituals must be uninterrupted and complete. This can be a challenge for the more popular destinations as popularity brings commercialization, therefore the sanctity of the destination may be left out for the sake of revenue. A sustainable approach is required when handling the impact of number of tourists visiting (Henderson, 2011).

2.7.9 Yacht Tourism

The term "Yacht" refers to boats with a design that allows them to move by using their weight and have a built-in living quarter. These vessels are built in a yacht design and must be designated as either "Commercial Yacht" or "Private Yacht" in their tonnage certificates. Yachts are used for sport or travel purposes and carry maximum 36 persons. Yachting is a very expensive and luxurious type of tourism that is accessible to only a small percentage of a country's population. With increasing welfare in a country yachting becomes more and more accessible. This does not limit a country in terms of yacht tourism as yacht harbors are usually used internationally. Yachting can be both private and commercial. The "Marina" which is used to dock yachts and provide a variety of amenities for boats like refueling, restocking, accommodation, shopping and among many other things legal help when visiting foreign

countries. Marinas can be considered a part of the yacht tourism experience. The services expected from these marinas change season to season as in the summer vessels expect shorter visit times and usually stop to shop, spend time on the shore and resupply, whereas in the winter vessels need shelter from the storms and the elements and require extensive repairs (Sariisik, Turkey, & Akova, 2011).

Yacht tourism became a part of the Turkish tourism market around 1980's as a way to reinforce nation's economy. Turkish style "Blue Voyage" is a common sight to see when visiting country's seaside tourism destinations, these voyages usually involve visitation of bays, cliffs, remote beaches, and islands while providing food, beverages and usually music to the passengers. Another option is to charter boats and have a more private experience. Turkey has an 8,300 km coastline and many types of climates and coastal formation due to bordering three different seas (Aegean Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea). Diving, fishing, sea archaeology are just some of the attractions offered by these coasts. The growth of the yacht tourism is localized in Aegean and Mediterranean coasts, but projects are planned for the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea region. This expansion is expected to attract tourists from the countries that have shores to the Black Sea like Russia, Georgia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, and Romania (Sariisik, Turkey, & Akova, 2011).

In the opening ceremony of the CNR Eurasia Boat Show, Transportation Minister Turhan stated that Turkey achieved to be the third in yacht building. He also stated that Turkey is expecting more investment in the yacht tourism sector to be a major player in the market (T.C. Ulaştırma ve Altyapı Bakanlığı, 2019).

Although yacht tourism is considered as harmful to the environment because of the pollution caused by the boats and the amount of waste thrown overboard it can also be seen as a form of sustainable tourism if developed with having the local people and the environment the marinas are founded upon. The preservation of the local beauty -the culture, local tapestry, flora and fauna- is essential to compete with the vast market (Sariisik, Turkey, & Akova, 2011).

2.7.10 Gastronomy Tourism

As competition in tourism sector grows, destinations try to find unique ways to promote their brands to the world. Local culture became a prime marketing and differentiating tool for the destinations. Gastronomy is one of the key tools to use when approaching this. And this is not just because eating and drinking is essential for the tourists, but also because gastronomy has become a fountain of knowledge of modern societies. The tourism experience itself is structured

around eating and drinking. People are usually spending their time eating and/or drinking or trying to find a place to eat and/or drink. But these experiences are usually not considered luxurious or as a part of the holiday experience because these activities are considered as a necessity (Richards, 2003).

Different cultures and identities of various people of the world gave birth to different cooking and eating practices using ingredients native to their own geographies. These practices were shaped by their beliefs, ideas, customs. In the modern ages, gastronomy became a very important part of the traditional tourism, affecting the choices of millions of tourists worldwide. Gastronomy tourism can be an alternative to the mass tourism as well as a supplement to it. As an example, %30 of the tourism income in Barcelona, comes from eating and drinking expenses. In 2010 State of Ontario of Canada reported 2 billion Canadian dollars solely from eating and drinking expenses totaling to %46 of all tourism income in the state. TÜRSAB reported that %20 to %25 of all tourism income in Turkey comes from eating and drinking activities (Altıntaş & Hazarhun, 2020).

Gastronomy tourism can also be called, culinary tourism, food tourism, gourmet tourism. Also, some subtitles of gastronomy tourism are wine, beer, chocolate, cheese tourism. Gastronomy tourism is defined as “primary and secondary food producers, festivals related to food, restaurants and visitation of places that allow tasting of food and visitation of places that produce special types of food”. Gastronomy tourism can be described as experiencing a culture's food and drinks, their preparation techniques or learning how to prepare a specific culture's food and drinks by traveling to their sources. Gastronomy tourism depends on agriculture, tourism and culture combined (Altıntaş & Hazarhun, 2020). Gastronomy tourism is essential in most kinds of tourism. As a person will need to eat in any case, gastronomy and eating and drinking is an inseparable part of tourism industry. While the need to eat is always there, the case for eating just for pleasure also exists. Some tourists will travel just to eat something specific, they travel for the experience alone (Hjalager, 2002). Gastronomy tourism helps support establishments and producers in a location by providing extra income. Gastronomy tourism encompasses many activities that is considered as attractive to both national and international tourists. These activities are, tourists experiencing the local produce, participation in culinary schools and workshops, visitation of wineries and vineyards, visitation of olive gardens and olive producers, participation to gastronomy festivals, visitation of museums related to gastronomy etc. Tourists participating in these activities are considered as gastro-tourists. These

types of tourists do not eat just to fulfil their needs but to experience the pleasure of eating and experience different customs of other cultures (Altıntaş & Hazarhun, 2020).

Today some tourists travel solely to experience exotic foods and cultures all around the world. By promoting gastronomy, a destination can differentiate itself from other similar destinations and become a unique experience point that attract more tourists. Some countries that are famous for their cuisine and use this for gastronomy tourism like France, Italy and Spain usually go out of their way to promote famous restaurants, chefs, cities with unique or popular foods, an example would be Italian pizza or French wine (Altıntaş & Hazarhun, 2020).

Gastronomy tourism should also deal with the term sustainable gastronomy, promoting local dishes, home-cooking, improving taste on younger generations so that they can appreciate their meals. Tourism's impact on local gastronomy can be both negative (streamlining the local cuisine, changing the local cuisine irreversibly, introducing fast food etc.). Italy based slow food movement is based on this idea, eco-gastronomy as it is defined. Eco-gastronomy deals with sustainable gastronomy practices promoting conservation of local cultures and reducing waste. For this reason, policy makers should always consider the contribution of gastronomy when planning tourism especially in rural and fragile destinations (Scarpato, 2003).

2.8 Industry Views

It is a fact that hotels and facilities that serve tourism use water, energy, and various other resources directly or indirectly. Such as hotels requiring a constant supply of food from markets that otherwise supply local markets. According to UNWTO (2017) accommodation industry accounts for almost 20% of all carbon emissions in the tourism sector. As such more and more tourists everyday expect “greener” operations from hotels. For example, a green hotel is defined as operating using greener practices like reducing energy and water usage, recycling, reduce their operation costs, buy locally to cut transportation costs.

World Bank (2007) defines corporate social responsibility (CSR) as “commitment of businesses to contribute to sustainable development, adding value to the lives of their employees, local community and society they exist in. This must be done both keeping in mind that it must be good for the business and the development.” So, it can be assumed that if this concept of CSR be implemented to the structure of sustainable tourism, communicated with all the stakeholders effectively, it may prevent any future conflict between the stakeholders. Incorporating business ethics principles both to the supply and the demand side of the tourism through effective communication, will create a common ground about sustainability in tourism and will prove

CSR's potential for business longevity. As it is repeated multiple times communication between the business side and the society side is essential for the sustainable tourism development. But it must also be in the tourist's level so that they can understand and adopt sustainable and ethical standards (fair trade, community relationships etc.) in a destination. This can create better and long-term relationships between the industry and the local small-scale enterprises which will result in more successful partnerships (Oriade & Evans, 2011).

53% of all British and Australian tourists expressed that they are concerned about the environment thus wish to see the environment conserved. This trend naturally translates directly to the market as the industry must respond to the changing trends to meet demands. Understanding the demographics is imperative for the hotels to survive. It is also known that younger people tend to gravitate towards greener hotels. Of course, the income plays a huge role too as people with less income do not really have a pick as they usually choose the option that they can afford (Ayazlar & Gün, 2017).

Some solutions for hotels are to use smart systems for their rooms and facilities so that the energy usage can be optimized for each guest. Examples to these can be lights that respond to entrance and exits to the rooms, self-adjusting room temperatures and water boilers. Hotels all around the world started using sun panels and wind turbines to mitigate the energy costs. As in industry examples Rotorua Hotel found out that in their hotel washrooms alone use 66 liters of water every hour and 1580 liters of water every day. By replacing the faucets with sensor faucets and replacing the shower heads with low pressure heads the hotel saved 5244\$ in seven months, the improvements had costed only 3060\$. Another example is Sheraton Auckland, changed the washing temperature of their sheets, covers, towels from 85°C to 65°C saved 2000\$ in three months (Aydın, 2017). From these examples it is very easy to say that sustainability is profitable in the long run for even the big chain hotels like Sheraton. Going "green" may seem like expensive at start but just like in the example of Rotorua Hotel it can be extremely profitable without even lowering the quality of their services.

The worry that resources are going to deplete soon is slowly pushing the whole industry to invest in renewable resources. This trend gave rise to terms like zero energy buildings and almost zero energy buildings. Zero energy buildings are those that require zero fossil fuel to operate and thus have zero emission. These buildings are not needed to be in the city infrastructure because they do not need energy from outside sources. Zero energy buildings source their energy needs from solar panels, wind turbines or wave turbines etc. (Aydın, 2017). These developments show that long term solutions do exist, and they are viable, even

profitable. A hotel that does not need to use the state energy grid, is not to be affected by fluctuating energy market or various taxes. The running costs and maintenance costs are usually lower than the aforementioned taxes and costs.

Apart from hotels facilities that are tied to them also threaten nature, such as marinas, theme parks, bars. These facilities must also transition to sustainable acts on the long run. Some of the guidelines to these are (Acar, Çelik, Coşkun, & Künç, 2017):

- Preserving resources for future generations.
- Careful use of resources.
- Protection of natural environment and resources.
- Careful usage of resources as to not harm anyone while working.
- Environmental and ecological integration.

Big chain hotels and associated facilities harm the nature in various ways such as (Acar, Çelik, Coşkun, & Künç, 2017):

- Pollution of earth and water due to immense amounts of waste a hotel can produce.
- Amount of water needed by pools draining underground water sources.
- High amounts of in and out traffic causing air pollution.
- Destruction of seaside.
- Deforesting for land acquisition.
- Tourists creating waste both in and out of the hotel.
- Introduction of human made structures to the ecosystem.
- Climate systems polluting air.

In the modern age it is imperative to meet the demands the “new” tourists require. For example, tourists want to see establishments respect the environment around them both natural and cultural. They expect clean beaches and untouched forests around them even when they are only there for the sun-sea-sand type of vacation (Acar, Çelik, Coşkun, & Künç, 2017).

Most establishments (especially those operate in several countries) are affected by not only trends in their countries but trends globally. Thus, they are also responsible for the global economy. People’s perception against big corporations are also reflected by this. As growing conscience for ecology grow, big tourism companies must respond in kind to retain and improve their market share. International agreements on sustainability and ecological issues (Paris

Agreement 2015) makes companies obligatory to shift their practices to “greener” practices (Kızgın, Karaosmanoğlu, Örmeci, & Taş, 2017).

2.9 Local Businesses

In the discussion about sustainability and green tourism local establishments have everything to gain but also everything to lose. For any sense of sustainability, the developments must always start from the micro scale to macro scale and not the other way around. It must be known that sustainable tourism and sustainability in tourism are two separate issues that are equally important and must be handled differently. While sustainable tourism handles economic issues, sustainable tourism tackles with tourism policies (Karaset & Yaşarsoy, 2017).

Generally, in developing countries local businesses and small-scale tourism enterprises get dominated by multinational companies and struggle to exist. Tourists are sometimes even advised not to interact with the local society or not to shop from locally sourced shops/businesses. This creates a tourism experience that is sheltered in big resort hotels, tourists sometimes only see the airport and the hotel in a country. With the “all-inclusive” model being the standard, the local businesses were in an even harder place than they were before (Roberts & Tribe, 2008). For sustainable tourism to succeed in a competitive fashion, the market needs to involve the local people, and incorporate the small-scale establishments, add value to the people employed in the tourism industry, work with projects that does not only provide to the big companies but also to the local economies, the tourism practice must not erode the local values and environment. Finally, the growth rate of tourism must be regulated so that it won't harm the nature and the local economy (Oriade & Evans, 2011).

Tourism at a local level provide an opportunity for the rural population to take control of their own social and economic progress. Tourism also allows these populations to take part in global activities and see recognition around the world. The development of tourism in rural areas is expressed by job creation, reduced migration to the urban areas and a possibility of reverse migration, improving the living standards of the rural population, vocational education, improvements on gender equality, improvements on cultural and social coexistence, opportunities for social interactions, encouragement of arts and crafts among the local population. Specifically, tourism helps the existence of two types of establishments that would otherwise would not exist, first the locally owned accommodation establishments, the second is various types of establishments (e.g., café's, restaurants, construction firms). Also, rural

tourism improves entrepreneurship in areas that would otherwise have very little opportunities for it (Surugiu, 2009).

With improvements in mind, the impact of rural tourism must be taken into consideration to develop policies that benefit both the establishments seeking economic gain, and the social and physical wellbeing of the environment. These policies must focus on four specific topics: improving the living conditions of everyone participating (business owners, workers, tourists, locals), stopping the migration of the locals and giving people reason (better conditions, jobs, training, and education) to stay in their villages/towns, sustainable prosperity of rural communities, preservation of the rural community and its surrounding environment. All these topics always must be sustainable or else any rural tourism policies or frameworks will always fail. Each rural area creates its own entrepreneurs and tourism culture, so plans must always be made at a local level (Surugiu, 2009).

In 2001 rural tourism in Europe was comprised of more than two and a half million SME's (Small and Medium Establishments), 99% of all tourism establishments in rural areas of USA qualify as small establishments (Mitchell & Hall, 2005). From this information it is easy to say that local small businesses are the backbone of the rural tourism model. One advantage tourism has over other industries is it is heavily labor intensive, meaning it is a learn on the job type of sector. This can help create more jobs in rural environment without the need of intensive training. Because of this reason rural tourism is one of the best ways of creating rural development plans. But all these advantages can backfire if not planned properly some structural and product problems may arise. These problems can be lack of knowledge of marketing, lack of skills, limited knowledge of tourism market's inner workings, limited cooperation between related markets (Surugiu, 2009).

Chapter 3

Key Destinations

The destinations were picked for their importance in the regions tourism and being hotspots in their own right. While there were other candidate destinations like Bademler village or Bornova Homeros valley, but these locations are either too similar to the key locations. The locations were picked so that they are either crowded, tourism-oriented destinations that are considered tourism destinations first and foremost like the Şirince village, or locations that experienced tourism but currently not overwhelmed by them like Barbaros village or the Birgi village. The destinations were picked so that they can represent a specific region of the İzmir City and its rural region.

3.1 İzmir Region

After being one of the most important tourist destinations for decades, Izmir lost its relative importance after 1990's. With its historical, cultural values and its nature Izmir still has a significant tourism potential (Önder, Candemir, & Kumral, 2009). In 2019 İzmir's tourism traffic expanded by almost %20¹, this shows us that İzmir still has the potential to grow and show resurgence. This in turn benefit rural tourism because, there is a huge market for lesser-known places. While İzmir may be not considered as a known and popular destination for rural tourism there are hotspots that are actually very popular. The city of İzmir was picked because while being a metropolis it is not as crowded as İstanbul but just as touristic. This makes İzmir a prime location to study rural tourism as well as the mainstream touristic potential. Like Kusadasi to the south, Izmir's main virtue is its proximity to Ephesus, an incredibly well-preserved Roman city that lives up to its lofty reputation. Likewise, the ruins of Pergamum and Asclepion, an ancient Greek center of culture and health, are easily accessible and are included excursion options on all ships docking in Izmir (Cruisecritic, 2014). As of 2019 Cruise and other types of sea travel has been stagnant on İzmir, but the air travel shows a whopping 40% increase. This is easily the proof that İzmir is a strong and growing tourism destination with the potential to grow to be a worldwide destination. Historic sites are a big draw for visitors and the Izmir's varied heritage assets have great potential to deliver economic benefits for the region. Izmir is known as a city with the history goes beyond 8000 years, which brings all the

unique heritage resources available for cultural heritage tourism. The city is called “The Aegean Pearl” and has a tremendous potential for cultural tourism (Günlü, Pınar, & Yağcı, 2009).

Months	Years			Rate of Change (%)	
	2016	2017	2018	2017/2016	2018/2017
JANUARY	16 397	13 330	24 330	-18,70	82,52
FEBRUARY	18 989	16 442	27 923	-13,41	69,83
MARCH	37 154	27 846	24 818	-25,05	-10,87
APRIL	37 925	43 211	47 039	13,94	8,86
MAY	66 015	57 378	75 264	-13,08	31,17
JUNE	73 226	94 325	139 679	28,81	48,08
JULY	135 271	157 459	245 724	16,40	56,06
AUGUST	111 838	146 900		31,35	
SEPTEMBER	76 603	105 279		37,43	
OCTOBER	62 989	62 447		-0,86	
NOVEMBER	16 691	17 203		3,07	
DECEMBER	19 201	21 990		14,53	
TOTAL OF 7 MONTHS	384 977	409 991	584 777	6,50	42,63
GENERAL TOTAL	672 299	763 810		13,61	

Table 3 Number of foreign visitors to the city of İzmir (T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2019)

From the above figure, it can be easily said that İzmir is still a growing destination in terms of international visitors. Just in two years (2017-2018) there was a whopping 33,75 % change in the visitors. And the positive change in the numbers are still strong with almost a 20% change in visitors in the year 2019.

Izmir has been mentioned in Izmir Chamber of Commerce’s report as being a well-suited city for “Turkey’s Tourism Strategy”, this means that more museums to be opened in the city. Besides being an established and respected tourism destination, Izmir is an important center of expositions and meetings, as it has numerous universities, museums, concert halls, cultural and art establishments, festivals both international and national (Günlü, Pınar, & Yağcı, 2009). Besides having a great potential for coastal tourism Izmir also possess some very important museums and historical sites such as Bergama and Selçuk. Ephesus museum which is located in the town of Selçuk is the second most visited museum in Turkey after the esteemed Topkapi museum in Istanbul (Emekli, 2003). Having a long history ranging from the Neolithic era to this day, the city of İzmir saw rise and fall of many civilizations from the Greek states of old to Byzantium to Ottoman Empire. This abundance of history and the ancient sites to show for it makes İzmir a hotspot for cultural tourism in Turkey. The city has a great potential for rural

tourism as the regions of Urla peninsula, Kozak plains, Bozdağ mountain has a wide range of rural and agricultural tourism opportunities (Baykal & Ataberk, 2020).

A unique feature in the city of İzmir is the İzmir fair and Kültürpark. Established in 1931 it became an international fair as other nations started to participate every year. It is in the city centre; it is established as a 150.000 m² green area with many different and sometimes exotic trees and plants. It is still used today for festivals, concerts and of course fairs and is considered a main pull factor for the city of İzmir (Pınar, 2005).



Figure 4 Position of the city of İzmir in Turkey (Google, 2020)

The city of İzmir is also famous for its potential for gastronomy tourism as the city's unique Aegean cuisine of olive oil, herbs, fish, pastries, and various meat dishes are renowned all over Turkey and the world. The city hosts many different festivals related to gastronomical activities like Urla Artichoke Festival (3.1.3 Barbaros Village). Coastal parts of the city are renowned for the fresh fish dishes and many side dishes that accompany them. Some of the best know sea produce of the city are prawns, lobsters, shellfish, oysters, octopus and mussels. Famously many of the dishes of the city include various herbs that grow wildly all over the city like, "blessed thistle, nettle, honeycomb, vine, rockling, radicchio". Many of the vegetables and fruits that are common to Aegean and Mediterranean regions are also present in the region. Most important and famous of these are olives that are native to the region and is harvested for thousands of years. Over the thousands of years many different peoples and cultures migrated to the city bringing their own foods to the city, some examples can be Macedonian böreks, Cretan herb dishes and artichoke, boyoz and sübye of the Jewish population, iskonta of the Greek citizens of the city are some of the best examples of the variety of the İzmir cuisine. Being a harbor city also contributes to this variety (Altıntaş & Hazarhun, 2020).

3.1.1 Foça

The town of Foça is located 70 km away from the city of İzmir, it was named “Phokaia by the first settlers around 8th century B.C. It was a trading port for the Ionian civilization. Today Foça is a two-part town named Yeni Foça and Eski Foça, these two districts are only few kilometers apart. The word Phoke means monk seal in Greek and the name Fok means monk seal too. This is because of the various monk seals that make their homes in this region.

Foça also has various archaeological ruins that date back to its Ionian roots, these ruins can be used for tourism reasons. Some of them are the Athena Temple, Kybele Open Air Temple, The Herodot Wall. These can be utilized as a cultural tourism hotspot. Even though these are already utilized they can be marketed more and reach more people. Foça is also a great gastronomical hotspot as it is teeming with marine wildlife. Various fish and shellfish mixed with traditional Aegean cuisine results in a unique blend of organic sustainable food that tastes like no other Aegean port. As a result, it can be said that Foça can be much more than a sun-sea-sand spot for tourism. Combining this with its potential as a rural tourism spot it can be easily said that Foça has a great potential for a green tourism spot (Sonuç, 2018).

Foça is a fishing town located to the north of İzmir’s city centre. The town saw huge amounts of popularity because of the Club Med in the 1967. Especially in the 1990’s towns popularity soared because of excursionist tours to the region. Town started losing its popularity in the 2000’s because Club Med had closed in 2005, this resulted in town losing most of its international connections. Usually, the city of İzmir receives tourists in the summer months, this hurts Foça’s tourism value as it only receives tourists in the summer months. Foça’s current population is 31.061 but in the summer months when people go to their summer houses it increases to almost 100.000. This can also be attributed to people staying in hotels for a long time. For all of the reasons given above the local people of Foça desires to revive tourism as they mostly rely on tourism and fishing (Sonuç, 2018). It is possible (and the objective of this study) to combine these features as a classical fishing town tourism destination as part of agricultural tourism. This region is a popular tourism destination as it is. The study will focus on studying effects of the tourism activity in the area with statistics gathered from governmental offices and İBB. Interviews will be conducted with the locals and opinions for improvement and rural tourism will be gathered. This will show how effective the rural tourism traffic is when a destination receives high numbers of visitors over the course of decades. It is 45 km’s away from İzmir city centre and has multiple options for public transportation makes Foça an easy to access region for visitors and locals alike.

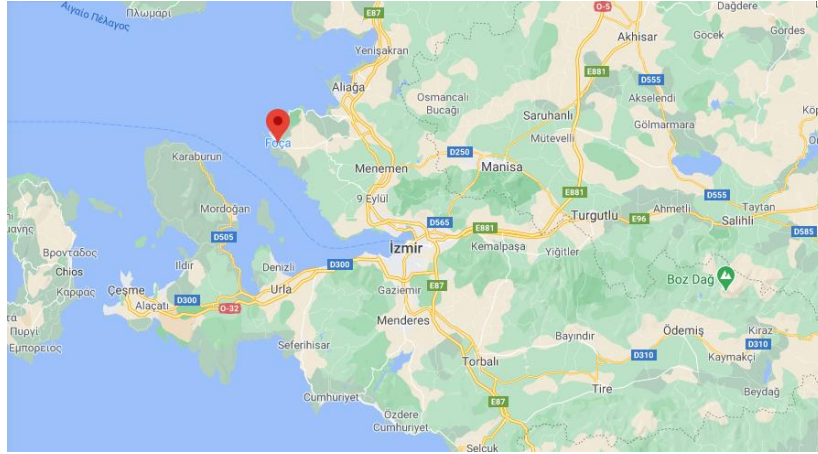


Figure 5 Position of the Foça in the İzmir Region (Google, 2020)

Foça applied to become a cittaslow in 2019 and is still waiting for approval from the international community. This step just like in Sığacık (3.1.2), will help preserving the environment and the culture of the region all the while improving its tourism marketing and its image. Mr. Fatih Gürbüz who is the mayor of Foça stated that they aim to be the second cittaslow in the city of İzmir and their administration will continue to develop projects that will achieve this objective. Being a cittaslow means that Foça will become more sustainable and invest in its own people (İzgazete, 2020).

Foça receives tourists in a seasonal manner much like the rest of the city of İzmir. The town has a population of 32.534 as of 2013 (T.C. Foça Kaymakamlığı, 2021).

Months	2016			2017			2018		
	National	International	Total	National	International	Total	National	International	Total
JANUARY	12	18	30	18	11	29	23	0	23
FEBRUARY	7	27	34	25	10	35	32	11	43
MARCH	20	35	55	22	7	29	69	5	74
APRIL	14	63	77	59	16	75	56	22	78
MAY	58	83	141	103	18	121	72	38	110
JUNE	51	104	155	137	33	170	86	61	147
JULY	79	171	250	256	40	296	208	75	283
AUGUST	41	240	281	380	43	423	239	47	286
SEPTEMBER	87	204	291	164	23	187	0	0	0
OCTOBER	64	82	146	89	35	124	0	0	0
NOVEMBER	25	29	54	43	3	46	0	0	0
DECEMBER	4	11	15	27	1	28	0	0	0
GENERAL TOTAL	462	1067	1529	1323	240	1563	785	259	1044

Table 4 Tourist Arrivals to Sub-Provincial Directorate of Foça, Ministry of Culture and Tourism by Years and Months (SONUÇ, 2018)

<i>Foça</i>	<i>Facilities with Operation Permit</i>			<i>Facilities with Investor Permit</i>		
	<i>Total Facilities</i>	<i>Total Rooms</i>	<i>Total Beds</i>	<i>Total Facilities</i>	<i>Total Rooms</i>	<i>Total Beds</i>
	8	362	739	1	12	24

Table 5 Total number of facilities registered to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the town of Foça for 2019 (T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2019)

3.1.2 Sığacık

Seferihisar was selected as a Cittaslow in 2009, this made it a great candidate for this research as we can see the effects of the Cittaslow on a rural town. Seferihisar was mostly focused on fishing and agriculture before it was a tourism destination. Commercialization of Seferihisar changed its focus industries and made trade and tourism more lucrative. The study will focus on this fact that even while trying to preserve local lifestyle's rural tourism may cause a destination to change its cultural landscape. Being one of the few places in Turkey that is a registered cittaslow may provide insights to how this can be achieved while maintaining the balance between environmental values and monetary gain.

Seferihisar's main income comes from agriculture from produce like artichoke, olives and oranges including mandarins. The town also practice greenhouses growing various foliage plants. Industrial oil presses and fruit packaging plants can be found in and around Seferihisar, as well as fishing farms and fishing boats. Almost 80% of Seferihisar's population practice agriculture as a job, this puts it as a prime candidate for agricultural and rural tourism. Especially starting from 2009 the town started to be a prime tourism spot and more and more people consider tourism as their main source of income. The province shows great potential for both domestic and international tourism in its current state (Çerçi, 2013).

Being a cittaslow Seferihisar retained its cultural, social and traditions and embraced renewable energy sources. It practices economical models that benefit local sector rather than big corporations like slowfood. Slowfood is a movement that directly opposes the fast-food corporations. It puts the emphasis on local food and small establishments, allowing locally sourced restaurants to survive and thrive in their own ecosystem (Öztürk & Umdü, 2017).

<i>Accommodation Facilities</i>	<i>Facilities with Operation Permit</i>			<i>Facilities with Investor Permit</i>		
	Total Facilities	Total Rooms	Total Beds	Total Facilities	Total Rooms	Total Beds
<i>Seferihisar</i>	7	833	1758	2	170	340

Table 6 Total number of facilities registered to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the town of Seferihisar for 2019 (T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2020)

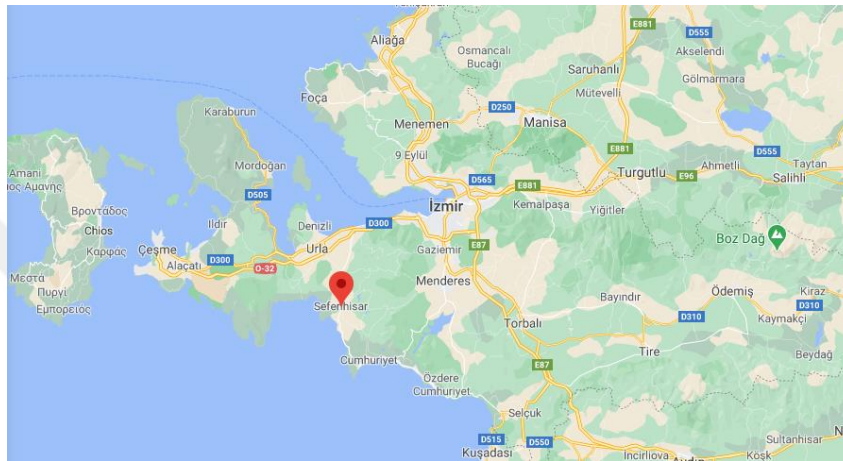


Figure 6 Position of the Seferihisar in the İzmir Region (Google, 2020)

3.1.3 Barbaros Village

Barbaros village is situated 22 km's from Urla-İzmir. The village claims that they were first to practice rural tourism in Turkey in 1970's (Barbaros köyü, 2018). In 1970's a tourism company called Bastıyalı Tourism would bring groups from Norway, Denmark and Finland. The villagers would organize "Turkish nights" on the village square for the tourists. With such strong claims and a fifty years' history of sustained rural tourism, warrants for research. The success of this village combined with an eco-friendly, sustainable approach to tourism could be a beneficial example to other villages and towns that practice rural tourism.

In 2020 İzmir Municipality distributed salep tulips to several villages including Barbaros village with the aims of reviving agriculture with expensive crops. Also, these tulips could be used for tourism with the way they look. It is known flower fields look gorgeous and attract tourists. This also contributes to the village's tourism as salep is a very famous winter drink in Turkey that is known to have medicinal properties besides its great taste (Haberimport, 2020).

The village of Barbaros is in the Urla county of the city of İzmir. Urla is situated west of the city of İzmir approximately 35 km's away from the city centre, in the biggest peninsula of the

Aegean region of Turkey aptly named Urla peninsula. It borders the Gulf of Sığacık in the south and the county of Çeşme which is a world-renowned tourism destination to the west. As of 2010 50% of the county's population is comprised of farmers, as such rural tourism has a much higher potential. But as the tourism industry grows in the county land needed for agriculture shifted to tourism industry and this caused the farmers in the region to seek alternative income types (Güdücüler, 2012).

Some reasons that Urla region and by extent the village of Barbaros is suitable for rural tourism is as follows:

- Urla farmlands are known to be extensive and diverse allowing many different crops to be planted and harvested. This includes the artichoke which is the centerpiece of a local festival. International Artichoke Festival of Urla is an annual festival organized with the intention of promoting the Urla destination and the artichoke crop that is growing in and around the town. It is usually organized around the end of the April and start of May. The festival helps the farmers of the area by promoting better farming practices and sale of crops directly from the producer. This festival is a mix between gastronomy and agricultural tourism as it promotes both the farmers and their produces and the local dishes made from artichoke like, artichoke sushi, artichoke pasta, artichoke boyoz (a pastry special to the city of İzmir). The festival also allows people to dine in the artichoke fields, creating an additional type of income for the farmers using tourism (Kargiglioğlu & Kabacık, 2017).
- The region is famous for its olive oil and wine industry; they are considered ancient traditions of the region handed down from the Ancient Greek states settled in the region.
- Farmlands and farmers adapting and adopting tourism as a side income job gradually shifts the region as a prime rural tourism destination (Güdücüler, 2012).



Figure 7 Position of the Barbaros Village in the İzmir Region (Google, 2020)

3.1.4 Şirince Village

The village of Şirince located to the south of İzmir near the town of Selçuk. Its proximity to both the city centre and the touristic Kuşadası makes this village a hotspot for tourism. Until 1923 the village was populated by the Greek speaking people with 1800 houses, but after the Turkish-Greek population exchange of 1923 almost all of the Greek population left and some of the Turkish people living over in the Greece came to this village. Around 1950 there were 2000 to 3000 people living in the village, but this number declined to 530 (Yerelnet, 2020) and is still on the decline with mostly the old or middle-aged population still residing in the village (Türkiye Kültür Portalı, 2020). Its proximity to the ancient city of Ephesus and the touristic hotspot Kuşadası makes Şirince a prime spot for tourists visiting these locations. Being far away from noise and hustle of the city Şirince has a huge potential for rural tourism as people choose Şirince for being both an established tourism destination and a slow, silent village. Climate is usually pleasant year-round, and village rarely gets bad weather conditions, this in part allows the village to receive tourism all four seasons. The village is surrounded by pine forests, and the flower “Hatmi” or Marsh-root grow around the small rivers around the village, this flower is known for its sweet root which is used for making Halva in Turkey or used as a flavoring agent in the popular treat Marshmallow. The Delice tree which is known as the wild olive can be found naturally around the village and this probably led to the cultivation of olive in the region. The agriculture largely depends on fruit trees like olive, figs, and pear trees (Çolak, 2009).

It is thought that Şirince was founded by the people abandoning the city of Ephesus as it declined. People might have chosen this location for the grave of St. Jean. Around the 6th century Byzantine Emperor Justinianus built a small church around the said grave, this shows

that Şirince was an important religious and historical landmark. It is not known exactly how or when Şirince was found, and its name was changed constantly during its life, Krykindje, Kirkindsche, Kirkidje, Kırkıca, Kırkıncı, Çirkince are some of the known names of Şirince. This name alludes to the village being known as the Ephesus of the mountains. The last one Çirkince was coined by the locals to deter visitors and stay isolated. In 1928 it was changed by the Governor of İzmir Kazım Dirik to Şirince as he thought it was a beautiful village and the name was doing it a disservice. While exact date is unknown the earliest found ruins date back to the between 9th to 13th centuries. Records show that the Turkish settlers arrived in the region around 16th century as the name of the village can be seen on the books of the Ankara General Directory of Land Registry and Cadastre in the book number 571 dated 1583. The earliest record of a tourist visiting Şirince dates to 1699, a man named Edmund D. Chisull. His journal is named “A Trip to Turkey and the Return to England”, in this journal Chisull states that he could only find a suitable place to stay in the village of Kirkince (Şirince) and that the whole village was Christian (Çolak, 2009).

Until 1980's the village economy largely relied on orchards and small animal herds, meaning the villagers were mostly working in agriculture. Locals regarded tourists mostly as visitors to their village as tourism was at a very low volume to become a major income boost. As more and more people started visiting the village the more traditional goods started to be produced just for the tourists. Houses slowly transitioned to small hotels and traditional shops became gift shops and wineries. But it can be said that rather than being a standalone tourism destination Şirince is a side destination for people visiting Ephesus and Kuşadası. People largely select the village for excursions rather than staying for more than one day. One of the main attractors of Şirince is its traditional Aegean cuisine that involves mostly herbs and many wild plants that are found in the region. Şirince largely kept its historical look which adds authenticity to the location that is lacking in other tourism destination. International visitors usually visit Şirince in Summer, and national visitors usually visit Şirince year-round but mostly on national and religious holidays in Spring and Fall (Semenderoğlu & Çakıcıoğlu, 2007).

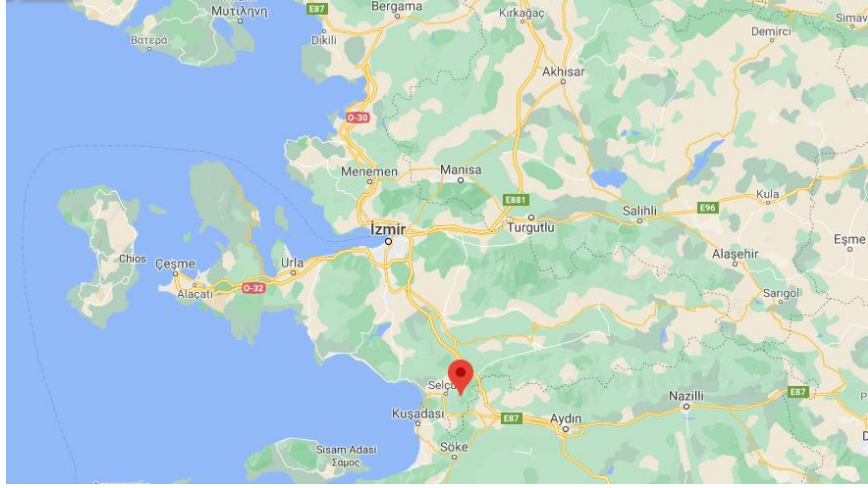


Figure 8 Position of the Şirince Village in the İzmir Region (Google, 2020)

3.1.5 Birgi

The village of Birgi was founded on the two opposing banks of the Sarıyer river between the Gediz and Küçük Menderes plains. It is first recorded in Roman records as “Dios” and later in the Byzantine records as “Hristopolis”. It is recorded as “Birge” in the chronicles of Evliya Çelebi. From these records it can be easily assumed that Birgi was settled by different people from different civilizations. During the reign of Ottomans Birgi became a cultural and economic centre for the region and was recognized as a town or a city rather than a village it is today. But about the end of the 17th century the city went into a state of decline, or even a catastrophe, with the social strife and wars damaging much of the Ottoman Empire, Birgi saw its fair share of conflict too. During 1900’s earthquakes and the Greek occupation harmed the town a great degree and it never truly recovered to that state again (Acar, Avcı, & Erat, 2017).

The village’s main attractor and its namesake comes from the İmam Birgivi Medrese, which is located southeast of the main square of the village. İmam Birgivi was the first Müderris (Headmaster) of the Madrasa (The historical name given to schools in Islamic countries (Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı , 2020). It can be easily said that the reason Birgi became a tourism destination is because many civilizations like Ancient Greece, Rome, Byzantium, Aydınoğulları, Osmanlı left their traces on the village. Its pleasant climate all year round and various, abundant natural resources also attract many people seeking an escape from the life of the city. Even though we can list many attractors for the village there are some negative aspects too. One of these aspects is the lack of hospitality services in and around the village. This only allows excursions to the village and makes it hard for tourists to stay for more than one night. Another negative aspect is that the village was discovered by the tourists only recently. While

this can also be a positive aspect (village being protected and still having an adventurous and fresh feeling), it also means that the village lacks tourism infrastructure and is not used to the increased human traffic from tourism. It also means that the destination may lack experienced tourism workforce, which can create a lack of quality when dealing with the guests. Destination still lacks proper marketing resulting in less-than-optimal income from tourism (especially on international scale) (Acar, Avcı, & Erat, 2017).

The village was declared an urban heritage site in 1997, this allows the village to retain its cultural heritage and unique looks. This created the opportunity to renovate the village without extra costs or having to look more “modern”, The Çekül Foundation, Birgi Municipality, Izmir Governor, Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University coordinated a renovation effort to repair and restore many of the buildings in the village and allow them to be used for tourism. This unique effort allowed the village to retain its feature while practicing tourism. Even though Birgi is considered mostly as a cultural or religious tourism destination, winter tourism, caravan and camp tourism potential are also there (Acar, Avcı, & Erat, 2017).



Figure 9 Position of the Birgi Village in İzmir (Google, 2020)

Chapter 4

Methodology and Findings

4.1 Methodology

4.1.1 Aim of the Research

This research will try to answer the question of whether tourism and specifically rural tourism is entirely beneficial to a destination or not. While the positive effects of tourism is evident, there are other outlying features that need explaining. The research tries to answer this by asking the questions directly to those who experience and practice tourism first hand. As a result an insight can be created for destinations, tourism professionals and government officials to better organise and benefit from tourism.

4.1.2 Method

The research will be mostly qualitative with some help from statistics from the governmental offices. The local traders, shop keeps, and producers will be contacted for their opinion on the situations in their towns or villages. Locals will be interviewed to determine the problems or the level of resentment towards the guests the local tourism brings. A literature review will be used as a guideline to help steer the research to being more reliable and relatable. Local government or people in charge will be consulted for their views on the state of exhaustion from the tourism and the advantages it brings.

Five questions were asked to the participants of the interviews:

- What do you think about the tourism potential of your village/town?
- Does tourism harm the ecological environment of your village/town?
- Does tourism harm the cultural environment of your village/town?
- Do you want more tourists to come to your village/town?
- Did tourism replaced agriculture in your village/town, or is it just supplementing it?

The questions are developed studying the previous articles published about the topic of Rural Tourism. Questions have been changed according to the circumstances of this paper and the change in geography and times. The A Phenomenological Explication of Guanxi in Rural Tourism Management: A Case Study of a Village in China by Chen, 2017 and Rural tourism and livelihood strategies in Romania by Iorio & Corsale, 2010 articles were referenced when picking the questions. Some of the questions were altered and taken from these articles, rest of the questions were chosen for their relevance in this research. While not explicitly used in the

question formulation and analysis process the model “A sustainable Rural Tourism-Based Traditional Village Revitalization model (RTTVR)”. The model puts an emphasis that for sustainable rural tourism revitalization three levels of integrated rural tourism must be used as a driving force. These three levels being material, social and spritual levels that contribute to a village’s revitalization using rural tourism, as it is the intention of this paper to shed a light on wether rural tourism is usable or not as a force for good for rural communities wether they are villages, hamlets or towns. As stated before, while it is not wholly used for analysis the model provided by Gao & Wu, (2017) which is given in this chapter of the research.

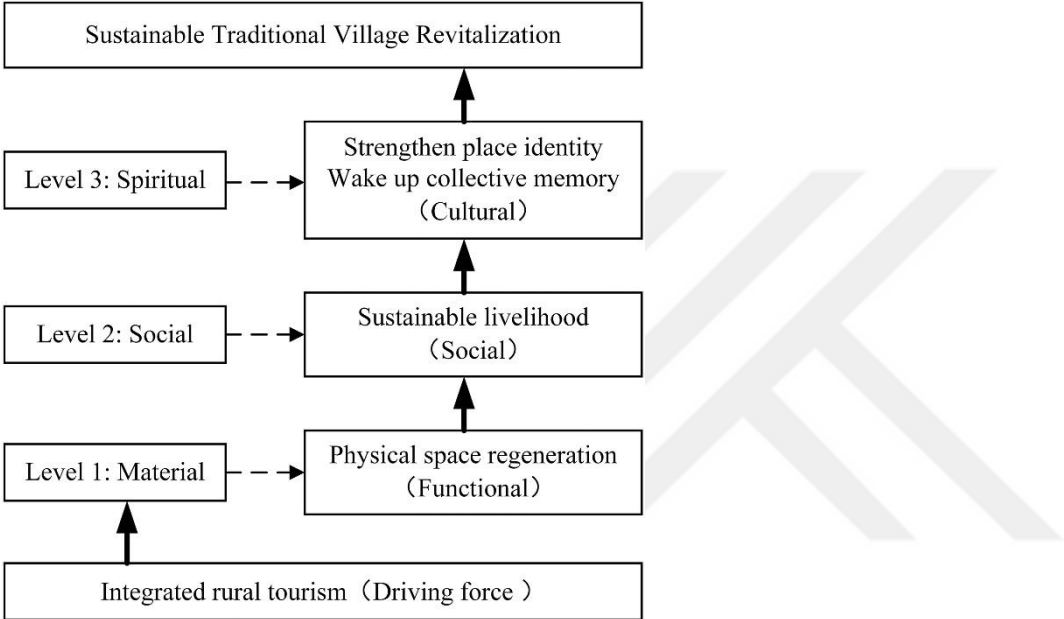


Figure 10 Sustainable Rural Tourism-Based Traditional Village Revitalization model (RTTVR) (Gao & Wu, 2017)

The answers were compiled in their respective titles in this thesis and supported by existing proof (scientific articles, newspapers, news agencies). The answers were analyzed according to their respective villages and towns, drawing a conclusion about the rural tourism structure existing in the destination and its effects. The questions were asked to at least one local, one shop owner, one tourism professional and one official residing in the village.

Content analysis was used to analyze the gathered data from the interviews. Content analysis is a method of analysis involving written, visual, and verbal communication. It is a method that involve deducting meanings from repeated words and sentences, analyzing them to uncover implied meanings. As a research method content analysis can be described as a systematic and objective method of describing a research. This allows the researcher an enhanced view on the data. It is possible to refine whole paragraphs to better laid out topics. Content analysis can be used to provide new knowledge, insights, and theories from old and new data alike. While

content analysis is usually criticized when used in quantitative research, in qualitative research -just like this paper- it is a tried and proven method of research. Content analysis provide researchers a great deal of flexibility in their research (Elo & Kyngas, 2008). In the context of this paper, it was chosen because the research relies on a great deal of literature review and interviews.

4.1.3 Sampling

Sixteen (16) people were interviewed, these people have been selected according to their relevancy to this research. Tourism professionals, locals and government officials were interviewed due their relevance in the research. The interviewed people were between ages of 28 to 50, this age bracket was chosen so that those interviewed would have experience in tourism in their destination enough that they can comment on it. People that were interviewed were picked according to the work of Li, Zhang, Zhang, & Abrahams (2019). As it is stated, this is to find out data from a govermental perspective, business perspective and a local perspective.

The biggest limitation on the research was the Covid-19 pandemic heavily limiting the number of people that could be interviewed. The prejudice of the interview candidates also limited the amount of people that could be reached. While small in number the interviews were directed upon three main groups of people that are affected by the rural tourism that are defined using Li, Zhang, Zhang, & Abrahams (2019) and Gao & Wu, (2017)'s researches.

The destinations were picked according to their tourism life stage's, rather than being a sample for the whole city, the destinations are treated according to their own unique circumstances. There exists other candidates for the research in the city of İzmir like the Bademler village or the Homeros Valley in Bornova, but the destinations represented in this paper represent the space and the scope of the research due to their current tourism life-cycle stages and either because they are destinations that are either already developed tourism destinations that are suffering from either overtourism or over dependancy on tourism, or destinations that are newly discovered that need investment and marketing to survive in the tourism market without losing their identity. As the paper focuses on the aspects of the rural tourism, the key destinations provides an insight on various different elements that can be found in destinations that are in different stages of tourism. The destinations represent a different geography of the city of İzmir, as no destination resides on the same region of the city.

4.2 Interview Results

4.2.1 Sığacık

During the interview with a resident who is a shop owner in Sığacık, Seferihisar, she pointed out the growing potential of Sığacık as a tourism destination. But also noted that Sığacık must strive to attract niche tourists rather than the mass tourist. As discussed on chapter 2.5 of this paper this can be attributed to the damage mass tourism can deal to a destination. Alternative tourism types like rural tourism or yacht tourism (which is very well established in Seferihisar and Sığacık) are better options for increased income and sustainability. She works in a handicraft shop and the shop's main clientele are usually tourists. As mentioned in Chapter 2 as the volume of the tourism increases, the local shops income increases too. But this increase must not bring industrialization as the destination's popularity increases, it becomes a thriving market for big tourism corporations. At this point the local competition either gets bought out or outcompeted. She states that the region still practices its traditional trades, and tourism is a boost to the local economy. There are 9 hotels with 903 rooms and 1898 beds, and two hot springs with 70 rooms and 140 beds as of 2019 (İzmir İl ve Turizm Müdürlüğü, 2021). From these numbers it can be seen that there are not yet big resort chains encroaching on the town but rather there are small or medium sized hotels, this can be deducted from the low number of total rooms in the region.

One refreshing view was a local shepherd who was grazing his sheep in the hills of the Teos ancient city. He expressed that before the city was unearthed fully and declared a protected site, the grounds were mostly grasslands and orchards owned by the local farmers. It is evident for the visitors too as the site is still neighboring orchards and small ranches that are raising chickens and turkeys. He was concerned that the small grazing land left to them after the tourism boom and the protected site declaration would not be enough in the future if the expansion would continue. He remarked that the local villagers are still working in agriculture, but their numbers are much lesser than before as a consequence of both economical strives and the lost land they were cultivating or grazing. This is a global phenomenon as the world population become more and more urbanized and require more land to grow. Though in Sığacık, Seferihisar's case the Teos ancient city also contributes to this too as it and its surrounding are considered as historical protected site. In the year of 2008 world's population was so urbanized that more than half of the world was living in cities leaving their villages and towns. It is projected that by 2030 more than %80 of the population will be living in urbanized areas. The most important change as evident in the interview one of the most important changes resulting

from this population shift is the loss of agricultural land whether for residential or commercial growth such as -in the context of this paper- building of new hotels or summerhouses. This puts a heavy pressure on the producers as they retreat from their farms and pastures. Most developing countries face the problem of agricultural self-sufficiency as they lose agricultural land while their economy develops (Tang & Di, 2019).

Even though he stated that the agricultural land was shrinking, he also stated that smaller animal husbandry such as rams and sheep continue in the region. He himself was shepherding a small herd of such animals during the interview. Similarly, he remarked that there are still people making a living by tending to their orchards, animal husbandry and farming.

In the interview with the owner of the Port Sığacık Hotel he stated that Sığacık and Seferihisar in general has good tourism potential. He also expressed that the current volume of tourism does not harm the environment, this statement can be backed by the fact that Seferihisar is still a cittaslow and usually participate in a low volume high quality type of tourism. But as he also says, “there is a cultural shift in Sığacık due to tourism”, which can be explained by the growing dependency on the tourism income. This was also apparent in the Şirince Village (3.1.4 Şirince) where tourism was the more dominant economical structure. Even so he expressed his desire for more tourism traffic to the town.

4.2.2 Barbaros Village

The owner of a tea house, talked about being a tourism destination without having access to any shorelines in a region where sun-sea-sand tourism is challenging and that the village is not getting very high tourist numbers compared to destinations that are relatively close like, Alaçatı or Mordoğan. Being very close to the mass tourism hot spot Çeşme also hurts the tourist traffic as it draws the crowds more consistently every summer season. This is where villages marketing comes into play as the village organizes a festival every year. This festival involves the locals making life sized scarecrows and placing them all around the village. Namely the “Oyuk Festivali” the festival involves parading the scarecrows through the streets of the village, cooking, and selling the local dishes, stalls to be built to sell villagers handicrafts. Two main reasons for this festival are to preserve the local culture through a popular annual festival, and to improve the village’s marketing, especially its tourism marketing. There are 350 scarecrows for every single person living in the village. There are various cultural events like documentaries explaining the history of the village, wedding ceremonies, and art exhibitions (Hürriyet, 2019).

When asked about the tourism's impact on the village's natural environment, answer was that the current flow of tourism was not impacting the environment aside from the occasional littering. He attributed this to the relatively low and seasonal nature of the village's tourism input. Much to the same regard, he also said that cultural erosion is not a problem in the village as most of the visitors only visit for a day and does not stay for a night. The village's most famous festival capitalizes on this norm as people only come to visit this festival and leave before the day dawns, not spending money on accommodation but spending it on local stalls and restaurants/cafés. This has the upside of people benefiting directly from the tourism sales but also has the downside of high seasonality, varying amount of income highly dependent on the quantity of visitors and relying on the people participating in the festival. Alluding to this he also said that they are expecting more and more visitors as years go by and this is the main objective of the festival. He said that village wants to be a tourism hotspot for both for the national and international tourists.

He explained that tourism and agriculture cannot exist in Barbaros without co-existing. This opinion seems to support the chapter 2

Tourism Product and Rural Tourism as it argues that rural tourism cannot continue without the participation of the locals and protection of the agricultural structure. He said that the tourism was only a side income for most of the people living in the village, as their income comes mostly from agricultural pursuits (fields, orchards, and animal husbandry). There are no big, multi hundreds of rooms hotels in the vicinity but rather small inns and hotels owned mostly by the local people in Barbaros village.

The assistant to the local reeve, pointed out the massive potential the village has especially with its unique culture and festival. He pointed out that the village mostly receives national tourists. Mr. Coşkun stated that organized tours have been coming to the village as of late and the tourism traffic has been on the rise consistently for years.

4.2.3 Şirince Village

In an interview with the owner of the Nikbin Konak in Şirince Village, she responded that mass tourism was harming the village as its capacity cannot handle the volume of visitor's mass tourism brings. She stated that the local population now mostly depend on tourism income as it replaced or integrated every aspect of the local economy, though small-scale orchards, animal husbandry and vineyards still exist. While most of the wine are imported from other cities or factories, there are still those that produce wine from local grapes. She remarks that rather than

having more and more tourists visiting the village it is better to have tourists that are participating in niche tourism types. Şirince hosted 1.5 million tourists in 2018, this is a very high number for a village of 500 people (Anadolu Ajansı, 2018). It is also important to have a pull factor for the international tourists. She worries that Şirince is becoming just another tourism destination that is interchangeable with one another. Because Şirince is still considered a historical and cultural protected site by the government its nature and cultural landscape is largely intact and protected. The agricultural life still continues to some extent. She stated that tourism damages and erodes the village culture of the local people, this is due to the rapid commercialization of the village. Best example she gave was the industrialization of the wine industry of the village, most wine is now being imported from the neighboring cities or from major brands with different labels. There are people that still depend on agriculture and these people are not in the tourism business. She remarked that olive oil, grapes and various fruit trees are still some of the major income sources for some of the locals.

Covid-19 crisis affected Şirince a bit different than the other tourism hotspots, as it became a sanctuary for those trying to escape the lockdown restrictions of the cities. As of 26 December 2020, all 45 lodgings with all their 550 beds have been booked. This is an unexpected by-product of the lockdowns and supportive of the fact that where mass tourism failed, rural tourism prevailed in an arguably extreme situation. This can be attributed to the more isolated and private nature of the rural tourism as the tourist does not have to share the facility (or even the destination for that matter) with several hundreds of people (Cumhuriyet, 2020).

The current reeve of Şirince, stated that while economically the village prospers from tourism, most people shifted towards tourism related activities - mostly accommodation – but there are people still retaining their old lifestyles practicing agriculture. He also remarked that there is a cultural degradation due to tourism, and the most common problem is the littering of the village.

In an interview given to the DHA (Doğan News Agency), one of the shop owners in Şirince Uğur Yücel told the interviewers that “we are receiving more and more visitors, before the covid-19 crisis there weren’t even room to walk freely. We hope that this season will be better in terms of tourist numbers” (Tahçıl, 2020). In 2019 the mayor of Selçuk stated that for Selçuk to become a brand the village of Şirince must become a brand first (İzgazete, 2019). This statement alone supports the fact that Şirince has an immense tourism potential in the region and can uplift the surrounding economy. The president of the Şirince Derivation Foundation (Şirince Türetim Derneği) Mr. Mehmet Kuzu expressed his desire to protect and preserve the village while growing the tourist numbers and the tourism related businesses (İzgazete, 2019).

This also reflect the views of the as she stated that preservation efforts must be made for the village.

Owner of the Mistik Konak told that Şirince still holds much potential for the future and deserves to be a more prominent tourism destination in the region. She stated that “Şirince will become a key destination in the post Covid world”. Even without more tourism traffic she thinks that the tourism volume of the village is currently optimal and does not need any change. Even though she has a more positive outlook she observes that the tourists that visit the village actively damage its natural environment and cause significant cultural changes on the local populace. She also stated that the tourism has become the main income of the village, long replacing any kind of agricultural practice.

4.2.4 Birgi Village

Owner of the Rukim Hotel in Birgi village stated that the history of the village contributes a lot to its tourism potential. Birgi village having been founded around 1100's is a viable destination for historical/cultural tourism. The village has extensive rural land which makes it a prime destination for rural tourism. He pointed out that the village is visited by not only by the national tourists, but also the international tourists. The hotel Rukim mostly hosts backpacker for one to three nights or weekend excursions. He noted that the village must be a part of an existing destination. He believes that the village can host more tourists (especially the international mass tourists) if investment and marketing be made. The village is usually frequented by tourists coming from the city centre (İzmir) and not from other cities or countries. He also mentioned a lack of investors in the village both governmental and private. To increase the volume of tourists to the village, the necessary infrastructure investments have to made by the tourism agencies, chain hotels, governmental bodies and auxiliary industries like food and travel corporations. He observed that presence of tourism helped preserve the ecological and the cultural environment of the village due to environment being the prime marketing point and attraction of the village. The locals and the officials are taking extra care not to damage the natural and the cultural environments. This in the words of the owner of the hotel “made the village a brand” which helps market the village.

He pointed out that the village is not an isolated village, and it is part of the general society, so the cultural changes of tourism were not very notable as the population of the village was already changing by the modern times just like any other place on the world. It can be said that the village is not yet a prime tourism destination, but it is still connected to the town of Ödemiş.

He also said that currently tourism is only a supplement to the usual trade and agriculture of the village, but this may change in the future as tourism develops in the region receiving more and more investment.

A local of the Birgi village, expressed that there are not many international tourists, visitors are usually national. She observed that visitors tend to be women excursionists, and not spending the night in the village. She noted that people are mostly visiting for the cultural qualities of the village and its gastronomy, as agriculture is still the dominant economical force in the village (and the surrounding villages) the produce and the food still feels fresh and high quality according to Mrs. Günay. Just like Mr. Çakır, Mrs. Günay believes that further marketing of the village is necessary for tourism development as she also believes that the village can benefit from more tourism as it stimulates the local economy. The current volume of tourists are satisfactory but increased numbers would be also welcome by the locals. Mrs. Günay stated that the tourists are not much of a danger for the nature as they do no more than the usual litter which is manageable at its current volume. She also stated that the culture has not been changed by the presence of tourism. Mrs. Günay expressed that tourism has not replaced agricultural production of the village, rather it gave women of the village an opportunity to participate in economic pursuits and have jobs as most of the tourism establishments and their auxiliary businesses are either owned or worked by women in the village. This statement is supported by the chapter 2

Tourism Product and Rural Tourism where it is stated that rural tourism contributes to the economic freedom of the women in the rural areas.

4.2.5 Foça

The receptionist of the Foçamor Hotel, stated that the tourism in the area is not really efficient and need a greater volume. She stated that “There is potential, but tourists are not coming at a high volume for us to generate any real income”. She expressed that she would rather have more tourists so that there is a greater flow of income to the region rather than Foça being a niche tourism destination. She claims that the tourists who visit the location actively litter the town and that it is becoming a problem. But when asked about the cultural effects she said that the tourists don’t really affect the local culture and they just pass by. In the interview she claimed that tourism has now become the main source of income in the region overshadowing fishing and agriculture.

A shop owner in the town, stated that the town only has potential for domestic tourism not international tourism, “the town has a more domestic appeal for tourism rather than an international one” he told during the interview. When asked about the volume of tourists he responded, “it is optimal, not too much nor too little that it is hard to get by”. He said that the tourists who visit the town damage its nature by littering though the cultural environment is untouched and preserved. He expressed that the tourism incomes can make up as much as %90 of the town’s income, but when the winter comes most of the income is gained through fishing and local trade.



5. Conclusion

5.1 Cultural Effect

As stated in previous chapters before, tourism if not checked or controlled entirely by tourism firms, can overwhelm the local culture, and transform it to be a part of the profit only. If examined on a location-on-location basis from the gathered data, the town of Foça is seemingly protected by the Cittaslow program. Absence of major hotel chains in the centre of the town also helps the preservation effort, protecting the lifestyles of the locals. Fishing is still the major industry in the location keeping that tradition both alive and profitable.

The town of Seferihisar and its tourism hub Sığacık on the other hand, while still protected by the Cittaslow program is much more reliant on tourism. According to the interviews, the local people are participating in the tourism business and are not being pushed out from the economy, but they are still wary of the mass tourism route the companies in the town seem to be taking with bigger hotels and an expansionist policy. Land clearances given for archaeological and tourism reasons have pushed out the agricultural producer to a degree out of the town.

Barbaros village blended the local culture with tourism expertly, using tourism as a means to promote the local culture to visitors while leaving it unspoiled, having only local owned businesses exist in the village helps the income stay in the village rather than benefiting tourism corporations. In turn most of the activities and the responsibility regarding both tourism and preservation depend on the villagers.

From an observation point Şirince village is heavily commercialized. While there are still ancestral vineyards and orchards most of the population is working in tourism one way or another. Local wine-making industry (which the destination is famous for) is largely industrialized and imported from other cities. There are only a few wine cellars that produce wine from local grown grapes. The churches in the village have seen restoration efforts but they remain in a bad state.

Birgi village still retains its unique architecture style and historical buildings in the village are restored in a proper way. The hotels and tourism establishments in the village are either locally owned or they are blended in with the local culture. Tourism traffic is not overwhelming, just enough to let the local businesses profit. From the gathered data from the village there are organized tours and international tourists in the village albeit not too much. The local preservation efforts kept the village's culture intact and strong.

5.2 Economical Effect

In the town of Foça tourism is still a side-industry when compared to agricultural and industrial pursuits. Most of the tourism centered around summerhouses and weekend visitors. While there are tourists that visit the town for longer periods of time most of the tourism relies on local visitors and backpackers.

The town of Seferihisar and its tourism hub Sığacık is a considerable tourism hotspot for the city of İzmir. Town has a considerable yacht tourism economy and the presence of cultural sites like Teos ruins, attract tourists both national and international visitors. There are a small number of all-inclusive hotels in the region, currently not encroaching in the town area but as learned from the interview questions, these hotels and the cultural preservation efforts has a push back effect for the agricultural producers. Local shops are somewhat reliant on the tourism, while they are still benefiting from the day-to-day life in the town, tourism is much more profitable for local establishments, especially the restaurants.

Barbaros village uses tourism as an added income source, the village's main economy relies on agriculture and day-to-day commerce. There are no high-capacity all-inclusive hotels nearby and most of the accommodation facilities are owned by the local population. Shops and restaurants in the village are mostly optimized for the tourism use, however they are not existing solely for the tourism but also for the daily lives of the villagers. It can be easily said that the economy mostly benefits the villagers in the Barbaros village.

Şirince village, economically relies mostly on tourism traffic, however there are still villagers that are practicing agriculture and local trades. Young population are either working in the nearby town of Selçuk or they are working in tourism industry. This creates a positive side as most tourism establishments and shops are owned by the local population (though it was stated by the interview participants that there are people who are not native to the village). But on the other side the village is mostly reliant on tourism.

In the Birgi village cultural preservation efforts have been largely successful and the local lifestyle and traditions are largely kept intact. Though it can be said that this village does not receive the same volumes of visitors when compared to other destinations in this paper. There are hotels and inns in and around the village, but they are either renovated buildings that already exist in the village or buildings that are not encroaching on the village premises. The old graveyard and the accompanying Medrese building is preserved and renovated without any issues.

5.3 Environmental Effect

In the town of Foça environmental issues are usually those stemming from fishing and nearby industrial sites (like Aliğa). Nearby petrol tankers and the refining plant can cause some spillages from time to time. One example would be the spillage of raw petrol to the sea on 31 August 2018 that affected the local wildlife and most importantly the marine life (İstikbal, 2018). Most notably any change in the marine ecosystem affects the fragile balance for the monk seals and the dolphins. Dolphins in this case is impacted by the industrial fishers who are either depleting the local fish sources that are used by both the local small-time fishers and the dolphins who frequent the area. Dolphins are also killed or injured by the fishing trawlers or their nets, causing a population decline on an already endangered species (Katisöz, 2013). Largely the landscape of Foça is intact as the industrial plants are far away from the town, and the hotels in the area are usually smaller clubs and not big-time resort hotels.

The town of Seferihisar is a very popular tourism hotspot in the city of İzmir, but the volume of tourism threatens the local environment due to littering by the tourists. Most importantly the due to the yachts in the town, marine pollution is high. This can be due to the fuel spillages from the boats or the simple littering by the passengers. There are not many large hotels or resorts in the area, which is a positive, most of the hotels are small scale and tend to be “greener” due to citta slow regulations and a desire to blend in with the rest of the town.

Barbaros village, due to the lower amounts of tourism it receives when compared to the rest of the destinations on this paper, does not have a pollution problem when it comes to tourism. There is a small amount of littering due to the festival but otherwise the local pollution cannot be attributed to tourism.

Şirince village’s littering problem can be attributed to the vast amounts of tourist traffic it receives. Due to the sheer amount of people that visits the village daily, large amounts of litter are created. There are no large sized hotels in or around the village which keeps it relatively cleaner and does not encroach on the nature. Most of the attractions are either in the village or is the nature itself so it does not endanger the ecosystem.

The Birgi village reports mild amounts of littering from the tourists, especially in the high season. As it does not receive very high amounts of tourism all year most of the littering is manageable. There are no large sized hotels in the area, most of the hotels and inns are owned by the local population. The surrounding environment kept mostly intact as the tourists visit for the natural environment rather than any manufactured attractions.

5.4 Implications for the Industry

From the gathered literature and the interviews conducted it is easy to say that rural tourism model can be a saving grace for destinations that are heavily invested in tourism. These destinations can save their cultural and environmental presence with rural tourism practices. Tourism industry at large can benefit from this trend in destinations where the rural nature and culture is at the forefront. Because the traditional tourism practice, “mass tourism” tend to damage and shorten the life of the destination. Alternative tourism types and rural tourism especially, can lengthen the life-span of a destination by alleviating cultural and environmental issues.

The economical benefits of specialised tourism is referred in the literature, the destination grows and prosper with the tourism establishments when they don't dominate the destination. As Sharpley (2002) stated, rural tourism allows employment opportunities for the locals, benefiting both the destination and the tourism industry. Rural tourism also creates opportunities for destinations that are far away from established tourism centres and destinations like the Barbaros village that is mentioned in this research, which is far away from water sources. These destinations can be utilized and provide the industry and tourists with more destination choices. These destinations can serve a niche tourist type and provide healthier, non-season dependant destinations. A wider market will help to serve alleviate the pressure on destinations like Çeşme – İzmir.

Rural tourism can save destinations like Şirince Village which is threatened by over-tourism. It can provide a more stable and less damaging tourism option for the village, and allow the income to be retained by the local populace allowing them to continue to live in the village, thus allowing the destination to persist for longer, allowing the industry to exist on the location longer.

5.5 Future Research and Recommendations

Despite the limitations of this research, the destinations were able to project reliable results after the interviews and the relevant literature review. As stated rural tourism is largely a positive force when compared to conventional tourism. As with everything nothing is clear cut or black and white. When interviewed, most of the people involved in tourism stated that niche forms of tourism trumps over the mass tourism in terms of income and its effect on local environment.

For future research, the number of interviews and the number of destinations can be increased to broaden its scope. The other cities of the Aegean region can be investigated to find similar

or different results that may or may not support the arguments created in this paper. Not just in Turkey, but the Greek islands and the cities on the Aegean shore (Thessaloniki e.g.) must be investigated.

From the information gathered from this paper it is safe to say that some destinations like Şirince village currently rely on mass tourism and may be difficult to change its style. Plus, from the data gathered from the locals and the state officials the village mostly does not want it to change. While there are tourism professionals and store owners in the village that desire a more niche approach to the region's tourism. For destinations like Birgi village and Barbaros village rural tourism approach seems to be more favored by the interviewed people and the literature mostly backs their views.

Alternative forms of tourism, mainly the rural tourism perspective can be the sustainable and profitable alternative for destinations with high tourism traffic, reducing pollution and allowing the income to be retained by those that work it rather than it being siphoned to big corporations.

While the literature is rather extensive about rural and alternative tourism, this research aims to be specific to a region and its properties. Most works of literature are about general rural tourism and alternative tourism fields, but in the case of rural destinations, every destination has specific problems and properties that must be researched particularly. As an example while Birgi Village and Barbaros village that have been mentioned in this research are similar, but their properties and problems that must be inspected individually.

It must be highlighted that rural tourism can be a ecological saving grace in an era where even the "green industry" of tourism has a huge carbon footprint. Alternative tourism types and especially rural tourism's ecological impact must be researched so that the academia can lead the change of the tourism industry towards a greener and more profitable way.

As a final recommendation, academia needs to visit the destinations they research to better understand and provide guidance for these destinations and tourism industry as a whole.

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