

THE PERCEIVED IMPACTS OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AT CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES-MARDIN SAMPLE

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, the potential relationship between tourism, conservation, and planning within the sustainability discourse is examined. The study is focused on identifying the capacity issues facing the Site and assessing the threat posed by these issues (now or in the future) to the Site's Key Values. The Key Values are identified through an analysis of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the Site and then graded as to whether they were critical, important or contributory in terms of their importance to the Site. Development of the study involved a staged process of survey, analysis and assessment which included public consultation. The aim of this paper is to present a practical method for urban sustainability policy analysis, with a particular view to finding a balance between the need for sustainable urban development (with a view to environmental and cultural goods) facing tourism development and visitors.

INTRODUCTION

The demand for natural and cultural sites has been increasing due to reasons such as the increase in world's population, the change in consumer's pleasures and preferences who contribute to foreign and domestic tourism, the increase in the demands of people who have more leisure time and higher disposable income regarding foreign and domestic tourism, compared to the past and etc. Today, the fact that the branches of the international tourism market, which are expanding at the highest speed, are related to natural and cultural tourism corroborates this assumption. Tourism industry is in interaction with natural systems from local to global scale. On one hand it assumes the responsibility of maintaining the environmental quality, on the other hand it, as an ever-growing industry, has the potential of overconsumption of resources and inevitably destroying the natural environment (Goodall and Stabler, 1997).

Deterioration of the qualities of cultural sources, along with the uncontrolled development, resulted in a decrease in demand for tourism (Saveriades, 2000). In this respect, a plenty of examples can be given like Venice, which has lost its attraction because of huge demand and turned out to be a crowded city.

Capacity, in its dictionary meaning, is "a certain amount that something can contain"; carrying is "enduring, bearing". Thus, carrying capacity can be defined as the amount to be born or the amount to be tolerated. World Tourism Organization defined carrying capacity as "the number of tourists that can be hosted in an area" (Simon et al. 2004). World Tourism Organization stated in 1992 that carrying capacity is fundamental for the protection of environment and a sustainable development.

The notion of carrying capacity which is regarded as a must in tourism planning and management is focused on the possible benefits it will provide for the touristic area. This concept should be seen not as a process of problem solving, but as a proactive, protective and a forward-looking approach, which can always be adapted to the phases of development of tourism (tourism life span). Growth-management strategies (Williams & Gill, 1994) and consideration for the carrying capacity of the natural and sociocultural environment (Getz, 1983; Gunn, 1994) have led to the demand for indicators that can monitor the sustainability of the natural and socio-cultural environment as the increasing awareness of the negative impacts of tourism (O'Grady, 1990) and the associated demand for impact-assessment studies (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006).

Because of the effects that can show up in long-term, preventing the deterioration of environment and reducing the risks are more beneficial than trying to solve the problems after they occur. In this regard, carrying capacity and life-cycles of environmental sources should be considered as a whole in order that tourism can display a sustainable development. If sustainable tourism policies and measures are not established early on to manage the possible negative effects of tourism, initial tourism development can become a political and marketing gimmick that opens the door to unwelcome mass tourism (Bookbinder et al. 1998; Mowforth & Munt, 1998).

The activity of tourism forms a change between financial values and natural - historical values. So, economically underdeveloped countries or regions gain income by offering their natural and historical values. They expand and enrich their economic production, working areas and varieties (Avcıkurt, 2003). For the prevention or reduction of negative effects of tourism activities ranging from the demand of dense housing on cultural and ecological asset to the destruction of ecological environments, tourism policies come to the fore as an important means of planning and implementation for not only regional development but also conserving and sustaining cultural heritage in regions with cultural heritage. At this point, in the new world order where priorities and requirements are changing at a great speed, the planning for the assessment of cultural heritage of Turkey along with tourism sector in terms of regional development and also sustainability principle is of utmost importance. The current potential should be carefully evaluated.

There are two main benefits of the tourism development plans which are to be implemented on historical sites. The first one is the emphasis on historical settlement or the originality of the site; the second one is the canalizing of the unique atmosphere of these sites to larger areas and masses, and in this way increasing the factors that will potentially help the development of tourism. It is important that the planning should be both correcting the existing problems and preventing the negative effects that may arise in historical and cultural environment (Ozguven, 1994).

The environmental capacity concept implies that if a city is pushed beyond certain limits, there is a risk of destroying the very things that are valued and worthy of conservation (ARUP, 1993). This also reflects the physical nature of the place, the significances of the place, the inherent sensitivity of the place (based on an understanding of its nature and associated values) and its sensitivity to the particular types of change or development (Atkins, 2006). It also gives the chance to highlight the development plan preparation process while the tensions between the perceived need for continued economic and physical growth and the desire to maintain the existing texture and character of the city facing tourism development.

CULTURAL HERITAGE, CONSERVATION AND TOURISM POLICIES

In Athens Clause dated to 1933, it is stated that architectural heritages are common values of mankind. Yet, this concept became widespread and was institutionalized after 1970s. Cultural heritage, which was stressed to be the common property of all nations in 1975, the year of Europe Architectural Heritage, became an emphasized concept whose problems the countries tried to bring a solution to (Zeren, 1989; Akin 1988). Much as the point of departure in the Report of Our Common Future, which is also known as the Bruntland Report, issued by United Nations Committee on Environment and Development in 1987, were natural assets such as air, water, soil and their contamination, it later included artificial environment which is the other constituent of environment. In this context, the problem of conservation of historical-cultural values has been carried to international domain through the discourse of "common heritage" (or common heritage of mankind). The policies for the conservation of historical-cultural heritage which were formerly used in order to establish local or national identities and the sense of common history are now considered in accordance with the discourse of globalization as a global responsibility of conserving "the common heritage of mankind" or "global properties". Feilden and Jokiletho (1998) make a

broad definition of cultural heritage as “*all the signs that document all of the activities and successes of mankind in the course of history*”.

Today, development levels of nations are measured by a healthy environment, cities which established their cultural identities, new development areas in accordance with these environment and cities around. Cities respecting the human and building bridges between past-present-future are signs of a conscious continuity. It is accepted that conserving the historical cities is also an effective means of social development. Conservation brings a new economic dynamism to the city. In our day, many societies employ conservation as a strategy of social development. Historical and cultural environments enliven local economies when attended properly; they can open new working areas and branches, and increase tax incomes. However, the cities, which are suddenly exposed to the development of tourism, expand and change quickly in an unhealthy way; therefore they cannot achieve this. These cities lose their identities and their readability in time and space; they evolve into undefined spaces in time.

Cultural heritage tourism and sustainable development is on the agenda of WTO since the beginning of 1970s. The subject of 1999 World Tourism Day was “*Tourism: the conservation of world heritage for the new millennium*”. In the same year, a memorandum on “Tourism and the conservation of cultural heritage” was issued jointly by UNESCO, Council of Europe and Organization of World Heritage Cities in Khiva-Uzbekistan. According to many critics (e.g. Ritzer, 1999; Urry, 2001) culture has now become an important element of tourism system or “culture tourism”. Culture tourism is also frequently mentioned as one of the largest and the most quickly developing branches of global tourism (e.g. WTO, 2004). It has the potential of creating more demand for conserving buildings including less valued monuments and overlooked traditional environments. It can also increase an appreciation for the historical environment, contributing to greater local and cross-cultural understanding.

A very important and visible part of heritage consists of the built environment, the context of urban living. Many countries have pursued conservation policies, as conserving the past offers a source for cultural identity and a basis of reference for the future. Conservation policy has usually been approached in an eclectic way focusing on the unique and outstanding. Recent attitudes towards conservation bring forward the issue of protecting more and more aspects of heritage. Yet the point to be paid attention is that mass tourism is not a phenomenon to be encountered only in holiday resorts on shores. It is being more and more difficult to conserve the cultural heritage areas of these holiday resorts, to provide a maximum access and to balance the use of visitors’ experiences. The number of tourists in some of the historical cultural heritages of the world, especially in World Heritage Sites and historical cities, is becoming a source of concern (Smith, 2003).

MARDIN -AS A CULTURAL HERITAGE SITE

The city of Mardin, located on the Tigris side of Southeastern Anatolia has become one of the most attractive cities of Turkey with its natural beauties, cultural heritage and socio-cultural elements. It is surrounded by Syria on the south, by Şırnak ve Siirt on the east, by Diyarbakır and Batman on the north, and by Şanlıurfa on the west. It has a settled history dating back to B.C.8000.

According to the address-based population data of 2009, the population of Mardin is 759, 697. The population of the central district is 81, 269. When evaluated in terms of the population sizes of the cities in Southeastern Anatolian region, Mardin ranks the fourth by 10% after Gaziantep, Diyarbakır and Şanlıurfa. According to the results of TÜİK of the year 2009, Mardin loses its population by emigration. Agriculture is still the primary sector of economy. Husbandry, besides vegetative production, is an important work branch and one of the main sources of living of its residents (Aydın, 2008). Although it falls behind the country averages in terms of industrial development, Mardin Cement Plant, KIDAŞ Spinning Factory, Southeastern Anatolian Phosphate Plant, Feed Factory, Pipe and Lime Factory are the industrial organizations established in the leadership of Special Provincial Administration, Development Bank and Public Economic Organizations which provide added-value to the city (Anonymous,2008).

The city, which was settled after B.C. 4500 is an important open-air museum hosting a lot of works from Subaris, Sumerians, Akadians, Babylonians, Mitanis, Assyrians, Persians, Byzantines, Arabs, Seljuks, Artuks and Ottomans

(Anonymous,2008). Because of the fact that it is located between the Anatolian and Middle East cultures and on the important trade routes of Eurasia, Mardin has a cosmopolitan structure with different geographies, religions, languages and cultures. The city is a unique one completely declared as cultural heritage after Venice and Jerusalem which, with their architectural, ethnographic, archaeological, historical and visual assets, gives the impression that time is suspended there.

Various examples of the multifunction buildings built in Anatolia in accordance with the structure program developed by the Great Seljuk Empire, mostly date back to the era of Artuquids, and then Akkoyunlus bring to this rich heritage a new dimension (Anonymous,2008). When all of the works are examined, starting from the Ulu Mosque and around, it is difficult to detect the boundaries of the annexes built in each period, because the rooted tradition of stone architecture has given rise to a homogeneous landscape in the city. All these cultural accumulation and traditional life style have formed the city culture and its structural environment, and determined cultural variety, topography and the texture of the city.

The era whose impact is most strongly sensed is the Middle-Age. When the strongly intertwined textures in Anatolian cities consisting of districts and having religious artifacts at their centers are taken as a whole, it becomes obvious that the works of the Middle-Ages still dominate the landscape even today.

Immovable culture assets, 353 of which at the city center and 293 in towns and villages, belonging to the civilizations above mentioned are registered by the Ministry of Culture (Anonymous, 2008). Mardin, a candidate for the list of cities having the universal values accepted on the Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (UNESCO, 1972), hosts inimitable religious and traditional examples of stone architecture which occurred as a result of natural structure and human interaction. Having the outlook of a city from middle-ages, it is defined as “*a cultural landscape site*” with the criteria below defined by WHC:

ii) displaying an important alternation of human values over span of time or in a cultural region of the world, on developments in technology or architecture, city-planning, landscape design or monumental arts.

iii) hosting a unique or distinct cultural tradition or civilization which is living or which has disappeared.

iv) being a distinct example of a certain type of building, technological or archeological example or landscape which shows different stages in human history.

In order for Mardin to enter UNESCO’s list of World Culture Heritage, there has been a struggle since the beginning of 1980s. For this purpose, an application was made to UNESCO in 1981, yet due to terrorism in the area this application was withdrawn. With the alleviation of security concerns, actions were retaken in 1998. In this respect, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism presented to UNESCO a list of 18 new items, the first one being Mardin. However, the officials withdrew the candidacy of Mardin from World Heritage List seeing that Mardin’s file lacked important documents (Anonymous,2008).

One of the most important criteria of being a “world city” or “sustainable city”, in today’s saying, is developing the cities by conserving their natural, historical and cultural identities. When the classification of Fagence (2003) on cultural tourism is taken into account, it is possible to determine that the potential of cultural tourism in Mardin consists of institutionalized culture (historical places), local people, popular culture (cuisine, handicrafts, traditions, and customs), and ethnic symbols (religion, dressing, ornaments)

In this sense, far-reaching projects of development and conservation of cultural heritage should be designed in order to improve tourism in Mardin. When geographical, cultural and economic properties of the region are considered, it becomes clear that such a project is important and necessary. It is obvious that Southeastern Anatolia, where Mardin is located, is socio-economically backward relative to the other regions. Nature and climate, folklore, civilization and culture, which are the basic constituents of tourism, comprise the raw material of his industry. In this context it can be said that Mardin, having the opportunity of regional economic development with its current tourism potential and geographical location, can also make progress in terms of tourism.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The type of the study is descriptive.

Observation technique used in the study is questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of 31 questions and carried out with 330 people, but the present paper is based on the answers of the visitors to the general information, their visit on the day, arriving there, the places they visited or planned to visit, quality of the Mardin historic centre, opinions to make Mardin more attractive for visitors to estimate an indication on their views, their opinions and the calculations were adjusted to provide an accurate percentage.

Questionnaire forms have been prepared through other researches made for the region or other similar regions, vocational experience, field survey and in situ observation. Some of the findings have been composed by using only the results of the questionnaire while some of them are based on questionnaire and observation.

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 15.0) was used for the analysis of data collected.

Environmental Capacity Study Model, conceived by ARUP in 1993 and developed by Atkins in 2006, is one of the significant methods inspiring our work. The fact that the regional and country conditions are different prevented us from using the model as it is, yet inspired by it, we produced an original "Environmental Capacity Study" approach.

The capacity of the Site to accommodate visitors is discussed in order to come up with a practical method for the analysis of city sustainability policy, with a particular emphasis on providing a balance between the need for sustainable city development and the policy.

Within the scope of the study, it is important to establish an understanding of the characteristics of historical city and the planning issues. The methodology is designed in such a way as to guide the management of the region and mark a range of pressures and demands facing the region because of its location at a strategic point. Among these issues are traffic and transport problems, the need for economic and social regeneration and the maintenance of a high quality of life for residents.

Key values have been identified depending upon the definition of the City's Outstanding Universal Values. Key values have been graded as critical, important or contributory, in accordance with their importance for the protected area. The relative threat that key values pose to a specific value level categorization has been developed as **Major Threat**, **Moderate Threat**, **Minor Threat**, **No Threat**.

Table 1: The Relationship between the Values and Threats

	Critical Value	Important Value	Contributory Value
Major Threat	Primary Concern	Primary or Significant Concern	Significant or Minor Concern
Moderate Threat	Primary or Significant Concern	Significant Concern	Minor Concern
Minor Threat	Minor Concern	Minor Concern	No Concern
No Threat	No Concern	No Concern	No Concern

Source: Saltaire World Heritage Site- Environmental Capacity Study,2006

FINDINGS

Visitors come to the city mostly to see the historical artifacts and thus contribute to the economy. The city offers a wide range of places to visit (madrasas, monasteries and churches, historical houses etc.). In a visitor's survey, 61% of the visitors stated that they would visit local bazaar and shops, 66% churches and monasteries, 58% residential areas exemplifying traditional architecture (Table 2). It appears that local bazaar and churches receive most of the demand. Therefore, it is possible to claim that these places are key values for the visitors.

When the expenditure incurred by the visitors is evaluated, which is a key factor in economic influence of the visitors, it was found that more than 30% of the visitors spend or plan to spend more than 200TL, 10% 151-200 TL, 14% 101-150 TL (Table 2); and that the visitors mostly prefer spending on souvenirs and silver jewelry. It was also determined that average expenditure of the visitors contributes to the souvenir shops.

An important problem relating to the analysis of visitors is the lack of information on total number of visitors. The number of one-day visitors limits the estimations on the issue. Since a fee is not paid while entering the city, it currently seems impossible to estimate the total number of visitors. The city is a visiting place for a lot of schools at the same time. The subjects generally studied are archeology, history, and architecture and art history. Student groups cannot be officially included in the total number of visitors.

The visitors are inseparable factors for the sustainability of historical cities. However, the balance between the residents and visitors is of vital importance. These relations reveal potential conflicts and problems.

Table 2: Visitors' opinions and demands

		%			%
The Places planned to be visited	local bazaar and shops		Facilities to be improved	improved toilet facilities	53
	churches and monasteries			inadequacy in restaurants or similar sectors of service	42
	residential areas exemplifying traditional architecture			inadequate accommodation facilities	44
Spending Amount	50 TL (-25 €)		Overall quality of the visitor experience* *total	Deficiency in parking lots	40
	51-100 TL (-25 -50 €)			Very good and good	77
	101-150 TL (-50-75 €)			Poor and very poor	1
	151-200 TL (-75 -100 €)		Demand for visit again	Yes	83
	More than 200 TL (-100€)			No	6

Potential Effects and Capacity Problems

Texture and Character: Tourists' overuse of the sources may lead to overcrowding, traffic jam, garbage problem and noise. Cultural assets are generally underestimated and misused by the young, so, abrasion on the stairs of places due to overuse, corruption on coating may be seen. Yet, this is not an insurmountable situation; being part of the daily cycle of city life, pavements and stairs can be assessed by medium-term solutions and renovated by appropriate materials. That is why, visitors pose *No Threat* to the Texture of the Site (A Critical Value) and there is *No Concern* regarding this issue and no necessity to monitor capacity.

The number of the visitors and their behaviors can influence the character of site, though. Large groups of tourists can affect the way people experience the place and can also transform the character of the city from a residential/trade region to a visitor attraction. Now, visitors do not have outstanding impact on the dominant residential character of the site. But, with the increase in the number of visitors, who want to spend more time in traditional housing zones or visit these places, this situation will turn out to be a threat in the coming years. So, it is possible to propound that visitors pose moderate threat to the character of the city. A follow-up is not yet required, but if a dramatic increase in the number of tourists and a decrease in the number of local residents are seen this factor should be re-evaluated.

Conflict between the Visitors and Residents

There are potential conflicts, such as overcrowding, noise, parking problem, between the visitors contributing to the long-term conservation and sustainability of the city, and residents and other users (including workers and business owners).

It is possible to say the impact of visitor activity on residents and other users is not currently a major problem right now, which is demonstrated in a recent resident's survey as 80 % of surveyed residents were satisfied or very satisfied with Mardin as a place to live.

However, this possible conflict between visitors and residents/users is important and it is considered that increased influx of visitors can pose a moderate threat to these important values in the longer term. This problem deserves monitoring through the capacity indicators. This issue, in addition to the provision of new facilities, is the primary factor limiting the region's capacity to accommodate visitors. It is not the number of the visitors that lies beneath this issue, but the way they behave and where they go. It is possible that the conflicts between the residents and workers may increase because of the behavior of the visitors while their number is decreasing. But of course vice versa is also possible. We cannot speak of a direct connection between the number of the visitors and the issue of conflict with residents and workers. Yet, it is probable -though not certain- that without an enhanced management of visitors, increased number of visitors may bring about an increase in conflicts.

Development of new facilities

Visitors identified a number of areas in which they feel that their experience can be improved providing that these areas are improved. 53 % considered toilets to be poor or very poor and stated that if toilet facilities are improved Mardin will be more attractive or enjoyable for the visitors. 52% of respondents think that there is an inadequacy in restaurants or similar sectors of service. 44% of the visitors find accommodation facilities inadequate and neglected. Approximately 40% indicated a deficiency in parking lots (Table 2).

Examining the infrastructure and ensuring that it is compatible with the texture and character of the city in case of changes is important. Capacity issues can be considered in respect to the region's ability to accommodate visitors because the location and type of facilities could also trigger potential conflicts between visitors, residents and workers. These facilities can also increase the number of visitors which in turn can cause car parking issues and traffic problems.

Economic viability of the Site and key buildings

Tourism and visitors' assistance maintain economically viable uses for key buildings on the site which in turn assists its conservation (e.g. Zinciriye Madrasa, Kasimiye Madrasa). And the visitors state that the profit gained through tourism will lead to a long-term development in economy and provide the necessary financial assistance for the conservation of cultural heritage.

Indicators

In order to observe the convenience capacity of the city for the visitors and to measure the change in the number of residents who are frequently having problems with the visitors, Indicator A, called "The Impact of the Visitors on Residents" was used. This measurement has been chosen to identify the areas where critical problems are seen in long-term administrations. Required information has been drawn from a part of the questionnaire given to residents.

So as to make allowance for some statistical fluctuations which may arise because of small sample size, the threshold has been set slightly above the existing levels. Yet, the threshold has been kept at a low level to assure that growing issues in this area are detected earlier. This low level also reflects the sensitivity of this issue for residents.

As mentioned above the results of the recent survey indicated that 80% of surveyed residents were satisfied or very satisfied with Mardin as a place to live. If the indicator be triggered in the future and there has been no significant decrease in the overall level of satisfaction then it may be acceptable to increase the threshold as any disturbance would not have reached levels sufficient to affect people's overall quality of life (an *Important Value*). Therefore, the following threshold should be taken as provisional.

Monitoring Measure

Visitors play an important role in the region's economic viability and thus help the maintenance of key buildings in the region. On the other hand, they also bring issues such as parking and their impact on the residents. This monitoring measure

has been developed to supply data on the visitors' overall experience in the region, and also to support the results of the analyses of Indicator A, in addition to providing information for the region's attraction operators and managers.

The data for this measure was collected in 2009. Interviewees were asked to rate the "Overall quality of the visitor experience" and the responses were as 53 % good, 24% very good (Table 2).

The outcome of the survey indicates that visitors are mostly satisfied with Mardin as a place to visit (Table 2). But, dissatisfaction to some degree can be observed in some facilities (as toilets, restaurants and a number of hotels) and the level of information provided. A failure to provide adequate facilities can bring about a decline in visitor satisfaction, which in turn can pose a moderate threat to the maintenance of appropriate uses on the region. Conservation problems regarding the texture and character of the region may appear in long-term. And consequently the issue ends up with being a *Significant Concern*.

With a decrease in visitor satisfaction or good ratings, or an increase in poor ratings is observed; a thorough analyses of Visitor Survey can provide the beneficial information to identify the causes of such changes. This analysis can further be supported by focus groups and follow-up interviews to determine the issues to be attended to increase visitor satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

Historical city center of Mardin is included in the category of historical cities which are still habitable, defined by UNESCO in operational guide. At this point, in order to succeed in issues such as enhancement of tourism sources and services before tourism-related problems occur, definition of bearing capacities and sustainable gains, augmentation of the efficiency of local organizations, reduction of conflicts, providing the environment of trust, sharing of the responsibility in such processes as planning, decision-making, problem solving, project identification and evaluation, establishing the dialogue with people, ensuring the attendance of residents and visitors to these processes, and fighting the local and social inequalities, a modern understanding of administration is crucial.

Environmental Capacity Study will have a significant role in the development of a Management Plan for the historical site. The indicators determined by the present study may be used as part of the local development along with the sustainability assessment.

From a resource management point of view, social and cultural effects of tourism should be analyzed throughout the planning process and also in an environmental capacity procedure; hence the benefits can be maximized and problems can be minimized.

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