Evaluation of the Perception of Change in Tourism and Agriculture after the Slow City Branding: The Case of Seferihisar

Sakin Şehir Markalaşması Sonrası Turizm ve Tarımda Yaşanan Değişim Algısının Değerlendirilmesi: Seferihisar Örneği

 Aysun AYGÜN OĞUR, Dalya HAZAR KALONYA, Görkem GÜLHAN

ABSTRACT

Seferihisar is the Slow City capital of Turkey, which aims to preserve the local characteristics to ensure local sustainable development while inevitably promotes tourism. However, the agriculture and tourism sectors can be conflicting and need accurate planning and production policies to improve the intersections such as agro-tourism. The study aims to reveal the perceived conflicts and potentials between the agriculture and tourism sectors by local stakeholders within the axis of the planning and production policies. Within this purpose, the study approaches Slow City branding from a criticising perspective. The study is based on two main stages. In the first stage, the perception of local stakeholders on tourism and agriculture sectors is determined through an interview. In the second stage, planning and policy suggestions are developed considering the outcomes of the first stage. The interview is conducted online with non-governmental organisations, cooperative representatives, local organisation representatives, and chambers that are related to the tourism and agriculture sectors. The questions aim to examine the changes in the spatial, social, demographic, cultural, economic, and political structure of Seferihisar within the perceptions of local stakeholders. The outcome of the interviews enlightens the planning approach for well-managed development. Finally, the framework of planning and policy approaches is drawn considering the perceived problems and potentials by local stakeholders.

Keywords: Agriculture; agro tourism; planning; Seferihisar; tourism; slow city.

ÖZ

Türkiye'nin sakin şehir başkenti olan Seferihisar, yerel sürdürülebilir kalkınmayı sağlamak için yerel karakteristikleri korumayı amaçlarken, kaçınılmaz olarak turizmi teşvik etmektedir. Ancak, tarım ve turizm sektörleri çatışmalı olabilmekte ve agroturizm gibi kesişimleri geliştirecek doğru planlama ve üretim politikalarına ihtiyaç duyabilmektedir. Çalışma, tarım ve turizm sektörleri arasında meydana gelen çatışmaları ve potansiyelleri, planlama ve üretim politikaları çerçevesinde yerel paydaşların algısı üzerinden ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaç çerçevesinde, çalışma sakin şehir markalaşmasına eleştirel bir perspektiften yaklaşmaktadır. Çalışma iki ana aşamaya dayanmaktadır. İlk aşamada, yerel paydaşların turizm ve tarım sektörlerine dair algısı mülakatlar yoluyla belirlenmektedir. İkinci aşamada ise ilk aşamanın çıktıları göz önüne alınarak planlama ve politika önerileri geliştirilmektedir. Mülakatlar, tarım ve turizm sektörleri ile ilişkili sivil toplum kuruluşları, kooperatif temsilcileri, yerel organizasyon temsilcileri ve meslek odalarıyla çevrim içi olarak yürütülmüştür. Sorular, Seferihisar'ın mekânsal, sosyal, demografik, kültürel, ekonomik ve politik yapısındaki değişiklikleri yerel paydaşların algıları dahilinde incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Mülakatın çıktıları iyi yönetilen bir gelişme ve planlama çerçevesini aydınlatmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, yerel paydaşlar tarafından algılanan sorunlar ve potansiyeller göz önüne alınarak planlama ve politika yaklaşımlarının çerçevesi çizilmektedir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Tarım; agroturizm; planlama; Seferihisar; turizm; sakin şehir.

Introduction

Tourism has become one of the most important economic sectors due to its contributions to the economic development of cities, regions, and nations. Although tourism development has several positive impacts on socio-economic development and welfare, it might cause negative externalities on land use, social structure, and local culture especially in rural areas, where agriculture is the dominant economic sector. Because of these potential externalities, tourism and agriculture sectors frequently conflict with each other. However, the conflicting interests can be determined and eliminated among these sectors, through improved participatory planning practices.

The study focuses on Seferihisar, a rural district in İzmir that has become a popular tourist destination since its Slow City membership in 2009. The study primarily investigates the changes in tourism and agriculture sectors after the Slow City branding, aiming to understand the interrelations of these conflicting sectors and negative externalities such as loss of urban identity, natural assets, and rural gentrification.

In order to understand the perception of change in the tourism and agriculture sectors in Seferihisar, an online interview is conducted among the local stakeholders consisting of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), cooperatives, local organisations, and Chambers. The findings of the study reveal that tourism development in Seferihisar has transformed the socio-economic structure of the district. Although there are several positive impacts of Slow City branding, negative impacts of tourism development were primarily emphasised by the stakeholders.

Understanding how the direction and situation in agriculture and tourism have changed over the years in the settlements where ecological potentials are qualified should be considered as an important indicator in master and implementation plan revisions and/or in new plan preparations. Undoubtedly, agriculture and tourism sectors are investigated quantitatively in the plan preparation, analysis, and even synthesis stages of each plan while the current situation is evaluated. However, these analyses are frequently handled in a non-comparative, quantitative and incommensurable manner that do not generally reveal the change and the perception of change. These analyses should have an interrogative, comparative and critical nature.

For this reason, the perception of change of the local stakeholders in important fields should be evaluated as a parameter in the continuation of planning data. There is rich literature on the slow cities and Seferihisar, yet this paper is significant for approaching the Slow City concept from a critical planning perspective.

A Critical Approach to Slow City Movement

The Slow City movement has emerged in Italy as a reaction to the dominating consumption-oriented lifestyle in 1999. It emphasises the importance of traditional lifestyle and local values, while aims to increase the quality of life and provide local sustainable development through alternative development models for urban and rural areas. Its principles define a pathway to more livable environments against today's consumption-driven lifestyle (Pink, 2008a; Özmen, 2016; Özmen and Can, 2018).

There have been many studies on the movement, diversifying from theoretical to administrative, social to economic aspects. Theoretical debates position it as a new concept against globalisation and focus on the dissemination of the *slowness* principles, sustainability issues, and benefits to local economic development (Özmen, Birsen and Birsen, 2016; Deniz, 2017; Knox, 2005). The overwhelming majority focuses on the positive impacts of slow city as an alternative development model (Değirmenci and Sarıbıyık, 2015; Tunçer and Olgun, 2017; Radstrom, 2011; Mayer and Knox, 2006). Some studies primarily promote the tourism potential, as an alternative sector contributing to local development (Heitmann et al., 2011; Ünal, 2016; Tunçer and Olgun, 2017; Yurtseven and Kaya, 2011).

On the other hand, critical approaches to the Slow City concept are limited in the literature. These studies reveal the potential problems caused by so-called opportunities and the contradicting development models of cities with Slow City branding (Çıtak, 2016; Akdoğan, 2017; Özmen and Can, 2018; Grzelak-Kostulska, Holowiecka and Kwiatkowski, 2011; Ak, 2017) and several economic and socio-spatial disadvantages (Pink, 2008b; Mayer and Knox, 2010). Çıtak (2016) reveals that while recognition level increases for a Slow City member, the number of tourists' increases as well, and that particular city can not be "slow" anymore due to consumer behaviour.

Akdoğan (2017) reveals that each sample of slow cities put different expectations ahead with this branding. While some cities focus on tourism development, some focus on the quality of life that depends on unique needs and values. However, the target of tourism development can contradict Slow City principles due to the inevitable increase in the population and pollution.

Nilsson et al. (2011) and Özmen and Can (2018) criticise the Slow Cities for gentrification risk, which may result in changes in local values and identity. They also discuss the tourism development with expectancy of rapid, uncontrolled, and unplanned economic and spatial development and loss of natural and socio-cultural assets.

There are several economic, socio-spatial disadvantages of Slow Cities such as; (1) *gentrification risk* (Nilsson et al., 2011); (2) *risk of remaining narrow-scoped* (Pink, 2008b);

(3) *conflicting demands of local citizens* (4) *need for long-term observations* (Mayer and Knox, 2010); (5) *unstable and vulnerable visions;* and (6) *uncontrolled and unplanned development*.

It is seen that the main concerns of the residents and local governments in the Slow Cities are economic development through transition to the international market. From this point of view, tourism development has a great opportunity for local communities (Hatipoğlu, 2015). Yet, this approach may cause unplanned urban development, which risks the non-renewable natural assets (Özmen and Can, 2018).

Eventually, tourism-oriented development requires a shift from the agriculture sector to tourism and other related service sectors in slow cities. Therefore, it is important to determine the conflicting areas of agriculture and tourism sectors from the perspective of local stakeholders, who are the witnesses of the positive and negative externalities. Andereck (1995) measures the perception of change on tourism in three dimensions of perception: (1) *economic dimension*, including elements such as tax revenue, increased jobs, additional income, tax burdens, inflation, and local government debt; (2) *sociocultural dimension*, including elements such as the resurgence of traditional crafts and ceremonies, increased intercultural communication and understanding, increased crime rates, and changes in traditional cultures; (3) *environmental dimension*, including spatial elements such as protection of parks and wildlife, crowding, air, water and noise pollution, wildlife destruction, vandalism, and waste (Andereck, 1995).

This study primarily focuses on the perception of change of the local stakeholders among the tourism and agriculture sectors after the Slow City branding and investigates the environmental elements within a *spatial dimension*, which is utilised of Andereck's third dimension.

Tourism Development on Rural Areas

Among the other emerging sectors, tourism has had the greatest impact on the conventional characteristics of the rural areas, especially on the coastal cities, which were used to see as solely lands for agricultural production. Today, rural areas are associated with recreation, leisure, commerce, consumption, and special productions (Saxena et al., 2007).

Tourism has a wide range of economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts on rural areas, which can be categorised positively or negatively with respect to the attitudes, expectations, and perspectives of rural residents. Tourism development in rural areas initially changed the economic structure of the region, primarily the agricultural production (Berber, 2017).

Tourism development is usually supported by the administrators, especially in developing countries due to its contribution to the rapid economic growth and beyond, socio-economic development, and increased welfare (Mbaiwa, 2003; Binns, 1995; Saarinen, 2003; Fleischer and Felsenstein, 2000; Eshliki and Kaboudi, 2012). On the other hand, the development of tourism leads to a transition of the region, not only economically but also environmentally and socio-culturally (Hanafiah et al., 2013; Berber, 2017).

According to the studies focusing on the negative externalities, when rapidly growing of tourism is not controlled, touristic destinations confront environmental destruction, pollution, overuse, and loss of non-renewable resources, cultural alienation, loss of identity, social and spatial polarisation, gentrification, and foreign domination of the market (Brohman, 1996). Thus, tourism development should consider economic, social, and environmental aspects simultaneously for sustainable development and improved quality of life (O'Sullivan and Jackson, 2002). Although there are inevitable conflicts between the agriculture and tourism sectors, they can together create a development potential and support mutual socio-economic viability through intersections such as agro-tourism (Gao and Wu, 2017).

According to the rural planning and management studies, the most effective tourism development method is the "community-based action", which develops partnerships between investors and local residents (Hwang, Stewart and Ko, 2012; Gao and Wu, 2017). Within this perspective, the perceived positive and negative impacts of tourism by various stakeholders are the primary issues to take into consideration for rural planning in order to create a mutual benefit (Kuvan and Akan, 2012).

Research Field

In this study, Seferihisar district in Izmir is chosen as the research field, which has confronted rapid structural, economic, and socio-spatial changes since its Slow City membership in 2009. Today, Seferihisar is the Slow City capital of Turkey, mainly promoting mass tourism by coastal activities and semi-promoting agro-tourism through "producer markets".

According to the literature review, 496 papers are determined on "Seferihisar Slow City" since 2009. These studies mainly focus on the *changes in the built environment* (Kiliç and Aydoğan, 2015; Tuncer and Olgun, 2017); *changes in the quality of life* (Coşar, 2014; Çakıcı et al., 2014; Akpınar and Pektaş; 2019); and *changes in the perceptions of the local people* (Aksu and Görman, 2019; Sarıbaş, Kömürcü and Güler, 2016; Akman et al., 2018).

The literature mentions the increased quality of life in Seferihisar due to the improvements on environmental

issues and infrastructure, encouragements of local producers, increased social activities, increased local businesses and employment, women employment (Coşar, 2014; Brown and Jeong, 2018; Gökalier, 2017; Tuncer and Olgun, 2017), and tourism development (Çakıcı et al., 2014; Aksu and Görman, 2019).

İzmir is an important tourism centre with its natural, cultural, and historical assets as revealed in "Tourism Master Plan" (2023) of Turkey. The main tourism types supported in İzmir are health and thermal tourism, congress and fair tourism, city tourism, sea tourism, and marine tourism. Although the plan focuses on alternative tourism types and aims to extend tourism all year round in different regions, İzmir is still not one of the primarily promoted regions for ecotourism and agro-tourism due to mass tourism tendency in the coastal districts. Yet, Seferihisar has the potential of ecotourism in terms of its geographic location, natural and cultural heritage, and the activities and awareness launched with the Slow City membership (Balaban, 2017).

On the other hand, "İzmir Regional Plan" (2014-2023) proposes a brand-new perspective for the tourism development in İzmir, which designates Seferihisar district as an *organic agricultural zone, ecotourism, thermal tourism, sea, and marine tourism center*. The plan aims to attract ecotourism investments to Seferihisar and other districts at the rural-urban fringe by increasing awareness for urban identity and protecting culture and history. The plan proposes Seferihisar as a "secondary tourism center" that has a connection with surrounding primary tourism centres. The plan is important for addressing both the tourism and agriculture potential of the Seferihisar district and attempting to connect these potentials via encouraging *ecotourism*.

The underlined negative impacts of recognition of the district as a Slow City are population increase, crowd, noise, traffic jam, urban fringe, increased property prices, expensiveness (Coşar, 2014; Akman et al., 2018; Dündar and Sert, 2018; Akpınar and Pektaş 2019), damages on original architecture to gain more room to serve as touristic pensions (Kılıç and Aydoğan, 2015), deterioration of original urban pattern (Gökalier, 2017), pressure on the agricultural lands (Tuncer and Olgun, 2017) maladjustment, environmental pollution (Sarıbaş et al., 2016), increasing domination of larger production and commercial businesses instead of local businesses (Cansaran, 2018; Akpınar and Pektaş 2019). Although attracting more tourists to Sığacık has been accomplished, the physical infrastructure of the district is not sufficient for the growing tourism demand (Coşkun Hepcan et al., 2014). Moreover, most of the tourists come within an all-inclusive system, which reveals a *mass tourism tendency*

(Tekin, 2017) and weakens the slowness concept (Brown and Jeong, 2018).

The tangerine and olive gardens, agricultural lands are under the pressure of tourism projects. On the other hand, in case of relocating the agricultural employees in tourism due to increased demand and income in tourism, agricultural lands might lose their importance (Kılıç and Aydoğan, 2015).

It is observed that the debates on Seferihisar agree upon the increase of land use attractiveness due to the increased recognition, which has started an intense demand for tourism. Economic and socio-cultural life has changed and triggered spatial transformations. In this process, natural assets and ecological products have been sold in markets and festivals and alternative tourism types have become the main attractions in the city. The commercial and service sectors for daily tourists have developed. Eventually, the district has started to receive domestic migration in order to meet the demands, and the population has increased rapidly.

Although this situation is gainly for several local residents, it has started to damage the main attractive assets of the district through increasing environmental pollution, carbon emission, land prices, and excessive concreting. Such situations are the common risks that await all Slow Cities unless they are controlled and/or managed. The impact of commercialisation and the development of mass tourism should be discouraged and, if possible, avoided; because the Slow City movement also deals with the projects such as climate change, environmental sustainability, sustainable ecosystems, social development, and sustainable energy (Heitmann et al., 2011; Cittaslow Association, 2013).

It is seen that real estate marketing has been very active in Seferihisar, which often results in polarisation within the community, along with differentiation from original values and identity of the place; and eventually, *gentrification* (Gündüz, 2012; Nilsson et. al., 2011).

Moreover, following the Slow City membership, conservation and amelioration practices have been initiated in Seferihisar, especially in Sığacık urban conservation area (Figure 1) for improving street sanitation and home pensions (Özmen and Can, 2018).

Although there has been a remarkable shift between the agriculture and tourism sectors in Seferihisar, it is seen that 80% of the local residents are still continuing agricultural activities leading by Satsuma mandarin, vegetables, olive, and grape production. In addition, good and/or organic agriculture practices are promoted. However, domestic tourism developed in the coastal areas has triggered an intensive migration (Tuncer and Olgun, 2017), which resulted in a decrease in the agricultural

lands and an increase in the settlement areas (Figures 2 and 3).

Accordingly, during the period of 1990–2018, urban settlements were developed on the agricultural lands, while forests slightly expanded and water reservoirs increased in number due to dams. The increasing trend in settlements slowed down between 2012 and 2018. Between 2006 and 2012 the increase in agricultural land is significant which is due to the increased awareness of agro-tourism. Seferihisar could manage to remain its agricultural land cover between 2012 and 2018. The increasing amount of forest cover can be observed

**Figure 1.** Boutique Pensions, Sığacık, Seferihisar, 2019.
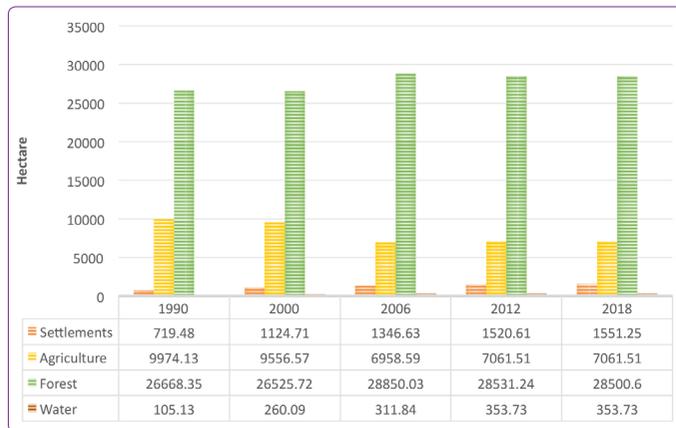
**Figure 2.** Land use changes in Seferihisar, 1990-2018 (ha).
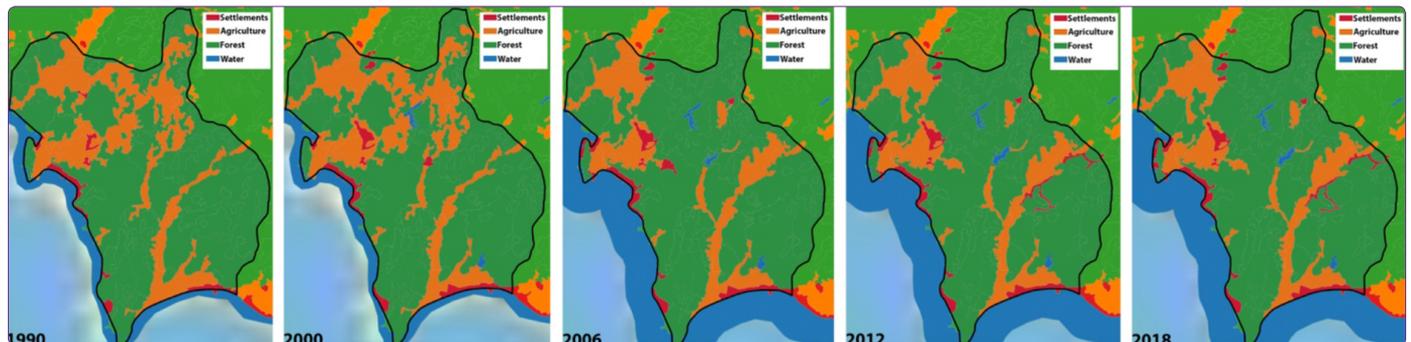
between 1990 and 2006; however, it slightly decreased in 2012 and 2018. These quantitative land-use changes reveal that the pressure of expanded settlements triggered by tourism threatens the natural and agricultural lands. It can also be inferred that the conflicts on the natural areas have begun in Seferihisar even before its Slow City membership.

According to the real estate valuation reports (Akkaya, 2017), it is seen that İzmir is preferred by capital investors in recent years. The capital flow directed to İzmir is especially concentrated in the construction sector, parallel to the general economic policies. Changing laws and planning regulations identify and encourage these trends, especially on Urla-Çeşme-Karaburun Peninsula, urban peripheries, and urban center depending on the projects. The report of UCTEA Coordination Council of Izmir, EGECEP, and Doga Association (2017) reveal that natural assets have opened to construction due to the economic policies dependent on land rent policies and promoted by the laws and regulations in İzmir, while ignoring the increasing population, urbanisation, decreasing resources and risk of pollution.

It is seen that the change in the fair value had a leap especially in 2014 and increased 40% within 10 years (Hazar et al., 2019). In the coastal districts Urla, Çeşme, Seferihisar, and Güzelbahçe, there is an increase in the value of the buildings. The leading districts are Çeşme, Urla, Güzelbahçe, Karaburun, Kemalpaşa, Torbalı, Menemen and Seferihisar, where the land investments are made (Akkaya, 2017).

In recent years, secondary residences in Çeşme, Urla, and Seferihisar districts have been used both in summer and winter. Urla-Çeşme-Karaburun Peninsula contains the most preferred districts, following the city center (Akkaya, 2018). It is inferred that the current COVID-19 pandemic has also triggered this situation. The average fair value of the plot in Seferihisar in 2008–2018 also reveals that there was a leap in 2014. In addition, there has been a regular increase in the population of the district, which is presumed to contradict the slow philosophy eventually

Figure 3. Land use maps of Seferihisar, 1990, 2000, 2006, 2012 and 2018.

Table 1 . The average fair value (AFV) of the plot and population change in Seferihisar (adapted from Hazar et. al., 2019)

Seferihisar	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
AFV(TL/m²)	25.39	27.32	33.20	34.48	38.3	41.00	101.74	106.89	109.86	114.01	163.85
Population	23.669	25.308	29.232	27.422	27.849	33.588	35.960	36.335	37.697	40.785	43.546
Tourist Arrival	56.534	63.404	22.106	49.355	70.238	153.370	82.312	152.993	142.208	191.741	68.291

(Table 1). Hazar et al. (2019) determined that Seferihisar has a medium difference between current and market prices with a relatively dominant housing development (Figure 4).

It is possible to relate these increases to a number of tourist arrivals. As a result of Slow City branding and tourism promotions for the district, the number of tourist arrivals increased more than double in 2014. Seferihisar has recognised as an alternative tourism destination, which has directly affected land prices.

Methodology

The research aims to understand the socio-economical and socio-spatial effects of Slow City branding; whether it promoted housing and tourism development and/or other conflicting sectors; whether it had negative effects on agriculture and resulted in rural gentrification; reveal the perceptions of the stakeholders about these changes and propose recommendations via planning parameters.

The data obtained reveal significant changes in the land use pattern, real estate values, and sectorial dominancy

in Seferihisar after Slow City membership. The important issue is how the locals have had positions and how they perceived these changes. Thus, the study aims to determine the conflicts between two economic sectors from the perspectives of local stakeholders and to propose rural planning parameters to eliminate these conflicts. The methodological diagram of the study can be seen in Figure 5.

The methodology is based on online interviews and statistical evaluation of minimum data determined by "central limit theorem", which is significant for scientific inferences among the interviews conducted to NGOs, cooperatives, and Chambers to determine the perception of change in tourism and agriculture sectors. The semi-structured interviews were conducted online and had 27 questions. The authors contacted 33 local stakeholders and 31 of the stakeholders completely answered the questions. The authors questioned the cross-relationships between the questions and the answers were found by the correlation analysis. The universe sample size ratio was determined by analysing the patterns accepted in the literature.
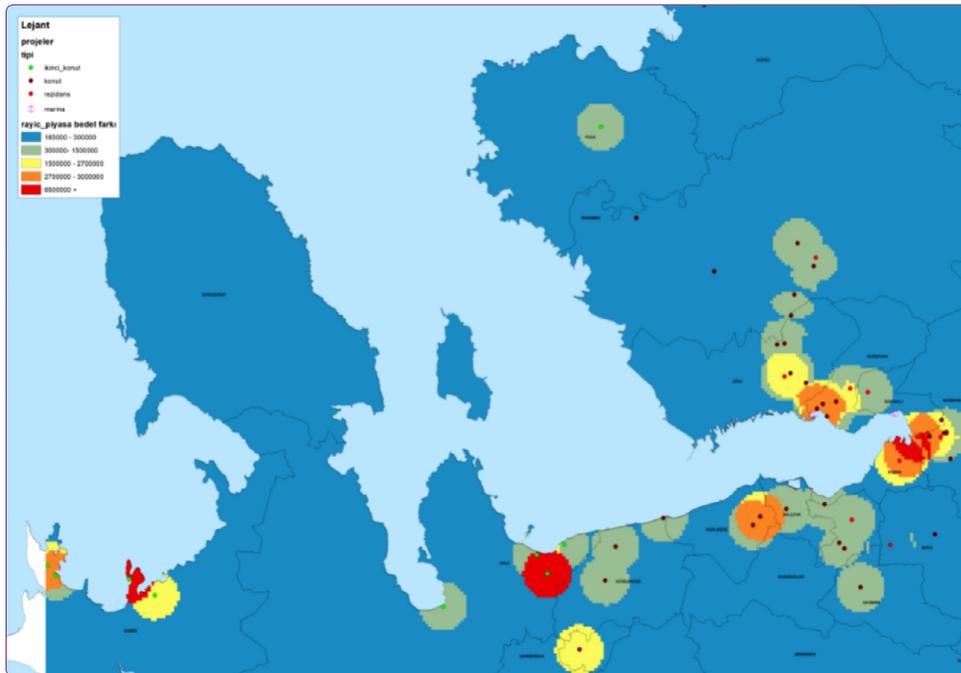
Figure 4. Point density analysis of the difference between current and market prices in İzmir (Özkan et al., 2019).
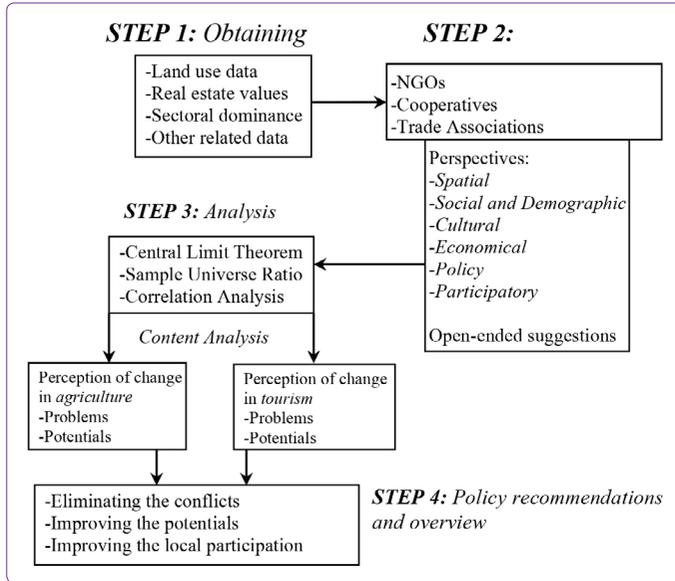
Figure 5. The methodological diagram

According to "central limit theorem", if the sample size is 30 the studentised sampling distribution approximates the standard normal distribution and assumptions about the population distribution are meaningless since the sampling distribution is considered normal. Therefore, even if the mean of a sample of size >30 is studentised using the variance, a normal distribution can be used for the probability distribution (Kwak and Kim, 2017). Thus, the representation amount with 31 interviews is verified in terms of statistics.

While determining the population sampling rate, the rates presented by Ural and Kılıç (2018) are taken as a basis. Accordingly, it is accepted that the 31 interviews represent the general opinion of the group.

The outcome of the interviews enlightens a planning approach for well-managed development. In this stage, the framework of planning and policy approaches is drawn considering the perceived problems and potentials by local stakeholders. Within this perspective, the policy suggestions focused on three issues: (1) *eliminating the conflicts,* (2) *improvement of the potentials,* and (3) *improvement of the local participation*.

The interview consists of seven parts: (1) *spatial perspective* mainly focuses on land-use change and its impacts in local's living spaces; (2) *social and demographic perspective* focuses on socio-economic changes and the contribution of tourism on socio-economic development; (3) *cultural perspective* examines the tourism impacts on cultural identity and unique values; (4) *economic perspective* questions the changing balance of agriculture and tourism sectors and local community involvement to these economic sectors; (5) *policy perspective* queries the planning process and politically promoted development; (6) *participatory perspective* focuses on local community involvement in decision-making process; (7) *suggestions* part contains open-ended questions added with an expectation of receiving problems and demanded solutions directly from local stakeholders. The interview is constructed by rating questions of 5 categories; absolutely Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, Absolutely Disagree. The content of the interview can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. The content of the interviews

Perspective	Description	Content of Questions
Spatial Perspective	Land use changes by tourism development and its impacts	• Impacts of urbanization on agricultural land • Impacts on residents' living space • Impacts on quality of life
Social and Demographic Perspective	Changes in the social structure by tourism development and its impacts	• Changes in social services • Changes in employment, unemployment and women employment • Impact on migration pattern
Cultural Perspective	Impacts of tourism development on culture	• Impacts of immigration • Level of sense of belonging • Impacts on cultural identity and lifestyle
Economic Perspective	Impacts of tourism development on agriculture sector and local economy	• Importance of agriculture for local people • Economic impacts of tourism • Changes in agricultural production • Role of local people in sectors
Policy Perspective	The political approach to development planning	• Role of local government • Effectiveness of planning practice • Directions of incentives and investments
Participatory Perspective	Level of participation	• Level of participatory approach in planning
Suggestions	Local suggestions	• Other problem areas and possible solution proposals
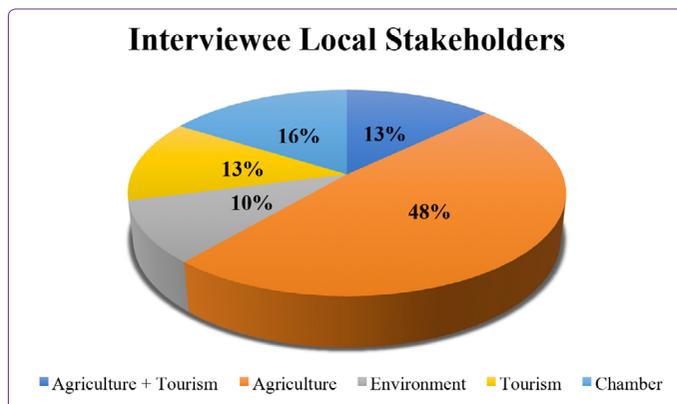
Figure 6. The participation ratio of local stakeholders.

Since the focus of the study is the conflict between the agriculture and tourism sectors, relevant non-governmental organisations (NGOs), cooperatives, and local organisations have been included. The representatives of both sectors can create diverse perspectives on how different groups have been affected by the Slow City branding. Additionally, NGOs that do not have a direct link to tourism or agriculture sectors; yet include several relevant activities have been included as "Agriculture and Tourism". Environmental NGOs that have been involved since any activities in both sectors affect the natural environment, which has inseparable value for both agriculture and tourism. Finally, Chambers related to the development and land-use change have been included because development in any sector inevitably causes land-use changes. The participation ratio of the local interviewees according to their representation can be seen in Figure 6.

According to Figure 5, the participation ratio of the local stakeholders are 48% agricultural NGOs and cooperatives, 16% Chambers, 13% Tourism NGOs and cooperatives, 13% Agriculture and Tourism NGOs and cooperatives, and 10% Environmental NGOs. The perceptions and suggestions of the interviewees were conducted via semi open-ended questions and categorised systematically by the authors through content analysis. The content of the interviews can be seen in Table 3.

Findings and Evaluation

Findings have revealed that local stakeholders agree upon that urbanisation is a threat to agricultural lands, which can also be observed from the satellite images. Local residents changed their settled areas and the quality of life increased in the region (except some NGOs from the agriculture sector and Chambers). Also, the quality of urban and social services, involvement of women in labour force and immigration from other cities and regions have increased. However, local residents are not able to protect

their district and social life from negative externalities, conventional local life has changed. Yet, the sense of belonging of residents is still high.

There is a shift from agriculture to the tourism sector. Agriculture sector still protects its importance for local citizens, which also do not have active roles in tourism and/or agriculture sectors as employee and/or investors. Opinions of different stakeholders has not been considered in the planning process while determining the sectorial development of Seferihisar. Incentives, investments, and encouragements for both the agriculture and tourism sectors are insufficient. Urban development pattern is not controlled within a plan, and a new and better way of participation in the planning process is needed comparing to past experiences.

However, some agriculture sector interviewees do not agree that emigration decreased after Slow City branding as younger residents can hold on to the region and employment opportunities have been increased. The agriculture sector has remained important for the district, and there is an economic relief due to economic growth.

There are similar opinions from different groups of interviewees on spatial, social, demographic, and cultural perspectives. Agriculture sector-related interviewees have distinctively more pessimistic in terms of economic, while others vary between totally agree and totally disagree. The answers on policy and participatory perspective change regardless of the sectors.

It is important to observe the similar views among the various topics for the interpretation of the interviews in order to reveal the current perception of the local stakeholders. Accordingly, an examination for a linear relationship among the two variables, a *correlation* has been conducted. The correlation coefficient reveals the relation among the two variables that have a value between -1 and 1. A negative value reveals a negative relation, while a positive value reveals a positive relation. The values 1 and -1 are perfect relations, while the values getting close to 0 are weaker relations. In this study, a negative value above the -0.6 threshold was not observed. Accordingly, the answers above the +0.6 value can be seen in Tables 4 and 5.

While determining the perception of change, a model is proposed in order to reveal the common opinion and strongest and most influential ideas. It is thought that the correlation results will determine the perception of change at the highest level. Accordingly, when the model results are examined, it is determined that those who revealed that the needs of the local people are not taken into consideration in the planning process are also of the opinion that participation and governance tools are not used effectively. In this respect, it is seen that the most

Table 3. Perceptions and suggestions of the interviewees on Seferihisar Slow City

Perceptions and Suggestions of the Interviewees

Positive	Spatial Perspective	- Increase in quality of life (yet debated) - Increase in urban and social services; however, there are remaining conflicts
	Social and Demographic Perspective	- Easier life for the younger population in the villages - Increase in the female labor force
	Cultural Perspective	- Protecting the local identity - Sense of belonging from the local residents
	Economic Perspective	- Economic relief due to tourism development - Tourism development supported agricultural products' recognition (yet debated) - Local residents have become investors and labor force in both sectors - Increase in the business opportunities (yet debated)
	Policy Perspective	–
	Participatory Perspective	–
Negative	Spatial Perspective	- Economic problems of the agricultural sector result in abandoning of the agricultural areas and concretion - Urban development decisions on agricultural land in 1/100 000 development plan - Infrastructure of the region is not sufficient - Traffic and car parking problem - Urbanization in Seferihisar harms the agricultural areas
	Social and Demographic Perspective	- Gentrification especially in the fortress area of Sığacık - Lack of education of the local residents about tourism and financial issues. - Negative results of the migration - Local residents cannot protect their regions.
	Cultural Perspective	- Inhabitants have changed in Seferihisar; locals left their domain
	Economic Perspective	- Non-locals dominancy on tourism businesses - Tourism and agriculture sectors have been conflicting - Agricultural sector is not as important as it used to be - Negative impacts of mass tourism due to overpopulation in summer
	Policy Perspective	- No adequate subsidies and loans for agriculture and tourism sectors - Uncontrolled urban and sectoral development in Seferihisar
	Participatory Perspective	- The ignored needs of the local residents in the planning process (yet debated)
Neutral	Spatial Perspective	–
	Social and Demographic Perspective	- Changes on demographic structure of the region - Immigration to Seferihisar
	Cultural Perspective	- Spectacular changes in the conventional lifestyle of the local residents
	Economic Perspective	- Importance of agricultural sector for the local residents' economy - Shift from agricultural sector to tourism sector
	Policy Perspective	–
	Participatory Perspective	- No consensus on whether participation and policy tools in the planning process is adequate
Suggestions	Spatial Perspective	- Water supply project (dam) for agriculture - Need to limit height of buildings - Need to stop hydroelectric power plant projects - Need for prevention of the development on the agricultural lands and waterfront areas - Need to improve infrastructure - Need to extend walking tour routes to all region
	Social and Demographic Perspective	- Need for prevention of immigration and concretion - Need to increase quality of service in tourism sector by qualified staff
	Cultural Perspective	- Protecting conventional rural lifestyle - Need to reconnect local values and life stye with nature
	Economic Perspective	- Need a coordination between tourism businesses - Need to support export - Need to stop all-inclusive mass tourism and support local involvement in tourism - Need to support agriculture as local, self-esteem, domestic way of economy instead tourism as a depended economy - Targeted tourists need to be compatible with Slow City concept
	Policy Perspective	- Active role of not only local but also Metropolitan municipality - Need for a comprehensive tourism plan - Need incentives for agriculture
	Participatory Perspective	- Need for participative strategic approaches directly focus on local resident' needs - Need of a new participation and planning perspective

Table 4. The correlated answers above +0,6 value

Q.	Answers
4	There has been an improvement in the quality of life in Seferihisar over the years.
5	There have been improvements in urban and social services over the years.
8	Compared to the past, younger population is now holding on to the city more easily.
9	Business opportunities in Seferihisar have become better over the years than before.
10	Seferihisar receives immigration from other provinces and districts.
11	In Seferihisar, local people can protect the region they live in and social life from various negative effects.
13	Local lifestyle in Seferihisar has changed over time.
15	Local identity is conserved in Seferihisar.
19	The development of the tourism sector has brought economic relief to Seferihisar over the years.
20	With the development of the tourism sector, the value of agricultural products has increased.
21	In the agriculture and tourism sectors, local people are actively involved in the role of labor or investors.
22	While determining the sectoral development axes in the planning processes in Seferihisar, the influences and opinions of the institutions were considered.
23	In the planning processes in Seferihisar, the needs of the local people were taken into consideration.
24	Financial supports, investments and incentives are sufficient for both the tourism and agricultural sectors.
25	Developments in Seferihisar have been proceeding within the framework of a controlled development plan for years.
26	Participation and governance tools were used effectively in the planning processes in Seferihisar.

powerful output of the model is the lack of participation in the 26th row and 23rd column (Table 5). Moreover, considering the intersection of the 25th row and the 23rd column, it can be interpreted that those who thought that the needs of the local people are not taken into consideration, also thought that the developments have not progressed within the framework of a controlled plan for years. It has also been found that those who thought that there is weak participation, also thought that financial supports, investments, and incentives for both sectors are insufficient. It is seen that job opportunities and youth holding in the district are also associated.

These evaluations obtained are strong and usable based on the correlation between the answers given to the questionnaire. These findings and comments can be detailed and advanced in further studies. It is seen that institutions need to develop methods to increase participatory governance in the planning process. Therefore, plans should have more effective control mechanisms, a governance model that well-guide the development within an effective control cycle.

The analysis of the perception of change of the local stakeholders revealed a need for a more comprehensive and participatory planning approach. It is obvious that Seferihisar has entered into a great economic and socio-spatial transformation by the Slow City branding. Eventually, the construction activities, commercial enterprises, and urban sprawl in coordination with the tourism development have reached a point that threatens the natural assets. As a result, the new, uncontrollable state of dimensions and interactions between the agriculture and tourism sectors requires attention.

Table 5. The correlated matrix above +0,6 value

Q.	4	5	8	10	11	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
5	0,70											
9		0,72	0,74									
13				0,62								
15		0,67										
20						0,62						
21							0,64					
22							0,63					
23					0,67	0,63			0,63			
24					0,60					0,63		
25										0,82	0,74	
26		0,63	0,62		0,60	0,67		0,60		0,81	0,62	0,79

The findings of the study reveal that the planning of the slow cities needs to have a *participatory, conservative,* and *restorative* approach. With this respect, the authors proposed several planning parameters and basic strategies:

- Controlling the effects of the uncontrolled and mass tourism development.
  - o Conducting training and information activities that will enable the local people to evaluate the tourism potential and providing economic incentives to prevent unfair competition among the foreign capital owners and the local residents.
  - o Preparing a spatial conservation plan with the participation of local residents to increase awareness on conservation and embracing decisions of the plan.
  - o Monitoring the tourism demand, trends and land-use changes to control its development.
  - o Educating residents and daily tourists on slow tourism.
  - o Educating local tour operators to increase awareness of daily tourists and establishing more information offices.
  - o Increasing public awareness by establishing more information boards about slow concepts and philosophy.
  - o Encouraging international sea tourism within sustainability and slowness perspectives.
- Development of the building condition and design to protect the local identity.
  - o Creating an atmosphere that will ensure the protection and increasing the local identity, in particular of the younger people through plans, programs, and legal arrangements that will increase the employment opportunities.
  - o Preparing an urban design code booklet to direct the new constructions.
  - o Promoting environmentally friendly and energy-efficient buildings constructed with local material.
  - o Encouraging urban design competitions by Seferihisar Municipality.
  - o Encouraging climate-sensitive and sustainable spatial development.
- Protection of the agricultural and coastal areas from the construction pressure.
  - o Improving the agricultural sector, preventing the economic difficulties and revitalising the agricultural trade by the regulations, cooperatives, and "slow food" understanding.

- o Determining of absolute conservation areas in coastal and agricultural sites.
- o Monitoring land-use changes regularly through remote sensing.
- o Increasing the public opinion of local people on conscious tourism in the conserved areas.
- o Organising attractive activities to increase the tourism value of agricultural and coastal areas.
- o Encouraging *agro-tourism* and *ecotourism* activities.
- Development of sub-centres to reduce the construction pressure.
  - o Making detailed carrying capacity and threshold analyses with a conservative approach.
  - o Regarding these analyses, directing new urban development on sub-centres by population decentralisation.
  - o Engaging the concepts of participation and governance effectively in the planning process and ensuring that local stakeholders understand and have a voice in the decision-making process (e.g., cooperatives, associations, unions, NGOs).
  - o Planning and making provisions to reduce the migration and construction density.
- Eliminating negative impacts of tourism in the region.
  - o Establishing "park and ride" systems to decrease the traffic and car parking problems.
  - o Establishing safe bike routes between Seferihisar districts, which also link to *EuroVelo*.
  - o Encouraging and promoting walking tours, trekking, etc., *ecotourism* activities.
  - o Improving public transportation between Sığacık and Seferihisar central district.
  - o Encouraging local small businesses by preventing all-inclusive hotels.
  - o Establishing the culture and awareness of cooperatives by strengthening the channels of education, technical and legal services, and financial support for cooperatives and raising the development of social capital.

Conclusion

Seferihisar district has faced several conflicts since its Slow City membership, which would cause the loss of the membership in the near future unless they are eliminated. The primary conflict is the rapid urbanisation and population increase. Moreover, it is presumed that the determined regular population increase of Seferihisar can be accelerated through the COVID-19 pandemic in

the near future as many people tend to leave the urban centres due to the need for isolation. Thus, it can be said that unless the planning and urban policy deficiencies are corrected, Seferihisar will lose its Slow City membership in the near future.

This study reveals that the emerging tourism sector has caused several socio-economic, cultural, and spatial changes in Seferihisar. As Berber (2017) stated, tourism may have both positive and negative changes but initially it changes the economic structure. In Seferihisar, this claim is approved with the statements of local stakeholders on this shift. From the perspective of the local stakeholders, positive impacts are debatable; however, negative impacts overweight the positive ones in terms of land use, economic structure, and culture. The obvious shift to the tourism sector compromises agricultural productivity and maintaining of fertile lands. The negative impacts emphasised in the literature (Brohman, 1996) are environmental destruction, pollution, overuse, and loss of non-renewable resources, cultural alienation, loss of identity, social and spatial polarisation, gentrification, and foreign domination, which are also observed in Seferihisar. Therefore, the well-management of tourism development is crucial in rural settlements.

As stated in the literature, tourism development is generally supported by governments due to its economic contributions. The results also prove the economic contribution of tourism development in the Seferihisar region. Moreover, besides economic transition, environmental and socio-cultural alterations as stated in the literature (Hanafiah et al., 2013) are perceived by local stakeholders. However, tourism development would not be perceived positively by local stakeholders as long as it avoids the local lifestyle, tradition, intrinsic knowledge, and inter-sectorial integration, which are crucial aspects for the slow philosophy.

The most dramatic result is about the participation perspective, in which stakeholders agreed on the absence of inclusive, participatory, monitoring, and responsive governance. Yet, the well-management of tourism development can only be possible when the local communities such as NGOs, cooperatives, and local institutions would be adequately included in the planning and management processes that support the local and regional markets.

Although the local producer markets have been promoted in Seferihisar, it is observed that there are several people exploiting this situation by selling foreign purchased products in the *producer markets* with "organic" labels. A similar situation also occurs in Seed Exchange Festivals as the local seeds are very scarce. Hereby, it is seen that the slow city has turned into a merely advertisement tool

without adequate monitoring and controlling systems that supervise the slow city criteria.

Seferihisar district has increased its recognition in the national and international platforms after the Slow City branding, in search of an alternative development model. However, an approach aimed at development by protecting the local values went beyond its purpose and became a means of rent. According to the results, it does not seem possible to protect the district from neoliberal rent policies merely through the Slow City branding. In this context, a dialogue needs to be established with the local people and development strategies.

The findings of the study underline that environmental and cultural conservation should be a primary principle in the Slow Cities rather than economic development via tourism. The findings reveal that there are positive impacts of tourism for the economic life in the district such as increasing women labour, decreasing emigration, and increasing subsidies, which are parallel to the Slow City targets as an alternative local development model. However, when it is investigated deeply, negative impacts are also revealed such as domination of the foreign investors and insufficient income of local citizens, harmful urbanisation on the natural areas, decreasing importance of the agricultural sector, and loss of local identity. It is revealed that the conflict between tourism and agriculture sectors is contradicting with Slow City principles.

This study reveals that the local development-oriented Slow City branding has several negative impacts within the agriculture-tourism axis, which are perceived by local stakeholders. These results crosschecked the problems in the literature on tourism development in rural areas. While tourism increases the economic revenue, agriculture is still crucial for the residents of Seferihisar, in line with the *local development model* of İzmir called "Another Farming is Possible" (Url-1).

The main reason for the problem is revealed to be *insufficient local participation*. Local participation is critically important to overcome the negative impacts of tourism development on rural areas. Based on this result, the study can be developed to further stages through investigating alternative and *new institutional models* (e.g., collective action model by Ostrom, 1990), which can create a common platform for residents to express their requirements and expectations for the development.

In addition, *agro-tourism* and *ecotourism* perspectives should be reflected in the upper and lower-scale plans of Seferihisar and surrounding settlements, as well as supported by Tourism Master Plan (2023). The awareness of the regional plan on this issue is important; however, it should be carried forward with central and local inter-institutional cooperations, participation of residents, and

sectorial integrations, all of which need to be improved and required further investigation. These new tourism types may combine potentials of these two sectors under a mutual benefit; and therefore, residents can be supported by incentives that produce local agricultural products, preserve their own lifestyle, and culture and retain their livelihood and local implicit knowledge.

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