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TOURISM AND CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION IN A HISTORIC CITY: THE CASE OF ANTALYA OLD TOWN (KALEIÇI)

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to understand the reasons for the transformation of culture in touristic destinations with rich cultural heritage, the transformation process, and the effects of tourism on this transformation, considering these effects within a theoretical framework based on the cultural change approach. To this end, in-depth interviews were conducted with 15 participants, including academics, local people, representatives of nongovernmental organizations, and public and private sector representatives who have extensive knowledge and experience in local culture and tourism, specifically within the context of Kaleiçi. The data obtained from these interviews were analyzed using content analysis. In the study, four main themes and eight subthemes emerged. The findings revealed the factors (political, economic, and sociocultural) affecting the cultural transformation of Kaleiçi and how this transformation process occurred. Furthermore, the cultural and environmental effects of tourism were found to play a critical role in this transformation. The study also concludes that the cultural change process actively continues in the transformation of the culture in Kaleiçi.

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In memory of our colleague Assoc. Prof. Dr. Osman Çalışkan, with whom we started this study but who passed away after the data collection phase of the study was completed.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism, as a powerful tool that brings different cultures together and brings them into interaction, accelerates cultural change processes (Carter & Beeton, 2004; Hall & Mitchell, 2002), making the balance between preserving local identities and economic returns critical. This interaction becomes even more pronounced in historical and multi-layered settlements such as Kaleiçi, Antalya, where local people's daily life practices, sense of identity, and social relations are transformed by the impact of tourism (Yıldırım & Öztürk Deniz, 2018). While the economic impacts and policies of tourism have been frequently examined in the literature, studies analyzing the multidimensional effects of tourism on cultural transformation in regions that have witnessed continuous settlement and are distinguished by their rich cultural heritage, such as Kaleiçi, are limited (Özekici & Ünlüönen, 2019; Richards, 2020). In this context, our study contributes to the literature by examining the effects of tourism on the cultural change process in Kaleiçi with a qualitative approach within the framework of political, economic, and socio-cultural factors. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with 15 participants (academics, local residents, public and private sector representatives, and NGO managers) selected through purposive sampling. The data obtained were evaluated through content analysis, resulting in four main themes and eight sub-themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The results of the study contribute to the development of theoretical frameworks explaining culture-tourism interactions for academics and shed light on the development of strategies that can balance the conservation of cultural heritage with the sustainable management of tourism for practitioners (MacCannell, 1976; Urry, 1999).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The culture change process consists of innovation, selective elimination, social acceptance, and integration phases and cannot be separated by strict boundaries (İlbars, 1980). The characteristic of the innovation phase is crucial and it can be either something that does not exist in that culture at all or a conscious adaptation of an existing method, tool, or idea (Haviland et al., 2008). Even if the new cultural element is superior, society cannot

immediately abandon the existing cultural element, and so they collide for a while in selective elimination (Günay, 2020). For innovation to become an element of culture, it must be socially meaningful; this is social acceptance (Deniz, 2004). Integration is a dynamic process in which the features of the accepted culture are integrated into society through communication and adaptation to its constituents (Tezcan, 2008). However, no complete integration is achieved in cultures due to the various forms of innovation or the addition of a new element in the case of fusion (Tezcan, 1984). Culture is transformed as assimilation or degeneration in terms of content and fundamentally as a fusion (merging) or assimilation at the end of the process. Integration is the preservation of a culture's core values along with the adaptation of some components of the dominant culture, and in a sense, it is the intersection set of local and foreign cultures. Cultures are reshaped in this intersection (Haviland et al., 2008; Lavenda & Schultz, 2018). This situation is cultural degeneration (Avcıkurt, 2017) and is inevitable when the extent of change reaches the level of sameness. Merging is when both cultures lose their identity or the dominant culture dominates the weaker one by preserving its identity (Aslan, 2016). Cultural hybridization can be experienced in weak cultures or in two cultures through radical change or by losing all values. It is difficult to generalize the cultural change process for all societies because the values adopted in society may vary according to the society's structure and the characteristics and strength of the influencing factors (Turhanoğlu Koçak, 2011). The dynamics of change are considered a general norm in modern societies; however, they vary in traditional societies. In this context, viewing tourism as a vehicle for cultural diffusion allows traditions, customs, beliefs, and values unique to different cultures to intersect and interact. As a result of the culture change process, which is a kind of interaction, the values, rituals, traditions, and customs of the society may be reflected in the cultural genes, and changes may occur. In short, tourism exerts an accelerating effect on change (Yıldırım & Öztürk Deniz, 2018).

Culture is employed as a product or consumption object in the tourism industry, and its components must be transformed and presented as cultural capital with characteristics such as authenticity, uniqueness, and inimitability. In this respect, academic and practical recommendations often refer to the relationship between culture and tourism (Emekli, 2006; Hughes, 2002; Özgürel et al., 2019; Richards, 2020). Tourists frequently encounter staged representations of culture within artificial settings, largely due to the widespread adoption of tourism models such as all-inclusive resorts and boutique tourism. Thus, culture in tourism transforms into a

product that has become a touristic commodity. If culture becomes a commodity, it will lose its importance for local people (Greenwood, 1977) and culture will diminish as it becomes an object in tourism (Taylor, 2001). According to Urry (1999), "Tourism is the artificial reproduction of authentic values and lifestyles, packaged at affordable prices, and offered to 'developed Westerners'."

The perception of local culture, shaped by its own constructed environment and influenced by the evolving understanding of tourism, may become increasingly artificial. Over time, this constructed form of culture can be widely adopted and presented as if it were genuinely local (Ölçer Özünel, 2011). The stages in the cultural change process are experienced partially or completely in the presentation of local culture to tourists in tourism destinations. For example, the inclusion of cultural values in animation activities may increase the motivation to learn culture, or, conversely, culture may be commercialized and can start to degenerate.

Research Area

The history of Kaleiçi began with Attaleia, founded as a port city by King Attalos II of Pergamon in the 2nd century BC (Gökalp, 2008). It developed with structures such as Hadrian's Gate during the Roman period (57 BC - 3rd century AD). However, it declined due to economic and political problems in the 3rd century (Yılmaz, 2002). It maintained its importance as a bishopric center during the Byzantine period (Dayar, 2020). It was conquered by the Seljuk Sultan Gıyaseddin Keyhüsrev I in 1207, and life continued within the walls (Yılmaz, 2002). The city, which came under Ottoman rule from the 14th century onwards, was revitalized with the increase in trade with Europe in the 18th century (Karaca, 2008). Its population structure changed with Greek migration in the 19th century and underwent a significant transformation with the fire of 1895 (Dayar, 2020a). During the Republican era, the Greek population was replaced by Turks from Thessaloniki and other regions through the population exchange, and the city entered a process of modernization (Çimrin, 2008). Kaleiçi became an international tourism center with domestic tourism from the 1960s onward, and international tourism after the 1980s. However, unplanned tourism might cause deterioration in the cultural heritage and physical fabric (Yalman, 2018). Today, Kaleiçi, with its four neighbourhoods, is one of Antalya's most important historical and cultural centers for both locals and tourists (Gül & Özaslan, 2022; Muratpaşa Municipality, 2025; TUIK, 2024).



Figure 1. Kaleiçi
Source: http://www.antalya.gov.tr/kaleici

METHOD

In this study, a qualitative research approach was adopted to better understand the impacts of tourism on cultural transformation within the context of Kaleiçi. Data were collected through in-depth interviews using a semi-structured interview form. After reviewing the documents related to Kaleiçi, a draft form was prepared by different researchers to examine the possible interview questions. An interview form including 10 questions was finally developed by taking expert opinions from academics who have conducted studies about the region. Interviews were conducted with 15 participants between March 1, 2022, and April 3, 2022, within the scope of purposive sampling. The number of participants was deemed sufficient as it was understood that the data had reached a certain saturation, and similar or repeated discourses were started to be uttered by the participants. The participants coded as P1, P2,…P15 were informed about the research, and interviews were recorded after their voluntary consent was obtained. Interviews took 48 minutes on average; they were long interviews because they exceeded 30 minutes (Geray, 2006). The audio recordings were analyzed, transcribed, and then listened to again and verified by comparing them with the written text.

The transcriptions obtained from interviews were subjected to content analysis. Considering that there is sufficient theoretical background because studies on the cultural change process and the impact of tourism on the transformation of the locality have been conducted previously, a deductive approach was preferred (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Carter & Beaton, 2004; Haviland et al., 2008; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Kariel, 1989; Özekici &

Ünlüönen, 2019; Rasmi et al., 2014). An initial coding scheme was developed with reference to previous studies, and after checking the appropriateness of the content to the codes, it was read and sorted until a consensus was reached on assigning the content to the relevant codes. The initial coding scheme was revised to identify uncoded data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), the evaluator and two coders discussed classifications and codes to verify the outputs of the coding process, and then the themes were created (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004).

The themes were divided into subthemes. Following the assumption of intrinsic homogeneity and extrinsic heterogeneity (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which expresses content in a context, the codes were compared and grouped based on differences and similarities, with reference to Patton's (1990) binary criterion. Themes were named using content-characteristic words and a clear definition was produced as suggested by Elo and Kyngäs (2008). For reliability, the research process was explained in detail and the results were presented with appropriate quotations to show the connections between the results and the data (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Due to the deductive approach of the study, a coding scheme developed based on the relevant literature was employed, which contributed to enhancing the reliability of the research. In the present study, the pursuit of consensus among co-researchers also makes a significant contribution to reliability.

FINDINGS

Table 1 shows the characteristics of the people included in the study. The ages of the participants ranged between 43 and 78 years. The participants were local people, tourist guides, archaeologists, public administrators, museologists, and others and their durations of residence in Antalya were between 16 and 76 years.

Table 1. *Characteristics of the Participants*

Participant	Sex	Age	Job	Educational level	Duration of residence in Antalya (Years)
P1	Male	43	Archaeologist, Guide, Academic	Postgraduate	16
P2	Male	76	Tourism Operator, NGO Representative	Graduate	44
P3	Female	43	Head of an NGO, Tourism Operator	Postgraduate	43
P4	Male	76	Academic, Guide	Postgraduate	47

P5	Male	65	Tourism Sector Representative, Local	Graduate	65
P6	Male	61	Shopkeeper, Local, Mukhtar	Primary school	36
P7	Female	57	Local Community Member, Tourism Operator	High school	57
P8	Male	78	Engineer, Local, Member of the Neighborhood Council	Graduate	47
P9	Male	66	Tourism Operator	High school	66
P10	Male	67	Author, Construction Coordinator, NGO, Local	Graduate	67
P11	Female	55	Public Administrator	Postgraduate	21
P12	Male	76	Urban Historian, Guide, Public Administrator	High school	76
P13	Male	40	Archaeologist, Museologist	Postgraduate	19
P14	Female	55	Academic, Archaeologist	Postgraduate	32
P15	Male	69	Tourism Operator, Former Mukhtar	High school	69

Table 2 shows the findings obtained from the content analysis. As seen in Table 2, four main and eight subthemes explained the impacts of tourism on Kaleiçi's transformation. Definitions for each subtheme are presented. These definitions do not reflect the formal definitions of the relevant subtheme but reflect the participants' views on the related concept.

Table 2. *Themes and Subthemes*

Theme	**Subtheme**	**Description**
Natural State	Nature of tourism/tourism industry	The existence of too many tourism enterprises, busy tourism seasons, traffic density, infrastructure problems, lack of local investments, too much interventionism, government policies, facility quality, tourist profile, complex and poor topography, a high number of archaeological structures and lack of protection, high population and tourist traffic, lack of protection of the ecological geological balance
	Nature of local people	Have poor cultural resilience, are flexible and open, are not responsible, are highly impoverished, have weak control of property, a low level of commitment, high expectation of economic benefits, realized the importance of tourism late, and their economic diversification is focused only on tourism
Reasons for Transformation/ Factors Affecting Transformation	Political	Legal regulations, lack of legislation, inability to establish a tourism system, efforts, and incentives of the state, improvement efforts of local governments, lack of governance, overlapping authorities, inadequate implementation, inadequate supervision
	Economic	Commercial concerns, poverty of local people, sale of settlements, not realizing that settlements are valuable, local people cannot afford the cost of restoration, increase in economic vitality due to tourism, the land is valuable, the land turns into a touristic product, and rent

	Sociocultural	Antalya receives intensive migration due to tourism and agriculture, change in lifestyle and daily life, cultural loss and destruction of culture, marginalization of local people, not recognizing their value, a tourism understanding excluding the local people, loss of local people's identity, being ashamed of the local people, and removal of local people while redesigning Kaleiçi
Transformation Process	Transformation in terms of context	Architecture, commercial life, house boarding, boutique hotels, use of tangible heritage sites
	Transformation from scratch	Social life, behavior, roles or values and norms, intangible culture, daily life of local people, hospitality in house boarding, meeting of families, acculturation
Effect of Tourism	Cultural effect	Loss of tangible and intangible culture, change in daily life rituals, disappearance of traditions and customs, lack of family life, increase in the crime rate, disappearance of communication and acculturation, change in values and norms, longing for the past
	Environmental effect	Excessive degeneration, few protected areas, change in the natural environment, the conduct of conservation works, tourism mobility above the meeting capacity, environmental stress, increase in noise pollution, inability of waste disposal, high consumption of resources, poor aesthetic change, unique and high attractiveness of the destination

The first main theme was related to the natural situation; here the traffic density in the nature of tourism/the tourism industry was often emphasized.

"That road inside the castle….for two or three months. They didn't plan the width of the road considering pavements. Build pavements…because visitors are always complaining about our flower pots on the road. A road open to traffic passes through here. When a visitor gets out of the house, they encounter traffic....Now a special status has been applied here, 20 km, but no one obeys." P9

Cultural resilience, economic and sociocultural structure of local people, level of commitment, and tourism awareness were observed in the nature of local people.

"Kaleiçi started to receive migration as tourism increased. The people of Kaleiçi had to vacate the area for the newcomers to find a place. Of course, this was a poor settlement; since the economic income of the residents was not very good, the fact that outsiders could buy a place and have money accordingly caused the locals here to move away, but they.... moved to other districts of Antalya. The newcomers restored the old places they bought and turned them into workplaces and boarding houses." P15

"Boarding houses have started to multiply since the flow of German tourists has increased. That's good too. This time the locals started to return to run boarding houses. But there were also those who could not do this; rent started in Kaleiçi for outsiders. And because rent started, the locals, who already needed money anyway, whose houses were leaking and falling apart slowly started to sell their houses. An influx of people occurred here and when

the influx started, tourism came here. This is how our tourism started; we were fine with that too." P8

The second main theme, culture, was related to the causes of transformation and factors affecting transformation. The views on political reasons emphasized factors such as legal regulations, lack of governance, overlapping authorities and lack of implementation and supervision.

"Some of the people moved after [19]78,....you know how they say, "You can't hammer a nail"....; those areas are protected areas, so any part of someone's door, for example, the hinge has fallen off, but they can't get the door repaired because the area is a protected site." P2

"Kaleiçi has such a misfortune. You know, if a ship has only one captain, it will sail smoothly. Our ship has several captains; so yes, it is not in danger of sinking from time to time, to be honest. A street belongs to one municipality, and the flower pot on the street belongs to the other municipality. There can't be such an idea, there shouldn't be such governance....My suggestion is definitely that this place should be managed by autonomous management....where there are many, unfortunately, problems always emerge." P3

The subheading of the impact of economic reasons included commercial concerns, poverty of local people, sale of settlements, not realizing that settlements are valuable, local people cannot afford the cost of restoration, increase in economic vitality due to tourism, the land is valuable, the land turns into a touristic product, and rent. It has been observed that as a result of using Kaleiçi as a tourist product, there have been changes, especially in the content of touristic businesses.

"I came and settled here in the [19]87; tourism was just starting in those years. Tourists with their tents were coming. Running boarding houses business also started; at first, there were a few of them, and almost all of our houses were full....hotels engaged in tourism, especially the hotel-boarding houses...cafés and bars have been opened in recent years. These kinds of businesses were opened. Such businesses accelerated their need for restoration. A lot of restoration work was done to our houses in Kaleiçi. Such structures, which were in the process of being demolished, were restored in accordance with the original, preserving their architectural style." P7

"The residents have no money, their houses are leaking. There was not so much modernity in the past....The houses are leaking everywhere, they don't have money to fix the windows and frames. What should they do? When a good price is offered, they say, "I'll sell it and go." Interest rates are very high. When they sell it for 5 billion, this is very good money; they buy two apartments and put the rest in the bank. This is how those who left here moved from these places....Even if you have money, you first have to struggle to get permission, which is a difficult process, and only if you get permission can you start the restoration....According to the rating, the authorities give you permission or not." P8.

The subtheme of sociocultural reasons included that Antalya receives intensive migration due to tourism and agriculture, change in lifestyle and daily life, cultural loss and destruction of culture, marginalization of local people, not recognizing their value, a tourism understanding excluding the local people, loss of local people's identity, being ashamed of the local people, and removal of local people while redesigning Kaleiçi.

"We have never realized that local people were the most important touristic value, we excluded local people from tourism. Look, we also excluded them from hotels. We were ashamed of local people, for example, the way they dressed, and the way they ate in restaurants. It was impossible for these people to adapt to tourism and integrate with tourism because we acted this way…. Most of our guides, I know from my friends, and we were ashamed of ourselves, from our toilets, our people. Instead of showing our own culture, we all regarded that we served tourism by saying "bye-bye" and "welcome" instead of "Hoşgeldiniz," "Güle güle," and "Merhaba" to show how Western we are." P4

"Many of our local people could not get their houses restored, so the people had to leave. The local culture moved with them. That culture is ours, our unique culture. As many residents moved away, so did our culture...Around [19]86, tourism slowly picked up. People with good economic status bought the houses of these people who moved and turned them into boarding houses, hotels, and other businesses. They had them restored. Places, where even a nail could not be nailed, became those that can be nailed....The culture living in Kaleiçi, which we call ours, was moved away from and another culture came here. Due to the entertainment and tourism sector, because everywhere in the world where money enters, a change has occurred. There is a rapid change there. In fact, there has been a rapid change in tourism and this change continues. In the first years when we came here, families would set tables in front of their doors in Kaleiçi....They would invite people who passed by their doors; sometimes they would meet people they knew....such a culture had formed. During the holidays, you would go to feast celebrations....you would have guests at work or home. But now all of this has gone....People from all over Turkey, from all regions have come to Antalya, especially to Kaleiçi. Their arrival has caused this culture to change a lot." P6

The third main theme was related to the process of transformation and the content of this theme emphasizes transformation, especially in architecture and commercial life.

"There is no deterioration in the external structure of the building, changes can be made to the rooms inside. The buildings are very well preserved and getting better. However, there are problems in the café-bar businesses in terms of their architecture and running their business; this is a factor that discourages tourists from coming....We directly apply business models from other parts of the world without thinking whether they are suitable for here or not....In other words, whatever the business culture is in Germany or Italy, we bring and adapt it here. Not only did the structure of our buildings change during the

restoration work, but also we brought that system here. I mean, now you see that, fortunately, a new fashion for Turkish coffee has emerged recently. There are many shops everywhere offering Nescafé varieties and filter coffee instead of traditional tea. We have forgotten tea. Now Turkish coffee is in fashion, tourists can drink it, and they recognize it. We are still trying to sell McDonald's-style food....In the markets, they are trying to sell food such as instant pizza...We have our pita, doner, and many kinds of food, but none of these are served." P6

Social life, behavior, roles or values and norms, intangible culture, the daily life of local people, hospitality in house boarding, meeting of families, and acculturation were included in the theme of transformation from scratch and exemplify how transformation happens.

"I think the most missing thing in Kaleiçi tours is that we cannot show the culture of the people living there. What is it like inside those houses? We pass by all these houses, but we can't go inside them. When can we go inside those houses? When the house is bought from the owner or when the vacated house is somehow invested in and converted into a hotel, we can go in and even stay in it. But whether the house we stay in its current form is the same as the house before it was converted into a hotel is a very serious question." P1

"I think tourism has helped people adapt to multiculturalism. This is actually not a negative thing, I see it as a positive thing. Serving different worlds or different cultures brings with it the opportunity to learn from people of that culture. Of course, if you have a solid subculture, you don't lose too much of yourself. You can only learn, but if you don't have a solid subculture, you will be degenerated; tourism is not to blame for this; you don't already have acquisitions in your subculture....It is not tourism that morally degenerates you, in fact, you are already not stable, you already have a culture that you don't own." P14

"The locals were a bit poor....but they got by somehow. From time to time the roofs leaked, houses fell apart when it rained, and they couldn't get them fixed because they didn't have the money....My brother, one of the old residents of Kaleiçi, knows very well that there were drummers. Ramadan drummers....Authorities forbade Ramadan drummers to beat drums as the neighborhood was opened to tourism. The drummers would also sing mani (short quadruplets). This is the culture of this place....tourists were disturbed, they were afraid of the sound of drums....but the tourists who caused drums to be banned have been celebrating Halloween since the bars opened here. Is there such a thing as Halloween in our culture?.... Let everything happen, but protect the culture of the city." P8

The last main theme was related to the impacts of tourism on a destination, and the cultural impacts included changes or loss of tangible and intangible culture, changes in daily life rituals, lack of family life, crime rate, and longing for the past.

"First of all, everyone would help each other here, especially the poor. During Ramadan, neighbors used to take food to each other....For example, behind our house lived Aunt Ayşe

and Ahmet Agha, people in need. My son used to take meals to them every day. As said earlier, we have become like the endangered bald ibis. Indeed we are. If it were up to me, I'd go. Let's say I tolerate the noise because there is noise until the morning, but I can't find a place to park my car. A drunk person comes and hits the car, and in the morning, I see that something has happened to it." P7

"Of course, when there were many locals and no boarding houses, we used to host the guests in our houses, we used to put them up and offered beds. Although they wanted to give us money, we couldn't take any because we were ashamed of accepting it. It has turned into today's distorted culture, tradition, or something that is not clear what it is from such a cultural structure....After the locals left Kaleiçi, there were no traditions or customs left. People coming from various parts of Turkey all have different customs, with adopted different cultures, so there is no common tradition left in Kaleiçi." P15

Noise pollution and poor maintenance came to the fore under the subtheme of environmental effects.

"Noise has reached its peak again....On the one hand, cafés and bars want to entertain their customers with live music and loud noises, on the other hand, people staying in hostels and hotels prefer a peaceful environment without noise. Therefore, there is a big conflict between these two situations....Look at this fortification wall! This castle wall is one of our most important cultural assets that make up the history of Kaleiçi, but these weeds and trees on it are causing the destruction of these walls." P15.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The relationship between tourism and culture is one of the most debated issues today, both academically and practically. Preservation, reproduction, and transformation of cultural heritage, particularly in historical centers, along with the development of tourism, is a complex process (MacCannell, 1976; Urry, 1999). The Kaleiçi case offers a striking example in this regard. The findings indicate that the cultural transformation in Kaleiçi is shaped not only by economic dynamics but also by the combined influence of political regulations, sociocultural changes, and the interventions of tourism actors.

According to the research findings, Kaleiçi's cultural transformation has been driven by political, economic, and sociocultural factors. At the political level, the site's protected status and multifaceted governance issues have come to the fore. As participants emphasized, ambiguities in legal regulations and the confusion of authority among municipalities make the sustainable management of Kaleiçi difficult. This situation, as frequently emphasized in the literature, slows down or distorts the development of tourism in historical areas (Özekici & Ünlüönen, 2019).

At the economic level, the poverty of local people and their inability to restore their homes have led to the sites becoming tourist products and the transfer of property. Participants stated that they sold their homes and left the area due to high restoration costs. This situation aligns with the findings of Greenwood (1977), who found in the literature that the commercialization of cultural heritage leads to a loss of local people's sense of identity. At the socio-cultural level, the most significant change is the migration of local people and the gradual fading of local identity. The fact that local people are not seen as "tourism's most important asset," and are sometimes even marginalized because they are perceived as "unsuitable for tourism", has accelerated the cultural erosion in Kaleiçi. Similarly, Tucker (2003) emphasizes that tourism in Mustafapaşa, Cappadocia, reshapes local identity and creates radical changes in the social relations of residents.

The transformation observed in Kaleiçi can be considered in two dimensions: contextual transformation and fundamental transformation. Contextual transformation is particularly evident in the architectural fabric and commercial life. Participant statements indicate that while the exterior structure has been largely preserved thanks to its protected status, the interior spaces have been reorganized in line with tourist demands. This situation aligns with the conclusion of Bear et al. (2020) in their study on UNESCO sites that architectural protection cannot prevent internal cultural change. The fundamental transformation, however, occurs primarily in social life, values, and norms. For example, traditional hospitality and neighbourhood relationships have been replaced by guesthouse management and commercialized hospitality. Furthermore, the prohibition of local rituals (e.g., Ramadan drummers) in the face of tourist demands demonstrates how cultural practices have been marginalized. In contrast, the establishment of new cultural elements (e.g., Halloween celebrations) demonstrates that tourism fosters cultural hybridization. These findings correspond to the “assimilation” and “hybridization” stages in the cultural change process identified by Haviland et al. (2008).

The cultural impacts of tourism on Kaleiçi manifest themselves in the transformation of daily life practices and the erosion of local identity. Participants emphasized the loss of past neighborhood solidarity, mutual aid, and holiday traditions. This situation parallels the observations of Van den Berghe & Oshoa (2000) in Cuzco, Peru; tourism reintroduces cultural elements but leads to the loss of authentic social relationships. Environmentally, Kaleiçi is under significant pressure due to tourist overload and infrastructure problems. Noise, waste management, and depletion of natural resources are the main problems threatening the

destination's sustainability. This situation is consistent with the findings of Yalman (2018), who stated that unplanned development of tourism brings about cultural and physical deterioration in historical centers.

In general, tourism in Kaleiçi contributes to the visibility of cultural heritage and economic vitality, while simultaneously weakening local identity, transforming social relations, and exacerbating environmental problems. This dual effect demonstrates that tourism is not only an economic activity but also an agent of cultural change (Carter & Beeton, 2004). From an academic perspective, this study contributes to the corroboration of theoretical frameworks on the culture-tourism relationship (e.g., the process of cultural change, acculturation theory) with field data. For practitioners, the Kaleiçi example offers lessons on how to strike a balance between cultural heritage protection and the sustainable management of tourism. In particular, involving local people in the process, reducing multi-faceted governance, and considering the social dimensions of tourism are critical to sustainability (Özgürel et al., 2019; Richards, 2020).

In conclusion, the Kaleiçi example demonstrates that the impacts of tourism are not limited to superficial spatial arrangements; it creates profound transformations in social values, social relations, and cultural identity. Sustainable management of this transformation process depends on both local governments and tourism stakeholders establishing a conscious balance between protecting cultural heritage and generating economic benefits.

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