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A conceptual review of last chance tourism: The case of Turkey

Abstract

Being always a popular issue despite being called differently on media, last chance tourism (LCT) has become a significant matter in tourism literature in recent years due to the increase in global warming and world population. Even though LCT has emerged in relation to visit demands to destinations under the threat of disappearance in Arctic regions, the concept is now not only used for destinations disappearing due to environmental changes but also for places disappearing due to anthropogenic reasons. The most important aspects of this concept are its relation with other tourism types and the paradox that it creates because of its impacts on the environment. These two aspects of this concept are still discussed in tourism literature. With regard to this discussion, the purpose of this study is to examine LCT and its paradox in the literature in detail; to discuss the term with regard to Turkey and to determine possible last chance destinations in Turkey with an emphasis on Hasankeyf (Batman). For this aim, a detailed literature review and an online search with keywords such as "places under threat" were conducted. As a result of this study, it is revealed that there are many LCT destinations in Turkey which have been dragged into being a LCT destination as a result of misgovernment and Hasankeyf (Batman) has been already recognized as a LCT destination by the tourists and therefore can be evaluated within LCT literature in future research in a more detailed and empirical way.

Key words: last chance tourism; environmental awareness; threat of disappearance; extinction; Hasankeyf

1. Introduction

In recent years, life style and travel magazines have published many articles about destinations under the threat of disappearance and about tours to those destinations that operators recommend (e.g. Heinrichs & Howe, 2003; Hudson, 2009; McKie, 2007; Reed, 2007; Salt, 2006; Siber, 2008; Struck, 2004). The concept of last chance tourism emerged in 1990s on the mainstream media. Various internet sites, travel blogs or travel books have focused on this issue and some destinations have been introduced or promoted as the places which should be seen before they disappear (Lemelin, Stewart, & Dawson, 2012). One of the most outstanding examples was radio documentaries and books of Douglas Adams and Mark Cawardine titled as "Last Chance to See" in 1989 and 1990. During these documentaries, Adams and Cawardine travelled a lot of locations around the world to see the species near extinction.

Although LCT is a rather new subject in tourism literature, it is not a new phenomenon. This notion has existed for a long time because tourists have been travelling to see the places which were formed by natural disasters like earthquakes or volcanoes like Pompeii (Italy) or the places which are vulnerable against anthropogenic changes like Amazon Rain Forest (Urry, 2004; Lemelin et al., 2012). However after 1990s and 2000s, melting glaciers, whitening corals or disappearing island or destinations like Tuvalu, Alaska, Mount Kilimanjaro, Greenland, Antarctica, Great Barrier Reef have started to be more in the lists of "the places that you should see" (Eijgelaar, Thaper, & Peeters, 2010). Nevertheless, in an

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era, which we are encouraged to decrease the impact of our carbon footprint, what could be the reasons of tourists' demands to visit the destinations promoted as "disappearing" due to climate changes on the media? At the end, the practice of travelling would create more carbon emission, which may cause these destinations to disappear faster (Hindley & Font, 2018). This is the biggest discussion in LCT literature, but it is also observed that LCT contributes to environmental regulations in vulnerable regions and leads to an increase in environmental consciousness and create at least social and environmental awareness. Therefore, the aim of current study is to raise environmental, social and historical awareness, to specify LCT destinations in Turkey and lastly to help these destinations be protected and preserved with a focus and an emphasis upon the case of Hasankeyf.

2. Theoretical background

In general, LCT is defined as a niche tourism market emerged from the tourists' need to seek for a region or place or natural and cultural heritage that is about to be destroyed, or disappear and to witness and experience before these places are lost (Lemelin & Johnston, 2008; Dawson et al., 2011; Lemelin, Dawson, Stewart, Maher, & Lueck, 2010). While LCT was born as a term with the notions of obscureness, rarity and virginity (Dawson et al., 2011), it is a tourism type that includes tourists' demands to visit disappearing destinations or to see disappearing natural and/or social heritage (Lemelin et al. 2010). This concept also covers observing, interacting and even taking photos of the animals in danger of extinction in many destinations which is also among package tours offered by tour operators around the world (Ballantyne, Packer, & Hughes, 2009; Garbutt, 2007; Newsome, Dowling, & Moore, 2005; Munn, 1992). This travel phenomenon is called differently on media or within academic literature as follows: catastrophe tourism (Todras-Whitehill, 2007), climate tourism and extinction tourism (Leahy, 2008), climate change voyeurism (Intelligent Travel, 2007), climate sightseeing (JWT, 2007), doom tourism (Salkin, 2007; Tsiokos, 2007), doomsday tourism (Shipman, 2007; Ruiz, 2008), global warming tourism (McCarthy, 2007), see before it's gone tourism (Viken, 2006), last chance to see tourism (Hall & Saarinen, 2010) and last chance tourism (Dawson, Stewart, Lemelin, & Scott, 2010a; Dawson, Stewart, & Scott, 2010b; Lemelin & Johnston, 2008; Lemelin et al., 2010; Lemelin, Dawson, & Stewart, 2011).

The concern towards disappearing destinations has led some tour operators and travel agencies to offer these destinations to consumers before they disappear. This trend has become concrete when the number of travelers to Galapagos Islands or Arctic regions that are besieged by changes in ecosystem has increased (Lemelin et al., 2010).

The concept of LCT emerged with the increased travel demand towards cold regions within tourism industry and popular media (Dawson et al, 2010b; Eijgelaar et al., 2010; Stewart, 2009). Many cold regions specifically Arctic regions are vulnerable to climatic and environmental changes. In recent years, it is observed that average temperature in those regions have showed a constant increase (Arctic Climate Impact Assessment [ACIA], 2004; Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], 2007). These climate changes have visible impacts on the nature of the environment. For example, some changes have occurred in seasonal periods of marine glaciers, their thickness and volume, in geographical distribution of wild species, their number and their health (ACIA, 2004; IPCC, 2007). Stewart (2009) thinks that LCT was firstly used for defining increasing tourist demand towards Arctic glaciers and polar bears, which have been under the threat of extinction. This thought has been supported by Mintel report too:

"Tour operators report that increasing number of tourists demand Arctic tours because they believe that these locations will soon disappear and they want to visit there before snow will melt away and polar bears will drown or die." (Mintel, 2008).

Besides Arctic Regions, LCT that is indeed similar to climate change tourism (Becken & Hay, 2007; Hall, Gossling, & Scott, 2011; Jones & Phillips, 2011) has been introduced with people's perceptions towards climate change. Among destinations promoted as a potential LCT destination on popular media because of their vulnerability towards changing climatic conditions, there are Great Barrier Reef, Everglades in Florida, Mount Kilimanjaro, Antarctica, Galapagos Islands and Maldives (Agnew & Viner, 2001; Amos, 2001; Becken & Hay, 2007; Hall & Higham, 2005; Uyarra, Cote, Gill, Tinch, Viner, & Watkinson, 2005).

However unlike climate change tourism, LCT covers all visits to the destinations, which are in decline due to other anthropogenic factors too. In other words, tourists sometimes demand to visit the places that are near disappearance because of other reasons than climate change, that are globalization, modernization etc. (Lemelin et al., 2012). In general, the artificial environments or attractions, local people or local cultures that are known to get lost soon are regarded as examples of LCT components (Dawson et al., 2011).

Presenting an opportunity to see the living dead or to witness annihilation of species, LCT can be considered as a predecessor of dark tourism (Lennon & Foley, 2000; Seaton, 2002). If dark tourism is the tangible form of the loss, LCT is not just a title but also it is a call for action. In deed it offers the opportunity to reverse these changes before it is too late. It is a chance to enlighten the darkness (Lemelin, Dawson, & Stewart, 2013). This study aims to use this chance to enlighten the darkness; raise people's awareness and call for action in Turkey.

3. The paradox of last chance tourism

Despite being a distinctive concept, LCT is a theme of discussion indicating paradoxes and dilemmas of sustainable tourism (Weaver, Hughes, & Pforr, 2015). The extent and structure of these discussions are complex and extensive, but it is a strong belief that if tourism does not involve travel, it is then sustainable which makes tourism impossible (Butler, 2015). The most crucial dilemma of LCT is the increase in carbon emission due to long-term travels to witness the situation of a disappearing destination (as these destinations are remote places in general) and accordingly this contributes to the speed of disappearance of those destinations (Dawson, Lemelin, Stewart, & Taillon, 2015). Dawson et al. (2015) remark another paradox of last chance tourism; environmental degradation can be advantageous for tourism industry. As Dawson et al. (2015) claim, *"as long as the existence of LCT is based upon taking advantage/utilizing the weak and the vulnerable, how could it be sustainable?"*

While the discussion about climate change still continues, it is inevitable that the idea of LCT is approached with suspicion and this notion is still criticized by tourism stakeholders and researchers (Salkin, 2007; Shipman, 2007). LCT decidedly brings to the mind many ethical questions to consider. For example, which criteria make a destination a LCT destination? How sensitive should a destination be to be included in LCT destinations' list? If a destination is permanently in a sensitive and vulnerable situation and it is being protected, what should be done? Can a destination stay as a LCT destination permanently? Should vulnerable destinations be promoted as a normal tourism destination? Which precautions should we take to ensure sustainability of a destination? Which kind of managerial or institutional regulations should be applied in order to prevent problems related to power, dominance and

personal benefits? The answers of these questions are debatable and complex and defining this notion is rather hard. Yet, the truth is that it is indeed not important whether there are universal interpretations or consistent definitions of last chance tourism. In the end, the significant point that can explain what LCT is and how a destination can be a LCT destination is the combination of vulnerability, rarity and demand. As in other tourism types, factors like marketing, people's perceptions; their values and management strategies play an important part in the existence of LCT destinations. Hence, LCT is about (1) people's perceptions towards vulnerability and (2) what is perceived as vulnerable (nature, sea, flora and fauna, artificial environment and cultures etc.) rather than specific characteristics of a certain destination (Dawson et al., 2011).

As Burns and Bibbins (2009) and Dawson et al. (2010a) claim, promoting or marketing the vulnerability of destinations under the threat of disappearance is a double-edged sword. Even though it raises awareness towards a problem, or leads to prevention efforts, it also increases the number of tourists who want to have unique or memorable experiences before these destinations disappear and so this situation may accelerate negative impacts.

When environmental changes have been combined with high adaptation capacity of tourism industry, a new approach has emerged which utilizes vulnerability. Destinations are marketed and promoted with their "disappearing" attractions and their vulnerability by some shareholders in order to obtain economic opportunities. Those promoted natural attractions; ecosystems and species that are at risk are generally located in more remote and less favorable places than more popular destinations all over the world. For this reason, LCT is identified with long-term travels to remote places, which are mostly accessed via air transportation (Dawson et al., 2011). The basic paradox of LCT is based on environmental impacts of these kinds of travels: greenhouse gas emission due to air transportation causes climate changes and degradation of those destinations (Dawson et al., 2011). In other words, people contribute to changes in the ecosystems of which results in anthropogenic climate changes (Lemelin et al., 2012), changes in land use, increasing pollution levels and pressures related to increasing population.

Tour operators have begun to offer services for customers demanding unique experiences. Although the intentions of the operators are mostly pure commercial concerns, the overall reason is the increase in the interest in those regions. Some operators recognize the environmental effects of the tours they sell; yet other benefits outweigh those disadvantages (McKie, 2007).

LCT is a function of some related variables: (1) global environmental changes (including climate changes) (2) externalities affecting other variables (e.g. habitat loss and habitat modification) (3) vulnerability of tourism sources (biophysical or cultural sources) (4) demand which is also affected by externalities like media promotion (Dawson et al., 2011). That can be summarized as a LCT vicious circle. With this model, Dawson et al. (2010a) presents the dilemma of this special niche tourism market. This circle begins with tourists' visits to destinations perceived as "at risk of extinction" and then emerging tourism-related activities and increasing human population lead to the degradation of the environment due to carbon emission caused by transportation and therefore all these cause anthropogenic climate changes. All these impacts together may harm natural value of a destination and strengthens the "at risk" status of the destination and accordingly, may increase market demand towards LCT (Piggott-McKellar & McNamara, 2017).

In another model created by Dawson et al. (2011), there are multiple and interrelated variables of last chance tourism. Global environmental changes constitute the supply part of the LCT since these changes make destinations more vulnerable towards degradation. Both supply and demand parts of this tourism type can be affected by externalities such as media interest in habitat loss and degradation

of a region. As these kinds of reasons directly influence tourism resource and accordingly make it more vulnerable and create supply, yet at the same time, they also increase the demand towards the destination by promoting its "getting lost soon" situation. LCT steps in right there and it oppresses already vulnerable destination both directly (tourist activities) and indirectly (greenhouse gas emission) and increases the vulnerability of the destination (Piggott-McKellar & McNamara, 2017).

Both models reflect two fundamental characteristics of last chance tourism. The first one is the necessity of the demand for the continuity of LCT trend, which means that tourists should be motivated to visit the destination. The second characteristic of LCT is the impacts of tourists, which make the destination, disappear faster (Dawson et al., 2010a; Dawson et al., 2011). These features of the LCT are important because increasing number of visitors can cause long-term impacts in a short term (Piggott-McKellar & McNamara, 2017).

4. Last chance tourism studies

Despite historical existence of LCT (due to the changes in built, sociocultural and political environments), this notion has gained attention only in recent years because the awareness towards environmental changes created by climate change has increased.

Beyond speculative information on popular media, LCT has not been studied and evaluated empirically. One of the first and most important empirical studies conducted in Arctic Circle belongs to Dawson, Lemelin, and Stewart (2009). As a result of a carbon emission cost evaluation of polar bear watching in Canada, the authors reveal that the reason why majority of tourists have visited Churchill, Canada is the vulnerability of this species and tourists demand to see this species before extinction. Dawson et al. (2011) focus on LCT in relation to climate change in their study through polar bear watching. Most contemporary studies on LCT have concentrated on Arctic regions (Dawson et al., 2010a; Dawson et al., 2011; Eijgelaar et al., 2010; Frew, 2008; Johnston, Viken, & Dawson, 2012; Lamers, Eijgelaar, & Amelung, 2012; Lemelin et al., 2010; Maher, Johnston, Dawson, & Noakes, 2010; Stewart, Dawson, & Lemelin, 2012; Vila, Costa, Angulo-Preckler, Sarda, & Avila, 2016). As Arctic tourism is bound mostly to environmental characteristics and is affected by irrevocable climatic conditions (Maher et al., 2010), these regions are the focus points in LCT studies. Another destinations studied in terms of LCT are Malaysia (Ahmad, Azman, Darson, & Shamsudin, 2014), the Mount Kilimanjaro (Frew, 2008) and Pacific islands (Farbotko, 2010; Huebner, 2011; Prideaux & McNamara, 2013). In the study by Coghlan (2012), LCT in Great Barrier Reef is described. Besides destinations, this trend has been studied with regard to some tourism activities such as skiing (Steiger, Dawson, & Stotter, 2012), wild life watching (Newsome & Rodger, 2012) and bird watching (Hvenegaard, 2012).

This concept has also been analyzed with other perspectives such as its perceived importance for shareholders as a niche market (Ahmad et al., 2014), its relation to ethics and reflections (Dawson et al., 2011), tourism operators' role in LCT advertisements (Frew, 2008) and how climate changes affect tourist behavior (Huebner, 2011). Dawson et al. (2015) reveal that the studies on LCT have increased four times between 2008 and 2013. The majority of these studies have been published on online articles and online blogs.

Although LCT literature has a wider scope, only in a few there are empirical findings about whether the motivation of tourists for travelling to these destinations is to find a chance to see before the attractions disappear. In one of the studies aiming to answer this question, tourists who have travelled for polar bear watching have been examined and in another one, the Antarctic has been studied (Maher et al.,

2010; Vila et al., 2016). The results of these studies show that some tourists have been influenced by LCT in their travel decisions. Dawson et al. (2010a) explain that the vulnerability of polar bears towards changing climatic conditions has affected tourists' travel preferences as a result of their analyses of data collected with 334 question forms. One of the tourists participating in that study claims *"I thought that I had to come and see those bears because when I will come this country again, they will be gone,"* another participant says *"I wanted to observe bears with my daughters because my grandchildren and their children will not see polar bears anywhere except zoos"* (Dawson et al., 2010a). In their study on tourists visiting the Antarctic, Vila et al. (2016) observe that many visitors have wanted to see a disappearing land for the last time. Even though the findings prove that this tourism trend has existed in those regions, to what extent this tourism type has impacted has not been determined yet.

With another perspective towards the subject, there are some examples of last chance to see situations or events, which people visit to witness such as the farewell concerts of popular bands or musicians like Elton John's announced final tour (Elton John, 2019) or the demolition of the house of Pablo Escobar (Casey, 2019) or the demolition of Berlin Wall (History Editors, 2019). It has not been determined yet that these kinds of happenings or events or moments can be examined under the concept of LCT.

5. Last chance tourism destinations in Turkey

For the aim of determining destinations and attractions that can be evaluated within LCT in Turkey, literature review has been conducted. However, it is seen that there has not been any scientific article or research on this specific subject. Therefore, for this part of this study, the magazines and newspaper articles related travel and environment are reviewed and also with the keywords "places under the threat of disappearance", an online search is conducted. According to the search results, newspaper articles, online blogs and online travel articles are included in the study. The destinations and attractions which have hosted or been visited by thousands of visitors every year are evaluated and explained.

Akarsu (2010) mentions about an increasing disappearance and degradation rate of species and destinations specially in the last 20 years and states that besides archeological heritage like Hasankeyf or Allianoi, almost all of the rivers, forests or prairies in Turkey have been struggling to survive due to anthropogenic threats such as hydroelectric power plants, mining, urbanization, industrialization, incorrect agriculture policies and tourism. In other words, these destinations visited by both foreign and domestic tourists have been on the verge of disappearance because of anthropogenic reasons like these visits and misconducted policies.

Some historical attractions, which were very important ancient ruins in terms of archeology and history in Turkey, were submerged for dam building. The most prominent and popular ones among these already disappeared archeological ruins were Allianoi (İzmir) and Zeugma (Gaziantep).

5.1. Allianoi

Allianoi was one of the most ancient thermal health centers in Anatolia which had its best days during Roman Era. It was located in Bergama, İzmir. From the excavations conducted in the best-preserved ancient spa of the world, Allianoi, there came out 11,000 coins, almost 400 metallic artifacts, 800 ceramic artifacts, almost 400 glass artifacts and among these, the most important one was the Nympe Statue which was moved to Bergama Museum. Despite all this, Allianoi is now under dam waters (Aydin, 2019).

5.2. Zeugma

Belkıs/Zeugma Ancient City was located within the borders of Belkıs Village in Gaziantep, near Euphrates River. The excavation work in the city was conducted in three parts as A, B and C. The A and B parts where houses and marketplace of the city were situated are now under the waters of Birecik Dam Lake. The C part of the city has not been a place of archeological excavations yet and in near future it is considered to be an open-air museum. Zeugma Ancient City was a well-known place with its mosaics dated back to Roman Era around the world. The mosaic works of art taken out with recovery excavations were moved to Zeugma Mosaic Museum in 2011 (Rehberi, 2019).

According to our literature review and online search, the destinations that may be regarded as destinations on the verge of disappearance in future may be Pamukkale (Denizli), Lake Salda (Burdur), Mount Ida (Balıkesir/ Çanakkale), Akkuyu (Mersin), Tuz Lake (Konya) and Gökova Bay (Muğla). Today, Mount Ida is threatened by mining activities, thermic and hydroelectric power plants; Akkuyu is threatened by the possibility of a nuclear power plant. Tuz Lake is on the verge of being drained by wells and Gökova, a protected area, is known to be zoned for construction in near future. All these destinations are here listed only because of the latest newspaper articles and their being a focus of attention on the media quite often in Turkey. But here only two of them are explained in a more detailed way because of their popularity in terms of tourism in Turkey.

5.3. Lake Salda

Lake Salda and its surroundings are qualified to host many tourism activities and types such as lake tourism, camping, water sports, trekking, bird-watching, rural tourism and winter tourism thanks to geographical conditions of the lake. The lake is situated in Yeşilova town of Burdur province and covers an area of 220 km². It is 1,300 m above the sea level and one of the deepest lakes of Turkey (184 m). The area is natural habitat of many bird and fish species. In 1989, the area was recognized as "Grade 1 Natural Site Area" due to its unique natural beauties and its ecosystem by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. However, in 1992, with a new regulation, the quality of the area was lowered to "Grade 2 Natural Site Area". After this, many activities have been conducted for promoting and developing tourism in the region (Kapan, 2016).

According to Nature Tourism Master Plan in Burdur Province (2013-2023) report (Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs, 2013), as a result of a survey study on Lake Salda, the residents claimed that tourism in Lake Salda elevated their quality of life. On the other hand, the newspaper articles published mostly in 2018 show that Lake Salda "*The Maldives of Turkey*" and its surroundings are under an environmental threat and specifically the endemic species are threatened by extinction (Esmer, 2016; Deniz, 2018; Yavuz, 2017; Salda Gölü yine tehdit altında, 2018; Türkiye'nin Maldivleri kararıyor, 2018; Yavuz, 2018; Atlas Dergisi, 2018).

Kapan (2016) conducted a SWOT analysis for the sustainability and tourism development in Lake Salda and as a result he revealed under the title of "threats" that Burdur province was in the first rank in natural habitat destruction because of activities related to hydroelectric power plant and mining. Despite all these warnings, the area has not been put under protection and it is planned that the destination would attract 500,000 tourists by the end of 2018 (Celik, 2018), which hosted 250,000 visitors in 2017 (Salda Gölü'nü bu yaz 250 bin kişi ziyaret etti, 2017).

5.4. Pamukkale

The most significant attractions of Pamukkale which is among World Heritage Sites and located in Denizli Province are natural and historical beauties which are evidently related to thermal waters in the

region. The most important tourist attraction is white travertine terraces forming a series of stepped pools cascading down steep slopes. This magnificent geological structure is almost 3 km long. One of the historical attractions is Hierapolis, an ancient spa center that is situated above Pamukkale travertines.

Hierapolis and travertine terraces were taken under protection as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. But terraces and ancient ruins have been at risk of degradation by tourism for a time (Yuksel, Bramwell, & Yuksel, 1999; Bertan, 2009). White travertines in Pamukkale are harmed physically and it is observed that there are alterations in their colors (Simsek, Gunay, Elhatip, & Ekmekçi, 2000). Even though there have been many studies regarding environmental protection of Pamukkale conducted by both tourism researchers and local authorities, it is seen that the problem still continues. In Pamukkale, hosting thousands of tourists especially during high season, the travertine terraces are highly bleached or so to say, their white color is turned into yellow day by day (Beyazlık yok oluyor, 2015). Nevertheless, it is revealed that in 2018 the number of tourists has drastically increased at the rate of 46% and in the first six months of the year (January-June) reached 780,207 (Haber Turk, 2018).

5.5. Hasankeyf

Twelve thousand-year-old Hasankeyf settlement is situated near the Euphrates at the southeastern part of Turkey. Hosting many historical artifacts from Neolithic caves, Roman ruins to the statues from Middle Age, Hasankeyf is a unique natural museum. For the purpose of building Ilisu Hydroelectric Power Plant Project as it has been planned, almost 80% of Hasankeyf will be submerged despite its rich, multicultural historical values and heritage. Nevertheless, there has not been any approved international plan for replacement and protection of the artifacts in the ancient city. The most urgent thing to do is the creation of an independent strategic plan protecting the balance between preservation and sustainable development. Hasankeyf was nominated for the program of "7 Cultural Heritage under Major Threat" in 2016 by "Kültür Bilincini Geliştirme Vakfı" ("Developing Cultural Consciousness Foundation") whose campaign has been supported by many national and international institutions and foundations (Endangered Site, 2009; Büyük tehlike altındaki 14 yer, 2015).

Hasankeyf, a potential UNESCO World Heritage List site, has actually the required qualifications for being in World Heritage List (Kocabas, 2013). Because Hasankeyf is a great example of human creative mind; reflects historical changes in human values under the light of developments in landscape design, urban planning, monumental artifacts, technology and architecture. Also, it is a living proof of cultural traditions and many civilizations; hosts architectural and technological examples reflecting important phases of human history; is an outstanding example of land and water usage and conventional human settlements which can reflect a culture in the best way. Hasankeyf has natural beauties and areas of great importance of aesthetic; has survived through significant phases of world history geologically, ecologically and biologically and is still a natural habitat of many species (Ahunbay & Balkız, 2009).

Hasankeyf which is an impressive city situated in Mesopotamia Region in Turkey and has survived through the Middle Ages and has been the cradle of many civilizations, unfortunately will be under waters of Ilisu Dam unless the project is cancelled (Sener, 2004) like Bergama Allianoi (Bergama – Allianoi, 2015). According to Kitchen and Ronayne (2001), the only way to protect Hasankeyf is to preclude the dam building. Although there are many national and international protests, campaigns and newspaper articles (Balta, 2009; Rainey, 2013, Harte, 2014) about this issue, there has not been any change in the ongoing plans.

Figure 1
Hasankeyf



Source: Photos taken by authors (2017).

All this is by the way, according to the latest news on the media, LCT has already begun in Hasankeyf; people have wanted to see it with their own eyes before it is under water. For example, one of the tourists say that *"I have been there before but this time, it is different for me because it is the last time that we ever see it before it is under waters. We are sorry about that because it is one of the few beauties of Batman and one of the tourism attractions that should be seen by everybody. I live in another city. I am afraid of seeing this place differently when we come to visit in a couple of years. I hope we will not see in a bad shape and I hope we will see it in the same way as now"* (Haber Turk, 2019)

6. Conclusion

Last chance tourism is a rarely studied issue in Turkey. The reason for that can be the controversial side of LCT. Because it is still a matter of debate whether LCT destinations are only the places on the verge of disappearance due to natural or environmental reasons or may the places near destruction because of anthropogenic reasons be called as LCT destinations. The current study is shaped in terms of LCT definition made by Lemelin et al., (2012). In this sense, some destinations are analyzed and discussed in terms of LCT.

According to the current study, these destinations which are near disappearance are still promoted for tourists. For example, in the case of Turkey, today only Hasankeyf are promoted by marketing campaigns with headlines like *"See before it is under waters"*. For the case of Hasankeyf, the number of visitors are not the reasons for increasing or speeding the rate of disappearance because it is not related with some environmental issues such as global warming as in the case of the Arctic regions. The reason of disappearance of Hasankeyf is related only to the decisions made by authorities; in other words, it is related mostly to the people. The important thing here is to raise awareness of locals and visitors towards historical and environmental values of a destination.

It is deduced that local and national governments or authorities should consult or get support from academics or experts in the fields of archeology, art history, tourism and environment as much as from

engineers or technical experts. When it comes to decide the faith of a destination or an attraction which was formed by nature or created in ancient times by people who lived many years ago, it should be considered thoroughly; with all sides. As a result, for example even if local people in Hasankeyf or Bergama can get more practical benefits from a dam than an ancient city, it should be conducted by both protecting the city or artifacts and developing the local people's quality of life. These places should be under protection for next generations and should not disappear due to some regulations. They should be open to visit only after the carrying capacities are determined especially for destinations like Lake Salda or Pamukkale. If it is needed, the number of visitations should be limited as in the case of Venice. Accordingly, it is believed that their value will be increased.

One of the limitations of this study is that it is assumed that tourists and visitors of aforementioned destinations know about their being under threat of disappearance because especially during high season, almost every day newspaper articles about this places' situation come out both on national and international media. Also, it is thought that tour guides give information about the threats facing these destinations to tourists during tours. Other limitation is that this study is not an empiric one but a conceptual study, which aims to raise awareness in Turkey firstly. In future research, tourists' opinions about aforementioned destinations will be studied empirically. Also it is suggested that in future studies, other popular LCT destinations should be specified and solutions for protection of natural or historical attractions should be discussed.

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