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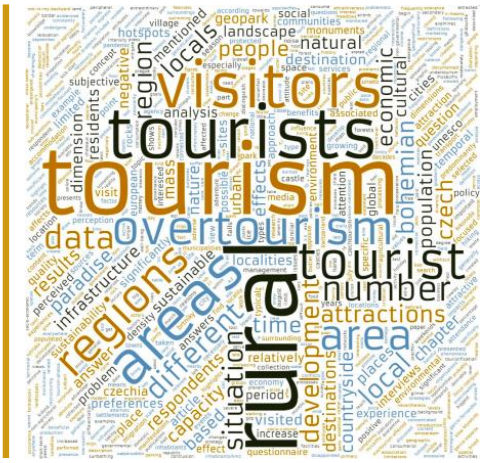
OVERTOURISM HOTSPOTS: BOTH A THREAT AND OPPORTUNITY FOR RURAL TOURISM



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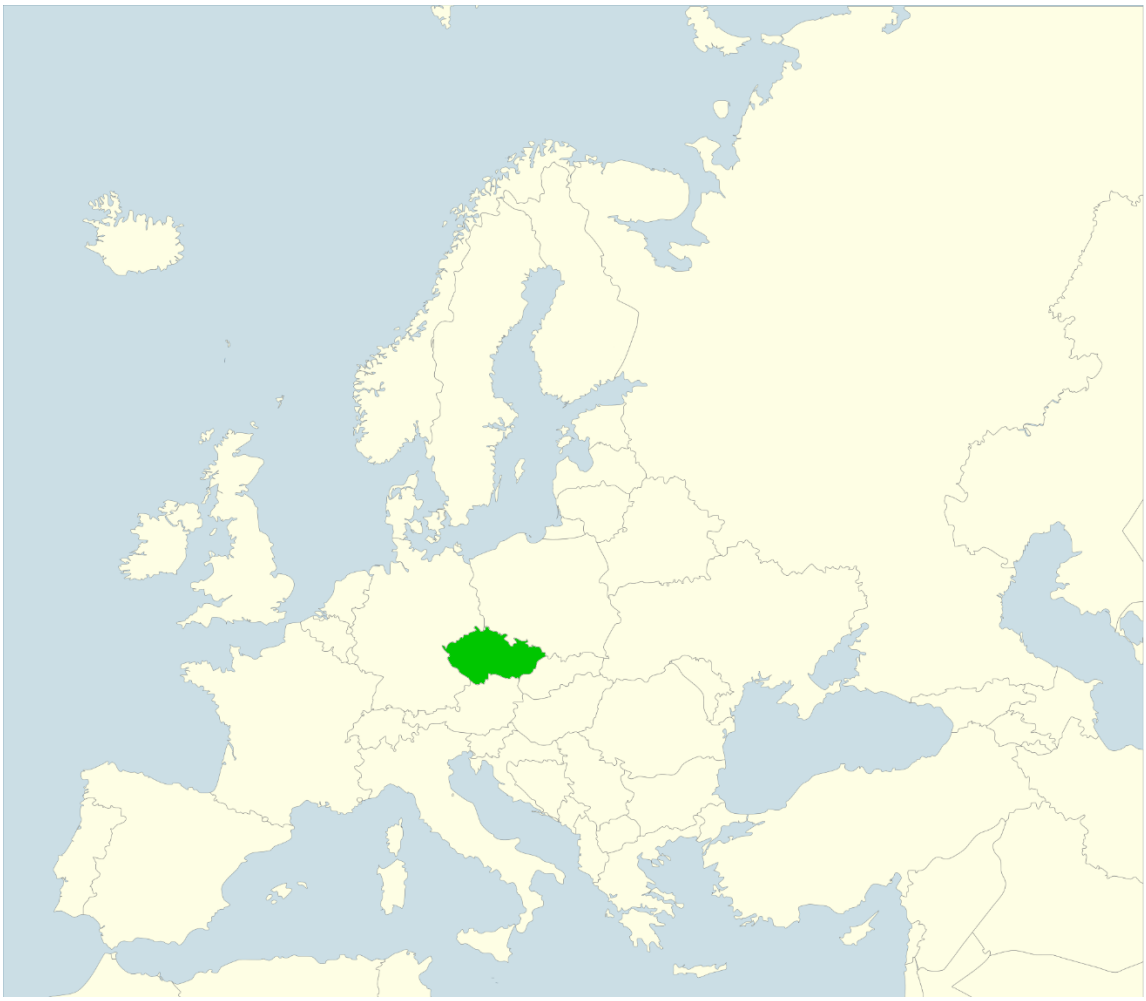

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Abstract: Overtourism is relatively rare in rural regions of Czechia, in the form of lonely "hotspots" surrounded by areas that suffer from undertourism. Therefore, the article aims to analyse whether these hotspots could be used to develop tourism in the surrounding regions and whether it is a desirable and sustainable situation. The paper examines the reasons that lead to overtourism in the rural environment and explains the concept of three dimensions of overtourism: objective, subjective and temporal. Based on experience from overtourism-affected locations in Czechia, we describe how to know whether a site can be a positive center for tourism development and whether it is desirable or, conversely, dangerous for the surrounding region. We use data obtained through a questionnaire survey, narrative interviews with local people, and field research.

Key Words: Overtourism, sustainable tourism, rural communities, tourism induced conflicts, touristification of rural areas

Souhrn: Overturismus se ve venkovských regionech Česka objevuje spíše zřídka, a to ve formě osamělých „horkých skvrn“, které jsou obklopeny oblastmi, které trpí spíše underturismem. Cílem článku je proto analyzovat, zda by se těchto hotspotů dalo využít k rozvoji turismu i v okolních regionech a zda jde o situaci, která žádoucí a udržitelná. V článku analyzujeme důvody, které v rurálním prostředí vedou ke vzniku overturismu, a vysvětlujeme naši koncepci jeho tří dimenzí. Na základě zkušeností z overturismem postižených lokalit v Česku popisujeme, jak poznat, zda lokalita má potenciál být pozitivním centrem rozvoje turismu a zda je to žádoucí nebo naopak pro okolní region nebezpečné. Využíváme dat, která jsme získali pomocí dotazníkového šetření, narativních rozhovorů s místními obyvateli a terénním průzkumem.

Klíčová slova: Overturismus, udržitelný turismus, venkovské komunity, cestovním ruchem vyvolané konflikty, turistifikace venkovského prostoru

Highlights

- There are three basic dimensions of overtourism – subjective, objective, and temporal; the deviation of some of them to a higher intensity causes a negative attitude towards visitors among the locals.
- The two main factors that influence the emergence of objective overtourism are the number of tourists and the (insufficient) capacity of the tourist infrastructure.
- The temporal aspect affects the degree of tolerance of locals to the negative effects of mass tourism; in rural areas, it is usually limited to a few days, weeks, or a maximum of few months.
- The perception of "over" is always subjective, so it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between overtourism and the NIMBY effect.
- Overtourism hotspots in rural regions are exceptions that can be used to develop tourism throughout the region.

1. Introduction

Rural areas have undergone economic restructuring in the last decades, particularly in Czechia, transitioning from socialist to a market economy, which brought declining income from traditional rural economies connected with agriculture. Tourism is viewed as a potential remedy for a declining economy of rural areas and related migration from the countryside and a major factor in the regional development

of the countryside (Cawley & Gilmor, 2008; Goodwin, 2017). However, another topic is how tourism and tourism policies relate to sustainable development (Aall et al., 2015).

In the past few years, media and academic attention were paid to overtourism in urban tourist destinations such as Venice, Amsterdam, and Barcelona, especially in the centers of mentioned cities. However, the most vulnerable places are not necessarily the cities, but rather coastal or rural sites such as Iceland, Norwegian fjords, or the Island of Skye. Rural areas suffering from overtourism are not frequently discussed, although the number of relevant publications partly or entirely focused on rural overtourism is slowly growing (Drápela, 2020; Dodds & Butler, eds., 2019; Milano, Cheer & Novelli, eds., 2019; Insch, 2020; Oklevik et al., 2019).

Small rural populations are more overwhelmed by the numbers of tourists, and the prevention of overtourism in that areas could be even more challenging (Butler, 2019). Rural areas usually have limited services, transport, and infrastructure, and seasonality more influences them. They are at a higher risk of various types of anthropogenic damage to natural sites (Drápela, 2021; Hall, 2011; Martín Martín, Guaita Martínez & Salinas Fernández, 2018; Ruban, 2010). We can find tourism hotspots, so-called honey pots in the countryside where tourists focus only on few popular destinations (Drápela, 2020; Goodwin, 2017). Rural regions are also different from a sociological point of view. They are generally calmer, more traditional, and known for personal ties between their inhabitants and local values. These values might be perceived as opposite to the anomie of urban living. During the Covid-19 pandemic, rural regions appeared to be safer than crowded cities. However, rural tourist hotspots were under a load of predominantly domestic tourists because of the border restrictions, as we know from our experience in Czechia. Domestic tourists are often underestimated in the management of overtourism. On the one hand, residents of rural areas welcome tourists. On the other hand, they are afraid of their cumulation. Their attitude towards mass tourism is associated with their socio-economic status, predominantly the linkage of their employment to tourism.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Overtourism

Tourism can have both positive and negative impacts on society as well as natural and cultural monuments. Tourist values can be very different from the values of residents in a tourist destination, and some consensus is ideal. Tourist customers of private businesses often use shared and public tangible resources and spaces such as landscape and parks and spiritual resources such as culture and atmosphere (Sæþórsdóttir, Hall & Wendt, 2020). However, the government, regional governments, municipalities, or travel advocates often attempt to stimulate tourism to maximise the economic effect. The attitude of the majority of locals or even tourists could be the opposite. Tourism development strategies are a political issue. They should reflect residents' views, and locals should be incorporated into a planning process to reach sustainable tourism based on the closed system of economy, society, and nature (Aall et al., 2015; Ólafsdóttir, 2021). The short-term and long terms benefits of mass tourism should be taken into consideration in destination management. However, the dialogue between multiple sides with opposite interests is not easy. It has critics who note that opinion-policy congruence costs time and money and decreases government efficiency. Tourists and their preferences should also be taken into account as essential players. A too massive influx of tourists can create hostile feelings among locals whose quality of life is endangered, specifically their access to civic facilities. It can even lead to public protests. Locals' negative moods can influence tourists' satisfaction in a vicious circle of mutual relationships (Lankford, 1994; Zerva et al., 2019). Overtourism is a new term for old problems with excessive tourism in attractive destinations known since the 19th century. These troubles have become a subject of academic attention since the 1960s (Dodds & Butler, eds. 2019). One of the first significant efforts to characterise overtourism through the perception of residents of tourist destinations was Doxey's Irridex or irritation index, which observes the connection between the numbers of tourists and feelings towards tourists with four stages of emotions (Doxey, 1997):

- Euphoria

- Apathy
- Irritation
- Antagonism

Tourism is, with the exception of the Covid-19 pandemic era, a growing economic sector worldwide, eased by a synergy of growing middle social class, new groups of tourists, more sophisticated tourism marketing with the help of media and online social networks, and cheap possibilities of transport and accommodation. 11% of global people's consumption before the pandemic was tourism (UNWTO, 2018). Although mass tourism is the subject of complaints for decades, overtourism or tourism-phobia are terms used for nine years and mean the perceived overcrowding from an excess of tourists, resulting in various clashes with locals or other tourists (Telegraph, 2018; Zerva et al., 2019). Modern overtourism is out of the effective control of local governments in affected areas (Goodwin, 2017). The term overtourism was first inserted in the Oxford English Dictionary in 2018 and nominated as the word of the year (Oxford Languages, 2018). This term is used by the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), which considers overtourism a severe problem, particularly in connection with urban tourism and its sustainability. It is challenging to assess overtourism due to the lack of reputable indicators and methodology. According to the report from the European Parliament's Committee on Transport and Tourism (Peeters et al., 2018), relevant indicators for overtourism could be:

- Tourism density – bed-nights/km^2
- Tourism intensity – bed-nights per resident
- The share of tourism in regional GDP
- Air travel intensity – arrivals by airplanes divided by the number of residents
- Closeness to the airport, port, or UNESCO Sites

UNWTO attempts to promote sustainable tourism in the long term and introduced indicators to measure the sustainability of tourism, accenting economy, society, environment, and governance (Ólafsdóttir, 2021). Sustainable, responsible, and slow tourism can be viewed as the opposite of overtourism (Guiver & McGrath, 2016; Oh, Assaf & Baloglu, 2014). Responsible tourism is based on strategic leadership and governance founded on sustainability principles. It attempts to mitigate negative aspects of tourism by:

- Not visiting crowded localities and preferring alternative destinations – related to the promotion of less-known sites in a tourist region and prolongation of tourist season and connected business
- Spending money in locals' businesses
- Staying for a longer time in one place
- Taking one’s own holiday's ecological footprint seriously

Another method of sustainable tourism is connected with restrictions that should prevent residents' irritation. Most destinations cannot control the influx of tourists because of the lack of control over transport networks and accommodation, such as Airbnb. However, several destinations charge fees to enter city centers (Venice), limit ship entry (Venice, Amsterdam), limit Airbnb rentals (many European metropoles), or somehow regulate the behavior of tourists.

Overtourism can be observed both among locals, who view tourism as a disruptive factor that increasingly burdens daily life, and visitors, who may regard high numbers of tourists as a nuisance. UNWTO defined tourism's carrying capacity (TCC) as "the maximum number of people that may visit a tourist destination at the same time, without destroying the physical, economic and socio-cultural environment and an unacceptable decrease in the quality of visitors' satisfaction" (UNWTO, 2018). TCC is comprised from (Mihalič & Kuščer, 2020):

- General sustainability – environmental, social-cultural, and economic dimension
- Socio-psychological sustainability – dimension of resident responses to tourism and its impacts

- Socio-political sustainability – strategies of involved governmental and non-governmental organisations, media and networks, and awareness of residents about them

Overtourism means that a destination has so many visitors that it is running down natural and social capital at a rate faster than it can recover within a concept of resilience (Sæþórsdóttir, Hall & Wendt, 2020). Tourist destinations are dynamic, and they change over time. Overtourism is usually with a specific tourists' behavior associated with short trips to famous locations and a hunt for selfies and trophy photos in popular places. So we must take into account not only the spatial dimension but also the time dimension of overtourism. Time dimension includes the length of a trip and also its season (Krajíčková & Novotná, 2020).

2.2 Rural area

An exact delimitation of a rural area or countryside is a big topic, because scholars and policy officials employ many definitions usually differing in population thresholds. Different countries have varying definitions of rural or countryside for statistical and administrative purposes. According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the delimitation of the countryside is a regionalisation based on the criteria of population density and share population in lower territorial units, which are purposefully defined. The purposefulness of definition compared units is the main problem of using and comparing different results of the method used. The limit value is the population density in municipalities lower than 150 inhabitants/km^2. Villages defined in this way can already be considered as rural. We can distinguish three subcategories (Binek et al., 2009):

- Primarily rural areas – more than 50% of the population lives in rural communities or regions
- Significantly rural areas – 15–50% of the population lives in rural municipalities, regions
- Mostly urban areas – 15% of the population in rural communities, regions

The definition of the countryside, according to Eurostat, is based on population density similar to an OECD definition and distinguishes (Binek et al., 2009):

- Densely populated areas – population density > 500 inhabitants/km^2, population > 50 000 inhabitants
- Moderately populated areas (rural) – density > 100 inhabitants/km^2, population > 50 000 inhabitants
- Sparsely populated areas (rural)

In general, a rural area or a countryside is a geographic area located outside towns and cities, representing an intermediate stage between a wilderness and urban space. We observe dichotomies: city – village, urbanised territory – non-urbanised territory, specific production-specific consumption. Rural areas usually have a low population density and small settlements. Rural settlements and infrastructure occupy only a tiny percentage of the landscape dominated by fields, meadows, forests, mountains, water, etc. The rural area includes landscape and rural settlements (villages and small towns connected into functioning complexes) and integrates undeveloped land and built-up areas. The agricultural area commonly comes under rural, as are other types of a site such as a forest.

The majority of people in rural areas were employed in agriculture in the past. Nevertheless, in contemporary Europe, the number of agricultural employees is lower than in services or industry, even in rural regions. High transaction costs connected with long distances and infrastructure of poor quality are typical for rural areas. Generally, the rural area has its specific institutional, socio-cultural, and environmental attributes. On the one hand, these specifics of some rural regions gradually disappear with increasing globalisation and amenity migration transforming rural settlements into urban. On the other hand, differences between various rural regions grow and are caused primarily by discrepancies in regions' living or tourist attractiveness (Ashley & Maxwell, 2001; McCarthy, 2008).

There is no universal rural area, and new attributes of rural area emerge, e. g., post-agricultural rural area, suburban rural area, or for our purposes, important recreational, rural area. A rural area is defined in geography based on these factors (Chromý et al., 2011):

- Demographic information – number of inhabitants or population density
- Geographical location – especially in relation to a city, urbanised area, or supreme regional center
- Hierarchy and scale
- Territorial and regional differentiation of its prevailing functions (e.g., agricultural, manufacturing, forestry, residential, recreational) or structural features of landscape, settlements, and companies (e.g., use of an area, size structure of municipalities, economic activity of the population)

Rural areas are not economic centers, and their population often commute for work or education. They can be divided from a geographic perspective derived from the Keynesian economy to peripheral or marginal areas. The degree of peripherality is derived from socio-economic characteristics. Modern approaches to regional development are more focused on the variety of actors in a rural area, their cooperation and innovation potential (Blažek & Uhlíř, 2020; Perlín, Kučerová & Kučera, 2010). A collaboration of actors is crucial for tourism management in rural areas. Rural areas do not usually suffer from overtourism. Nevertheless, some localities deal with overtourism and its effects are multiplied by the low-quality infrastructure and above-mentioned geographical factors.

2.3 Rural tourism

Rural areas in European countries have undergone economic restructuring since the 1990s as part of the transition from industrial to post-industrial or the transition from a centrally planned economy to a capitalist economy in post-socialist countries. The peripheralisation of rural areas became apparent because of the collapse of agricultural cooperatives. The effect of European integration and its Common Agricultural Policy, which also encourages rural communities to find non-agricultural sources of income, on rural areas, should be reflected. Changes also happened in the regional differentiation of rural regions (Chromý et al., 2011). Tourism has taken over primary production as a prominent business in European rural communities, and top tourist destinations outside cities belong to rural regions (Daugstad, 2008). Rural tourism is a broad concept depending on a wide range of publicly and privately owned natural and cultural resources, associated infrastructure, interpretative facilities, and provision of accommodation, food, beverages, and goods (Cawley & Gilmor, 2008; Konečný, 2014). It includes both active and passive holidays. The benefits of rural tourism are to preserve identity and tradition in an acceptable way and present rural heritage to tourists. Visitors expect a rural tourism product with authentic and original experiences. Rural tourism is seen as a tool for developing rural areas, but its quality, especially the quality of services, is a determinant of its success. Rural tourism can boost local inhabitants' economic profit and increase employment, improve their living standards, and prevent their migration to cities. Depopulation of rural areas and abandonment of properties are frequent phenomena in many European regions (Gajić et al., 2020). Rural tourism was analysed from various standpoints (Saxena et al., 2007):

- Core/periphery approach – based on economic linkages and disparities between regions
- Economic approach – examines if tourism is economically harmful, beneficial, or redistributive
- Commercialisation approach – focused on visibility and publicity of tourism
- Consumerist approach – tourists consume places
- Existential approach – focused on spiritual reasons of tourist visits
- Community-focused approach – distinguishing between culturally exploitative and culturally restorative tourism
- Sustainability approach – based on the concept of sustainable development

Generally, modern tourists are more attracted by peripheral upland landscapes than agricultural lowlands. Rural tourism includes many stakeholders such as tourists, travel agencies, business owners, or host community members. There are usually problems with the cooperation of all these stakeholders and their interests. Rural tourism activities also develop in natural protected areas where they can have a beneficial or adverse effect. Protected areas are susceptible to tourism impact. When an area is given protected status, the tourist sees it as a validation of its attractivity and becomes a marketing tool for the tourism industry. Generally, the landscape is vital for rural tourism, and local knowledge and public participation are crucial. The concept of integrated rural tourism (IRT) was created to make it a part of a rural development strategy. It promotes environmental, economic, and socio-cultural sustainability and recognises non-linear processes and tourism development's human and cultural context. It combines the approaches of rural tourism analysis mentioned in the typology above this paragraph. It is based on creating an integrative framework of stakeholders with an accent on the involvement of local people (Cawley & Gilmor, 2008; Saxena et al., 2007). A goal is to protect a diversity of a rural area, important for its tourist attractiveness and containing a predominantly cultural landscape and partly natural resources. A common conclusion is that rural tourism concentrates on economic and social viability at the expense of environmentally sustainable development.

The concept of environmental policy integration (EPI) was created to improve sustainable tourism development (Aall et al., 2015). The complexity of sustainability issues and sustainable tourism requires a response outside of the usual jurisdiction of tourism-specific governance. This may be an issue of spatial scale. A government body may have limited or even no jurisdictional authority over a policy problem. It may be an issue of means concerning operational policy processes, technologies, or institutional arrangements. Or perhaps the policy capacity to respond to sustainable tourism issues may reflect the political acceptability of any solution, i.e., increases in tax, greater regulation, concern over travel lifestyle change (Hall, 2011). EPI contains horizontal cross-sector (HEPI), vertical multi-level (VEPI), and governmental and non-governmental dimensions. We can also distinguish between three levels of EPI (Aall et al., 2015; Lafferty & Hovden, 2003):

- Coordination – removal of contradictions between policies as well as within policies on different levels
- Harmonisation – a creation of synergies based on mutual benefits recognition and making policies mutually supportive
- Prioritisation – preferring environmental issues to achieve sustainable development and incorporation of ecological objectives into all policy-making stages as guiding principles for a policy and its evaluation

Still, EPI is a broad concept with a need for operationalisation. VEPI is the dimension that is most actively pursued and achieved. Examples of successful HEPI are not so frequent. VEPI involves less inter-departmental conflict and less probability of occurrence of clear sectoral winners and losers.

2.4 Overtourism in a rural area

We expect a rural area to provide a slow pace, feelings of peace, remoteness, and transcendence from everyday life, which is an important reason for the growing popularity of rural tourism. However, some tourists prefer very active recreations in rural areas (e.g., whitewater rafting, hang gliding, hunting). Mainly for remote rural regions, tourism is a crucial source of income and pleasant social contact with tourists. Tourism can also bring other benefits to rural areas, such as infrastructural development and spin-off enterprise opportunities. Nevertheless, the reality of tourism hotspots brings many tourists concentrated in a small space. A high concentration of visitors leads to the creation of crowds, although it facilitates making money from tourism. Mass tourism in rural areas can be perceived as a form of urbanisation, concretely its transport and service impact (Butler, 2019). Another consequence of overtourism in rural areas is losing their cultural authenticity. It can change rural areas together with amenity migration by a proliferation of urban lifestyle and settlement development. Amenity migration means creating primary or secondary residences in rural areas and tourism gentrification, contributing to

overtourism in some regions (Liang & Bao, 2015). Proximity to protected natural areas and attractive landscapes with outdoor tourism possibilities become a more relevant factor of choice of residence within amenity migration (McCarthy, 2008).

Unfortunately, social effects and conflicts between residents and tourists are more attractive than adverse environmental effects, which affect urban and rural areas, for media attention. Environmental issues associated with overtourism in rural areas are pollution, noise, higher water consumption, excessive waste production, littering, destruction of biotopes in rural regions, decreased species diversity, soil degradation, extreme exploitation of natural resources, water, and air pollution, contribution to climate change, etc. (Drápela, 2020; Dodds & Butler, eds. 2019; Peeters et al., 2018). Impacts can vary depending on the type of environment. Accumulation of waste belongs to typical consequences of mass tourism, and in rural areas, services are not so frequent and quality, such as in cities. These issues are usually concentrated in the tourism hotspots of rural areas. These hotspots could be far from each other, so tourists do not walk or cycle and go by car. In rural regions, tourism occurs in a location where there are significantly fewer residents than in urban space. Nevertheless, visitors often reside in an urban location adjacent to rural attractivity, usually small towns. So logically, a rural site is endangered, especially by damaging natural areas.

Once the carrying capacity of a place is reached, the destination is strained by additional users. It cannot develop sustainably, threatening the environment, well-being of the residents, and visitors' experiences (Insch, 2020). The most frequent measures taken by destination management organisations and local governments to mitigate the adverse effects of overtourism are (Peeters et al., 2018):

- Spreading visitors in time and space – promoting less-visited attractions and stays out of main tourist season
- Targeting visitor misbehavior – the misbehavior may violate laws and decrees or moral norms, and it should be monitored and punished
- Increasing the capacity of infrastructure and accommodation

Mentioned measures, based on offer and positive motivation or warning, are most common in tourism management. However, it does not mean they are the most appropriate for specific locations.

2.5 Three-dimensional concept of overtourism

The main factor influencing the perception of overtourism in a given locality is the absolute number of visitors (Namberger et al., 2019; Fedyk et al., 2020). However, this is not a direct proportion, as a certain type of locality (like cities and large tourist resorts) has a relatively large visitor capacity, while especially nature reserves suffer from not very high numbers of visitors. Thus, overtourism in a certain place cannot be measured solely based on objective criteria (such as those mentioned in the previous chapters, e.g., Peeters et al., 2018), but the subjective and temporal dimensions must also be included (see Fig 1). In general, it can be said that the perception of what is already "over" is always a matter of subjective dimension. However, the subjective perception of the problem is based on the objective reality (e.g., number of visitors, tourist and transport infrastructure capacity) that affects the subject and the temporal effect of this problem. We analyse rural overtourism using predominantly sustainability and community-focused approaches mentioned in Chapter 2.3. The consumerist approach was essential for the preparation of our questionnaire.

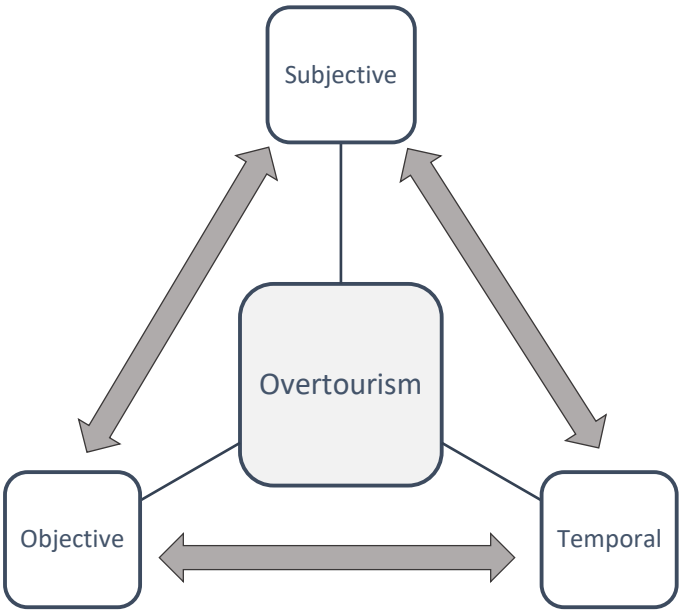

Fig 1. Three dimensions of overtourism and their interactions. Source: own processing

In our experience, if the negative effects of mass tourism (a) are not objectively too severe, (b) last only a limited time and not long-term, and (c) cause only mild mental discomfort to locals, the situation is not perceived as overtourism. However, if in one or more dimensions the situation already exceeds the tolerable level (which is very difficult to define), a turning point occurs, and the situation is marked as overtourism. For the subjective dimension, it is then difficult to distinguish how much this manifests overtourism and how much of a common NIMBY (not-in-my-backyard) effect. In such a case, we recommend assessing whether there is evidence of the adverse impacts of tourism in the second two dimensions or whether it is a manifestation of intolerance. Also, asking tourists in a given locality about their subjective feelings may help distinguish overtourism from a NIMBY effect.

Overtourism in rural regions is a topic that receives much less attention than it deserves. In addition to a few studies (Ghidouche & Ghidouche, 2019; Brlic, 2020; Altaba & Garcia-Esparza, 2021), the attention of researchers is focused more on cities or seaside resorts. At the same time, given the global growth of tourism in recent decades, it can be expected that this will be a topic that will be addressed more and more often. Whether it is nature reserves, the environment of rural communities, or just the beauty of the cultural landscape, the number of visitors can be expected to grow in the future for at least the next few decades. The European countryside must prepare for this situation to take advantage of enough opportunities and neutralise the negative effects as much as possible.
For this reason, we would like to answer three questions in this article, namely:

1. *What is the origin of overtourism in Czech rural areas?*
2. *How does the temporal dimension of overtourism manifest itself in the environment of the Czech countryside, where the main tourist season is relatively narrowly limited to the period of July and August?*
3. *Can these overtourism hotspots be used to kick-start tourism in the surrounding regions?*

We believe that although our analysis focuses only on the Czech rural areas, its results will be applicable in also other European regions with a similar character of the territory. At the same time, we do not want to use the term "overtourism" as a stigma but as a product of a certain development that can be reversible. It is undoubtedly more difficult in many cases to attract tourists to the region if it is not perceived as a tourist destination than to find a way to mitigate the adverse effects of mass tourism.

3. Data and methods

The data used in this article are from several different sources, which we combined to answer the research question outlined in the introduction. In the paper, we use in Chapter 4.1 the content analysis based on secondary data collection in the form of online desk research. We used the Google search engine, limited the search to sources in Czech, and excluded search results that did not address the topic. The content analysis was performed using two keywords, namely the term "overtourism" and the name of the tourist region or tourist destination. All tourist regions (some of them not only in the form of official names, but also traditionally used) and the 100 most visited tourist destinations in Czechia were selected. The results included all relevant links in the online media, which dealt with the problem of overtourism in the selected area. The results of the content analysis correspond to the date of August 15, 2021.

This article's primary data source is a questionnaire survey conducted to obtain background data for the project "Proactive solutions to the negative effects of overtourism." The questionnaire itself is relatively extensive, and only part of it is used for this article. Data collection took place in the Bohemian Paradise UNESCO Global Geopark in June – September 2020 and June – July 2021. During this period (interrupted due to quarantine measures associated with the Covid-19 pandemic in March – May 2020 and October 2020 – May 2021), we received a total of 826 responses from respondents. Data collection is still taking place; for the purposes of the article, we used questionnaires collected before July 31, 2021. The respondents were visitors to the geopark, not the locals. Data were collected at 26 places, evenly distributed throughout the geopark, while increased attention was paid to the most visited places.

The results presented in Chapter 4.1 were obtained from the part of the questionnaire that contains open-ended questions that ask the respondent about his holiday experiences. Specifically, these are questions:

"What has disappointed you the most so far (here)?"

"What has surprised you the most so far (here)?"

The respondent did not have to answer these questions or could mention more than one answer. We first monitored the percentage of respondents complaining about too many tourists in the question "What has disappointed you the most so far (here)?". Then we analysed what these complainants said in the second and subsequent answers in this question (if such answers were available) or an answer to the question "What has surprised you the most so far (here)?".

In another part of the questionnaire, a battery of 11 sub-questions was placed, asking respondents about their priorities and plans for what they wanted to experience on their vacation. The question was:
Please indicate on the graphic scales what you want to visit, see, or experience during your holiday:
Under the question, 11 categories were mentioned, where the respondents had to mark their answers on graphic scales 10 cm long. These responses were then recorded to a data of 0–100 (length in millimeters from the left) when 0 means the extreme answer "I am not interested at all" and 100 the extreme answer "I am most interested"). The respondent commented on the following items:

a) Rocks, rock formations

b) Castles, chateaux

c) Museums, galleries, folk buildings

d) Forests, meadows, landscape views

e) Swimming, sunbathing

f) Cycling

g) Walking, hiking

h) Good food and drink

i) Festivals, social events

j) Events and attractions for children

k) Well-being and relaxation

l) Something else: (the answers were not evaluated, they only served as a check of the completeness of the list above).

Respondents' answers, recorded in the above-mentioned battery of sub-questions, were analysed using k-means cluster analysis and the results presented in our recently published article (Drápela et al., 2021). A detailed description of the cluster analysis procedure can be found in it. For the purposes of this article, we have selected part of the results, reflecting the diversity of interests of different tourists, to point out that some types of tourists are not interested in other kinds of attractions, and it is, therefore, complicated to motivate them to stay in the region for a little longer and visit more different places. These data are presented in Chapter 4.3.

Another source of data was narrative interviews, conducted in the period 2019–2021 throughout the Czechia in localities where there are clear manifestations of mass tourism (not necessarily overtourism). During these interviews, respondents are encouraged to describe their experience with tourists in the place where they live and evaluate how tourism affects their lives. These are, therefore, individual experiences that must be perceived as qualitative information. On the other hand, many of these statements from different localities are similar in many ways, so they certainly have some telling value. Chapter 4.2 presents several parts of interviews out of a total of 156 recorded so far.

The last type of data used is the number of visitors to tourist destinations, which we used in Chapter 4.2. These data come from the CzechTourism Agency, which annually presents them in the publication "Attendance of tourist destinations in the Czech Republic" on its website. Unfortunately, older publications (2013–2018) are no longer available on the website, although they used to be. The article presents relatively detailed data for some local goals, which cannot be traced in the publications mentioned above or for more extended periods than the CzechTourism agency monitors. We supplemented this data from two sources, directly from the websites of the Bohemian Switzerland NP and the destination agency, the Bohemian Paradise Association. The CzechTourism Agency also receives data from these two entities, so the data are comparable.

4. Results

4.1 The origin of rural overtourism

To understand which regions suffer from overtourism, it is possible to use, for example, content analysis of the media, which may not provide a realistic picture of the situation, but at least draw attention to problematic localities. For this purpose, we performed a simple content analysis of Czech Internet sources (see Table 1) to reveal which locations the term "overtourism" is most often associated with.

Tab 1. Results of content analysis of Czech internet sources: search for "overtourism" + "location" by Google search engine. Own processing

Location / region	Type of location	Number of articles on the Internet
Krkonoše NP	Rural	5 610
Prague	Urban	4 770
Bohemian Paradise	Rural	826
Bohemian Switzerland NP	Rural	487
Šumava NP	Rural	345
Adršpach rocks	Rural	326
Český Krumlov	Urban	218

As the results show, the city of Prague, which is about ten times more visited than any other Czech region, is in second place. The first place is occupied by the Krkonoše National Park (NP), followed by the third to sixth place by other rural regions. The specific situation of the Krkonoše National Park is caused by historical reasons when this region was transformed into a giant ski resort with a large accommodation

capacity after the expulsion of the German population after the Second World War. This accommodation capacity is used even in the months when there is no more snow on the slopes, thus generating many visitors throughout the year. Due to the limited capacity of mountain hiking trails, it can be stated that the continuous damage to mountain nature results from too many tourists per unit area. However, this is different for other rural regions.

The Bohemian Paradise is a traditional region of rural tourism (some highlights are shown in Fig. 2), and the beginnings of its popularity date back to the 19th century. Since 1955, it has been a protected landscape area (the first in Czechia), which is a category of nature protection one level lower than the national park. In 2005, it became a UNESCO Global Geopark. Although it is a well-known region, 90% of its visitors are domestic tourists, which is no different from other Czech rural regions. According to the definition of the countryside in Chapter 2.2, the Bohemian Paradise predominantly belongs to sparsely populated areas and partly to moderately populated areas (because of the population density of towns Turnov and Semily higher than 500 inhabitants/km^2) (CENIA 2020). It is typical for the Bohemian Paradise and many other rural regions in the Czech Republic that several highly visited highlights may be affected by overtourism, but most of the region is visited much less. This fact is documented in Table 2. It presents how many respondents at the given data collection sites answered the question in the questionnaire "What has disappointed you the most so far (here)?" that too many tourists (or similar wording). "Too many tourists" was the most frequently mentioned answer to this question (196 respondents), well in advance of "too few benches and places to rest" (65 respondents), "high prices" (57 respondents), "lack of public toilets" (46 respondents) and "bad food quality" (41 respondents).

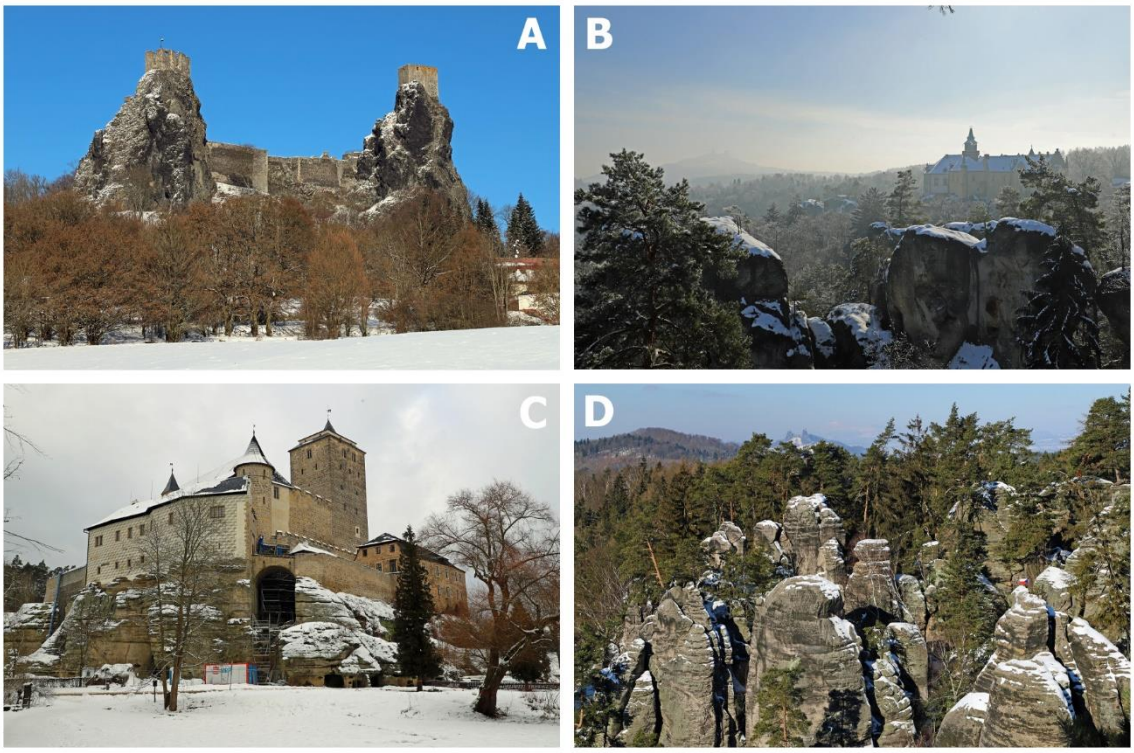

Fig 2. Highlights of Bohemian Paradise UNESCO Global Geopark in winter off-season: A) Trosky Castle, B) Hrubá Skála, C) Kost Castle, D) Prachov rocks. Photos: Emil Drápela

The table clearly shows that there are seven localities in the region (the Bohemian Paradise UNESCO Global Geopark) where the share of these answers was significantly higher. These are: (a) places near sandstone rock towns, where tourists are crammed between rocks, and it is a problem to park nearby – Hrubá Skála, Malá Skála, Krásná vyhlídka, Prachov rocks; (b) iconic cultural monuments that have a capacity problem with visitors and it is also a problem to park nearby – Kost Castle, Trosky Castle; (c) the most visited tourist attraction in the region, where the tourist infrastructure has sufficient capacity,

but for some visitors, such a large number of people does not suit – the castle resort Dětenice. At all other data collection sites, complaints about too many tourists were scarce and accounted for only 5.2% of all responses.

Tab 2. The proportion of Bohemian Paradise UNESCO Global Geopark visitors stated that they were bothered by too many tourists in the area (see description above). Own processing

Location of data collection	Number of answers	Percentage
Hrubá Skála	35/60	58.3%
Malá Skála	32/60	53.3%
Krásná vyhlídka	23/45	51.1%
Prachov rocks	29/60	48.3%
Kost Castle	21/50	42.0%
Trosky Castle	18/50	36.0%
Dětenice chateaux resort	13/60	21.7%
All other locations	23/441	5.2%
TOTAL	**194/826**	**23.5%**

It is fascinating to watch other answers of these "dissatisfied" with too many tourists. They often point directly to the main problems caused by rural overtourism: mostly often mentioned are few parking spaces, long waiting times for cultural monuments tours, rubbish in nature, damaged nature, lack of public toilets, lack of rubbish bins, vandalism, unpleasant workers in restaurants and other services due to too many visitors, high prices, lack of peace in the evening and at night, the ruthlessness of visitors and the overall stress associated with travel. Thus, the typical manifestations of rural overtourism are somewhat different from urban overtourism, but they have the same basis, as it results from the large concentration of people in one place. However, the specific reason for the emergence of rural overtourism is the insufficient tourist infrastructure (represented by answers like few parking spaces, lack of public toilets, lack of rubbish bins etc.), which causes many conflicts between visitors and locals and between visitors themselves (see Chapter 4.2). A large number of visitors and inadequate tourist infrastructure are thus the two main sources of rural overtourism.

4.2 Temporal dimension of overtourism and its effect on rural communities

In the previous chapter, we presented how rural overtourism is perceived by visitors themselves. However, even more important is how locals feel overtourism, as they live in the region all the time while tourists leave again. We studied this topic through narrative interviews with residents of municipalities associated with manifestations of overtourism. The interviews showed that the perception of the negative effects of overtourism by locals depends on their duration (the temporal dimension) because for a short time, local people are willing to tolerate various limitations, if the situation lasts for a long time, their attitude changes and they started to perceive the presence of tourists very negatively. It is not far from the overall aversion to incoming tourists from such a situation, the highest stage on Irridex.

The above-mentioned situation is evidenced, for example, by two interviews we conducted in the village of Brtníky, which is located on the border of the Bohemian Switzerland NP. The biggest local highlight is the icefalls (see Fig. 3), which arise from about January to March each year. Although hiking in the area is attractive all year round, the ice falls attract many times more visitors, who literally flood the village's surroundings with parked cars. The typical situation is described by one of the locals:

Man, Brtníky, April 2020

> *"In the second half of winter, a lot of tourists always come here to see the ice falls. Many cars are parked everywhere, near houses, on dirt roads, by the forest (…), and along the road, where two oncoming cars cannot even avoid because of it. This is very annoying and sometimes dangerous.*

Fortunately, most tourists arrive on weekends when I don't have to go to work, so I'm home and don't drive anywhere."

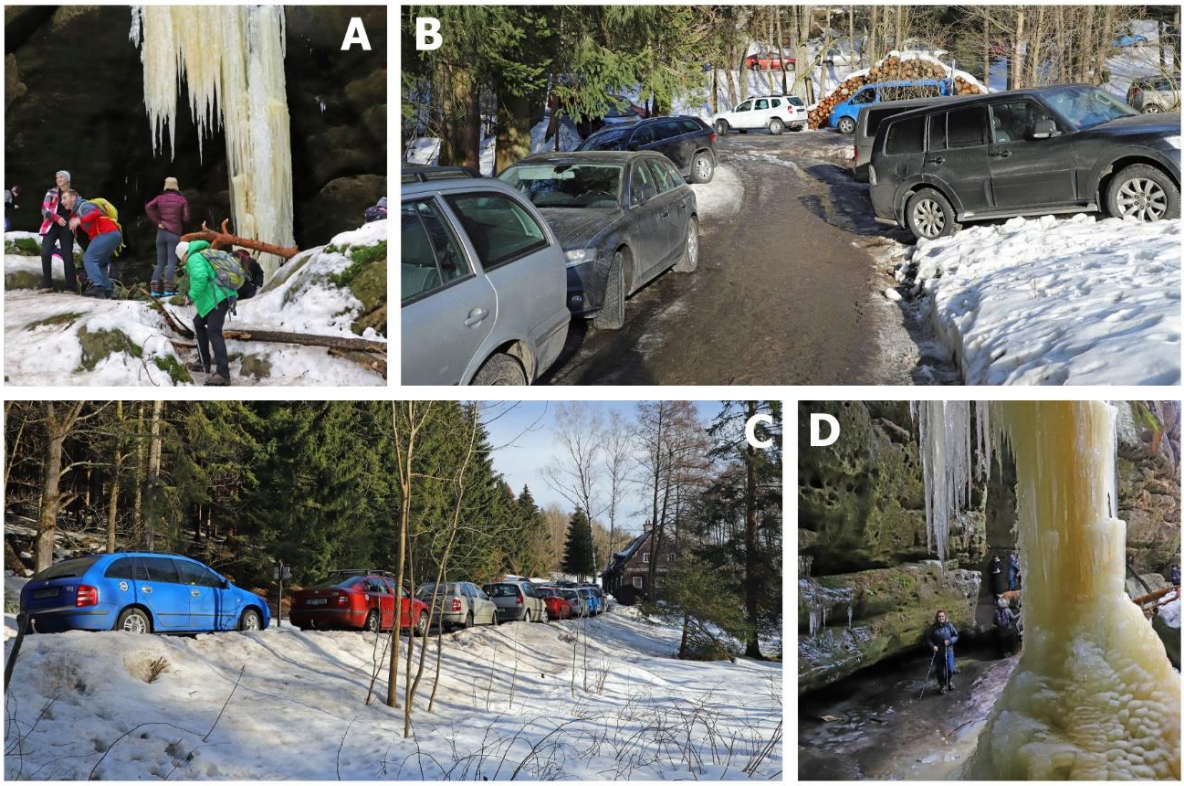

Fig 3. Brtníky ice falls: A) tourists admiring ice falls, B) cars parked behind a no-entry sign, C) cars parked on a local road where an oncoming vehicle cannot be bypassed, D) some ice falls are really massive. Photos: Emil Drápela

From this statement, the man is aware of the negative phenomena that arise during mass tourism and limit him. Still, he can tolerate this situation due to their short duration (several weekends in winter). How different is this information from another interview that was taken in the same village a year later! January to March 2021 was affected by quarantine measures in connection with the Covid-19 pandemic, when many Czechs did not go to work (or at least significantly less). Manifestations of overtourism in Brtníky were, therefore, not limited to weekends, but because people had free time also on weekdays (and the weather was perfect for ice falls), they lasted a quarter of a year. The assessment of the situation by the local is, therefore, significantly different:

Man, Brtníky, March 2021

"When tourists only came here on weekends, it was bearable, but now we have them here every day, so every time you need to get somewhere, it's like "hell." (…) I'd instead go to the woods with an ax and smash all the ice falls. Then I would call the press to come to take a picture of them and write an article about the fact that there is nothing to see here and people should not come here."

Although it is a different respondent, and his personality and current mood may influence his statement, there is a clear shift from a conciliatory attitude to aggression. The interview also shows that the respondent blames at least partly for the situation on the media, which annually place local ice falls among their "tips for trips," thus drawing attention to it. Due to the extraordinary situation, we are witnessing the emergence of an anti-tourist attitude caused by a long period of discomfort and frustration. While for the village of Brtníky, it was an extraordinary situation, other villages experience this regularly.

The main season for rural tourism lasts in most of Czechia (except regions specialising in winter recreation) from the beginning of July to the end of August, a period of main holidays for Czech pupils. In this period, the effects of rural overtourism are most common – on the contrary, only rarely outside this period.

However, two months is long enough for the locals to feel frustrated by the harmful effects of mass tourism. Several different strategies for dealing with this situation are documented in the following excerpts from the interviews:

Woman, Hrubá Skála, August 2020

> *"It's the same here every year, there are a lot of tourists everywhere, so you can't even sit in the garden without someone recognising what you are eating, reading, or talking about. Therefore, we regularly go on holiday to the sea, and we visit family and friends to be here as little as possible. It's a shame because it's beautiful here, but you would go crazy here."*

Man, Doksy, June 2021

> *"I planted this hedge here because otherwise, I felt like all those people were walking straight across my living room. I had no privacy at all. The noise is still the same, but at least I have some privacy."*

Woman, Tábor, July 2021

> *"I'm used to the fact that there are always a lot of people parked around here who go to the zoo. It's quite a noise, but at least something's going on here. I'm in the garden; people are looking at me, so I'm looking at them, and I don't care."*

Only a two-month high season means that rural regions cannot specialise enough in tourism – so there is no strong touristification in these regions. It is, therefore, necessary that tourism is in line with the priorities of residents. An example where this coexistence does not work well is the village of Malá Skála in Bohemian Paradise. Although the absolute numbers of tourists in this locality are smaller than in other less problematic localities, overtourism has been discussed here for about two decades. How is it possible? The problem is inflating too many activities into a small space, where they then clash. The area where the locals shop, meet and spend their free time is disturbed by cyclists, parked cars, noise from the campsite, and paddlers sailing on the Jizera River. Moreover, tourist routes to near castles Vranov and Frýdštejn and Suché rocks lead around locals' family houses. Events organised for tourists are usually not very interesting to locals, so they consider them an "invasion into their space." Interestingly, after several years of trying to reduce tourism as much as possible, the village found that it could not be without it. The visitors brought funds to the municipality's budget, which began to decline due to the municipality's anti-tourism policy. So after a few years, the village started permitting festivals and other events again. Economic benefits for the municipality and local businesses, which are essential factors of mass tourism perception, prevailed. Concepts like IRT mentioned in Chapter 2.3 are often ideals far from the Czech everyday reality of villages with small budgets. The current situation in Malá Skála is summarised by one of the respondents:

Man, Malá Skála, September 2020

> *"Tourists have been annoying the local people for a long time. They think they can park wherever they want, they make noise, a mess, and there are too many of them. But we are a small village and without money from tourists suddenly there was no money for anything. So we have to survive it somehow."*

From the point of view of the temporal dimension of overtourism, the most critical situation is when it lasts continuously throughout the year. Fortunately, this is not the case with rural overtourism in Czechia because, in each region, the off-season lasts at least half a year.

4.3 Overtourism hotspot as a development pole

Overtourism is a term denoting a negative situation created by mass tourism. However, places, where overtourism occurs in rural areas are relatively rare, with most rural regions being more affected by undertourism. In this situation, there are too few tourists to bring significant economic benefits to the area. Therefore, the question arises as to whether it would be possible to take advantage of these high numbers of tourists and attract them with other attractions in the region. Ideally, there would be

a slight decrease in the number of tourists on the overtoured highlight (below the limit that locals perceive as "over") and an increase in the number of tourists in its vicinity. Is it even possible, or is it just a utopian idea?

To answer this question, it is first necessary to know the context of tourism development in the rural regions of Czechia. The number of visitors to attractions is constantly growing yearly, although this increase is significantly different in different types of attractions. One of the biggest attractions in the countryside is nature, which we do not find much in cities. Fig. 2 shows the development of attendance at one of the most visited natural sites in the Czech Republic, for which data on the number of visitors for the whole year is available. Unfortunately, data from the most visited region are missing, namely from the Krkonoše NP, as the local climate does not allow measuring the number of visitors throughout the year due to the high snow cover. Selected localities are from Bohemian Switzerland NP (Kamenice gorges, Edmundova gorge, Pravčická brána), Bohemian Paradise (Prachov rocks), and the Moravian Karst (Punkevní cave). According to the official data of the CzechTourism agency, only localities from these three regions are among the Top 10 most visited natural attractions.

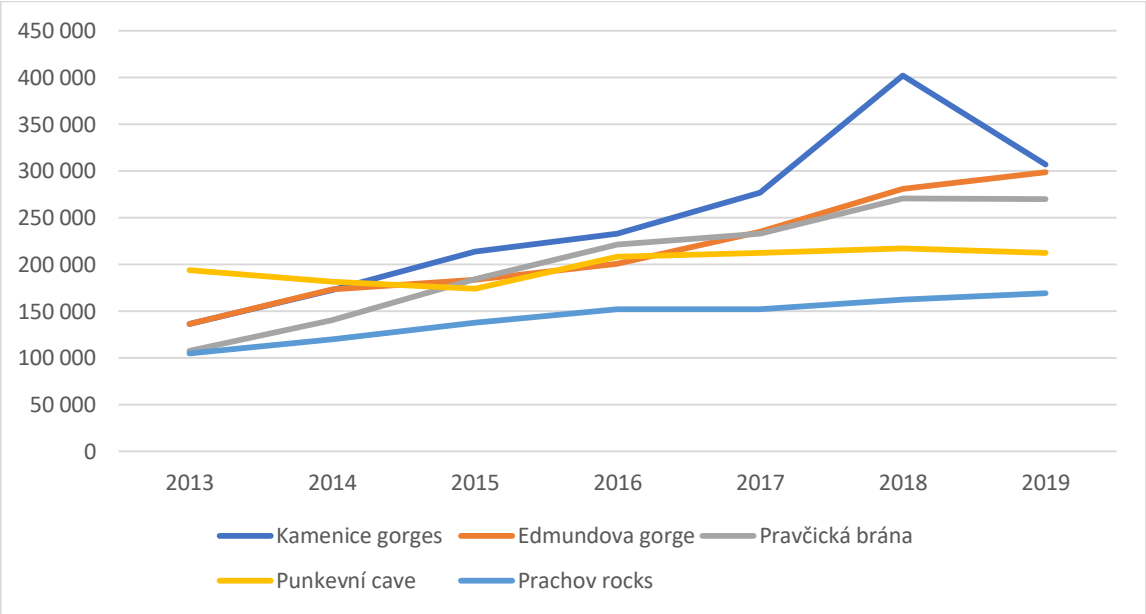

Fig 4. Development of attendance of selected natural tourist destinations in Czechia in the years 2013–2019. Source: own processing, data CzechTourism 2014–2020

Fig. 4 shows that in all monitored localities, the number of visitors increased in the period 2013–2019, while in Kamenice gorges, the number of visitors even tripled in the period 2013–2018 (the decrease in 2019 is due to several months of closure due to reconstruction works). We can also see high increases in other localities in Bohemian Switzerland. On the contrary, attendance in the Punkevní cave is relatively stagnant, where the capacity of the cave limits the maximum number of visitors. However, the number of visitors to nature is generally constantly increasing, evidenced by other data from automatic pedestrian counters located in national parks and other nature reserves.

Fig 5 shows the development over the same time period for sites with a cultural-historical or experiential character. The most visited places of the Bohemian Paradise were selected due to a possible comparison with the data given in Tab 2. The locations where tourists feel the number of visitors is too high are listed. The two most visited places, the Škoda Auto Museum, and the Dětenice chateau resort, are focused on exploring the experience and adventure, so they are not classic cultural monuments but interactive experience exhibitions. As shown in Fig 5, the attendance of this type of attraction is experiencing a sharp increase. However, for adventure attractions, it should be mentioned that their quality significantly affects the increase in traffic. Even the third location in the order, Staré Hrady, is an adventure attraction. However, in this case, the increase in the number of visitors is not so steep because the attraction does

not reach the professionalism of nearby Dětenice. Trosky and Kost Castles are examples of cultural monuments where it is clear that the increase in the number of visitors is relatively modest. Of course, the main limiting element is the limited capacity of these monuments (See Chapter 4.1).

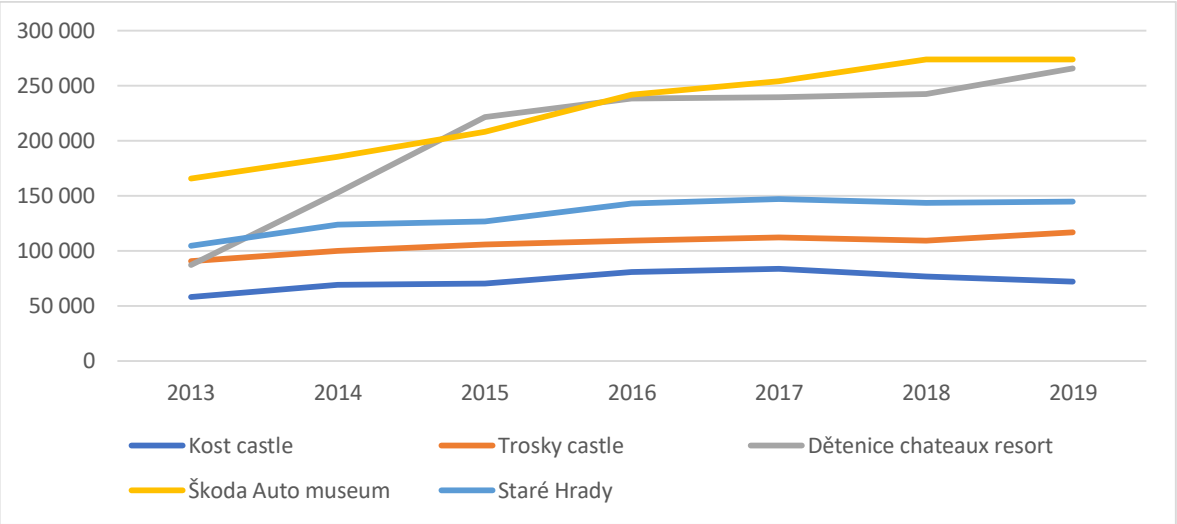

Fig 5. Development of attendance of selected non-natural tourist destinations in the Bohemian Paradise tourist area in the years 2013–2019. Source: own processing, data Bohemian Paradise Association 2014–2020

If we generalise the above findings, we can state that a significant increase in visitors occurs in rural areas in (a) attractive natural sites and (b) tourist attractions focused on shows and unusual experiences. Only a slight increase is recorded in classical cultural monuments, where the capacity of tours limits the number of visitors. And stagnation or even a decrease in the number of visitors is recorded by less attractive cultural facilities (e.g., museums with obsolete exhibits) and other outdated attractions. Especially with natural attractions, there is a chance that if there is something similarly interesting in the area, the growing tourism can spread there as well. However, this may not always be the only positive. For example, in the Krkonoše NP in the past, overtourism only affected the immediate vicinity of Špindlerův Mlýn and Pec pod Sněžkou. Still, now the harmful effects of mass tourism can be found virtually everywhere in the NP. But what about adventure attractions or famous cultural monuments, which are relatively isolated and do not form any "clusters"? Especially adventure and experience attractions are relatively easy to build/prepare compared to other attractions. These and cultural attractions depend on whether their surroundings are interesting enough for visitors and follow their preferences.

The paper of Drápela et al. (2021) deals with the preferences of different types of tourists. The authors used graphic scales on which the respondents had to answer how much they would like to run or visit the activity on their holiday. Using k-means cluster analysis, they identified seven significant clusters, which express the typical preferences of different types of tourists. Although these 7 clusters cannot describe all the nuances and specific preferences, they capture the general trends found among tourists in a rural environment. Tab 3. presents the main results of this study, where the columns represent the seven groups of tourists and the rows express their preferences, where the minimum (the tourist is not interested in the item at all) is 0, and the maximum is 100 (the tourist is most interested in the item). Values above 70 are highlighted in green, where it can be expected that if such an attraction were located around the main local attraction, the tourist would like to visit it as well.

Tab 3. Preferences of different groups of visitors regarding their idea of how they want to spend their holidays. Adapted from Drápela et al. (2021)

Item	History lover	Active family t.	Sports lover	Resting nature lover	Calm loving hiker	Social and relaxing t.	Family traveler
Rocks, rock formations	64.73	78.63	79.20	80.47	75.28	21.31	61.14
Castles, chateaux	91.60	77.96	62.52	52.00	77.34	34.84	70.25
Museums, galleries, folklore	84.80	57.92	38.13	19.36	30.32	22.56	39.51
Forests, meadows, landscape	75.26	80.92	82.59	84.14	75.54	33.13	55.00
Swimming, sunbathing	62.01	73.92	68.15	79.06	16.39	66.27	51.55
Cycling	18.48	59.20	85.33	15.78	7.77	15.87	23.62
Walking, hiking	53.60	81.45	72.52	68.26	77.30	17.33	60.03
Good food and drink	78.60	88.32	77.18	82.44	50.85	83.31	67.09
Festivals, social events	26.94	73.36	47.67	46.18	10.68	61.49	33.18
Events and attr. For children	22.12	83.17	21.67	12.45	9.59	28.33	76.35
Well-being and relaxation	85.11	87.01	72.89	81.26	64.19	83.91	75.77

The main message from Tab 3. is that not every tourist is interested in every kind of attraction – for example, a resting nature lover will probably visit a castle or chateau only if it is a really exceptionally large or famous monument. On the contrary, history lovers are not fans of walks, so the dense network of marked hiking trails around the castle will probably not interest him. Therefore, for each site affected by overtourism, we must ask who the visitors are and their preferences. According to this, we can determine whether it makes sense to promote various attractions in the area or not. Thus, the Overtourism hotspot can be a development pole, but only under certain conditions, related to the "compatibility" of the offer in the surrounding region and visitors' preferences.

5. Discussion and conclusion

Tourism as an economic activity can bring economic benefits to rural regions, create jobs, and stabilise the local range of services (Andereck et al., 2005). Therefore, it can be a factor that helps the countryside develop, prevents people from leaving the cities, and increases the quality of life of local people. However, as the practical examples show, the reality is not always so ideal. Very often, there are specific highlights, where a large number of visitors come, while in the rest of the surrounding region, there are too few of them for their presence to be able to generate the above-mentioned positive effects (Llorca-Rodriguez, Casas-Jurado & Garcia-Fernandez, 2016). In those high-traffic highlights, overtourism can occur, damaging local nature and the landscape, disrupting relations in rural communities, and deteriorating the quality of life of local people. Their irritation influences tourist satisfaction in a locality (see Chapter 2.1). Therefore, it is necessary to reduce these negative impacts as much as possible and try to use the popularity of the destination for the development of tourism in the wider area (Peeters et al., 2008).

Our paper tried to answer three questions that we did not find answers to in the existing professional literature. The first was "what is the source of overtourism in Czech rural areas?" As the results of the questionnaire survey among visitors to the Bohemian Paradise UNESCO Global Geopark showed and confirmed interviews with residents in tourist-exposed localities, there are two main reasons for overtourism: (a) too many visitors who are no longer able to handle the site and (b) insufficient tourist infrastructure, which adversely affects the capacity of the site, or causes inappropriate behavior of tourists (garbage, excrement, widening hiking trails, shortcuts, etc.). These reasons are predominantly objective and measurable and they heavily influence the subjective dimension of overtourism. The situation is also perceived negatively by the tourists themselves (in the Bohemian Paradise Paradise UNESCO Global Geopark, 23.5% of them), who can very accurately name the negative phenomena that

tourism causes in the destination. They also miss the idyllic and peaceful environment attributed originally to rural areas (see Chapter 2.4).

Interestingly, in narrative interviews, local people also mention only visible, tangible, and psychological negatives, but they do not mention long-term trends that can have a destructive effect on rural communities, such as significant real estate price increases, non-reflection of local people's needs in services, commercialisation of public space or rural gentrification (see Hines, 2010; Solana-Solana, 2010; Guimond & Simard, 2010; Liang & Bao, 2015). These phenomena also occur in the Czech countryside (the authors of this article observed them in many places visited), but they are not easily visible, work slowly, and many people cannot realise these changes until it is too late to change them. From the point of view of avoiding tourism-phobia in rural areas, it is enough to focus in the first phase on improving tourist infrastructure and avoiding conflicts with local people, which is certainly easier than solving severe and complex problems such as rural gentrification.

The second question we wanted to answer was "how does the temporal dimension of overtourism manifest itself in the environment of the Czech countryside, where the main tourist season is relatively narrowly limited to the period of July and August?" As it turns out, the duration of the tourist "rush hour" significantly affects the degree of tolerance shown by residents. While in the case of short-term exposure (e.g., several weekends during the summer holidays or periods of plenty of snow), manifestations of overtourism are usually perceived as a temporary discomfort, in the case of more prolonged exposure, they begin to be perceived much more negatively. This finding shows that the popular tourism management strategy of spreading visitors in time, mentioned in Chapter 2.4, is not always appropriate. As soon as several individuals begin to spread the view that there are already too many tourists in a given destination, they also influence their other neighbors, and the situation starts to escalate. Even if positive changes come to remedy this situation, relations between locals and visitors tend to be tarnished for a long time (e.g., problem in Malá Skála; compare with Cheer, Milano & Novelli, 2019). The role of the media and social networks deserves more profound research, announcing, for example, that a lot of mushrooms are growing in the forests or that the ice falls near Brtníky have already formed and look beautiful.

The main research question of this paper was if these overtourism hotspots can be used to kick-start tourism in the surrounding regions within a strategy of spreading visitors in space. The answer is not entirely straightforward. First of all, it is necessary to consider whether the highlight has a similar character as other attractions in the area. For example, if it is a natural site, there is a good chance that other wild places in the area will also attract visitors. On the contrary, if it is something unique that we will not find anywhere else in the area (e.g., aquapark or amusement park), the willingness of visitors to explore other attractions in the region will be significantly lower. In addition, it should be taken into account that different types of visitors will have different preferences. Therefore, it is necessary to consider whether the type of tourist will be interested in another kind of attraction.

During our fieldwork, it was also often shown that the way the attraction is presented affects whether the visitor plans to visit something else in the area. If, for example, he is influenced by advertising, whether he visits the city of Telč to visit the UNESCO monument, he usually does not consider visiting any destinations in the area because that highlight is Telč. The attractive surroundings of this city with swimming ponds, deep forests, stunning rocky outcrops, viewpoints, castles, and other attractions will not visit, although many of these attractions would be compatible with its preferences and interests. It seems a better approach to promote the whole region and only draw attention to the most exciting sites.

This study has certain limitations. It is important to realise that rural areas in different parts of Europe may be significantly different from those in Central Europe. Our conclusions are based on an analysis of conditions in the Czech countryside, which is from the point of view of recreation, with a few exceptions, attractive thanks to the hilly to highland landscape with a number of cultural and natural monuments. However, in contrast to the more developed regions of Europe, this is an area suffering from low-quality infrastructure, including tourist infrastructure. Our results, therefore, need to be seen through the Central European context. Some of the data in the article come from the UNESCO Global Geopark Bohemian Paradise, which may seem like a globally visited destination and thus a region that can hardly be described

as a typical rural. Unfortunately, the opposite is true, the "UNESCO Global Geopark" brand has not attracted a significant number of visitors during the 16 years of its operation, and the share of foreign visitors in geopark is very low, as in other Czech rural regions. From this point of view, the territory of the geopark is no different from other regions.

In conclusion, it should be noted that increasing interest in the area overtourism hotspots visitors may not always have only positive effects. The riskiest situation is in nature reserves and national parks, where the expansion of tourism to other parts can lead to various environmental damage (Tyrvainen et al., 2014; Stojanović, Lazić & Dunjić, 2018; Drápela, 2021; Kubalíková et al., 2021) and irreversible destruction of the most valuable sites. All Czech national parks and some protected landscape areas are struggling with this phenomenon. However, for most Czech rural regions, this phenomenon could help economic development and create new jobs.

Acknowledgment

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