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Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage: Conflicts and Challenges.
A case of the Namugongo Martyrs Shrines in Uganda

Key words: Tourism, religious tourism, pilgrimage, Uganda martyrs.

Abstract

Religious tourism has been quoted as being a form of cultural tourism by authors like Rinschede [1992] and Singh [2004] both cited by Terzidou et al. [2008]. In a developing country like Uganda, the concept of religious tourism is still new and has been embraced both by the government as well as by the people. Unfortunately, not much attention has been given to the conflicts and challenges that might arise from this new form of tourism. Also, majority of the studies undertaken about tourism and religious tourism seem to focus on the benefits of tourism to the host communities and not on the conflicts that might be associated with this form of tourism. This paper is intended to establish the conflicts and challenges associated with religious tourism and pilgrimage in developing countries like Uganda specifically looking at the Uganda Martyrs Shrine Namugongo. Uganda Martyrs Shrine Namugongo was chosen because it receives multitudes of tourists and pilgrims every 3rd June and so would be a good representative of other sites in the country. A qualitative cross sectional analytical study was carried out to enable the researchers to better understand these conflicts and challenges. The study population was comprised of the religious leaders at the Namugongo Shrines, the residents of the area, the business community around the shrines, policy makers as well as the pilgrims from within and without Kampala. A sample size of 100 respondents was interviewed using semi structured interviews. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the respondents for the study.
The study shows that religious tourism and pilgrimage come with challenges such as overcrowding, too much noise, the violation of basic religious principles and poor hygiene standards among others.

This research is focused on the challenges of religious tourism and pilgrimage. There is limited literature on the conflicts and challenges that are encountered by the host communities of the pilgrimages especially in developing countries like Uganda. The findings can be used by policy makers to address the challenges for sustainable tourism.

Introduction

Tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes [UNWTO, 2008]. Tourism around the world is worth over $1 trillion annually and the industry is growing almost everywhere [UNWTO, 2012]. Tourism employs about 7.7 million people in Africa and contributes an average of 9% GDP to East African countries' economy [Gedecho, 2015].

Uganda's tourism has tremendous opportunities. Lonely Planet, an independent tourists' trusted information source, named Uganda its top destination for 2011/12. In addition,

Uganda received accolades from six trusted publications including: ***Virungas: One of 20 Must-See Places for 2012*** by *National Geographic Traveller Magazine*, ***Bwindi: Best African Birding Destination [2011]*** by *Travel Africa Magazine* and **Rwenzori Mountains: *One of the World's 15 Best Hikes [2011]*** by *National Geographic Society*. Tourism is a key driver of Uganda's economy and represents a significant opportunity to the attainment of the Uganda "Vision 2040". The tourism sector is Uganda's largest services export, having provided direct contribution of US$ 979 million in 2013, and 2.8% of the total employment in Uganda [Maria Mutagamba, NTSDP 2015]. In 2014, the tourism sector was declared as Uganda's top foreign-exchange earner by Uganda's Central Bank [Tenywa, 2014]. Tourism is a major driver of employment, investment and foreign exchange, contributing Uganda Shillings 4.9 trillion (US $1.88billion or €1.4 billion as of 2013) to Uganda's GDP in the financial year 2012-13 and was expected to rise by 3.2% in 2013 according to the then Minister of Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities [Vision Reporter, 25/08/13].

Uganda's tremendous resource base allows the country to offer a combination of safaris, primate tracking, adventure tourism, bird watching, and cultural tourism products. With the dense misty forests, source of the Biblical River Nile, more than half of World's mountain gorillas, snow-peaked mountains, glassy lakes, tree-climbing lions, most bird species on the African continent, the World's best white-water rafting, the best weather around, sprawling savannas, some of the most hospitable folks around, unique religious sites, delicious organic food and drink among other things, Uganda is a place like no other. Uganda is also blessed with various religions which have formed different religious sites, which are of much interest to tourists interested in exploring religion in this part of the World. Amongst the tourists that visit Uganda are religious tourists and pilgrims who travel from different countries to come to the Namugongo Martyrs' Shrines to learn about and pay tribute to the 23 Anglican and 22 Catholic converts to Christianity in Buganda kingdom who were killed by King Mwanga of Buganda between January 13, 1885, and January 27, 1887. The sites receive pilgrims in June every year with the biggest number coming from Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Democratic Republic of Congo, and over two million pilgrims convening at the shrines on June 3rd every year. These include Anglicans and Catholics that trek from different parts of the country and region every June 3rd to follow the footsteps of the Uganda martyrs, commemorating and emulating their profound faith.

Religious tourism and pilgrimage

According to Blackwell [2007], religious tourism refers to the form of tourism with strong or single minded religious motivation of pilgrimage as well as the non-pilgrimage tourist activities, such as travelling to religious sites for sightseeing, cultivation and recreation. Ostrowski [2000] refers to religious tourism as a tourist's wandering with the religious element as one of the leading objectives in addition to other motives like the need to move, recreate, see new surroundings, meet new people, and see the cultural heritage, among others. Religious tourism encompasses all kinds of travel that is motivated by religion and where the destination is a religious site. A religious tourist is a person that sets out to visit a destination of religious significance for a specifically religious purpose [Puscasu, 2015]. Pilgrimage on the other hand refers to a religious journey (of a pilgrim) to a shrine or a sacred place [Puşcaşu, 2015] or a trip to a place considered sacred owing to a special influence of God therein, undertaken for religious motives, to perform religious acts of piety and penance, dictated by the need to be close to the sacred [Ostrowski, 2000]. "Pilgrimage is a journey of strengthening of ties with others of like mind, a reinforcing of beliefs and relationships, earthly as well as with the divine" [Pavicic, Alfirevic & Batarelo, 2007].

Religious tourism is a relatively new phenomenon despite the fact that religious travel has existed right from the early centuries [Puşcaşu, 2015]. With the emergence of religious tourism, emphasis has been placed on the socioeconomic benefits of this kind of tourism and little or none attention to the challenges that come with the same. This paper seeks to highlight the conflicts and challenges that arise from religious tourism and pilgrimage with emphasis on how these conflicts and challenges affect communities around pilgrimage sites (Namugongo Martyrs Shrines in this case). This paper explores the concepts of religious tourism and pilgrimage, mutually compares them and also attempts to bring out the differences between them as is shown in literature. It also looks at the benefits of religious tourism and pilgrimage to the communities surrounding the sacred sites (i.e. Namugongo Martyrs' Shrines).

Understanding religious tourism and pilgrimage

Literature on the religious tourism and pilgrimage is fragmented and lacks synthesis and holistic conceptualization [Collins-Kreiner, 2010; Timothy & Olsen, 2006]. There is also a debate about the meaning of religious tourism and whether it differs from pilgrimage [Blackwell, 2007]. Puşcaşu [2015] noted that few studies are concerned with the technical distinction between religious tourism and pilgrimage and that the distinction is sometimes less marked. Most of the available literature talks about tourism and pilgrimage but with very few if any focuses on religious tourism [Mora-Torres, Serrano-Barquin, Favila-Casneros & Serrano-Barquin, 2016; Vukonic, 1998]. This paper seeks to establish the similarity as well as the distinction between religious tourism and pilgrimage – if any – by employing a multidimensional approach.

Mora-Torres et al. [2016] say that religious tourism is a social construction between the elements of two different journeys i.e. pilgrimage and tourism. Smith [1992] places religious tourism at the centre of a continuum with pilgrimage and tourism at the opposite ends of the continuum. *Religious tourism* encompasses all kinds of travel that is motivated by religion and where the destination is a religious site [Blackwell, 2007] and consists of a range of spiritual sites and associated services, which are visited for both religious and secular reasons. This definition according to Blackwell identifies two kinds of sites i.e. shrines (sites where a relic or image is "venerated") and pilgrimage sites ("places where it is recognized that a miracle has occurred, still occurs and may do so again" pg. 37). Blackwell further says that religious tourism need not incorporate belief in a specific religion. *Pilgrimage* on the other hand is a journey resulting from causes: externally to a holy site and internally for spiritual purposes and inner understanding [Collins-Kreiner & Kliot, 2000], or a journey undertaken by a person in search of holiness, truth and the sacred [Collins-Kreiner, 2004]. Puşcaşu [2015] defines pilgrimage as a religious journey (of a pilgrim) to a shrine or a sacred place. Pilgrimage is a form of circulation encompassing large scale movements of people, objects, capital and information throughout the World [Collins-Kreiner, 2010]. Pilgrimage is a well-known phenomenon in religious culture and exists in all the main religions of the world i.e. Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Christianity [Collins-Kreiner & Kliot, 2000; Collins-Kreiner, 2010]. According to Blackwell [2007], pilgrimage is always expected to involve austerity to a greater or lesser extent and this is to be incorporated in all aspects of the pilgrimage such as choice of food, places to stay en route, social intercourse among others. Wong, Ryan and McIntosh [2013] however note that pilgrimage is a journey of strengthening ties with others of like mind, a reinforcing of beliefs and earthly and divine relationships and can therefore be considered a traditional religious or modern secular journey [Collins-Kreiner, 2010].

Considering the similarities, "the term pilgrimage connotes a religious journey but its Latin derivation from *peregrinus* allows broader interpretations including foreigner, wanderer, exile, traveler, as well as newcomer and stranger. The term tourist also has Latin origins from *tornus* – an individual who makes a circuitous journey, usually for pleasure, and returns to the starting point" [Collins-Kreiner & Kliot, 2000 pg. 56]. Considering the definition of tourism as "the movement of people from their usual environment for not more than one year for leisure, business or other purposes", then religious tourism and pilgrimage both stand as types of tourism. A religious tourist is one who sets out to visit a destination of religious significance for specifically religious purposes [Puşcaşu, 2015] while a pilgrim is one who makes a religious journey to a shrine or a sacred place [Collins-Kreiner 2009]. The tourist is perceived as a pilgrim and the pilgrim as a religious traveler. Tourism and pilgrimage both depend on the three operational elements i.e. discretionary income, leisure time and social conditions permissive of travel [Pavicic et al, 2007; Collins-Kreiner & Kliot, 2000; Vukonić, 2002]. The two forms of travelers i.e. the tourist and the pilgrim, just like any other types of traveler, both consume various goods and services [Vukonić, 1998]. Puşcaşu [2015] argues that pilgrimage is a derivate and constituent form of tourism just like religious tourism. Even when the pilgrim may follow a programme filled with a number of religious practices, prayers and services, they may also be led by the need to satisfy human curiosity, to see new places, surroundings, heritage sites, to meet new people among others [Ostrowski, 2000] just like any other tourist. Ordinary tourists also visit many places connected with religion along the way. In the process of visiting these places, the tourist may enter the realm of the sacred and become a participant in the mystery as opposed to being a mere spectator. The result is prayer and adoration, turning the tourist into a pilgrim. Also, both religious tourism and pilgrimage are opportunities of drawing people to the sacred as well as give an opportunity of preaching the gospel.

Looking at religious tourism and pilgrimage from a geographical perspective, Puşcaşu [2015] and Collins-Kreiner [2010] explain the two concepts and conclude that pilgrimage can be considered a traditional religious or modern secular journey. Pilgrimages occur because people believe specific places are holy and thus undertake religious journeys so they can worship at those places. Collins-Kreiner [2010] says that originally geographers defined pilgrimage as a religious journey but now study the effects of total distance on movement as well as examining the routes of movement, catchment areas of pilgrims and also answer questions on the size and scale, hierarchical relationships, location and distribution of sacred places. Pilgrimage necessitates spatial movement and stimulates geographers' interest with distances travelled and its effects on individual's behavior.

In the sociological perspective, three types of pilgrimage are defined in Puşcaşu [2015] and these include: the sacred journey (an act of covering a road towards a sacred place by a person who establishes a purpose for himself connected to religion or spirituality at the end of the endeavour), religious tourism (journey undertaken for cultural-historic purposes by an individual with no religious reference points to a place considered sacred), and the pseudo-sacred journey (action of a person animated by a feeling of veneration of visiting places with no religious value). Puşcaşu [2015] also mentions three types of religious tourism to include a) visits to holy places; b) religious pilgrimages, and c) religious youth camps. This categorization seems to suggest that some pilgrimages are actually not religious. The sociological perspective also emphasizes the need to look at one's position towards pilgrimage as it is clear that individuals may interpret their experiences differently. This means that it is not the number of pilgrims, their ages, equipment, nationality or means of transportation that matters but rather their personal attitude towards pilgrimage. What is relevant is the reflection and perception of the distance between precept and practice in one's existence other than whether the pilgrims move individually or as a group.

According to Puşcaşu [2015], the distinction between the religious tourism and pilgrimage does not stand out. Religious tourism and pilgrimage are one and the same because religious tourism is a form of pilgrimage while religious pilgrimage is in majority of cases a type of religious tourism.

On the sociological perspective, the differences between the two are not pronounced. Blackwell [2007] argues that the distinguishing feature of pilgrimage is the fact that pilgrimage incorporates religious involvement in the journey and also connects people from diverse cultures and different parts of the world. Smith [1992] however places pilgrimage and tourism at the two extreme ends of the same axis of a continuum of travel with the polarities on the pilgrimage-tourism axis labeled as sacred vs. secular, with religious tourism (knowledge based tourism) at the centre. These positions reflect the multiple and changing motivations of the traveler, whose interests and activities may switch from tourism to pilgrimage and vice versa, even without the individual being aware of the change [Collins-Kreiner & Kliot, 2000].

According to Collins-Kreiner [2010], the issue of pilgrim vs. tourist must be examined on two levels, that is: the perspective of the religious organizations and the travelers themselves. In Kreiner's view, pilgrims are not tourists because they travel for spiritual reasons (for example to perform a religious obligation, to gain religious merit, to make a vow or to improve their likelihood of salvation) [Collins-Kreiner, 2004] while tourists travel or visit a site for more secular reasons such as curiosity or pleasure. According to Ostrowski [2000], while for pilgrimage the religious meaning is fundamental and permeates into and exerts its impacts on the further motives, for religious tourism it is the religious/educational or only educational aspects that come to the forefront. In pilgrimage, the whole journey is characterized by prayer, penance and other forms of "cult" performed both on the way and at the destination, while in religious tourism, the tourist may visit a sacred place during the travels and may even participate religiously in the acts of the cult like prayer and meditation, but the sacred place is not the destination [Ostrowski, 2000].

Theologically, pilgrimage means to walk unto the house of God, answering a permanent call from God. For example the exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt to the Promised land.

Benefits of religious tourism and pilgrimage

The benefits of faith tourism are deep (in that the proceeds trickle down through the value chain) and wide (to involve a cross section of stakeholders across the economy and country). Pilgrimages have powerful political, economic, social and cultural implications and can even affect global trade and health. Any arrival of believers in a place of pilgrimage has an economic impact. In most parts of the world the pilgrimage shapes the nature of the economic activity and the design of the public space. Pilgrimage also creates other population mobilities such as trade, cultural exchanges, political integration as well as the spread of diseases [Collins-Kreiner, 2010]. Pilgrimage and religious tourism affect the population in the place of pilgrimage through employment opportunities which leads to a total demographic growth of the settlement. Some of the pilgrims stay at hotels and other accommodation facilities, shops are set up in the vicinity, road networks are constructed as well as the establishment of other services like food stuffs as well as fuel stations for the pilgrims. Pilgrimages are a major source of revenue in the areas where they take place. They are also a source of foreign exchange to the local town where they take place [Gedecho, 2015]. There is also an improvement in the general living conditions of the people as a result of the constant source of income for the local population [Vukonic, 1998]. There are new ideas in the markets and new startups who integrate themselves with the pilgrims to provide

efficient sales and marketing hence better economic stability [Foruzan, 2014]. The population of the area also rises tremendously as a result of the pilgrims that may not afford the fare back home or the workers who come to these areas hoping to find work servicing the pilgrims. Towns and other urban settlements are set up in areas surrounding these places of pilgrimage.

From the sociological aspect, pilgrims contribute to the idea of unification within the same religion. Pilgrimages from around the country and region are brought closer thereby creating a team spirit. Religious tourism and pilgrimage bring different people together thereby providing opportunities for cultural exchange [Vukonic, 1998].

Environmentally, religious tourism and pilgrimage can be the means for conserving and revitalizing the natural, cultural and historical resources of a rural region.

Conflicts and challenges of religious tourism and pilgrimage

It is evident that in all places of pilgrimage in the World there are both benefits as well as challenges of these kinds of mobility. One of the challenges or conflicts that arise from religious tourism and pilgrimage is the pressure of visitors as a result of overcrowding [Blackwell, 2010; Gedecho, 2015] that can damage an important or sacred site. Also, the spirituality, which may sometimes be enhanced by sheer numbers of believers, in the case of mass pilgrimage can be lost in the crowd [Rotherham in Raj &Morpeth (eds)]. Other challenges may include shortage of clean and potable water and outbreak of water borne diseases as well as breaking some religious rules and sanctions and indulging in illegal activities, such as drug trafficking [Gedecho, 2015]. According to Vukonic [1998], travels undertaken by the faithful often become ordinary secular travels, and shopping and other secular activities along the way suppress religious ones [Wong, et al., 2013]. Wong et al. [2013] argue that visitors may come to a sacred site to worship, for an interest in such places as contributors to culture and heritage, or simply out of curiosity to see places of interest with friends and family. The manufacture and sale of souvenirs and other objects and the indulgence in activities such as drinking sprees profanes the religious meaning of the events and transforms them into fairs bereft of moderation and good taste [Vukonic, 1998]. At the Namugongo Martyrs' Shrine in Uganda for example, one of the activities that some business owners look forward to is the sale of roasted meat especially pork as well as alcoholic drinks among other things. The News is always awash of people that are drunk and "feasting" (listening to and enjoying loud music and dancing) a few days before and after 3rd June every year.

As Vukonić [1998] clearly points out, another challenge of such forms of travel is the indulgence at the particular places of pilgrimage. While these indulgences may be looked at as beneficial, they can also be a challenge. This is because these indulgences result in the places of pilgrimage competing with one another in collecting holy relics or proclaiming various miracles in order to attract as many pilgrims as possible. Such competition does not usually have a religious basis and may even be dominated by purely economic reasons. The cost of living in the town or suburbs surrounding the places of pilgrimage is usually high. This is often attributed to the apparent demand for goods and services in these areas and the fact that the pilgrims would not have much of a choice in where to purchase from. The improvement in the everyday life such as expensive accommodation, more comfortable means of transport among others may be linked with an increased cost of such services [Vukonic, 1998].

Another challenge is the competition for the use of available resources such as transport, infrastructure and parking around the shrines by the tourists, pilgrims and local people. The contest for access may also occur between the local people, the site owners or managers and the visitors as well as between the pilgrims and tourists

[Collins-Kreiner, 2009]. At the Namugongo martyrs shrine for example, the local residents and some business owners are usually unable to access the areas surrounding the shrines due to their overcrowding by pilgrims. Driving to the areas around the shrines is restricted to special dignitaries of the church and the government while other motorists are given diversionary routes to take or better yet to park their vehicles at a certain distance almost ten kilometers away and then walk to the shrines. This leaves the residents of such surrounding areas grounded in their homes for almost a week or risk to spend countless hours in dense traffic.

The level of crime as a result of such huge gatherings of people also goes up. The government often has to deploy extra armed forces to ensure that people's lives and property are safe but even the presence of the police and the army does not eliminate petty thieves.

The traveler, the pilgrim in this case always leaves an imprint on the pilgrim route. The huge number of pilgrims in addition to the locals that provide services to the pilgrims does not improve the situation. There is degradation [Gedecho, 2015) of the environment which is evident in the destruction of the green cover like the grass and the trees and flowers in gardens. There is also a lot of littering after the celebrations by the pilgrims which gives the caretakers of the shrines extra work in restoring the sites to their usual state.

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to understand the concepts of religious tourism and pilgrimage, the conflicts and challenges that come with them as well as how these conflicts and challenges affect the areas surrounding the religious/pilgrimage sites. The study employed a qualitative cross sectional research design. Interviews were conducted at the Namugongo martyrs' shrine a week before the climax of the 3rd June Martyrs' Day celebrations and until after the pilgrims had left and business had returned to normal. Namugongo martyrs' shrine was chosen because it is where the largest number of Uganda martyrs were killed and attracts more pilgrims compared to all the other sites combined.

Respondents in the study included among others the pilgrims that came for the Martyrs' Day celebrations, some of the organizers of the event such as the church leaders and the local leaders, business owners (both the ones that permanently have their businesses in the locality and those that come in during the martyrs' day celebrations) as well as the residents in the areas that surround the shrines. The study took an exploratory approach.

Data collection

The study was cross sectional in nature and sought to understand how religious tourism and pilgrimage affect the areas around the pilgrimage sites and how this tourism can be effectively and sustainably managed. Purposive sampling was employed in selecting the respondents. For pilgrims, the researcher would approach a group from the same diocese, request to speak to the leader of the delegation. Their permission was sought to be interviewed or to interview a member of their team. The business owners were also explained to the reasons for the study and requested to be interviewed. Majority would respond to the questions while they went on with their businesses. Primary data was obtained through conducting interviews with the respondents. Interviews were conducted mainly in English, but in instances where the respondent was not conversant with English or where they were more comfortable using the vernacular, the choice of the respondent was respected. In cases where there was language barrier, the respondent was requested to kindly be excused

from the interview. Pilgrims were asked their motivation for travel to Namugongo, how many times they had come in the past and the challenges they encountered as well as their recommendations to the organisers of the annual event. The business owners were asked why they chose to do business at Namugongo during this particular time, how often they had participated, the benefits as well as challenges and their recommendations to the organisers. The residents were asked how long they had stayed in the area, the benefits that accrued from the Namugongo event, the challenges they faced and their suggestions towards the improvement of the organization.

A total of 100 respondents were interviewed. 40 pilgrims were interviewed from about 30 groups (these were clustered together according to their area of origin) on the three days prior to 3rd June which is normally the climax of celebrations. 30 business owners were interviewed both during the event and a few days after. 4 respondents from two major media houses were also interviewed. 20 residents took part in the study as well as 6 organizers (three from the Catholic shrine and 3 from the Anglican shrine). Purposive sampling was employed in selecting the management while availability sampling was used to select the residents, pilgrims as well as business owners/persons and the media. This is where only those respondents that were available and willing to take part in the study were interviewed. Short semi-structured face to face interviews were conducted with all the respondents. Respondents were at liberty to opt out of the interview in case they felt like it. In addition to the interviews, the researcher did some observation and took note of the major points observed. It should be noted that 100 respondents is not representative of the number of pilgrims and business owners that come to Namugongo as well as the residents there. This is because as the 3rd of June drew closer, accessing the sites became a problem due to the crowds and this meant that a lot of time was spent just getting to the pilgrims. Also, not all pilgrims and business owners were willing to take part in the study. For the residents, as soon as the celebrations were over, majority were hard to get because then they had to go back to work which meant that most of their homes were inaccessible. The pilgrims were asked about their area or country of origin, how many times they have come for the martyrs' day celebrations, their mode of transport, their reasons for coming, the benefits and challenges of pilgrimage, as well as their recommendations. The business owners were asked how long they had been doing business in the area, the reasons for coming, the benefits and the challenges encountered as well as the recommendations. The management or organizers were asked for their opinion of the benefits of the event, the challenges encountered and the effects the martyrs' day celebrations have on the surrounding areas. The media were requested to give their view from the media perspective.

All data gathered were analyzed and grouped into themes that appeared similar. The researchers read through the responses and came up with common responses that were used in coming up with a final conclusion about religious tourism and pilgrimage.

Findings

Of the 100 interviews conducted, 65% of the respondents were female while 35% were male. All respondents were adults with majority above the age of 35 years. Majority of the pilgrims interviewed were Catholics because the Anglican shrine was almost impossible to access especially during the peak days of the event. Regarding the country of origin, majority were Ugandans with some pilgrims from Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Kenya, Malawi, and Nigeria. Of the Ugandans interviewed, 70% were from other towns of Uganda and 30% from the local city and the surrounding suburbs. Almost all of the pilgrims were motivated by religion. In fact only one pilgrim (from DRC) revealed that

in addition to taking part in the pilgrimage, he wanted to get business ideas to implement once he got back to his home country.

- *Benefits of religious tourism and pilgrimage*

Spirituality

Majority of the pilgrims highlighted becoming more spiritually centered as the primary benefit of religious tourism and pilgrimage, followed by answered prayers for themselves and their families, peace in the home and healing among others.

Increased sales and profits

The business communities noted an increase in sales as a result of the increase in the number of pilgrims though some added that these pilgrims were however not spending much money on purchases compared to the previous years. Other benefits mentioned were increased revenues to the municipal council as a result of the fees levied on the business owners to enable them to do business. Some of the business owners rented out their spaces and were able to make some quick money for the period of the event.

Improved infrastructural development

The residents noted that the areas had developed as a result of the pilgrimage that takes place every year and that, in fact, it was becoming almost impossible to find a plot of land to buy in the area, and that the few that are available are extremely expensive. There are a number of supermarkets, schools and even medical centres in the area. Another benefit is the improved road network (tarred roads) and even pedestrian walkways.

- *Conflicts and challenges*

Overcrowding

The conflicts and challenges that arose as a result of the pilgrimage were mainly related to the huge crowds that flocked to the place. For the pilgrims, large crowds were a huge problem. Transportation to the pilgrimage sites was a problem and involved standing in long queues just to be able to get to the venue. Vehicles were not allowed to the sites which meant that the pilgrims had to walk a few kilometers before they could get to the sites. In the surrounding areas where "taxis" and "boda bodas" could be accessed, fares were doubled or even tripled as the main day drew closer. At the venue, there was a lot of stampede as people would push each other to try and get into the martyrs' shrine premises, and as a result, some people were separated from family members they had come with which took their concentration away from the pilgrimage to trying to find their lost relatives. Meals in terms of food and drink were scarce and expensive. Most of what was available were snacks and if one wanted a proper meal, they had to get out of the site premises to outside stalls but because getting back inside was almost impossible, some pilgrims had to forego meals or would choose to make do with the snacks for the period. There were no sleeping facilities at the premises which meant that the pilgrims had to sleep in the open space and risked the harsh weather conditions. There was no privacy as men and women as well as some with children had to share the same space. Washrooms too had to be shared in that the men had to share with the boys while the women shared with the girls and even children as parents could not let their children wander off on their own. Hygiene was another major challenge. Much as the washrooms available were closely monitored, they were not sufficient for the huge crowds. This compromised the quality of hygiene at the venue. One pilgrim in fact mentioned that basing on the past experience she had decided not to bother washing up for the entire period for fear of getting infections from the facilities.

Pilgrims complained about the noise levels being too high. This was also observed by the researcher who actually found it difficult to interview the respondents and sometimes

had to practically shout to the respondents so that they could hear what was being asked. There was noise from radio and television stations that had camped at the site and were playing loud music in addition to the business owners who were trying to lure the pilgrims to their stalls. The noise disrupted the pilgrims who wanted to take part in the proceedings at the site, most especially the church services. 5 pilgrims complained of the fact that some political heads like the president, vice president and prime minister as well as some ministers and church leaders came to the event as dignitaries and not as pilgrims. These were accorded special VIP treatment which sometimes called for extra vigilance by the security personnel, who even some times mishandled the pilgrims. *One pilgrim in particular noted that for her, she always takes note of the day the president is to come and makes sure she comes the day before or does not come at all.* The pilgrims, especially the foreigners, also pointed out the poor information flow. Majority said the program for the period was not clear and that the organizers assumed that everyone knew what to do and when to do it. Also, some pilgrims, and more so the foreigners, complained that they did not understand the language used and that proper translation was not made to cater for diversity in cultures and tribes. Thefts and pick pocketing were complained about by a number of pilgrims, especially the foreign delegates, who mostly lost their money during the pilgrimage, with a few cases of lost bags. A particular group of pilgrims from Tanzania that always comes to commemorate the day of their former statesman "Nyerere" expressed disappointment that the day is not accorded the attention it deserves in their opinion. They also noted that it should not be celebrated by the Tanzanians alone but it should be open to the whole public.

On the side of the business owners, the most often mentioned challenge was the high rent charged by the area management and the property owners, as well as the taxes that were levied on them by the municipal council. Majority said they had anticipated sales to be high but due to the prevailing economic circumstances this was not the case as pilgrims were not spending much on purchases. Some business owners even expressed fear that they would not even be able to regain the moneys spent on hiring the premises due to the low sales. Another challenge mentioned by some of the business owners was the stiff competition from the many exhibitors with duplicate goods and services. The supply in fact exceeded the demand which meant that the pilgrims had a lot to choose from. In an effort to make some sales, some business owners were even forced to discount their goods so as not to have to return home with them. Some business owners complained about the fact that service providers were not organized in particular clusters or places. This meant that the customers would move up and down looking for a given product or service thereby contributing to the congestion. Also, some customers got away without paying for their goods. This left the business owners in losses. The business owners also mentioned the lack of sufficient public toilets as a major challenge. They noted that the few available were hard to access and that they were even not clean. This posed a risk of disease outbreaks, especially as some business owners were dealing in edible goods, which in turn could compromise the quality of the food they were selling. The weather was not friendly. Because majority of the business owners were operating in open spaces or makeshift tents, many were beaten by the rain and scorched by the sun. Some goods were even smeared by the mud on the rainy days making them unsuitable for sale. Some business premises on the side of the martyrs' shrines were actually sealed off to the public and for such business owners it meant losses as their side of the road was used by the pilgrims to access the martyrs' shrines.

The major challenge on the side of the organizers/management is the huge masses of people that pick interest in participating in the pilgrimage. Every year, more and more people are seen joining those that participated in the previous years. In fact, majority of the pilgrims revealed that they had participated in the event for 5, 8, 10 times and even for 11 times in a row. This was a challenge because even the first-time pilgrims were many not withstanding those that had come for 2, or 3, or even 4 times. One of the organizers revealed

that because every year it is a different diocese or province that is tasked with organizing the event, they as management may not have much control over the details of the program which makes it hard to avoid some of the "glitches".

Almost all residents in and around the Namugongo area pointed out the issue of congestion due to the huge crowds that lead to them being unable to use their usual access routes to their homes and some of them being grounded in their homes for the entire period. To those that have to go to work in the city centre or other areas outside Namugongo, this always means hiked transport fares and sometimes walking long distances to and from their homes because vehicles are banned from the area especially on the days leading to the 3ʳᵈ June. Too much noise and littering by the pilgrims were also pointed out by the residents as some of the challenges of the event.

The researcher, having participated in this year's pilgrimage, observed a few challenges and made some conclusive notes that might be useful to the study. The researcher noticed that many pilgrims actually abandoned the idea of accessing the pilgrimage sites and instead were busy buying goods and souvenirs such as rosaries, prayer books, cloths with the Uganda martyrs' pictures among other things. Another group of pilgrims came with countless empty jericans and bottles and were instead seen trying to fill them with "holy" water, which many believed would relieve them of many problems and diseases. Some of the media houses camped at the venue and were competing for the viewership of the pilgrims. The TV stations for example were seen following their normal programing (some of which included programs such as soap operas) instead of broadcasting what was happening at the venue so as to help the people outside the premises take part in the program (NB. even those stations did live broadcasting on the final day of the pilgrimage).

The researchers also noted that while the church and the government as well as the Uganda Tourism Board put a lot of money into organizing this particular event, without much in return economically probably because their attention to the spiritual element while ignoring the enormous economic potential of foreign tourism.

Discussion

From the findings, presented above, one can conclude that religious tourism and pilgrimage do indeed affect the area surrounding the pilgrimage sites. This can be seen from the benefits and challenges that accrue from having the event take place. The major findings of the study were:

- Religious tourism and pilgrimage are beneficial to the pilgrims, the area of pilgrimage and to the country in various ways.

    The major benefit is the spiritual growth of the pilgrims that participate in the Martyrs' Day celebrations as well as the church in terms of collections (offertory and thanksgiving). As Vukonic [1998] clearly states, any arrival of believers in a place of pilgrimage has an economic impact. Amongst the economic impacts are developments such as better buildings at the pilgrim sites, better road networks to ease accessibility to the pilgrim sites, more hotels and lodges, restaurants and bars, banks and supermarkets all looking to tap into the increased business opportunities. The standard of living in these areas improves as a result of the people coming into the area. These need products and services such as food, accommodation, and transport among others and are willing to pay for them.. Foreign tourists and pilgrims bring in foreign currency thereby improving the revenues in the area. This in the long run results in improved standards of living.

The areas surrounding the pilgrimage sites gain political significance [Vukonic, 2002]. The government accords these areas more significance because of the VIPs, who visit the sites on an annual basis.

With the varieties of pilgrims and tourists from various countries comes an intercultural exchange. The visitors mix with the host communities, try to learn the culture of the hosts while the hosts also learn the cultures of the visitors. Some of these cultures are good but some are not. What usually results from this exchange is a new culture that sometimes erodes the authentic culture of both the visitors and the locals.

Religious tourism and pilgrimage also affect the population in the areas surrounding the pilgrimage sites. This is because some pilgrims end up staying after the pilgrimage while other locals migrate to these areas because of the seemingly better economic conditions. Vukonic [1998] cites cities like Loreto in Italy, Mecca and Medina which developed into cosmopolitan cities as a result of the influx of various kinds of artisans and workers that thought they may find work servicing pilgrims.

- Every area with huge crowds of people will definitely be affected by the challenges and conflicts that arise from hosting those crowds. Common among these challenges are congestion, stampeding, noise, littering, and thefts among others. Sometimes as literature has pointed out, there is diversion from the primary purpose of the pilgrimage to business dealings and even wild parties. While some pilgrims come purposely for prayer and meditation, there are groups of people, especially the business persons, who instead indulge in selling of items such as souvenirs and other objects like rosaries, prayer books, food items, clothes etc. Some pilgrims even come all the way to collect "holy water" from the pilgrimage sites with the hope that this water will solve their problems. Activities such as wild parties, drunken sprees, entertainment and selling and buying of goods during the celebration of the Martyrs often distract the faithful pilgrims that would want to fully engage in the day's program. As Vukonic [1998] notes, the pilgrimage activities often become ordinary and the profane activities sometimes suppress the religious activities.

There is an increase in crime rates in such areas with huge crowds. There are usually pickpockets, petty thieves as well as seasoned criminals. In some cases, there is even involvement in drug and substance abuse.

Conclusion

It is often difficult to separate religious tourism from pilgrimage and most often the two terms are used interchangeably. The main conclusion of this study is that religious tourism and pilgrimage noticeably affect the areas that surround pilgrimage sites both positively and negatively. It is however difficult to tag the impact to pilgrimage or religious tourism separately. As a result of religious tourism and pilgrimage activities, challenges arise and these challenges must be dealt with in order to ensure that these activities are sustained for a longer period.

Recommendations

With the increasing significance of the Namugongo martyrs' shrine, more and more pilgrims are taking part in pilgrimage to the site. There is a need for the stakeholders to understand the differences between religious tourism and pilgrimage to enable organisers of religious tourism and pilgrimage events to develop systems that meet the diverse needs and expectations of the two categories of travelers. The Government of Uganda and the other

players like the Church and Uganda Tourism Board should first of all understand the needs of the different pilgrims and plan for them accordingly.

All stakeholders in religious tourism and pilgrimage should be involved in the planning and organization of the Martyrs' Day celebrations. This will enable them to point out the various needs and even suggest ways in which religious tourism and pilgrimage can be planned and managed more sustainably.

The stakeholders should organize and manage accessibility to and from the pilgrimage sites say through demarcating access routes to and from the pilgrimage sites. This will help to reduce congestion and will also help to quicken transportation.

There is a need to improve the infrastructure in and around the sites. Shelters and affordable accommodation should be provided for the pilgrims so that they can comfortably take part in the pilgrimage activities without necessarily worrying about where to stay.

All operations at the pilgrimage sites should be regulated by the authorities. Services for example should be streamlined and service providers given some kind of regulation to govern them. This is aimed at ensuring some form of order so that the operations and pilgrimage activities co-exist and that neither group feels alienated.

Contribution of the study

Most of the available literature focuses on the similarities and differences between tourism and pilgrimage as opposed to religious tourism and pilgrimage as well as the benefits of religious tourism [Gedecho, 2015] and not on the conflicts and challenges that arise from religious tourism and pilgrimage. This study therefore fills that gap by providing information on the similarities and differences between religious tourism and pilgrimage and the conflicts and challenges. The findings from the study also supplement the already existing literature and provide knowledge on the general understanding of the concepts of religious tourism and pilgrimage.

The study makes recommendations that may be useful in managing conflicts and challenges that arise as a result of religious tourism and pilgrimage activities.

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Turystyka religijna i pielgrzymkowa: konflikty i wyzwania. Przypadek Swiątyni Męczenników Namugongo w Ugandzie

Słowa kluczowe: turystyka, turystyka religijna, pielgrzymka, męczennicy Ugandy.

Abstrakt:
Turystyka religijna zostałą zdefiniowana jako forma turystyki kulturowej przez autorów takich jak Rinschede [1992] i Singh [2004], obydwoje cytowani są przez Terzidou et al. [2008]. W rozwijającym się kraju, takim jak Uganda, koncepcja turystyki religijnej jest wciąż nowa i została zaakceptowana zarówno przez rząd, jak i przez ludzi. Niestety niewiele uwagi poświęcono konfliktom i wyzwaniom, jakie mogą wyniknąć z tej nowej formy turystyki. Ponadto większość badań dotyczących turystyki i turystyki religijnej wydaje się koncentrować na korzyściach płynących z turystyki dla społeczności przyjmującej, a nie na konfliktach, które mogą być związane z tą formą turystyki. Niniejszy artykuł ma na celu wskazanie konfliktów i wyzwań związanych z turystyką religijną i pielgrzymkową w krajach rozwijających się, takich jak Uganda, w szczególności patrząc przez pryzmat męczenników Namugongo w Ugandzie. Sanktuarium Męczenników Namugongo w Ugandzie zostało wybrane, 3 czerwca każdego roku przyjmuje rzesze turystów i pielgrzymów i jest dobrym przykłedm innych miejsc w kraju. Przeprowadzono jakościowe przekrojowe badanie analityczne, aby umożliwić naukowcom lepsze zrozumienie tych konfliktów i wyzwań. Badaną populację stanowili przywódcy religijni w Sanktuariach Namugongo, mieszkańcy okolicy, społeczność biznesowa wokół sanktuariów, decydenci polityczni, a także pielgrzymi z Kampali i spoza niej. Na próbę 100 respondentów przeprowadzono badania za pomocą wywiadów częściowo ustrukturyzowanych. Do wyboru respondentów do badania wykorzystano celową technikę pobierania prób.
Badanie pokazuje, że turystyce religijnej i pielgrzymkowej towarzyszą takie wyzwania, jak przeludnienie, zbyt duży hałas, naruszenie podstawowych zasad religijnych i złe standardy higieny.

Badania koncentrują się na wyzwaniach związanych z turystyką religijną i pielgrzymkową. Obecnie jest dostępna nieliczna literatura dotycząca konfliktów i wyzwań, z którymi borykają się społeczności przyjmujące pielgrzymki, szczególnie w krajach rozwijających się, takich jak Uganda. Wywody artukułu mogą być wykorzystane przez decydentów, aby sprostać wyzwaniom związanym z turystyką zrównoważoną.