

Western Tourism in Zanzibar: Cultural And Religious Implications

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ABSTRACT

Zanzibar is a semi-autonomous polity in Tanzania. Since the 1980s with the fall in the production of cloves in the world market, tourism became an alternate source of economic development. The expansion of tourism has led to large scale infrastructure development; yet, local communities believe that this development has taken place without considering local values. While the government seems to be willing to meet the demands of tourists, it will be argued here that local communities give priority to Islamic values. There seems to be in fact a conflict between the economic development plans of the government and the population of Zanzibar with respect to the preservation of Zanzibar's Islamic culture. This study will appraise the effects of Western tourism on the Islamic culture and values of the people of Zanzibar.

Keywords: Zanzibar, Islam, Tourism, cultural conflict

Zanzibar'da Batı Turizmi : Kültürel ve Dini Etkileri

ÖZ

Zanzibar, Tanzanya'da yarı-özerk bir yönetim birimidir. Dünya pazarında karanfil üretimindeki düşüş ile 1980'lerden bu yana turizm, ekonomik kalkınma için alternatif bir kaynak haline geldi. Turizmin genişlemesi büyük ölçekli altyapı geliştirmeyi sağlamıştır fakat yerel topluluklar bu gelişmelerin yerel değerler dikkate alınmadan yapıldığını düşünmektedir. Hükümetin turistlerin taleplerini karşılamak için istekli tavrı görülse de; burada yerel toplulukların İslami hassasiyetlere verdikleri öncelik tartışılacaktır. Gerçekte, hükümetin ekonomik gelişme planları ve Zanzibar nüfusunun, Zanzibar'ın İslami kültürünü koruma saygısı çatışmaktadır. Bu çalışma Batı turizminin İslam kültürü ve Zanzibar halkının değerleri üzerindeki etkilerini değerlendirecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Zanzibar, İslam, Turizm, kültürel çatışma

Zanzibar is an archipelago consisting of the two main islands of Unguja and Pemba and about 51 other surrounding small islets located in the Indian Ocean about 35km off the coast of mainland Tanzania at a longitude of 39 degrees east and a latitude of 6 degrees south of the Equator. Zanzibar and Tanganyika together form the United Republic of Tanzania. Zanzibar has its own Government led by its own president. It has an elected House of Representatives and cabinet ministers for all matters which are not “Union Affairs” including tourism. The Swahili culture of Zanzibar is a result of the historical process of blending of African, Persian, Arabic and Indian influences. Today the romance, the splendour and legends of these past cultures are still brightly alive; traditional sailing dhows, carved wooden doors, chests, the fragrance of the clove and the smile of Zanzibar’s people welcome tourists to Zanzibar. The majority of Zanzibaris are Muslim and Islam is reflected in their life style and culture. Mosques are holy places and usually entered with permission, provided the visitor’s shoes are first removed. During the holy month of *Ramadhan* tourist may find it difficult to dine during the day hours. However some restaurants are allowed to serve the tourists. There are also Christian churches and Hindu temples which offer regular daily or Sunday services.

The climate of Zanzibar is warm all year, 28-38 degrees Celsius, with cool sea breezes in the hottest months. However, heavy storms arrive in April/May and November. Zanzibar is surrounded by coral reefs and there are miles of unspoiled white beaches. Sea temperatures of c. 27 degrees attract Scuba enthusiasts and visitors can swim with dolphins. In the south east of Unguja Island is the Jozani Natural Forest Reserve, home of the rare Red Colobus monkey, and this Natural Forest reserve also has excellent and well-led walks along nature trails. Nearby at the village of Kizimkazi is an old mosque (built 1107 AD) with Kufic scripts on the left of the *mihrab* which gives the date of the building of the mosque as well as some passages from the Quran. A World Heritage site – and an old town called Stone Town today is Zanzibar’s capital city. Off the west coast is Chumbe Island with its solar power driven hotel that won a sustainable tourism award in 2000.

INTRODUCTION TO TOURISM

Tourism is defined as being the temporary short-term movement of people to destinations outside the places where they normally live and work. It is the practice of traveling for particular activities selected by choice and undertaken outside the home environment. Tourism involves also the movement of people within their own country. This category of tourism is known as domestic tourism, while the traveling of people to and from other countries is known as international tourism. In either case the movement involves travel by a range of different means including road, water and air travel, over long or short distances. Moreover, tourists have different purposes

of travelling. Main purposes are traveling for pleasure especially during holidays or vacations. Also, visits to relatives and friends, education and training, the gaining of new experiences, sports and recreation. Some tourists travel for cultural purposes to visit exhibitions, art galleries, historical places or buildings, to attend concerts and festivals and so forth. Still others visit holy cities or shrines and may thus be called religious tourists. Many tourists like to see and meet different people and to experience different cultures.

Travel and tourism have grown from activities in which mainly the rich were involved in historical times. Today, tourism has developed into a huge industry employing thousands of employees in countries all over the world. Tourism is likely to be the largest global industry. In 1991, 450 million international tourist arrivals compared with 60 million in 1960 (Talib 2001: 5) generated receipts of US \$ 270 billion according to the World Tourism Organization. The tourist industry is thus a major contributor to world trade and is responsible for significant proportions of the foreign earnings of many countries. Citizens of the host countries benefit in many ways from improvements made by this industry, including investment in infrastructure. On the other hand they also have to bear costs in many ways, not only financially but also socially. The tourism industry is heterogeneous, i.e. it is composed of different types of business activities. A well planned, operated and controlled national tourism policy should benefit a population at large and not only benefit those who happen to live in those locations where money is actually spent by tourists.

States are involved in the tourism industry because tourism contributes to national incomes, to the balance of payment and because tourism may encourage economic growth. Tourism in addition provides employment. Government participation can also prevent the emergence of economic hegemonies when just a few large private sector organizations would otherwise dominate and control tourism within a country. States also take steps to protect the ecology and the environment from damage and pollution. States equally protect the national heritage (culture, beaches, beautiful sites, historical and archaeological sites, flora and fauna) from commercial exploitation and damage incurring due to large numbers of visitors. No matter how beautiful a product may be, one should not be able to sell it unless there is awareness. Awareness is built through development promotion.

When it comes to tourism and tourist destinations, there are leading determinants and influences that decide the choice of a specific destination. Tourists do not rise up one day and decide they are going to visit one specific country and not another one without prior reasons and without knowing some specific features of the destination. Basically there are four determinants that decide choices, namely:

1. The level of security and safety that goes with a destination. Appropriate measures must be taken to ensure that local and international tourists will enjoy an ever higher degree of safety and security. Tourism will not flourish in

destinations characterized by civil turmoil, war or where the tourists' health or security is perceived to be under threat.

2. The attractions of the destination and how they have been promoted. It is important to arouse interest and desire to see or to participate in something, especially when such a destination has unique selling power. Attractions create different types of tourism such as cultural tourism, religious tourism, eco-tourism, agro-tourism, social-tourism etc. This happens due to site attractions, event attractions or combined attractions which may be natural, man-made or combined.
3. The services and facilities offered by the destination and their cost. It is very important to make sure that facilities meet a range of requirements and are offered at a reasonable price.
4. The accessibility of destinations for tourists, including the type and range of travel opportunities offered. A destination should be accessible by regular and convenient as well as reasonably priced forms of transport.

These are the most important criteria to which tourist authorities, tour operators, organizers, and travel agencies must pay attention if they are to attract tourists and to ensure their satisfaction (Talib 2001: 6). It is very important to know that "bad experiences" will be passed on to other tourists back home who may be deterred from making a visit. Bad publicity thus does not help any destination.

TOURISM IN "OLD ZANZIBAR"¹

Before 1964, Zanzibar was among the best known tourist sites in East Africa due to its privileged position, weather and culture on the shores of the Indian Ocean. Records and pictures since the 1820s provide evidence that although many western influences have contributed to the development of early tourism to "old Zanzibar", none was stronger in its day than the impact of the travellers, merchants and shipmasters from the eastern seaboard of the United States of America, particularly the harbours and factories of Massachusetts. But even earlier than this time, there is evidence that shows that ships anchored at Zanzibar harbour for a number of different purposes including tourism. Some of these visiting travellers left statements that show the status of "old Zanzibar" and the characteristic features of "tourism" in the eyes of western travellers who visited Zanzibar during these times. Some of these statements declare:

This place (Zanzibar) (is famous) for the goodness of the Harborough (sic) and watering and plentiful refreshing with fish, and for sending sorts of fruits of the country, as cows, and others which were brought by Moores, as also for oxen and hennes, is carefully to be sought for by such of all ships as shall hereafter pass the way... (A guide to Zanzibar 1952: 95).

¹ In this paper the term "old Zanzibar" refers to the period of time before 1964 when a revolution changed every aspect of Zanzibar's society.

This quote is actually taken from an extract of the report of Captain James Lancaster on the visit of the first English ship in Zanzibar, the “Edward Bonaventure” in 1592.

When Mr. Burton gazed for the first time on “old Zanzibar” in the mid-19th century, he wrote:

As we drew nearer and vision became more distinct, we found as many questions for the pilot as did Vasco da Gama of old. Those prim plantations which, from the offing resembled Italian avenues of oranges, the tea-gardens of China, the vines of romantic Provence, the coffee plantation of Brazil, or the orange yards of Paraguay, were the celebrated clove-grounds. We distinctly felt a heavy spicy perfume, as if passing before the shop of an Egyptian (attar) and the sensorium was not the less pleasantly affected, after a hard diet of briny N.E. Trade (A guide to Zanzibar 1961: iii).

In 1961, Sir George Mooring, British Resident to Zanzibar wrote that,

...the visitor to Zanzibar treads a path that has been worn by generations of travelers and sea adventurers for many centuries. No doubt the scene has changed, and yet this description, which Burton wrote over a hundred years ago, could as truthfully be written today (A guide to Zanzibar 1961: iv).

Viewing these quotations, one can understand that tourism in “old Zanzibar” depended on local, natural and cultural attractions. The interest of travelers was to visit Zanzibar and to realize the nature and the beautiful creation of almighty Allah.

Although Zanzibar was a British Protectorate since 1890, and was administered by a British Resident who exercised his functions under the Zanzibar Orders-in-Council of 1925 and 1926, and who, in certain matters, was directly responsible to the Colonial Office, he did not try to directly influence the beliefs and culture of Zanzibar’s population. Instead, the British Protectorate Constitution declared that “Zanzibar was an Islamic State ruled by His Highness the Sultan ...” (A guide to Zanzibar 1961: iv). According to this Constitution that dated to the early 1890’s, Zanzibar was an Arab State at the head of which was a Sultan, and which had been a British Protectorate since 1890. It was clearly stated that Mohammedan (Islamic) Law was the fundamental Law of Zanzibar in civil matters. Section 4 of the “Courts Decree” stated that: “The Supreme Judicial Authority is and remains vested in His Highness the Sultan as heretofore.” (Department of Education Report for the Triennium: 1961 – 1963: 5).

This is to say that touristic activities in “old Zanzibar” were expected to follow the Islamic law as the source of people’s culture, implying recognition of, for instance, the prohibition of liquor. The “Guide to Zanzibar: A detailed account of Zanzibar Town and Island, including general information about the Protectorate, and a description of itineraries for the use of visitors” (1952: 22) and (1961: 81) clearly stated that “as

Zanzibar is a Muslim State” the possession or drinking of intoxicating liquor and alcohol was prohibited by law except under license or permit for non-Muslims. Tourists, travelers and other persons visiting Zanzibar and staying longer than thirty days must be registered with the Town Clerk in order to take certificate of exemption, license or permit provided they are not prohibited persons such as Muslims.

In addition to that, anybody interested in the history of tourism in Zanzibar may understand the role and importance of Zanzibar’s Islamic culture by looking at a list of places of special interest in Zanzibar Town and its environs, as well as by looking at the tour guide and information books of that time. All the places mentioned in these texts are those that are linked with Islamic teaching and which are integrated into local Muslim culture. It seems that the issue of “making money” was not yet visible or was not a first priority for people. A list of attractions in “old Zanzibar” lists, amongst others, the following places of touristic interest and activity (A guide to Zanzibar 1952: 26): the Town and its Environs such as the Arab Fort, the Bazaars, the Beit el-Ajaib or the Sultan’s Palace as well as various islands; country tours; sports, in particular swimming and fishing, but also leisure activities such as “African dances” and exhibitions; it was also possible to acquire touristic mementos of local manufacture and traditional design in the silversmiths’ shops. Accommodation was possible in a series of hotels in the “Stone Town” area of Zanzibar. Last but not least, a number of local newspapers such as the *Adal Insaf* (English and Gujarati), *al-Falaq* (Arabic and English), *The Zanzibar Voice* (English and Gujarati) and *The Samachar* (English and Gujarati) were available, although the only daily English newspaper was the *Tanganyika Standard* which was delivered by air from Dar es Salaam.

This short description of “old Zanzibar’s” touristic attractions with respect to the theme of this paper shows that, although Zanzibar knew tourism in historical times, tourism was not yet seen as constituting a problem for the Islamic culture of Zanzibar. Islam was anchored, in fact, in the constitution of Zanzibar under British colonial rule. As a consequence, Zanzibar developed to become a strong center of Islamic civilization, culture and education in East Africa.

TOURISM IN “CONTEMPORARY ZANZIBAR”²

The zeal of Zanzibar’s Revolutionary Government to control all touristic properties and the tourist industry in Zanzibar was clear from the very first days of revolution. The Revolutionary Government issued many decrees with regard to the control of touristic properties. This was done by the nationalization of private touristic properties and the centralization of touristic income under the auspices of the new tourist commission which was established in 1964. From 1985, however, a year which signals the beginning of

2 In this paper the term “contemporary Zanzibar” means the period after 1964 when the revolution started to change every aspect of Zanzibar’s everyday life.

a policy of liberalization of Zanzibar's economy, the Revolutionary government enacted laws that invited the private sector to participate in the development of tourism. When introducing these new policies of tourism, Zanzibar had to face many challenges. The government for instance opened the doors to western investors to invest in the tourist sector. When comparing old and contemporary Zanzibar, it seems as if Zanzibar's new government gave priority to jobs and money instead of culture and values. This is an impression supported by all Muslim leaders of Zanzibar (Communiqué of the Muslim Religious Leaders Workshop on Tourism for all: 18.6.2012) regarding current touristic activities in Zanzibar.

According to these Muslim leaders, the present government is concerned more with the security of tourists, the attraction of Zanzibar for Western³ tourists as a safe destination, and the provision of all necessary facilities to attract tourists. Another argument of Muslim leaders is that the government attracts tourism because it contributes to the national income, because it encourages economic growth and provides employment in Zanzibar. A big challenge in the eyes of people is how the Government can manage to balance a fast growing tourist industry and the preservation of Zanzibar's Islamic culture. Muslim scholars are rejecting tourism as such because it holds some profit for Zanzibaris but their argument is how can local beliefs and traditions be respected? Muslim scholars are thus calling to give values again the central stage and to encourage understanding and dialogue between different nations and civilizations.

When Zanzibar's Muslims look at the vision of the Government of Zanzibar regarding tourism which is "to become one of the top tourist destinations of the Indian Ocean, offering an upmarket, high quality product across the board within the coming 17 years" (Zanzibar Commission for Tourism files) or when Muslims read the "Mission of Zanzibar" regarding the development of tourism, they fear that Zanzibar's Islamic culture will not be respected. For the "Mission to Zanzibar" tourist development thus means

...to be the most exotic, diverse island destination in the Indian Ocean Region beaches - Exotic as it is wrapped in a mysterious Arab/African setting and flavoured with palm fringed, tropical beaches. Diverse in terms of products, activities and attractions, thereby combining various types of tourism: Beach holidays, Eco-friendly, Culture & Tradition, History & Archaeology, Water sports, Honeymoon, Performing Arts, Conference, Incentive, Culinary (spices) and Medical (herbs) (Zanzibar Commission for Tourism files)

The "Zanzibar Policy Statement Article 4.1.7" mentions clearly indeed that "Tourism will be used to conserve the uniqueness of the Island's heritage, its history,

3 It has to be mentioned here that Zanzibar attracts not only tourists from Western countries, but also tourists and visitors from Arab countries, in particular Oman, as well as from the Zanzibari diaspora in the Gulf, in Britain, the USA and Canada. Such non-Western tourists and visitors are not seen, however, as a "cultural problem" and are not considered thus in the present analysis.

culture and way of life; tourism will help to reinforce these values, and stimulate the further development of an extensive range of cultural activities, mega events and manifestations (e.g. festivals)” (ZNZ Policy Statement: 4). This article has so far not paid attention, however, to the implementation of practical measures when it comes to issues of Islamic ethics and values. When looking at government statements on tourism development, for instance, it seems that there exists a conflict between theory and practice, between the government and the population of Zanzibar with respect to the preservation of the culture of the people. (Communiqué of the Muslim Religious Leaders Workshop on Tourism for all: 18.6.2012) Sometimes the government appears to defend the needs of the people rather than the interests of the tourists. A good example of this phenomenon occurred earlier this year (2012) when Zanzibar enacted a law to ban gay and lesbian practices in the country. Western gay activists subsequently wrote in “Afrol News” the following article titled “Zanzibar threatened with tourism boycott”:

European gay activists are calling for an ample travel boycott of the autonomous Tanzanian island of Zanzibar after local authorities earlier this month outlawed homosexuality. Zanzibar, a major tourist destination, on the other hand, has banned gay and lesbian tourists and threatens homosexuals with jail sentences of up to 25 years. Peter Tatchell, the infamous leading figure of the British gay activist group Outrage!, has reacted strongly to the new and harsh anti-homosexual legislation of Zanzibar, an Indian Ocean island forming the smaller half of the Tanzanian Union during the last 40 years. The mostly Muslim state last week decided to outlaw homosexuality. The anti-gay bill, which probably will be approved by the Zanzibari parliament in May, provides for jail terms of up to 25 years for men engaged in homosexual relationships and up to seven years prison for lesbians. The ban is also widely understood as a ban on gay tourists as the bill does not differentiate between local and foreign “offenders”. Zanzibar is one of Tanzania’s main tourist destinations and is known to be the favourite gay tourist destination in East Africa, given liberal practices. The growing arrival of foreign homosexuals however was the main cause of government concern, fearing a “corruption” of Zanzibari culture. British activist Tatchell, however, expects European and American heterosexuals to show solidarity with the gay community and told the London-based ‘Observer’ that Outrage! was calling for a general tourist boycott of Zanzibar.

Especially gays and lesbians were advised from going to Zanzibar, given their safety on the island, said Mr Tatchell according to “Afrol News”. “I would hope that both gay and straight travellers will boycott Zanzibar,” he however added. The British activist hopes the prospect of dramatically lowered tourism may contribute to a change of attitude among Zanzibari lawmakers”.

ISSUES OF CONFLICT

Zanzibar indeed is heavily dependent on tourism: While Zanzibar was visited by only 6,100 tourists in 1977, the number of tourists grew to 82,700 in 1991, and to c. 170,000 in 1997. (Purpura 1997: 473) However, there has always been a striking difference between officially registered arrivals and the true number of tourists in Zanzibar. In 2008, for instance, 128,440 tourists officially arrived in Zanzibar. This number grew to 134,919 in 2009. Yet, in 2003, the true number of arrivals had been 350,000.⁴ Equally, Zanzibar had 80 hotels in 1997, yet, by 2010, their number had risen to 342. These hotels command control over beaches in order to secure the privacy of their clients. Today, the tourist industry is the second largest on the island, closely behind commercial agriculture. Local authorities and businesses have invested large sums in building an infrastructure and marketing the island's impressive cultural history and natural beauty. The growing impact of tourism in Zanzibar has not been without problems. Sparsely dressed women and men, sexually overt behaviour among heterosexual couples and a growing number of gay tourists are in a sharp contrast to traditional values in the conservative Zanzibari society.

Drugs, alcohol and homosexuality in fact form a group of themes that were usually presented in one argumentative context with the issue of tourism, possibly as an effort to discredit the rather liberal tourist policies of the revolutionary government. In 1992, the first graffiti had appeared that said: *Ondosha Utalii! Weka Uislamu* 'Get rid of tourism, commit to Islam', (Purpura 1997: 379). Tourists, in particular, those from Italy who have indeed acquired an extremely bad reputation in Zanzibar, were called names such as *vishuka* or *nusu shuka* (those who wear only 'half trousers', i.e. shorts), but also *bahili* (misers) and *kichua* for their disrespectful behaviour (Purpura 1997: 382). At the same time, the local *vijana wa Kimaendeleo*, Zanzibar's 'modern youth' would be influenced (in negative ways) by tourism and supposedly preferred new hairstyles, fashion, jeans and wanted to dance and to be like Americans (Purpura 1997: 381).

In the early 2000s, cruise ships were thought to carry homosexuals to Zanzibar, as one article in *an-Nuur* (14 March 2003) claimed and attention was paid to an 'homosexual marriage' in the Bwawani hotel on 14 February 2003, which was interpreted by *ansar al-sunna*⁵ spokesmen as another manifestation of Zanzibar's moral decay: Muslims who wanted to pray were beaten up by the police, while men married other men "*wanaosali wapigwa, wanaume waowana*", (*Dira*, 28 February 2003): "*Zanzibar yafikishwa pabaya*", (Zanzibar has become bad). Although the alleged marriage ceremony was presented in *Dira*'s next edition on 7 March 2003 as 'just a meeting of friends' (*waliodaiwa kuonana ni 'marafiki' tu*), this affair triggered considerable publicity and was condemned by the Muslim press. Possibly as a result of this campaign, the Zanzibar House of Representatives supported a law that made

4 Communication Othman Saidi Khamis.

5 The term "ansar al-sunna" refers to a heterogeneous group of Muslim activists in both Zanzibar and mainland Tanzania who oppose government politics on many different issues.

gay sex a criminal offence to be punished with 25 years of imprisonment for men and seven years for women (*The Guardian*, 21 August 2004). The most recent campaign against homosexuality started in September 2006, when the owner of 'Mercury's', a well-known tourist bar close to the Malindi Friday mosque, announced his plans to boost the memory of the homosexual rock star Freddie Mercury, who was born, as Farouk Bulsara, in Zanzibar in 1946, as a 'seller' for Zanzibar's tourist industry and to annually celebrate his birthday on 5 September (Loimeier 2011: 21).

Hotels were also depicted thus as a source of evil as in *an-Nuur* of 21 March 2003 "*Mahoteli ya Kitalii Unguja kuchomwa moto*": (tourist hotels in Unguja will burn) as they 'invite homosexuals and prostitution'. The article specifically mentioned prostitutes (*changudoa*) from Tanga and beach boy relationships (*mzinifu*) as a cause of evil. Ustādh Azzan of the *Jumuiya ya Uamsho* again accused the Mufti to remain passive, Muslims would thus have to become active themselves. The article condemned improper dress, in particular, that of women from the mainland and that of Europeans (*Wazungu*; literally, 'those who are not circumcised') who did not respect the civilization of Zanzibar. Abeid Amani Karume, by contrast, had been successful in imposing respect and insisting on decent dress even for *Wazungu* (Loimeier 2011: 22).

Maarifa (No. 3, 16 January 2002) also raised the problem of 'free sex on the beaches' (*Ngono huria katika Fukwe za Zanzibar*) and mentioned that there had been an advertisement for 'free sex on the beach cocktail on arrival at three great restaurants (bikinis on request)', which was spread by taxi-drivers at the airport and tour guide cars. The land, in fact, had been 'overwhelmed' (*nchi hii kuharibiwa*) by tourism: It had become more difficult to get water than alcohol. Bad habits as introduced by tourism were also expressed in advertisement which depicted Zanzibar as a place where tourist may go naked. Even more outrageous was a postcard showing Mnemba Island adorned with the *shahāda* as reproduced in *Maarifa* (No. 5, 16 March 2002) and titled *Waislam washtushwa na matangazo ya Mnemba*. As the postcard with the *shahāda* was used for advertising tourism and showed no respect for religion, the hotel should apologize and stop publishing the *shahāda* on postcards: Badly conceived tourism had led to resistance on Kiwengwa and some villages on Jombwe Island off Pemba, as documented in *Maarifa* (16 March 2002 and 12 July 2002).

Equally, the public consumption of alcohol, in particular, in bars close to mosques, has fired Muslim criticism of government policies, even though the government had repeatedly tried to limit the liquor business and to close bars close to mosques (*The Guardian*, 5 August 2003: 'Zanzibar bans liquor business'). Yet, while the municipality had prohibited bars near places of worship, this regulation was not enforced and there still were bars near mosques such as the 'Sunrise' bar in Shangani (*Maarifa*, No. 4, 15 February 2002). In the same *Maarifa* article, the secretary of the editorial board of *Zanzibar Leo*, a loyalist daily paper, Ali Abdallah, confirmed that the law prohibited bars near places of worship. Muslims were, however, not sure about the implementation

of this law, as business was done in clandestine ways: Even though the law existed, it was not implemented. In Stone Town, the situation was even more problematic as there was a whore house, the 'New Happy Lodge' that was tolerated, although neighbors and citizens complained as their wives and children were threatened and condoms were lying in the street for the children to see. *Dira* (14 March 2003) also complained that Kiembe Samaki residents complained about a bar (*Kiembe Samaki walalamikia baa*) and that Kiembe Samaki residents wanted the government to close down the 'Mustapha Modern Bar'. Three villagers had even gone to court to stop the owner to get a licence, but he had nevertheless got the licence (Loimeier 2011: 23).

According to a report by the non-governmental organisation, "Action Aid", tourism, despite its rapid growth on the island, has so far benefited big investors and a handful of local people only. Janet Mawiyoo, the organisation's director in Tanzania, says that a lot of foreign companies have bought land and local people are no longer accessing the sea easily: "We are aware of a lot of people who work in the tourist industry who are not necessarily from the island. As to how many local Zanzibaris are really benefiting I think that is really questionable, ordinary Zanzibaris are really not being part of that scene" (Action Aid). Not only was that the case but there were also news reported on Wednesday, 11 May 2011, by Salma Said, The Citizen Correspondent, with the heading: "Six charged over burning of shops". This fire also burned a substantial sum of money in local and foreign currencies. The traders appealed to the government to take stern measures against the arsonists since they were still at large and were likely to commit similar offences elsewhere. However, the Zanzibari historian Professor Abdul Sheriff, Executive Director of ZIORI (Zanzibar Indian Ocean Research Institute), has analysed this issue and has come to the following conclusion:

The burning of the *mabanda* (shops) belonging to 'Wabara' (Mainlanders) at Pwani Mchangani in Zanzibar has become a big story, treated as a criminal or a political act by Zanzibaris against mainlanders. It may be both, but nobody has asked where the root of the problem may lie in the economic and social sphere. The first question that may be asked is whether all these 80 or so shops indeed belonged only to mainlanders, and there were not any belonging to local people. From the picture that I have seen, the whole area was swept clean. If this was the case, then the second question is how such an odd situation could have arisen in a fishing village in Zanzibar, that suddenly there should be such a flood of the 'wabara', without providing any opportunity to the local people to benefit from any development there. The answer may lie in the way tourism has invaded Zanzibari villages, and how it has undermined local economy and society. I remember going to nearby Nungwi village (North of Zanzibar) in 1979 before the tourism invasion. It was not a rich village, but it was to a considerable extent a neat village and a comfortable self-reliant community subsisting on local agriculture and fishing, selling the surplus to the town. When I visited the same village last year, it had been turned upside down, and I could not recognise it at all. It has been flooded with shops blaring loud music, with bars and *mabanda* (shops) selling all sorts of things

to tourists and others. It resembles Kariakoo (Dar es Salaam big Market). A couple of years ago there was a conflict there where women of the village came out demonstrating against the huge inflow of prostitutes who they said were breaking up their families there. Some years previously, a politician extended his bar into one of the streets of Zanzibar Stone Town against the existing law, with drunkards and prostitutes blocking the street that even a self-respecting man would not dare to pass, let alone women. He was approached by one of the European neighbours, but he was rudely told to shove off. Other neighbours approached the police, but they did nothing to enforce the law. Where everything failed, some disgruntled person resorted to the bomb. Overnight, the bar went indoors where it was supposed to be according to the law in Zanzibar. More recently several bars that had sprung up in the middle peaceful residential communities in Zanzibar were burnt. In the recent case also there have been complaints that the *mabanda* were haunts of bars and prostitutes. Did the government or the police take any action to deal with the grievances of the local villagers to prevent the destruction of these communities for the sake of the tourist dollar and those pursuing them? Therefore, should we be surprised that some local villagers would resort to be taking law into their own hands when those responsible fail to fulfil their duties? We should not be surprised, without necessarily condoning such acts. This has been taken by the authorities as a criminal act, and they have promised the 'full force of the law' to suppress it. It has been interpreted by those affected as hatred by Zanzibaris against *wabara* (Mainlanders). If there is such 'hatred', there must be a reason. In the persisting widespread discontent in Zanzibar against the Union, which many see as not having benefited the smaller partner, but on the contrary, is destroying local communities, why should we be surprised that it may become a demonstration of the underlying political problem? Some people on the mainland have raised the spectre of a similar treatment against Zanzibaris on the mainland. If Zanzibaris become responsible for a similar disruption of the local economy and society in their new homes on the mainland, they may suffer a similar backlash. However, this should not stop us from asking some fundamental questions about our economic policies, especially about tourism, to the neglect of everything else, without considering the social, cultural, and even political consequences to our country and its people (Prof. Sheriff, Zanzinet.net).

CONCLUSION

Some 95 percent of Zanzibar's population is Muslim. As foreign impulses have increasingly hit the island, Islam has become a stronger force in society. The ban on homosexuality caused no controversy in Zanzibar and was one of the relatively few occasions that united the polarised political establishment here. The threat of less tourism revenues however may be taken seriously among the business-oriented population. Representatives of the island's tourism authorities have expressed outrage at a possible boycott, given the impact it could have on local economy. They hold

that Mr Tatchell is acting irresponsibly by “calling for a boycott and instead urge tourists to understand and respect local culture”; (ZNZ Commission for Tourism website). The examples presented above throw some light on the challenges that are facing Zanzibar’s tourism industry today. However, this challenge may be overcome if both the government and the people of Zanzibar will stand firm and defend the nation’s principles, culture, ethics and Islamic norms. In order to solve such problems concerning tourism in Zanzibar it is necessary to make some key institutional changes in order to protect the interests of people in local communities and to make sure that the population of Zanzibar will benefit from tourism economically and religiously. The said changes will make people believe that they are indeed stakeholders in the tourism business by contrast to present times when the entrepreneurs who are selling children’s clothes as well as cup cakes and chapattis used to say that “it is foreigners who benefit most from tourism in Zanzibar”, or, “There are a lot of Italians who own hotels in Zanzibar. But we Zanzibaris live in poverty... we don’t have enough money to own or manage good hotels.” (Daniel Dickinson, BBC Zanzibar).

This paper discussed how tourism developed in Zanzibar’s history. It discussed the conflict between tourism “in theory” and its implementation in old and contemporary Zanzibar realities. The paper showed how tourism in Zanzibar has acquired different meanings over time and is interpreted differently by government, foreigners, tourists, business people and the local population. The paper also presented some evidence of conflict between the wishes of tourists and the need to accommodate tourists who respect the peoples’ culture. Issues of gay and lesbian tourism, prostitution, and the public consumption of alcohol as well as the negative impact of tourism in local villages have equally been addressed. In conclusion, it has been argued that there are still some fundamental questions about Zanzibar economic policies, especially about tourism, to the neglect of everything else, without considering the social, cultural, and even political consequences to the country and its people.

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