



TOURISM IN A POST-CONFLICT SITUATION OF FRAGILITY

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Abstract: Whilst there are studies of tourism development in sub-Saharan Africa, almost none explicitly explore tourism in post-conflict societies. This study, co-authored between an African ‘insider’ and European ‘outsiders’, analyses tourism development challenges in Burundi, a ‘situation of fragility’ emerging from a 12-year civil war. Framed by hopeful tourism’s co-created knowledge, the field research had unique access to powerful elites and remote communities and encompasses interviews with a wide range of stakeholders (including the President of the Republic), field observations, and a feedback workshop. The paper identifies challenges to sustainable tourism development in one of the world’s poorest countries and evaluates tourism in a post-conflict situation of fragility under the themes of institution- and state-building and post-conflict challenges and transitional justice. **Keywords:** post-conflict societies, rapid situation analysis, hopeful tourism, fragile states, Africa, Burundi. © 2012 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

INTRODUCTION

The guarantee of tourists’ personal safety is perhaps the most important prerequisite for any aspiring tourism destination (Mansfield & Pizam, 2005). Incidents of terrorism, crime, natural disasters and epidemic outbreaks all negatively impact on place image and pose major challenges to the tourism industry, especially as the global media reinforce such security fears (Anson, 1999). However, unlike short-term disasters, civil unrest can affect the image of a destination for years to come and so internal conflict is totally inconsistent with sustainable tourism development (Beirman, 2002; Morgan, Pritchard, & Pride, 2011). This is a particular problem for many of the world’s poorest

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countries, most of which are heavily reliant on tourism (Cole & Morgan, 2010). Around 60% of the poorest countries have recently experienced civil conflict of varying intensity and duration; conflict that usually erupted after a period of economic stagnation or collapse (Kahler, 2007). Many of these states are so-called ‘situations of fragility’ (OECD, 2008, p. 1), a group of around 50 countries which are lagging 40 to 60% behind other low and middle-income countries in United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) achievement and which are defined as ‘states that are failing, or at risk of failing, with respect to authority, comprehensive basic service provision, or legitimacy’ (Stewart & Brown, 2010, p. 3).

For many of these ‘fragile’ or conflict-affected states tourism is often the vector for their integration into the global economy. The connections between tourism and sustainable development are well traversed (e.g. De Kadt, 1979; Britton, 1982; Ashley, Boyd, & Goodwin, 2000; Burns, 1999; Burns, 2003; Lea, 1988; Mitchell & Ashley, 2010; Sharpley & Telfer, 2002; Telfer & Sharpley, 2008). Moreover there is general agreement on the role of tourism as a potential contributor to the socio-economic development of less economically developed countries. Organizations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the European Union (EU), as well as national ministries, regional bodies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), view tourism as a potentially important tool for economic diversification and regeneration, poverty reduction, post-conflict stability, socio-economic recovery and multilateral integration and peace.

Whilst there is an established literature on tourism in the less economically developed countries of sub-Saharan Africa, almost none of these studies specifically focus on the role of tourism in conflict-affected or post-conflict societies-itself still a relatively new area of enquiry (e.g. Causevic 2010; Causevic & Lynch, 2009; 2011a, 2011b; Gould, 2011). This paper makes a unique contribution to the debate over the position of tourism in less economically developed countries through an exploration of its potential role in the socio-economic recovery and stabilisation of Burundi in Central-East Africa, a country which is emerging from almost four decades of internal strife and a 12-year civil war. Co-authored between a Burundi ‘insider’ and European ‘outsiders’ and framed by hopeful tourism’s co-created, co-transformative learning (Pritchard, Morgan, & Ateljevic, 2011a), it identifies the challenges to sustainable tourism development in one of the world’s 25 poorest countries from the ‘inside’. We use Burundi as illustrative although not necessarily typical of the many situations of fragility in sub-Saharan Africa, which aspire to harness their tourism potential to aid economic growth and in institution-building. Tourism has consistently been identified in the IMF’s National Poverty Reduction Strategy Progress Reports (2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011) as a sector able to deliver development opportunities in this African state, but its complex state-society relations and ongoing internal conflicts are identified here as serious barriers to the realisation of this potential.

TOURISM, SITUATIONS OF FRAGILITY AND POST-CONFLICT DEVELOPMENT

Tourism is frequently described as a new source of wealth creation in deprived regions and less economically developed countries and to some, it is the most viable means of stimulating local development (Dieke, 2003). In recent years however, emphasis on tourism's economic benefits has been countered by concerns over the uneven nature of such economic development, serious questions about its environmental sustainability and disquiet at its negative social and cultural impacts (Hall & Brown, 2011). These concerns have been raised by academics, policy makers, aid agencies and practitioners and in relation to different scales: individual well-being, family structure, community development and national identity (e.g. Botterill & Klemm, 2006; Botterill & Klemm, 2007; Cole & Morgan, 2010; Hilary, 2011). Tourism as a panacea for the problems of less economically developed countries has been exposed as an illusion since a number of these states are now confronting the challenge of harnessing local resources to build a sustainable and economically viable tourism sector (Meyer, 2011).

In sub-Saharan Africa, few countries have developed strong tourism sectors while many more, having given little consideration to the type of tourism they wanted, failed to set realistic aims or identify reasonable targets have weak, embryonic industries (Lickorish & Jenkins, 1997). The benefits of tourism, such as income generation, foreign exchange earnings, employment and economic diversification are core to the national MDGs and/or Poverty Alleviation Strategies of numerous less economically developed countries, but as early as 1992, Choy argued that focus on short-term benefits might lead to *ad hoc* approaches and to insufficient focus on long-term development. Over fifteen years later, Tefler and Sharpley (2008) confirmed this prediction, suggesting that these states do not fully comprehend what embracing a tourist economy entails and that their human resource capacities do not match their tourism aspirations.

Although contemporary debates over tourism development in such countries have shifted from a focus on *economic* to *sustainable* development, forging a variety of new approaches (e.g. pro-poor, responsible, community-based and ethical tourism), there is definitional confusion, expectations are unrealistic and guidance over practical implementation is inadequate (Meyer, 2011; Mitchell & Ashley, 2010). For instance, while tourism is included as a possible pathway to prosperity in over 80% of low-income countries' poverty reduction strategies, there is an evident implementation gap, which has led to a world map of the poorest countries dotted with "well-intentioned community-based tourism projects, delivering small benefits to few people" (Mitchell & Ashley, 2009, p. 1). Moreover, this implementation gap is even wider in countries regarded as 'situations of fragility', due to their weak capacity, problematic state-society relations, deep social divides and/or the legacy of violent conflict (Engberg-Pedersen et al., 2008).

While many countries are making progress towards achieving their MDGs, these 50 or so countries are not. They are home to a billion people (a third of them living on less than a US\$ a day) and half of the world's children who die before the age of five (Moreno-Torres & Anderson, 2004). Civil conflict and political instability are endemic in many of them and around 35 of those considered fragile in 1979 are still fragile today, whilst the gap with other developing countries has been widening since the 1970s (OECD, 2011). Significantly, there is no authoritative definition of state fragility, nor is there an agreed list of fragile states, reflecting the lack of consensus over the concept. Indeed, the term 'fragile state' has been critiqued as stigmatizing and analytically imprecise; many commentators see the term 'fragile' as a pejorative and inherently political label reflecting neoliberal ideals of how a 'successful' state should function (see Stepputat & Engberg-Pedersen, 2008). Others argue that state fragility is not an 'either/or' condition, but varies along a continuum of performance, as well as across areas of state function and capacity.

Recognizing the empirical and normative deficiencies of the term, development agencies now prefer the much broader terminologies of 'environments of difficulty', 'situations of fragility' or 'fragile situations', terms which also recognize that fragility does not neatly map onto state boundaries and that there is a need to look beyond the political setting to the state of society in both examining and countering fragility (Moreno-Torres & Anderson, 2004; OECD, 2008; Stewart & Brown, 2010). It is also increasingly common for development agencies to conceptualize fragility in relation to its opposite—resilience. Thus, resilient states are able to maintain authority, stability and legitimacy, balance societal expectations and capacity, deliver services, and ameliorate the impact of external and internal shocks. Whichever definition commentators use, there is broad agreement that there exist strong links between violent conflict and some of the dimensions of fragility—particularly between failures of authority, service and legitimacy. Authority failures associated with violent conflict weaken service access and undermine legitimacy, which in turn cause failures in social, economic, political rights and justice, weaken the realization of MDGs, and often reinforce inequalities (Stewart & Brown, 2010).

In this context, it may appear naïve to suggest that a sector such as tourism could play a positive role in a conflict-affected or post-conflict situation of fragility, especially given concerns over its ability to deliver sustainable and equitable growth (Burns & Novelli, 2008; Hall & Brown, 2011; Novelli & Hellwig, 2011). Moreover, harnessing tourism as a pathway to socio-economic recovery and development would require former victims and perpetrators of conflict to cooperate in a setting where reconciliation and societal healing may be a long and complex process (Brewer & Hayes, 2011; Sullivan & Tift, 2006). However, on the basis of Boudreaux's (2007, p. 9) claim that "[t]rade increases co-operation and improves relations amongst former enemies," tourism could provide opportunities to advance the reconciliation process and contribute to the prevention of structural conflicts (see Ackermann, 2003). For example, by applying Smith's

(2004, p. 28) “peace building palette” to the Rwandan context, Alluri (2009) has highlighted how tourism business activities can contribute to peace building by strengthening reconciliation, justice and socio-economic foundations.

Investigation of tourism in post-conflict destinations has emerged as a new sub-field of tourism studies in the last two decades. Extant literature has focused on: dissonant and contested heritage (Anson, 1999; Lisle, 2004; Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996); internal turmoil and terrorism and destination image, destination choice and post-conflict re-branding (Anson, 1999; Beirman, 2002; Fletcher, 2011; Gould, 2011; Hall, 2003; Vitic & Ringer, 2007); post-crisis recovery (de Sausmarez, 2007; Ndlovu & Heath, 2011); domestic and niche market opportunities (Mazimhaka, 2007); and the contribution of tourism to reconciliation and peace-building (Alluri, 2009; Causevic & Lynch, 2011a, 2011b). Other studies have explored the role of tour guides in the transition of conflict issues into new heritage (Causevic & Lynch, 2011a), operators as intermediaries in the creation of destination image during post-crisis recovery (Calvek, 2002), the identification of strategies (Faulkner, 2001; Lisle, 2004) and crisis management approaches (Cioccio & Michael, 2007; Irvine & Anderson, 2004). In many of these studies, tourism is referred to as a social force that can promote cross-cultural understanding and collaboration (see Novelli & Burns, 2011) and as a vehicle for the promotion of the ‘Culture of Peace’ (IIPT, 2011).

New tourism initiatives can lead post-conflict recovery, especially when developed in conjunction with infrastructure and transportation improvement projects (Richter, 1999). For example, in Slovenia, Croatia and Montenegro, a process of “reconstruction, diversification and re-imaging” focused, amongst other issues, on refurbishing the tourism infrastructure and on product innovation and upgrading (Hall, 2003, p. 283). In its post-crisis recovery strategy, Croatia chose to restore its tourism sector with a state-driven policy of economic recovery, which was a major factor in attracting foreign investments and foreign currency (Beirman, 2002). Of course, reassuring tourists that a destination is safe is also a major task for post-conflict places and here the signing of the *General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (also known as the *Dayton Agreement* of 1995) was effective in restoring tourists’ confidence in the region. Whilst capacity- and institution-building and regaining the confidence of both the international and domestic markets are crucially important to post-conflict tourism recovery (de Sausmarez, 2007), a major challenge for such places is their “management of post-conflict emotions” (Brewer & Hayes, 2011, p. 7) and “contested heritage” (Anson, 1999, p. 59).

While for some tourists conflict sites may become cultural markers in “a new post-conflict symbolic landscape” (McEvoy, 2001, p. 55), they will continue to evoke painful memories for many communities. In this case, the participation of various (often antipathetic) groups in the identification and interpretation of such dissonant or contested heritage becomes part of the transitional justice process (Anson, 1999; Austin, 2002; Brewer & Hayes, 2011). Failure to reach such accommodation will create new divisions and then instead of becoming a vehicle

for reconciliation, tourism becomes the catalyst for further inter-community rivalry and “animosity stemming from ‘old wounds’” (Podoshen & Hunt, 2011). In Burundi, the focus of this paper, such rapprochement is an on-going process for this is a country where ethnic diversity became a vehicle for political competition in the quest for economic and political advantage (Eifert, Miguel, & Posner, 2010; Hatungimana, Theron, & Popic, 2007). As this small African state emerges from a shattering civil war, its government faces considerable problems of establishing authority, legitimacy and service delivery, tied to the broader challenge of peace- and state-building. In this, tourism could play a significant role.

RESEARCH SETTING AND METHODOLOGY

The Research Setting of Burundi

The Republic of Burundi is a small landlocked country (27,816 km²) in central-eastern Africa (Figure 1). Home to 8.5 million people, it has one of the highest population densities in the continent (300 people per km²). It is also one of the world’s 25 poorest countries, with a gross national income per capita of US\$110 and over half of its population living below the poverty line (World Bank, 2011). Once known as *Urun-di*, the country was controlled by Germany during 1884–1919, and then by Belgium until independence in 1962. We take Burundi as illustrative (although not necessarily typical) of the many situations of fragility in sub-Saharan Africa, which aspire to harness their tourism potential to aid post-conflict recovery. The country is emerging from decades of civil unrest that began with independence; the most recent civil war (1993–2005) was responsible for over 300,000 deaths and the displacement of 1.2 million people (16% of the population). The war, together with a four-year regional economic embargo, devastated the economy and marked the beginning of a decade of economic decline (World Bank, 2009). Recovery began with the signing of the *Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement* in August 2000 and the transition to a multi-party system of government saw the 2005 National Assembly elections and the 2006 signing of a cease-fire between the government and the FNL-PALIPEHUTU, the last remaining rebel movement.

A further breakthrough in Burundi’s peace process came in 2009 when the rebel group removed the ethnic connotation from its name—PALIPEHUTU (Hutu people)—and became the FNL (Forces for National Liberation), making them constitutionally eligible to register as a political party (World Bank, 2009). In parallel with these political moves, the government also embarked on substantial reforms aimed at restoring macroeconomic stability, promoting good governance and strengthening economic recovery (IMF, 2007). Specifically, it is pursuing institution- and state-building via structural reforms, notably the promotion of transparency and fiscal management and reform of the financial and coffee sectors. It is also strengthening regional integration through membership of three regional trade organizations—the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa



Figure 1. The Location of Burundi

(COMESA), the Communauté Economique des Etats de l’Afrique Centrale (CEEAC) and the Communauté Economique des Pays des Grands Lacs (CEPGL) (East Africa Business Community, 2009).

Typically, tourism strategies in sub-Saharan Africa focus on the attraction of international tourists and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) (Africa Development Bank Group, 2008), rather than encouraging domestic tourism and local entrepreneurial development. Yet, while international tourism can make a major contribution to national economic growth, it is important that regional and domestic tourism is not overlooked (Mazimhaka, 2007). Burundi is no different in this regard and if the country is to be successful in attracting tourists from

neighbouring countries, it needs to introduce visa harmonisation schemes and regional travel packages, which are currently under scrutiny elsewhere in the region (Anastasiadou & de Sausmarez, 2006). To achieve this, it needs to deepen its interregional integration (Yasarata et al., 2010) and moved towards this in 2007, when it became a member of the East African Community (EAC), which includes Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Rwanda. The EAC is committed to deepening integration and addressing those “... issues that constrain creating an environment for a single tourist destination, foreign investment, internal and external trade and generally marketing the region as a bloc” (EAC, 2009). These five countries now form *Destination East Africa*. However, despite this potential for re-branding and linking into the regional tourism supply-chain, Burundi has yet to identify its own unique selling point or develop an effective organisation structure for its tourism sector beyond the current highly fragmented arrangements (Figure 2).

Methodology

This paper reports research conducted in Burundi between 2007 and 2009 and specifically focuses on a 2009 tourism development opportunity study, which employed Rapid Situation Analysis (RSA) (Koutra, 2010). Whilst political science and international relations “have naturally dominated debates about democratic transitions and accommodations after conflict” (Brewer & Hayes, 2011, p. 6), the policy challenges of post-conflict development can be addressed from different perspectives and disciplinary contexts ranging across anthropology, sociology, psychology, development studies and economics as well as tourism (see Moufakkir & Kelly, 2010). This study traverses a number of these disciplines, but differs from them as it draws on O’Sullivan’s (2002) ideas on co-transformative learning and is framed by the unfolding hopeful tourism perspective, which combines co-created, co-transformative learning with an activist edge (Pritchard et al., 2011a).

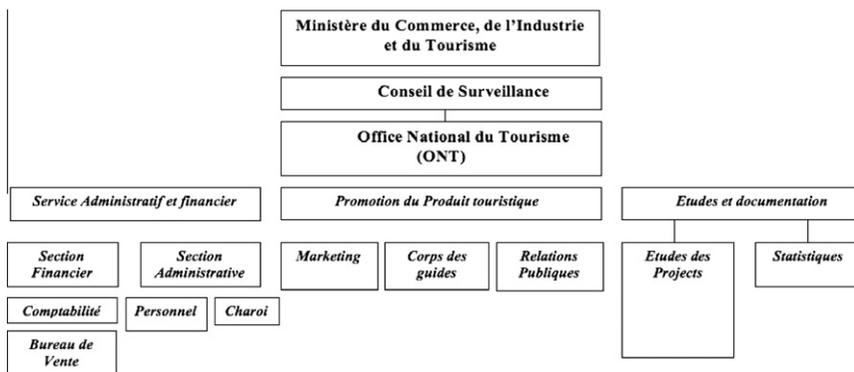


Figure 2. Organisation Chart of the National Tourism Organizations in Burundi

As a humanist perspective guided by ethics and responsibility, this standpoint advocates the co-creation of knowledge and resonates powerfully with Agathangelou and Ling's (2009, p.1) worldism perspective and its focus on "the multiple relations, ways of being, and traditions of seeing and doing passed to us across generations. More than a post-modern sense of 'difference', worldism registers the entwining of multiple worlds: their contending structures, histories, memories, and political economies in the making of our contemporary world..." Framed by the perspectives of Pritchard et al. (2011a), Pritchard, Morgan, and Ateljevic (2011b) and Agathangelou and Ling (2009), the paper adopts a qualitative, interpretative approach and follows the rapid situation analysis (RSA) methodology employed by Koutra (2010). RSA is a "hybrid, participatory, bottom-up research approach" which sees "understanding to be derived from indigenous knowledge... especially those at the grassroots level" (Koutra, 2010, p. 1016). The intention here was to use this participatory research method to explore perceptions and practices in partnership with tourism stakeholders, thus co-creating knowledge to benefit indigenous communities, consolidated through a feedback workshop in last stage of the field research.

In line with the tenets of hopeful tourism, which values the plurality of world views, cultural differences and research praxis, the paper is co-authored between an African 'insider' and two European 'outsiders' (see Beebe, 2001) and the fieldwork team was composed of one 'outsider' researcher/author and three Burundian 'insiders': a researcher/author, a research assistant/translator and a driver/tour-guide. This Burundian-dominated team created a high level of trust with local people and facilitated an equal exchange of ideas with the interviewees (here termed research partners), who were recruited through the insider's local contacts and snowballing. The RSA consisted of five phases: desk research and team recruitment; identification of research partners; interviewing; field observations; feedback workshop and study refinement (Table 1). The intention was to co-create knowledge and understanding with the research partners who are tourism stakeholders at all levels of society, from the capital city of Bujumbura to the most remote rural areas. They include: the President of the Republic, two government ministers, the General Director of the National Development Programme (4), representatives from international and regional development organizations (4), local cooperatives/NGOs/sector associations (4), construction companies (2), a local university (1), tourism services providers (16); and representatives of local village communities (15).

The interviews lasted between 20 minutes and one hour and were conducted either in the local Kirundi language, French or English, largely in the research partner's working environment or home in the case of the villagers. The shorter interviews were those in remote rural areas and these were truncated due to security concerns. In total, 31 in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with a variety of research partners together with 15 less formal interviews with villagers in rural areas. Although we had predetermined some interview

Table 1. Implementing Rapid Situation Analysis

| Phase of Fieldwork | Detailed Activities |
|---|---|
| 1. Initial Preparations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Desk research on tourism in Burundi ⇒ Local contacts facilitated by the ‘insider’ researcher, prior to the start of the 2009 field assessment ⇒ Identification of the population sample, ranging from grassroots to governmental level (including villagers from the most remote areas, the President of the Republic, two Ministers and the General Director of the National Development Programme) ⇒ Recruitment of a research assistant/translator, as many interviews were conducted in the local language (Kirundi) |
| 2. Identification of research partners in local communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Snowball sampling technique was used to identify experts and non-experts tourism knowledge ⇒ The ‘insider’ played a key role in identifying key community figures by using her local knowledge |
| 3. Interviewing among key opinion formers and local communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Semi-structured interviews - use of English or French with most research partners ⇒ Unstructured and informal interviews with those at grassroots level - use of Kirundi translator |
| 4. Field Observations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Participant observations to complement information from the local communities ⇒ The ‘insider’ research assistant/translator and driver/tour guide facilitated communication and data gathering in the field ⇒ Rapid note-taking and report-writing techniques were used to guarantee a close recording of observations ⇒ The ‘insider’ (research assistant) and ‘outsider’ researchers’ notes were compared leading to a more balanced interpretation of findings at the end of each day ⇒ A camera was used to capture the current state of development, tourism facilities and sites of potential tourism interest (permission was secured from local people) |
| 5. Discussion with local communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Workshop event organized in the capital city of Bujumbura ⇒ Research partners had been informed and invited to attend this event when interviewed ⇒ 36 of the 46 research partners attended the event, including representatives from the most remote communities, a UNDP representative and a tourism consultant |

questions, we wanted our research partners to ‘drive’ the conversations and to provide insight into their experiences (England, 1994). We encouraged open conversation and tried to establish rapport, interactions which proved invaluable when analyzing, interpreting and contextualizing the interview transcripts. The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed and analyzed using qualitative content analysis, to “identify core consistencies and meanings” which structured the analysis themes (Patton, 2002, p. 453). In order to maintain anonymity, research partners are coded RP1 to RP46 (Table 2). The interviews were supplemented by field observations made throughout the duration of the study (see Table 1, phase four) and photographic evidence documenting existing and potential tourism development sites (permission was secured from local people). The final phase of the project was a workshop held in Bujumbura to communicate, discuss and refine the findings with the research partners. All of them were invited and 36 attended, including representatives from the most remote communities.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN POST-CONFLICT BURUNDI

This section of the paper presents and analyses the 2009 RSA-based joint tourism development opportunity study. It discusses: desk research; in-depth interviews; field observations; reflections from the closing feedback workshop (Table 1). In structuring our analysis we recognise the value of Brewer and Hayes’ (2011, p. 7) suggestion that, “rather than approach post-conflict societies on a disciplinary basis, it is more valuable to emphasize analytical themes... [such as:] the management of post-conflict emotions; consideration of the effective arrangements for transitional justice; and post-conflict institution and state building.” We organise our discussion under two main themes of tourism and post-conflict institution- and state-building; tourism, post-conflict challenges and transitional justice.

Table 2. Study Research Partners

| Type of Stakeholder | Code | Number Interviewed |
|---|-----------|--------------------|
| Government Officials/Politicians | RP1–RP4 | 4 |
| International Organization/Agencies | RP5–RP8 | 4 |
| Accommodation Providers | RP9–RP15 | 7 |
| Bar/Restaurant Worker/Owners | RP16–RP18 | 3 |
| Travel Agent/Tour Operators | RP19–RP22 | 4 |
| Craft Artist/Recreation Providers | RP23–RP24 | 2 |
| Local Cooperative/NGO/Sector Associations | RP25–RP28 | 4 |
| Construction Companies | RP29–RP30 | 2 |
| Private University | RP31 | 1 |
| Residents of Village Communities | RP32–RP46 | 15 |
| <i>Total</i> | | <i>46</i> |

Tourism and Post-Conflict Institution- and State-Building

It is important to appreciate “how political obstacles inhibit formulation and implementation of sustainable tourism development” (Yasarata et al., 2010, p. 346), especially in a volatile political climate. In post-conflict situations of fragility like Burundi, where continuous civil conflict has weakened the state with respect to its authority, comprehensive basic service provision and legitimacy, there are complex challenges to the development of tourism as a tool for socio-economic development. These challenges relate to institution-building to fill the vacuum in areas such as planning, environmental management, infrastructural development and human resource planning; and state-building where it connects with public diplomacy, nation reputation and destination image (see Morgan et al., 2011). Although the first study of tourism in Burundi was conducted as early as 1989 by the *Ministère du Plan*, the continuous civil conflict has meant that tourism remains underdeveloped and Burundi has a negative external image. As a consequence,

... today, Burundi tourism consists of business travel associated with the peace process [like] travellers from aid agencies, NGOs and post-conflict investors and a small percentage of domestic leisure travel, neighbouring countries' nationals and the region's expatriate communities. (RP4)

Burundi's Tourism Potential. Although it does not boast the ‘big-five’ safari attractions of neighbouring Tanzania or Rwanda’s mountain gorillas, Burundi does have tourism potential, largely based on its three national reserves and natural forests (IMF, 2011). Its Office National du Tourisme (ONT) has identified two main tourist routes—the *Northern Round Trip*, through Gitega and Kibira and the *Southern Trip*, which includes the source of the River Nile (International, 2007), and:

... [U]ake Tanganyika [which] remains the most prominent tourist attraction with a growing number of accommodation establishments, ranging from resort-type hotels to self-catering units of variable standards and quality. (RP20)

The capital city of Bujumbura provides the majority of bed spaces (around 1,000) and some interesting cultural attractions such as the National Museum, the Presidential Palace and a nearby craft village (ONT, 2009). At the time of writing, no reliable tourism statistics exist for Burundi. In 2004 there were fewer than 80,000 international arrivals at Bujumbura International Airport, mostly visiting for business and post-conflict reconstruction purposes from East Africa, whilst in 2009 there were just under 210,000 overnight international tourists, although there were no details on their nationality or reason for travel (Lanquar, 2006; WTTC, 2009). During the 2009 fieldwork observations it became evident that if the country is to develop its tourism industry, then aside from its small business tourism sector, the main market would appear to be for adventure and eco-tourism, including overland travellers and users of Lake Tanganyika’s waterways travelling from neighbouring countries (Tourism Intelligence International, 2007).

Certainly, the last five Burundi Poverty Reduction Strategy Progress Reports (IMF, 2007; IMF, 2008; IMF, 2009; IMF, 2010; IMF, 2011) have consistently referred to tourism development opportunities, but little has been done to facilitate this in strategic terms. The ONT has a long-term vision to achieve the following by 2020: 300,000 annual arrivals; eight world-class 100-bed hotels; tourism income of 419 million US\$; 1000 new jobs and 100 newly trained guides; a diversified product; a length of stay of 10 days (ONT, 2009). However, the frustration at the lack of progress on these targets is articulated by one of the government officials:

... unfortunately, whilst the government has undertaken to prepare a national tourism development plan neither the ONT nor the National Poverty Reduction Strategy's ambitions are currently supported by a tourism development policy, which leaves space for incoherent development decisions (RP2).

Whilst Burundi's natural and cultural assets provide the base for a potentially attractive destination, there are major internal and external issues to be addressed. Although considerable efforts are being made by the government to create tourism business opportunities, as one travel agent comments:

... there are key barriers that need attention, such as the limited national financial resources allocated to the sector, the widespread disconnect between stakeholders (public, private and third sector) and the lack of vision and capacity of key sector players, with only few recently emerged exceptions (RP20).

The country's tourism industry is hindered by the absence of a strategic policy approach, aggravated by a lack of coordinated public, private and third sector stakeholder involvement in the post-conflict development process. This became particularly evident during the feedback workshop, when several participants commented that it was the first time they had discussed tourism-related matters in an open forum with a variety of stakeholders.

It also became apparent during the fieldwork that those directly and indirectly involved in tourism have a poor understanding of the sector's dynamics and that Burundi's weak governance in areas such as planning and environmental management (typical of situations of fragility), threaten its vulnerable tourism assets:

... local resources, such as wilderness, people, [and] culture are threatened by unsustainable business propositions and practices like the questionable allocation of land, planning permission and overdevelopment of the Lake Tanganyika's shore (R6).

Such comments suggest the urgent need to establish institutions empowered to devise sustainable land management and conservation policies, as well as those charged with developing a viable tourism strategy and action plan.

This can only be possible once awareness of the opportunities offered by tourism is raised and careful consideration is given to resource use (Lickorish & Jenkins, 1997). In fact, a lack of understanding of the

wider economic benefits of tourism (i.e. the multiplier effect on construction, arts and crafts and food supply chains) and of agreement on product offerings or local community involvement, exacerbates uncertainty over the role of tourism. As one of the village representatives (R40) highlights:

There is an increasing number of people travelling in this part of the world, they come and stay by the lake and they come to the villages to look around, but we are not sure why. They seem to be interested in what we have and do, but it is not clear to us what is it exactly that we could do to benefit from those strangers

Capacity Building and the Implementation Gap. Those tourism stakeholders we spoke with clearly identify the urgent need to clarify the direction of Burundi's tourism industry; one tour operator (R20) is of the opinion that:

... the leisure tourism product should be focused on 'nature, society and culture', with the peaceful settings by the Lakes providing a viable USP and opportunities for the local communities to come together and be proud of what they have to offer.

Another (R21) thinks that:

... the government should identify the country's key national assets and... establish... national tourism comparative advantages based on niche products of relevance in the regional context. For example, coming to relax by the lake after either the big five in Tanzania or the gorilla tracking in Rwanda would offer people the opportunity to visit another destination with rich cultural assets."

Similarly, one of the accommodation operators (R11) considers that:

... special interest activities [should be devised] in response to a growing sustainable and responsible tourism market. For example, the development of the Lake Tanganyika's waterways, cruising and up-market lodging with spa and relaxation facilities would provide an additional favourable business dimension and wider employment opportunities.

Furthermore, whilst several of our research partners think that Burundi can be "an add-on destination to Rwanda" (R2, R4, R7, R15, R22), there is no market research to substantiate this and it is not clear why Rwanda's tourists would choose to extend their stay in Burundi, especially when international travel advice discourages border crossing into the country. Indeed, only one established tour operator (Eos Visions from Rwanda) seems to have a vision of how to operate such a link, based on existing clients expressing an interest in extending their stay in the neighbouring destination.

There is as yet no coherent product development or marketing strategy in Burundi; as one accommodation provider points out:

... product development is left to [the] individual initiative of... entrepreneurs with money, but insufficient knowledge about the sector and lack of business environment stability pose challenges for... potentially good investors from overseas. (R11)

During the closing workshop, several of our research partners (e.g. RP1, RP7, RP25 and RP28) commented on the ineffectiveness of the national tourism organizations and suggested that a cross-ministry task force should be established to work with the private and the third sectors and with each province to identify how tourism can diversify the economy. They suggest that this cross-ministry task force seek assistance from international development organizations to identify a sustainable package of reforms, to provide incentives to stimulate investment, and to build local capacity and enable rural communities to establish tourism micro-enterprises. The absence of such initiatives reflects both the chaotic national reconstruction process (which has failed to address priorities such as human resource investment and preservation of natural assets), and the continuing dependency created by the international development assistance agenda (Hilary, 2011).

A transparent and sustainable business environment is a priority if Burundi is to protect existing natural assets from depletion or acquisition by privileged elites. This is clearly a challenge as:

... the lack of cohesiveness of the tourism supporting institutions fails to create an enabling business environment, within which the tourist sector can function effectively” (R5).

Despite the attempts made by the government to encourage investment, the development of local tourism businesses is constrained by limited access to funding and lack of entrepreneurial investment, exacerbated by what one of the villagers (R40) terms:

... individuals’ adversity to risk taking, which may be linked to the inherited fears from wartime and corruption. Business is in the hand of those elites who have money. ... they could enable the circulation of money through creating new businesses and employments for those who do not have start-up capital.

Even where investment is forthcoming, given the absence of building regulations and control over environmental impacts, there is variable understanding of what represents a quality tourism product—typical in such fragile states (Hall, 2003). This has led to questionable reconstruction and upgrading projects and the haphazard allocation of development land, all exacerbated by the Burundian Agency of Promotion of Investment’s incentives (Republique du Burundi 2010a; Republique du Burundi, 2010b). Our field observations and interviews provide evidence of several such ill-conceived initiatives. One example is the Saga Resha Resort, initially planned as a luxury hotel, but compromised by poor quality building materials, furniture and service. Indeed, one of our research partners (RP25) described the resort construction phase as “*environmental suicide*,” as the developers felled trees, cemented pagodas into the beach and over-developed a large portion of Lake Tanganyika’s shoreline. As a result, the resort is now marketed as low budget accommodation and tourists are choosing nearby alternatives like Tanganyika Blue Bay.

This is not an isolated case as a number of construction companies have pressed ahead in developing tourist resorts in the absence of a

national tourism policy or development guidelines. While their service quality and pricing rates are typical of a conflict-affected country, which has benefitted from the less demanding business markets of peace-keepers, reconstruction workers and NGO employees, they are not appropriate for the leisure tourist, and many agree with this agency worker (R8) that:

... the product and services expected by a leisure traveler need to be recalibrated, packaged and priced in a way that Burundi can compete in the regional market.

As in many similar settings (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008), Burundi's tourism development aspirations are not matched by the robustness of its institutions, governance or local capacity. We observed an absence of strategic tourism planning, environmental management policies and formal tourism or hospitality training. Indeed, human resource development is limited to in-house training programmes (for example, at the Hotel Club du Lac, Lake Tanganyika), which undermines the local workforce's ability to deliver an adequate service. In fact, there is a lack of suitably trained staff at all levels in both the public and private sectors and, as this research partner comments:

... the lack of business skills in general and the limited availability of sector specific trained staff are evident even in those establishments who have been in tourism since the 1990s" (R31).

A wider set of skills is required by the sector, especially in the rural communities; as one of the villagers (R33) comments:

I don't know what those muzungu [white people] really want when they come here. If somebody told me, I could learn the trade and find a way to benefit from those visits... I would not know where to start from though.

Whilst institution-building challenges in areas such as planning, environmental protection, infrastructural development and human resource planning constrain Burundi's tourism development, these overlap with challenges in relation to state-building, nation reputation and destination image (see Morgan et al., 2011). In fact, although the peace process has achieved much, the persistent volatile political situation contributes to a "... negative image of the country as an unsafe place to be" (RP10). Given the circumstances, even if the most adventurous of tourists decide to visit north-central Africa, the image of Burundi as a politically unstable nation and the negative travel advice associated with it has become an institutionalized barrier to tourism development. Thus, while the country possesses natural and cultural attributes conducive to tourism development:

... its ability to capitalize on this potential is hindered by the legacy of its protracted internal conflict, with international warnings against traveling comparable to war zones like Iraq and Afghanistan (RP7).

Burundi's contextual complexities and image problems are compounded by a central African regional context of conflict, as one of the government officials (RP3) comments:

The general atmosphere of danger and violence that dominates international perceptions of Burundi as a whole has long been typical of the chaos and violence that many associate with Central Africa in general.

Tourism, Post-Conflict Challenges and Transitional Justice

During the closing workshop, our research partners were agreed that the state had a key role to play in facilitating what many referred to as “social healing” (RP4, RP28, RP45). Specifically, the government officials and politicians saw tourism development as a way to tackle peace promotion, socio-economic inclusion, reconciliation and justice, just as in Rwanda (Alluri, 2009). They did, however recognize that:

... this would only be possible if the country puts in place effective arrangements for transitional justice through a set of inclusive sector development actions... also addressing the post-conflict emotional challenges faced by people (RP7)

These comments echo Daley’s (2006, p. 677) observation on Burundi, that “[p]eace and stability... requires a non-ethicized vision of the state, one that is inclusive and which stresses stability and security for all.” In this respect, the effective empowerment of rural Burundian communities needs to be rooted in agreement over the identification of cultural symbols and their appropriate interpretation for tourists (Austin, 2002; Causevic & Lynch, 2011b; McEvoy, 2001).

In some cases, however, the identification of new cultural symbols in the post-conflict landscape has led to inter-community animosity over the use of resources and sites of contested meaning (Anson, 1999; Lisle, 2004; Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996). For example, as observed and confirmed during discussions with rural villagers, it was evident that those locations where mass killing took place remain, “a raw wound for many, posing a challenge for those who would use such sites for tourism purposes” (RP41). Such emotions overlay existing inter-community rivalries over resources, as we witnessed in the case of *Lac Aux Oiseaux*, where one community’s exploitation of the lake through bird-watching tourism is increasingly resented by another which relies on it for fishing. The prolonged isolation of communities during the civil war and the lack of any consultation over post-conflict tourism development plans have created further conflicts and led to outsiders sometimes being viewed unfavorably by local communities:

Those people who come here with visitors... What do they do for us? Nothing, they just take pictures for themselves... You will see, one day they will come and set up something, without us knowing... This is our land, this is our lake and if they want to use them, we should get something out of it (R36)

Inclusive Development Actions. Officials from international agencies were in agreement that effective arrangements for transitional justice and inclusive sector development actions could enhance the ability of tourism to leverage social development. One (R6) comments:

... pro-poor entrepreneurial development could be facilitated by those NGOs involved in capacity-building. Their presence in the country has a long history associated with the aid and peace building process.

This in turn could lead to pro-poor tourism development if it was supported by a national training strategy that targeted the wider rural community and created linkages between the informal sector and the tourism value chain. As a government figure (R3) comments:

Obviously, the lack of resources poses some constraints, which may be addressed by re-directing some of the available funding in this direction. Initiatives such as the vocational training provided by the Association Mi-PAREC [Ministry for Peace and Reconciliation], which is aimed at teaching employable skills, contributes to peace building by stimulating reconciliation and social healing amongst young orphans from the war.

The Association runs training in Gitega (Burundi's second largest city with a population of around 47,000) with the aim of:

... [r]escuing kids from the streets and enabling them to get some skills. By doing so, they stay away from trouble... The hospitality course was introduced this year to respond to the needs of local guesthouses" (R27).

As in neighbouring Rwanda (Mazimhaka, 2007), "Burundians do not have a culture of tourism" (R45) and if the sector is to play a part in post-conflict recovery one politician (R4) suggests that:

An essential step would be to educate the people about the sector's values and potential contribution to the wider communities' livelihood and encourage all Burundians to appreciate, enjoy and learn about their own country. This would be the only way to preserve Burundi tourism assets and identity and reinstate community pride.

A practical step towards creating a culture of tourism is the provision of better facilities and infrastructure (Ndlovu & Heath, 2011; Richter, 1999) as this would enable:

... an increased propensity by the domestic market to travel outside the urban areas, an increased number of visitors from neighbouring countries, possible repeat visitations and consecutively a pass parole to the wider international market... especially the adventure tourists, as they call them, and the diaspora, which may be more prone to visit (R14)

Managing Post-Conflict Emotions and Reinstating Confidence. Beyond addressing negative perceptions of Burundi, there is a considerable challenge to create a more stable society. During the workshop, it became clear that many of our research partners think that the underlying causes of violent conflict need to be addressed through economic and social development, echoing Broudeaux's (2007, p.10) view of "trade as a means to post-conflict reconciliation." The assumption is that, as with any other form of trade, tourism can increase cooperation and improve relations amongst former enemies by providing them with a common business goal. Amongst the ways to achieve this would be the identification of shared interests and a sense of place, which would then be reflected in a tourism portfolio. Perhaps the most fundamental

task facing those who would promote tourism in this post-conflict society is building confidence amongst communities which have been isolated for so long. This is essential if tourism is to form part of the post-conflict healing and peace-building processes. A restaurant owner (R17) told us that a key task is to:

... enable Burundians to acquire a deeper self-belief in what the country has to offer, and the current workforce to gain a clear understanding of what tourism means in practical terms would enable people to develop an interest in either working in the sector or become visitors themselves.

Of course, managing post-conflict emotions and reinstating confidence is not only an internal but also an external task, and tourists' perceptions of Burundi as a high-risk politically unstable destination, requires a realistic response (Anson, 1999). As is often the case, such perceptions are worse than the reality; our own observations indicate that whilst security is an issue in some remote rural areas, tourist areas are safe and, as one of the bar workers (R18) commented:

Burundi is a vibrant place, where people returning from overseas are willing to establish businesses and live here. The emotional state of people here is positive and it would be great if those coming from the outside could say that to others. Burundi's safety is no worse than any other African destination, which has come out of turmoil. People go to South Africa in places, which are far more dangerous. Here you can go out at night... have you experienced any other African capital where you can stay out at night and enjoy? Well this should be a first step towards reconsidering this place and managing peoples' perceptions, emotions, fears...

CONCLUSION

This paper has explored some of the key challenges associated with the post-conflict recovery process, taking Burundi as illustrative (although not necessarily typical) of the many situations of fragility in sub-Saharan Africa which aspire to harness their tourism potential to aid economic growth and advance institution-building. Framed by hopeful tourism's call for co-created knowledge (Pritchard et al., 2011a), it has been co-written by insiders and outsiders and employed a participatory research method in partnership with tourism stakeholders to benefit indigenous communities. The paper discussed how Burundi's aspirations of leveraging tourism in the national post-conflict restructuring agenda as an economically, environmentally and socially sustainable sector, is challenged by the complexities of a volatile political situation and weak institutions and governance in areas such as tourism, planning, environmental management and human resource development.

Yet, despite the continued internal political instability in Burundi, many of the stakeholders are of the view that inter-community collaborative tourism developments have the potential to offer innovative business opportunities and accelerate the healing process (Broudeaux, 2007; Alluri, 2009; Miller, 2006). In a country that has suffered from

decades of inter-community and inter-ethnic conflict, the effective inclusion and empowerment of rural communities in tourism-related micro-initiatives would not only provide pro-poor entrepreneurial opportunities, but address underlying social causes of violent conflict (Brewer & Hayes, 2011). As we observed, initiatives such as the training provided by the Ministry for Peace and Reconciliation (Mi-PAREC) are examples of how tourism can increase cooperation, improve relations amongst former enemies and promote post-conflict reconciliation through vocational education, business motivation and the achievement of common goals. Additionally, these would contribute toward the creation of a resilient state able to maintain authority, stability and legitimacy, balance societal expectations and capacity, deliver services, and ameliorate the impact of external and internal shocks.

It is likely to be some time before Burundi attracts long-haul tourists beyond the most adventurous segments, and while such markets continue to be targeted, as in the cases of Rwanda and Zimbabwe, it is important that Burundi taps into the new African middle class and the lucrative diaspora, domestic and regional markets (Mazimhaka, 2007; Ndlovu & Heath, 2011). This remains an under-researched topic in sub-Saharan Africa and yet, in addition to holding much potential, it is also less susceptible to any global crises. At the same time, increased domestic tourism in Burundi could boost the wider economy, promote social and business opportunities and encourage interactions between residents—addressing internal divisions and reinforcing a new sense of community, unity and reconciliation. If tourism is to contribute to the national socio-economic wellbeing of a fragile situation such as Burundi, the widespread lack of understanding of the industry's complexity and potential benefits needs to be addressed, together with the clear absence of cohesion amongst its key stakeholders. The need for sector-specific capacity-building activities is evident and should focus on the development of basic entrepreneurial and leadership skills to enable local authorities to deliver a competitive, sustainable destination to domestic, regional and global audiences. Moreover, the highly political nature of the business environment needs to be addressed by reinforcing transitional justice and institutional- and state-building processes if tourism is to make a significant contribution to the national post-conflict recovery. **A**

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