

Report on Ph.D. Thesis Defence

Ph.D. Candidate	Temesgen Kasahun Assefa
Main referee	垣内 恵美子
Referees	佐藤 禎一 Xavier Greffe 大山 達雄 稲葉 信子(筑波大学)
Dissertation Title	Harmonizing Heritage Tourism and Conservation in the Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela, Ethiopia

Result: Pass (subject to minor changes)

1. Abstract

I. Presentation overview

Mr. Temesgen Kasahun presented his doctoral dissertation for about an hour followed by a question and answer session. The committee members raised several appropriate questions and comments, which were very useful for the candidate's better dissertation. Based on the questions and comments of the committee members, the candidate has made a minor revision to the dissertation. I have reviewed the revised version of this dissertation and believed that it sufficiently incorporate the suggestions of committee members.

II. Summary of Dissertation

There is an apparent dichotomy between conserving cultural heritages and ensuring tourism development. The former is usually considered as an exorbitant luxury which developing countries can ill afford and hence is usually accorded low priority. The relationship between tourism and heritage conservation is often characterized by contradictions whereby one sector is antithetical to the other. Finding the possible ways or strategies to harmonize the two sectors has seldom been discussed in the literature.

This doctoral dissertation is aimed at harmonizing heritage tourism and conservation in one of the flagship world heritage sites of Ethiopia, the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela. The author used the local residents' attitudes, tourists' perceptions, and stakeholder collaboration as prominent parameters to harmonize the two sectors. Data were collected from 348 sample local residents', 110 tourists, and around other 30 key

tourism and conservation stakeholders.

The findings show that despite Ethiopia having a well-designed conservation proclamation, the acute lack of finances and expertise remains to be a bottleneck for its effective implementation. Failure to facilitate conservation efforts and absence of specified site management plan as well as pre-determined carrying capacity limit exacerbate the deterioration of the churches. On the other hand, although local residents lacked awareness over a scientific ways of conserving the church, they were deeply committed to the conservation of the churches in their daily life activities. In the case of support for tourism development, those residents who were less educated, resided away from the churches, and had no tourism related jobs tended to be less interested and committed for tourism development. The poor performance of local administrators and high negative impacts of tourism were also the main findings of this study.

In addition, this study finds that the relationships between stakeholders in Lalibela are often characterized by full of conflict and mistrust whereby the informal commission-based linkage among few groups distort the tourism industry. As far as tourists' perception is concerned, they perceived several negative features of Lalibela, such as: poor signage, lack of restrooms, sanitation problem, begging and pestering, poor hotel amenities, and lack of water supply.

To sustainably harmonize heritage tourism and conservation, the author suggested that the government should start pre-conservation studies of the heritage as a first step in line with securing financial and human resources for conservation. Tourists are also expected to share a part of conservation costs through many ways. At the same time, local residents' commitment to conserve the church must be also maintained through enhancing their level of awareness, and protecting them from undesirable tourism influences. A mutually beneficial relationship free from undesirable conflict among stakeholders must also exist. Importantly, a special attention must be also given to alleviate the unfavorable tourism service facilities of the town so as to boost tourists' satisfaction and comfort at the destination.

2. Result /Notes from the Examining meeting / Final Evaluation

III. Reviewer questions and comments

Members of the dissertation committee raised several questions and comments which many of the questions were focused on the concept behind the trade-off relationship between heritage tourism and conservation. The major points of those questions and

comments are included in this report together with the candidate's response for each question and comment.

1. Prof. Sato

How do you think the local government in Lalibela should be involved in both heritage conservation and tourism development activities?

The candidate addressed this question on page 153 and 154 of the dissertation. The local government may have several ways to involve in heritage conservation and tourism development activities in Lalibela, such as; raise local residents' awareness on conservation and establish a platform for local residents to participate in conservation and tourism development affairs.

2. Prof. Inaba

How do you define both heritage tourism and sustainable heritage tourism?

These definitions are included from page 10 to 12 of the dissertation. The candidate defined heritage tourism in his dissertation as tourists seeing or experiencing built and intangible heritage. Heritage tourism is based upon antiquated relics; it tends to occur in rural areas and is more place-bound. As for sustainable heritage tourism, it should be defined as a partnership that satisfies both heritage tourism and conservation objectives. Sustainable heritage tourism requires not only the mutually beneficial partnerships amongst stakeholders, but also it requires the long-term protection of heritage assets, high quality visitor experience, and respects for the wishes of local communities.

3. Prof. Greffe

What is your intention of including distance as a base variable?

The candidate clarified the reason to include distance as a base variable in his study on page 72. The main rationale of including distance as a base variable is to understand to what extent residing either near or far from the site can influence residents' commitment toward church conservation.

4. Prof. Greffe

You better explain the issues of resettlement a little bit more.

The candidate clarified this issue in a detail manner on page 70. According to the author, the residents' settlement around the core zone has been recognized as detrimental to the physical environment of the churches and opposing to the belief

system that advocates separation of mundane and spiritual activities. One of the fundamental reasons of resettling local residents are to make the church compound clean, free from worldly activities, such as musical performances that provoke sexual behavior, getting intoxicated, and others. See page 70 for the details.

5. Prof. Oyama

Explain the trade-offs between heritage conservation and tourism development.

The candidate added some more clarifications regarding the trade-off relationship between heritage conservation and tourism development on page 2 of the dissertation. Heritage tourism can be a powerful ally of heritage conservation and a powerful tool to achieve true sustainable use of cultural heritage assets. Heritage tourism can offer the financial wherewithal to conserve cultural heritage assets, either directly via entrance tickets or indirectly via tax revenue generated from the tourism industry. Unfortunately on the other hand, heritage tourism's potential to support heritage conservation is not often being met. Oftentimes, heritage tourism is regarded as a competitor and not as a collaborator to heritage conservation.

6. Prof. Oyama

Explain the intentions of every stakeholder that you considered in your study and also discuss Ethiopia's tourism situation in detail.

The candidate described the intentions of every stakeholder from page 123 to 126. As the interview finding shows that every stakeholder run towards achieving individual benefits at the expense of one another. The tendency of collaborating for the sake of mutual benefit is easier said than done. As for the tourism situation, he added a detail explanation of the tourism industry in different time period and in different political regimes of the country from page 127 to 128.

IV. Final Evaluation

Mr. Temesgen Kasahun has made the changes recommended by the examination committee members and has given a detailed report of the changes to me. I have examined those changes and explained them in this report, and I am satisfied that he has fully followed the recommendations of the examination committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Emiko Kakiuchi

Professor,

Chairman of Supervisory Committee,

APPENDIX

Publications in progress

1. Issues Pertaining to the Heritage Conservation System in Ethiopia, Submitted to International Journal of Heritage Studies (Submission status: on review).
2. Harmonizing Heritage Tourism and Conservation from Local Residents ' Perspectives: The Case of Lalibela, Ethiopia, Submitted to ENCATC Journal of Cultural Management and Policy (Submission status: on review)

Conference and Seminar Presentations of Mr. TemesgenKasahun

1. Harmonizing heritage tourism and conservation through stakeholder collaborations (May 16, 2013). The past for sale? New Perspectives on the Economic Entanglements of Cultural Heritage, University of Massachusetts, Amherst Campus.
2. Harmonization of heritage tourism and conservation in Lalibela (March 14, 2013). Campus Asia, Ph.D. joint seminar, Korean Development Institute, Seoul, South Korea.
3. Harmonization of heritage tourism and conservation from local residents perspectives (September 13, 2012), "Networked Culture" International Conference on Cultural Management and Cultural Policy Education, Goldsmiths, University of London, London, United Kingdom.