TOURISM AT RELIGIOUS SITES: A CASE FROM MARDIN, TURKEY

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Abstract: Religion has been and continues to be a major motivation for travel. Many religions make the visitation of sacred sites a mandatory act for all followers who are healthy and can afford it. However, more recent research suggests that motivation for religious tourism is multifaceted and multilayered. Not all visitors to religious sites are “pious travelers”. Many secular tourists visit these sites for completely non-religious purposes such as for historical, cultural or architectural motives. It is then important to understand what motivates tourists to visit religious sites and how can their expectations be met by the local authorities and tourism managers. This study was conducted in the Turkish province of Mardin, an area blessed with a great number of religious and cultural sites belonging to both Islam and Christianity. We found that, in Mardin, religious sites are visited for their historical and cultural value rather than for their sacred and spiritual value. Many tourists are actually attracted to Mardin by the multi-religious and multi-cultural character of the province.

Rezumat: Religia a fost şi continuă să fie o componentă majoră pentru călătoriile cu caracter turistic. Numeroasele religii fac din vizitarea siturilor sfinte un act obligatoriu pentru toţi cei care doresc şi îşi permit astfel de practici turistice. Literatura contemporană de specialitate ilustrează faptul că motivării turismului religios sunt diferite şi prezintă o mare diversificare. Nu toţi cei care practică turismul religios sunt călători evlavioşi. Mulţi dintre turişti practică această formă de călătorie din motive nereligioase aceasta fiind determinată de raţiuni istorice, culturale sau referitoare la stilurile şi tipurile arhitecturale. În general este foarte important să înţelegem care sunt motivaţiile turiştilor pentru vizitarea siturilor religioase şi cum sunt împărtăşite așteptările acestora în contact cu autorităţile locale şi managerii din domeniul turistic. Această lucrare a fost realizată pentru una din provinciile Turciei şi anume Mardin, un areal binecuvântat de un potenţial turistic religios deosebit de bogat care aparţine atât religiei islamice, cât şi celei creştine. Pe baza prezentei cercetări am descoperit că în această provincie siturile religioase sunt vizitate mai degrabă pentru marea lor valoare istorică şi culturală şi mai puţin pentru valoarea spirituală a sa. Mulţi turişti sunt atraşi de provincia Mardin tocmai de caracterul multi-cultural şi multi-religios al acestei provincii turceşti.

Keywords: Middle East, pilgrimage, religion, religious tourism, tourism motivation.
Cuvinte cheie: Estul Mijlociu, pelegrinaj, religie, turism religios, motivaţie turistică.
1. INTRODUCTION: RELIGION AND PILGRIMAGE

Religion has for long been a strong motivating factor for people to travel (Wall and Mathieson, 2006). Some sources argue that people traveled to sacred sites even 30,000 years ago (Blackwell, 2007). While we know very little about those pilgrims there is plenty of information available about contemporary pilgrimages. Many religions make the visitation of sacred sites a mandatory act for all followers who are healthy and can afford it. For example, in Islam, pilgrimage to Mecca is mandatory for all able-bodied Muslims who can afford to do it at least once during their lifetime. This pilgrimage, known as Hajj, is one of the Five Pillars of Islam. The pilgrimage pre-dates the time of Prophet Mohammed and Islam going back four thousand years to the time of Abraham (Ibrahim). Some pilgrims also travel to Medina, the second holiest city in Islam where they visit the Mosque of the Prophet which contains Mohammed’s tomb. Between one and two million foreign pilgrims arrive in Saudi Arabia each year for the Hajj. Other holy sites for Islam are the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem (Israel) and Mount Sinai in Egypt. The Shia Muslims also regard Najaf and Karbala in Iraq as sacred with some important sites for pilgrimage situated also in Damascus (Syria), Baghdad (Iraq), Mashhad and Qom (Iran). However, all countries with significant Muslim population possess shrines of local interest.

The followers of the Baha’i faith are to make pilgrimage to the House of Baha’u’lah in Baghdad and the House of Bab in Shiraz (Iran). Since these two centers are not accessible to the majority of the Baha’i, currently they are making a nine-day pilgrimage to the Baha’i World Center in Haifa and to other sites in Israel instead. For the Buddhists, several sites connected to the life of Gautama Buddha in India and in Nepal are the main places of pilgrimage. Other pilgrimage sites are in Cambodia, China (Tibet), Myanmar, Thailand and other countries with significant Buddhist population. Hindus also have their sacred rivers, lakes, cities or mountains associated with events from the lives of various gods. These are visited by millions of pilgrims each year. Most of these centers have a local or regional importance but a few holy cities are attracting pilgrims from the entire India and beyond and could be credited among the largest gatherings of humans in the entire world. Among these it is worth mentioning Allahabad, Haridwar-Rishikesh, Varanasi and Ayodhya.

The main focus of the Jewish pilgrimage is Jerusalem. Only one wall has remained of the original Temple (known today as the Wailing Wall) and this has been the most sacred site for Jews. Pilgrims visit here from all over the world. There are also secondary pilgrimage sites not only in Israel but also in other countries (Ukraine, Egypt, Bulgaria, etc). In Christianity pilgrimages are not mandatory but they have been practiced for almost 2000 years. Initially Christian pilgrims were known to travel to places in the Middle East connected to the birth, life, crucifixion or resurrection of Jesus Christ. The first documented such travels date back to the 4th Century. Other pilgrimages were made to sites that were considered sacred to Christianity, such as those associated with apostles, saints or Christian martyrs or places where apparitions of Virgin Mary have been reported. Some of the major pilgrimage sites for the Christian world are in Rome, Lourdes (France), Medjugorje (Bosnia-Herzegovina), Fatima (Portugal), Santiago de Compostella (Spain), Czestochowa (Poland) as well as several sites in Israel.
1.1. Defining religious tourism and pilgrimage

Religious tourism is far from being a simple concept. A simple quest for religion and travel on a search engine would reveal that there are several terms used in the literature to define travel to religious sites: pilgrimage, religious tourism or faith tourism. In a few studies these terms are used very loosely and often interchangeably. Other studies however make it a major point to differentiate between them. A substantial body of literature has been published attempting to define and compare religious tourism and pilgrimage (Graburn, 1977; Turner and Turner, 1978, Cohen, 1992, Smith, 1992; Shinde, 2007).

Pilgrimage is a travel that involves a religious experience (Griffin, 2007) or, as Ambrosio (2007, p. 78) puts it: “The pilgrimage concept based on spirituality is essentially defined as an encounter between Man and God.” Also, religious space, the object of gaze for the pilgrims refers not only to a confined space used for religious rites and rituals (such as a church, mosque, temple, shrine, etc.) but also to the open geographical space through which pilgrims travel or which is loaded with historical-religious significance (Raj and Morpeth, 2007). Therefore, in a pilgrimage it is not only the final destination that matters but also the way that is leading there (one example here is El Camino de Santiago, a pathway of about 700 km in Spain walked every year by the pilgrims – see Gonzalez and Medina, 2003). One way of distinguishing between pilgrims and religious tourists is by looking at their behavior and their motivation. A pilgrim’s travel is characterized by austerity and ritual (Blackwell, 2007). On the other hand, Pusztai (2004, p. 19) has argued that “religious tourism is a form of travel where religious and tourist motivations coexist, it is organized by specialized agencies and it usually collects and brings strangers on a pilgrimage route.” Unlike the pilgrim, the religious tourist could be motivated by broader cultural reasons rather than just religion.

Since religion is understood as part of the culture, many scholars see religious tourism as part of the broader cultural tourism (Rinschede, 1992). Besides visiting sites with religious significance, religious tourism could also include: attending religious conferences, cultural-religious events, exhibitions of cultic objects, and concerts of sacred music (Vorzsak and Gut, 2009). However, Tomasi (2002, p. 21) has also argued that “The distinction between pilgrimage driven by faith and tourism for cultural and recreational purposes no longer holds because contemporary pilgrimages involve such huge numbers of people that they can only be organized in the same manner as mass tourism.” Also many pilgrimage “venues”, such as Lourdes have been secularized through commercialization and commoditization.

Also, pilgrimage and religious tourism overlap because many people travel for both religious and recreational reasons (Shinde, 2007; Raj, 2008). Shinde (2007), for example, has shown that, in the case of India, pilgrimage and religious tourism are intertwined. This means that at one site you can find an entire range of tourists, from the deeply religious ones who visit the place for its sacred significance and are seeking spiritual fulfillment to the other end of the continuum represented by secular tourists who are visiting the area for multitude of reasons (cultural and knowledge-based among them) but who also seek to fulfill some personal or spiritual needs by visiting the site (Sharples and Sundaram, 2005; Collins-Kreiner, 2010). Besides motivation, behavior is considered another factor for distinguishing between pilgrims and religious tourists. According to Pusztai (2004; 20; also in Vorzsak and Gut, 2009, and in Josan, 2009), religious tourists may be considered a combination between pilgrims and tourists. They resemble the pilgrims because they usually take a spiritual leader on the journey and sing hymns and
pray. However, unlike the pilgrims they prefer a comfortable journey and good quality accommodation and reject physical penitence or asceticism. Through these characteristics they are closer to tourists. However, “modern” pilgrimages are generally different from pilgrimages in the past because the pilgrims today also prefer to use modern means of transportation and stay in hotels (Vorzsak and Gut, 2009). Nolan and Nolan (1992, p. 69) then concluded that: “Regardless of their motivations, all visitors to these (religious) attractions require some level of services, ranging from providing for the most basic human needs to full commercial development that rivals the most secular resort” (the same idea also in Gupta, 1999).

We could then assert that the boundary between pilgrimage and religious tourism is blurred. Therefore, we tend to agree with Turner and Turner (1978, p. 20) that a “tourist is half a pilgrim if a pilgrim is half a tourist” and for this reason we consider all visits to religious sites as religious tourism regardless of their primary motivation. In conclusion, religious tourism is a complex activity that includes all travel motivated partly or wholly by religion and/or where the destination is a religious or sacred site (Blackwell, 2007, p. 37; Rinschede, 1992).

2. RELIGION AND THE MOTIVATION FOR RELIGIOUS TOURISM

Although the importance of religion in the western world has diminished considerably and the number of atheists and agnostics has multiplied, the number of tourists visiting religious sites has increased continuously (Griffin 2007). How could we explain this paradox? The main reason for this could be that, in an increasingly uncertain life, people start searching for a meaning (Richards and Fernandes, 2007). Moreover, not all visitors to a religious site are “pious travelers”. Many secular tourists visit religious sites for spiritual reasons. Some visit for completely non-religious purposes, such as for historical, cultural or architectural motives (Griffin, 2007; Sharpley and Sundaram, 2005). Often times these secular tourists are even uninformed about the religious meaning of that site (Nolan and Nolan, 1992).

As a matter of fact, the number of tourists traveling solely for religious reasons is relatively low (Griffin, 2007; Richards and Fernandes, 2007). This is true even for pilgrims whose primary motivation is religion. Raj (2008) has pointed out that pilgrimage destinations have been transformed from sacred to secular use. Also, while religion is the most important motivation for pilgrims there might arise some secondary outcomes either during the travel or at the destination (Swatos, 2006; Vukonic, 1998). For example, the primary motivation for pilgrims going to Rome is to visit the St. Peter’s cathedral and other such religious objectives and perform the religious rituals; however, once in Rome they may also choose to visit non-religious objectives and even go for shopping (Swatos, 2006).

According to Santos (2002) the proportion of pilgrims that visit a religious site for religious motivation is about 50 percent while another 20 percent may have a mixed “religious-cultural” motivation. Also many cultural tourists include religious monuments among the objectives they visit. However, their interest in those monuments is cultural, historical or architectural/artistic rather than religious (Richards and Fernandes, 2007). For example, in the case of Italian sites, 93 percent of religious tourists report also cultural interests (Petrillo, 2003).
Attitudes and behavior of religious tourists at the site may differ based on their religious affiliation and religiosity. A study by Poria, Butler and Airey (2003) conducted at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem found different visitation patterns for Christian and Jewish tourists. Jewish tourists were more likely than Christians to consider the visit as a “heritage experience”. Also the more religious participants were more inclined to consider the site as part of their heritage than those who were moderately religious or not religious at all. Christian pilgrims in Israel represent about 25% of all tourists to this country (Collins-Kreiner and Kliot, 2000). A questionnaire distributed to several groups of Christian pilgrims in Israel revealed that most of these visitors (72%) were interested in visiting also other sites besides the Christian holy sites. Generally these pilgrims wanted to visit other religious sites that belong to other religions but 43% were also interested in cultural objectives and 35% in shopping (Collins-Kreiner and Kliot, 2000). It is clear then that religious tourism (which in our definition includes pilgrimage) “is embedded within a complex of heritage tourism and mass tourism activities” (Rotherham, 2007, p. 65).

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

From the difficulty to define religious tourism it should be evident that the motivation for religious tourism is multifaceted and multilayered (Blackwell, 2007). It is important that we understand what motivates tourists to visit religious sites and how can their expectations be met by the local authorities and tourism managers. The study will attempt to answer two major questions: 1) Why is Mardin an important place for religious tourism? And, 2) what is the primary motivation of tourists to visit religious sites in Mardin?

4. METHODOLOGY

In order to answer our research questions we employ several methods:

A. Interviews with hotel managers as well as with officials of Mardin’s Tourism Bureau. We had in-depth interviews with managers of seven hotels in the city of Mardin. The selected hotels are among the most important in this city, are situated near the religious sites and were presumed to be receiving many religious tourists. Each interview lasted between 15 minutes and 45 minutes and discussed many issues related to religious tourism in the city. We also talked with the president of Mardin’s Tourism Bureau about the number of tourists that visited Mardin, the measures taken by the local authorities to promote tourism in the area and about the benefits to the local area brought by tourism and religious tourism.

B. A questionnaire was designed to interview tourists around the major religious sites in Mardin City. The questionnaire was available in two languages (Turkish and English) and was administered by one of the authors between 17 and 29 January 2011. We asked tourists about their reasons to visit Mardin, the places visited in Mardin, and about the importance of religion in their lives. The questionnaire also collected tourists’ personal data such as age, country or province they came from, education, income, etc. In total, a number of 19 questionnaires were administered. The low number of responses could be explained by the timing of the fieldwork, January being off the main tourist season. Moreover the weather was also colder than usual which may have kept many potential tourists from traveling. The low number of responses constitutes a serious limitation to our
findings as many correlations that we initially intended to make are not possible anymore. However, the results from the questionnaire could still be used to reinforce the findings from the interviews which were our main query instrument. Of the total number of tourists that we surveyed 47% were men and 53% were women. Also most of our respondents were very young: more than 84% of survey respondents were between the ages of 26-45 and a little over 15% were between the ages of 46-65. The tourists that we surveyed were well educated, 79% of them being university graduates and five percent holding a Masters or a Doctoral degree. The remaining 16% were high school graduates. About a third (31%) of the surveyed religious tourists is working in the education sector, 21% are self employed, and 16% have included themselves in the management category. The remaining one-third of the respondents is distributed almost equally between health care workers, farmers and unemployed. Approximately 74% of our participants were from different provinces of Turkey and the rest were international tourists coming from South Korea, Germany and Argentina.

C. Some of the information that we use in this study was derived from participant observation. One of us spent two weeks in Mardin during which time she visited these religious sites several times and had many informal discussions with local people. We examined the location and characteristics of tourism infrastructure (lodging, restaurants, transportation means) as well as how tourism was promoted. Our researcher also watched tourists and locals inside and outside the religious tourism sites. This method is known in the literature as the ethnographic method.

D. Finally we have used a plethora of secondary sources such as academic articles, newspaper articles, websites, books and tourist brochures. These sources informed us about the history and geography of Mardin, the main tourist and religious attractions in the city and provided us with similar case studies in other parts of the world.

5. THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION FOR TOURISM IN MARDIN

Mardin (figure 1) is a 7000-year-old city that has hosted many different civilizations. It has also been a city of many religions and languages. A Turkish official labeled Mardin as the “capital of religions and languages”, a reflection of the numerous languages spoken in the province and of the co-habitation of people of different religious denomination. For this reason, the province is blessed with a great number of religious and cultural sites. Between 1160 and 1932 the city was the seat of the Syriac Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch. Today the Patriarch lives in Damascus.

Syria but the existence of many churches and monasteries in the province of Mardin speak about a great Christian past. Starting with the 12th century the area was ruled by Muslims, Artukid Turks initially, succeeded by the Mongols, Akkoyunlu Turks and finally in the 16th Century the territory was conquered by the Ottoman Turks. They have built numerous religious structures (mosques, medreses, tombs, etc) creating an original Turkish-Islamic civilization.

Deyrulzaffaran Monastery (Mor Hananyo in Syriac) is one of the oldest active monasteries in the world built in the fourth century on the site of a 4500 year old pagan temple dedicated to the worship of the sun. This explains the existence of 365 rooms in the monastery symbolizing the solar calendar based on 365 days, the time the Earth needs to revolve around the sun. The liturgies here are performed in the Aramaic language which is
the language of the early Christians during the time of Jesus Christ. The monastery is situated about five kilometers from Mardin city and has been one of the most important centers of the Syriac Orthodox Church. It also has one of Christianity’s oldest shrines and holds a very valuable historic New Testament. Although the monastery is no longer the seat of the Patriarch, it still contains the graves of 52 past patriarchs and metropolitans of the church and the patriarchal throne. The bishop is now in charge of the monastery helped by a monk and several lay assistants.

However, the oldest functioning Syriac monastery in the world is Saint Gabriel Monastery (or Mor Gabriel in Syriac; also known as Deyrulumur) situated near Midyat, in the province of Mardin. Founded in the fourth century, the monastery has since remained active providing schooling and ordination for native-born monks. Today a number of monks and nuns live here (in separate wings of the building) as well as several lay workers and occasional guests. The head of the monastery is the metropolitan bishop of Tur Abdin who also resides here. Two other important Christian religious sites can be found in Midyat, the churches of Mor Dimet and Mor Shmuni.

The Church of the Forty Martyrs (Kırklar Kilisesi in Turkish) is the only active church in the town of Mardin, serving the approximately one hundred Christians still left in town. It dates back to the 6th Century and holds the manuscripts of the Syriac Christian Patriarchate. Another town in the Mardin Province with significant Christian vestiges is Nusaybin (the ancient Nisibis) situated at the border with Syria. Nisibis was a major center for the early Christians. The town has had a bishop since the year 300. Saint Jacob who was born in the town was one of the bishops for over twenty years. He is buried in the Saint Jacob Church. The School of Nisibis, where students studied philosophy, theology and medicine was also founded during this period by the Syriac Church of the East. Although most of the Christians have left the town, Nusaybin has remained a major center for the Chaldean Catholic Church. There are many other churches and monasteries in the province.
but most are closed and many are in ruin. There also many great Islamic religious sites to visit in the province. Many of these were erected before the Ottoman conquest, especially during the Artukid period. Ulu Camii (Grand Mosque), built in the 12th Century is a great example of the Artukid architecture. It is the oldest mosque in Mardin and perhaps the most visited. Other mosques built in the same period are: Koçhisar Mosque (12th Century), Şehidiye Mosque (13th Century), Melik Mahmud Mosque (14th Century), and Abdullatif Mosque (14th Century). Several medresse (religious schools) also date back to this period, such as Şehidiye Medresse (13th Century) and Zinciriye Medresse (built in the 14th Century by Prince Melik Mecdeddin Isa). Another famous medresse, Kasimiye Medresse, was built by Sultan Kasim in the 15th Century during the Akkoyunlu period. In Nusaybin, very close to the Saint Jacob Church there is a historic mosque dedicated to Zeynel Abidin, a direct descendent of prophet Mohammed. The tombs of Zeynel Abidin and his sister are in the mosque.

In general, religious tourists visit religious sites belonging to their own religion. In Mardin, however, many tourists are attracted by the multi-religious character of the city and province. As our informants told us, they enjoy listening to the muezzin’s call for prayer and to the bell sound of the churches at the same time. It is exactly this peaceful co-habitation of the two major religions that makes Mardin interesting for tourists (same findings in Anonymous, 2005).

According to information received from the governor’s office and hotel owners, while most tourists may be coming to Mardin to visit religious sites, many of them are in fact interested in the cultural and historical value of those objectives rather than in their sacred or spiritual value. Most do not come to perform specific religious rites and rituals. Few churches are open during weekdays and only the most important monasteries such as Deyrulzafaran Monastery and Deyrulumur Monastery still perform religious rituals. Monasteries are situated outside the main towns in the province and tourists can visit them only for short times and only with a guide.

They cannot stay at the monastery as only the priests, the monks, the nuns and a few of those working there are allowed to stay. The majority of our respondents (69%) were Muslim and 16% were Christian. The rest were of another religion, were atheist or declared no religion. For most of the people we surveyed religion was either very important (42%) or somewhat important (37%) and only 21% stated that religion played a minor role or no role in their lives. Almost all (94%) of our participants visited religious sites of their religion and of other religion during their stay in Mardin.

The results of our survey support the finding that the primary motivation for most tourists visiting religious sites in Mardin is not actually religion. Only 42% of the tourists we surveyed visited religious sites for their religious importance while 42% visited the sites because they were famous sites. Less than 16% visited these religious sites with the intention of praying. For most, visiting the sites was rather seen as an opportunity to learn about architecture and arts (42%) or about the history of the place (31%).

Only 17% viewed their visit as an opportunity to educate themselves in religious matters. None of the tourists we questioned considered a visit to a religious site in Mardin a good opportunity to pray or to meditate on spiritual matters. We also asked our participants to agree or disagree with a series of statements regarding their feelings upon visiting the particular religious sites where they were interviewed. Only 26% of the participants to our survey declared that they had a great religious experience while 74% stated that they had a great cultural experience (table 1).
Table 1: Concluding statements summarizing the experience of our respondents after their visit to the religious site.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Percent agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I had a great cultural experience</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I had an interesting experience</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. This experience made me feel that I belong to this site, that this site is part of my heritage</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I had a spiritual experience</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The experience was emotional for me</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I had a great educational experience</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I had a great religious experience</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Processed data

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Mardin has a great potential for the development of religious tourism. In the city, there are 14 churches and the Patriarchate (with many more churches and monasteries in the rest of the province) and more than 33 mosques and medreses. However, very little of this potential is exploited today. There are 664 sites in the province of interest for tourists; of these 62 are religious sites (Provincial Tourism Directorate, 2011). Due to the serious decline of the Christian population after World War I, most churches and monasteries are closed today and cannot be visited. Some are in very bad shape and need renovating. Similarly, only the largest and the historically more important mosques are visited by tourists. All others are used only by the local people for daily worship. The conclusion from here is that the attractiveness of the province for religious tourism could increase with the renovation and inclusion of some of these religious sites into the touristic circuit. The next important conclusion from this study is that, although the majority of visitors to the religious sites in Mardin would label themselves as “religious”, the main purpose of their visit is cultural rather than religious. They visit these sites mainly because these structures, built during different historical periods and by different civilizations, feed their interest in the multi-cultural and multi-religious character of the province and allow them to reconnect with the rich history of the place.

This is a very important finding of our study that should be considered by any future tourism marketing campaign. Already, the local government in Mardin has established a “Culture and Faith Park Complex” in Nusaybin uniting the historic monastery of Saint Jacob with the Zeynel Abidin Mosque complex (Ziflioğlu, 2011). Before opening for tourism, the 1700 year-old monastery will be completely excavated and restored. There are also seven buildings between the two religious structures which will be demolished in the future. The joining of two religious structures belonging to different religions in a faith park museum is as much opportunistic (as the two religious complexes happened to be situated very close to each other) as it is symbolic. This approach is meant to strengthen the dialog between cultures or, as governor of Mardin, Hasan Duruer, has declared in an interview, “the Culture and Faith Park aims to emphasize the beauty of brotherhood and living next to one-another” (Ziflioğlu, 2011). Another monastery, Mor Evgin, situated close by, will also be restored in the near future and will enhance the tourism potential of the town.
Finally, previous studies have informed us that tourists who visit religious sites with a primary motivation other than religion are more likely to visit also other (non-religious) tourism sites and even involve in other activities such as shopping. From here results that the diversification of the tourism offer including offering more shopping and entertainment possibilities, would be necessary to attract and retain more tourism revenue in the area.

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