

# Wildlife Conservation, Safari Tourism and the Role of Tourism Certification in Kenya: A Postcolonial Critique

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**ABSTRACT:** Kenya's national parks and game reserves form the pillar of the country's tourism industry, and wildlife viewing and safari tourism are significant generators of income and foreign exchange. The promulgation of pioneer national parks in Kenya in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century followed colonial practices of "exclusion" and "divide and rule" which marginalized local communities in decision-making processes and initiation of tourism programmes and wildlife conservation initiatives. Government supported policies and programmes that focused on wildlife protection and promotion of safari tourism also accentuated human-wildlife conflicts and contributed to species loss and habitat fragmentation. This study examines the evolution of Kenya's wildlife conservation policies and safari tourism programmes, and argues that safari tourism in Kenya has privileged Western models of tourism development and wildlife conservation, with historic exclusion of indigenous communities still ongoing today, though some improvements are evident. Postcolonial legacies influence the political economy of tourism in regard to the Maasai in Kenya; inequitable power relations are illustrated with the help of a literature review as well as a case example. The study offers suggestions to guide the development of future tourism certification programmes and indicators related to protected areas and safari tourism. Such programmes should be cognizant of Kenya's postcolonial context and attend to social and cultural sustainability, including issues of inclusion, exclusion and empowering local communities to participate directly in the management and ownership of environmental and tourism resources.

**Keywords:** wildlife conservation; safari tourism; postcolonialism; political economy; exclusion; community participation.

## Introduction

Kenya is ranked the fifth leading international tourist destination in Africa, receiving 1.575 million international tourist arrivals in 2008 (KNBS 2010). Wildlife-based tourism currently accounts for about 70% of tourism earnings, 25% of gross domestic product and more than 10% of total formal sector employment in the country (KNBS 2010). Conservation policies and related collaborative schemes and tourism programmes play a crucial role in developing intervention measures to protect these nationally and internationally significant resources (Bulte *et al.* 2008). A widespread protected area system is in place with over 10% of its land area currently gazetted as national parks, national reserves or forest reserves: the system to date is comprised of 23 national parks, 28 national reserves, 4 marine national parks, 5 marine national reserves and 4 national sanctuaries (Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) 2010). These critical biodiversity areas are the backbone of a flourishing tourism sector; one out of

two international visitors to Kenya is anticipated to have at least one wildlife appreciative/viewing opportunity during their stay (Odunga and Maingi 2011).

The sustainable development and management of these nationally vital wildlife resources and of its robust safari tourism sector are a major concern, however, as the country is experiencing an accelerated decline of its wildlife population. National park and national reserve wildlife populations declined over the past 30 years at rates similar to non-protected areas (Western *et al.* 2009). A number of reasons have been cited for this alarming trend: unsustainable development, consumptive use of resources, land degradation, unsustainable land use practices, population pressure and climate change (see Okello and Kiringe 2004; Tucker and Akama 2009). Another significant issue is ongoing development and use conflict over wildlife rich lands that have been traditionally used for pastoral grazing and subsistence agriculture by indigenous and local

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resource use was destructive to wildlife and incompatible with the development of wildlife safari tourism activities (Okello *et al.* 2009). African modes of natural resource use were perceived to be unprogressive or barbaric and hence to be eliminated. Local people were prohibited from entering the park and utilizing the existing park resources including pasture, wildlife, water and fuel wood upon which indigenous African communities depended upon for sustenance. Whereas wildlife safari tourism, an entirely European recreational phenomenon, was allowed in the protected game parks, subsistence hunting by indigenous people was banned and officially classified as poaching (Okello *et al.* 2009).

These structurally embedded wildlife conservation policies and tourism development initiatives continued into the postcolonial period, after Kenya achieved independence from the British on December 12, 1963. The national parks and reserves developed into major centres of safari tourism activities, hosting increasing numbers of international tourists, particularly from Western countries such as Germany, the United Kingdom, United States, Italy and France, for wildlife viewing and photography of its unique savanna grasslands and game (Kenya Government 2010). But 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century images of Kenya and other African countries as a wilderness “Eden” persisted in attracting Western tourists to Kenya, and Western naturalists and tourism developers continued to play significant roles in the design and development of conservation and tourism programmes. A number of international conservation and tourism related organizations have established offices in the country, acting as watchdogs and assisting the government in nature conservation and the promotion of safari tourism. They include quasi-governmental and non-governmental organizations like the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) and others like the Max Planck Institute and the Frankfurt Zoo. Even local organizations like the Kenya Tourist Board and the East African Wildlife Society have been dominated by Western membership (Akama 1996).

It is therefore argued below that understanding the present day context of wildlife safari tourism and conservation in Kenya, and the merit of tools such as sustainability certification and monitoring indicators, requires a critical analysis of its colonial and political past. Particularly, a political economic examination of wildlife and safari tourism development in Kenya has to consider the local to global influence of stakeholders and the power relations that have shaped its conservation and tourism programmes over the past century.

## Postcolonial Influences

Several scholars have compared tourism with a new form of colonialism, i.e., *neocolonialism*, where “first world” countries are seen to exercise relationships of power and domination over “third world” countries and destinations (Mowforth and Munt 2003; Nash 1989). Postcolonial theory enables a more nuanced critique and is especially concerned with identifying the ongoing political, economic and cultural influences of former imperial powers in the postcolonial state (see Hall and Tucker 2004, as well as Tucker and Akama 2009, for an overview and discussion of postcolonialism and tourism). A postcolonial critique of tourism is concerned with the perpetuation of colonial practices, influence and power in the postcolony through tourism. Postcolonial analysis also examines how the forms and structures of tourism that evolved during colonial times interpellate with tourism in the postcolony to continue economic, political and social-cultural domination, control as well as local struggle/resistance against these. In the Kenyan context, neocolonialism should be carefully examined for imperialist influences and micro-macro power relations, negotiation and struggle (see case example further below). Such neo- and post-colonizations can be affected, for example, through (i) dependent and exploitative economic relationships between developed and developing countries (Britton 1982); (ii) tourism image and discourse (Britton 1979; Morgan and Pritchard 1998; Silver 1993); and (iii) exclusionary practices and hegemonic struggle as local residents negotiate and resist external influences and values. We explore these themes further below and argue that neocolonial tourism practices in the Kenyan postcolony (after independence) dovetailed with and reinforced the structural inequities laid down during colonial rule through conservation policies and safari tourism (Garland 2008; Hill 1996; Singh and van Houtum 2002).

### (i) *Eco-Imperialism and the Political Economy of Safari Tourism*

Hall (1994) offered an early critique of “eco-imperialism” in regard to the influence of Western policies and science on the creation and management of protected areas in developing countries. A similar critique can be made in the East African context. Neumann (1995: 92), for instance, noted that government concerns in Tanganyika<sup>1</sup> about the future of Serengeti National Park in the 1950s and the committee they set up to reconstitute the park ‘were now stated in the discourse of the ‘second colonial occupation,’ with its influx of technocrats trained in applied field such as agronomy and soil science.’ The committee called for a more scientific approach, where the spatial separation of humans and nature was now referred to as a “principle.” The Maasai

pastoralists would be allowed to stay in a special conservation unit encompassing Ngorongoro Crater, and the subsequent 1959 legislation by the National Park Ordinance (amended) stated:

*Under this ordinance the Tanganyika National Parks become for the first time areas where all human rights must be excluded thus eliminating the biggest problem of the Trustees and the Parks in the past.<sup>2</sup>*

Neumann argued that establishment of Tanganyika's national parks was a process of nature production as much as preservation, and African nature was conceived on a vision of Africa as primeval wilderness, as first imagined in the preservationists' minds. Furthermore, development and preservation (conservation) projects came from the same belief of superior European culture and contempt for African land-use practices – both were about control over land, resources and people (Neumann 1995).

Can a similar argument be made with respect to safari tourism in Kenya? Does it too play a role in reinforcing hegemonic economic and cultural relationships? Is it, too, subject to the charge of cultural imperialism or economic domination? Norton (1996) focused on the representational and experiential aspects of safari tourism to investigate how this type of tourism constructs East African nature. His study of tourist brochures and the interpretations made by tourists in relation to safari experience indicated that safari tourism constructs East African nature through a process of negotiation between texts, tourists and places. He, too, pointed to Neumann's (1995) research of the material and symbolic appropriation of national parks through British colonialism in East Africa (where not only was land occupied by indigenous Africans seized physically from them, but particular ways of seeing and understanding the landscape were also imposed, aided by conservation-related policies and actions such as described by Neumann). These relationships, Norton concluded, were implicated in a hidden nexus of capital and power relations, including colonialism and capitalism.

Garland (2008) provides further insight into these relations of capital and power. She calls for situating local production/consumption within a larger political economy perspective, i.e., linking the local to the global stage of capitalism, conservation and tourism. But instead of framing ideology of wildlife conservation primarily as a Western imposition on Africans, she argues that conservation should be seen as 'a productive process... as a particular kind of capitalist production, one which lays claim to the intrinsic, or natural, capital game animals represent... and ultimately transforms it into capital of a more convertible and globally ramifying kind.' This depends greatly on understanding and

addressing the social organization of control and the politico-legal frameworks through which this control is exercised (Garland 2008). Mosedale and Albrecht (2011) call for a similar relational understanding of space and socio-economic, political and cultural processes and practices that transcend multiple scales in tourism (see also Britton 1982).

Similarly, too, the sustainable management of safari tourism in Kenya requires a political economic understanding of the international, national and local organizations and institutions involved in the organization, management and regulation of conservation and safari tourism. It also requires historical understanding of the colonial policies that set into place exclusionary practices and park boundaries that continue to impact local inhabitants, nomadic and pastoral populations today. As the case example shown further below, inequities continue in the postcolonial spaces that intersect with new (neocolonial) tourism development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

A brief look at marketing, representational and promotional discourses in tourism further illustrates the merit of understanding the historical and social-political landscape that influenced wildlife conservation and safari tourism development in Kenya.

### *(ii) Promotion and Marketing*

*In the Euro-American West, the continent of Africa has long been associated with iconic wild animals. China may have its pandas, India its tigers, the Amazon its jaguars and anacondas, North America its bison, wolves, and bears. But Africa has lions and leopards, gorillas and chimpanzees, elephants, rhinos, hippos, ostrich, zebra, giraffe, and more! Not only is the continent home to more large, charismatic species than other regions of the globe, but its animals are also highly familiar to Western people, who are exposed to them in the form of toys, visual media, and the display of live creatures in zoological parks, often from early childhood on. (Garland 2008: 58)*

Garland (2008: 51) goes on to say that 'the ubiquity of African animals in Western daily life itself derives from the dialectical history of European exploration and colonization of the continent.' Aided by globalization and the rise of the culture industries, these African animals have become ubiquitous symbolic imagery around the world in films like "Out of Africa" or "The Lion King," in travel magazines, travel writing, travel guides and countless advertising, promotion and marketing media. Postcolonial theorists like Said (1978), Spurr (1993) and Pratt (1992) have been drawn upon to develop analytical frameworks to conduct discourse analysis of travel magazines and travel journalism (e.g., Dickinson, as well as postcolonial critiques of promotional and marketing materials). Prasad (1997) analyzed how tourism advertising can replicate colonial forms of discourse,

such as by portraying local people and places as passive recipients of the Western tourist gaze, and show binary oppositions like colonizer/colonized, First World/Third World, civilized/primitive, active/passive, disciplined/unrestrained, normal/exotic, etc. Postcolonial critique and discourse analysis of various promotion and marketing materials of Kenya's wildlife safari tourism attractions shows that tourist advertisements for Kenyan attractions in Western media focus primarily on the "Big Five" (elephant, lion, rhino, cheetah and giraffe), and reinforce stereotypes of Kenyan people (Kibara 1994; Sinclair 1990; Urmilla *et al.* 2007). Images of wild Africa complete with roaring lions, trumpeting elephants, semi-naked natives and Maasai imagery complement the scene. See, for instance, the images portrayed on the following two websites (accessed May 23, 2011):

- <http://www.rodeomasai.net/>
- [http://www.voyagetrek.com/Travel/Tours/Kenya/Safaris?gclid=CLOwmZm6\\_agCfcTt7QodNxJ6Sw](http://www.voyagetrek.com/Travel/Tours/Kenya/Safaris?gclid=CLOwmZm6_agCfcTt7QodNxJ6Sw)

The Maasai feature prominently in brochures, advertisements, electronic media and other forms of tourism commercials that promote Kenya as a leading safari tourism "mecca" in Africa and are represented as primitive, unchanging, and inseparable from Nature and Savannah. Scenes of the Maasai dressed in red ochre shuka and/or traditional regalia are juxtaposed with the "Big Five" (Tucker and Akama 2009). The Maasai tribesmen do not appear to have changed since early European explorers and adventure seekers first encountered the Maasai over 200 years ago (cf. Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's 1994 study, where they noted blue jeans and non-traditional apparel being worn when the Maasai were not performing for the tourists). The Maasai Moran (youthful warriors), carrying traditional long spears and clubs, are projected as people who "walk-tall" amidst the deadly Africa wildlife (see above two websites). Scenes of Maasai livestock are also projected in commercials, grazing in harmony with other savanna herbivores such as antelopes, zebra, wildebeest, buffalo and elephants (which is far from the case – see further below).

It has been argued that the design and development of promotional messages and images used in marketing tour packages in tourist generating countries tend to be based on dominant Western cultural values and socio-political systems (Mowforth and Munt 1998, 2003). Social and cultural practices at the local level in which the Maasai and tourism intersect are also influenced to cohere with the media representations. Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's (1994) study shows how the performance and actions of the Maasai are "scripted" carefully for visitors, controlled and

influenced strongly by overseas tour operators and travel agents. The power relationships and subjection of the Maasai performing to tour visitors at a tea party on the manicured lawn of a plantation (British owners since pre-independence) can be seen as a continuation of the colonial relationships and power that underlie this touristic act. Advertising, promotion and other media representations by these tour operators fit the "script" and influence visitor expectations and the way they expect to see the Maasai. As Morgan and Pritchard (1998: 6) put it:

*Tourism image (as constructed by tour operators and other tourism marketers) reveals as much about the power relations underpinning its construction, as it does about the specific tourism product or country it promotes...They are powerful images which reinforce particular ways of seeing the world and can restrict and channel people, countries, genders and sexes into certain mind-sets.*

### (iii) Exclusion of Local People

Kenya's popular safari tourism activities are spatially constrained to a few locations in the popular wildlife parks and environmental impacts are consequently very high (Okech and Urmilla 2009). Few local people who live at or near these tourist attractions and facilities benefit from related jobs, even relatively lowly (menial) ones. An increasing trend towards all-inclusive tour packages further hinders the equitable distribution of tourism benefits to local residents and the nomadic/pastoral Maasai (Akama 1996; Bachmann 1988; Okech 2007; Sinclair 1990). It has been estimated that only between 2% and 5% of Kenya's total tourism receipts trickle down to the grassroots level, primarily in the form of low paying, servile jobs, souvenir sales and agricultural produce (Bachmann 1988; Okech 2007; Sinclair 1990).

An example of shifting the cost of wildlife conservation and safari tourism development to the locals can be seen with respect to cultivators and pastoralists; many experience considerable injury and damage to farms and livestock, but are not allowed to protect themselves and their property (KWS 1990; Urmilla *et al.* 2007). Close to 80% of Kenya's population reside in rural areas, and wildlife parks evoke images of the harsh colonial legacy of wildlife preservation and protected areas to many of these rural dwellers (Tucker and Akama 2009). As discussed earlier, state tourism programmes and wildlife conservation policies were oriented towards protecting park wildlife for foreign tourists, and tended to eschew local involvement. The tourism images of harmonious coexistence between the Maasai and the savanna wildlife are far from reality, and conflict with park wildlife over grazing and water resources persists.

The diverse social and environmental problems confronting wildlife conservation and safari tourism in

Kenya and other African countries have led to the emergence of alternative models of wildlife conservation and safari tourism (Eagles 2009; Mbaiwa and Stronza 2009; Okello *et al.* 2009). Since the mid-1980s, KWS has been implementing community-based wildlife tourism programmes in areas around Amboseli National Park and Maasai Mara National Reserve. Local action such as forming wildlife conservation associations and direct participation in safari tourism development was encouraged (Okech and Urmilla 2009). Several initiatives are summarized in Appendix A which indicates an optimistic and constructive shift in KWS politics. Less evident, however, are the micro-macro politics of tourism and ongoing marginalization of pastoral and nomadic groups due to the power and influence of foreign investors (see Impink and Gaynor 2010). The example below illustrates some of the challenges awaiting “sustainable tourism” and the certifications, monitoring and evaluation indicators.

#### Case Example: Power Negotiations and Safari Tourism

As discussed above, despite immense and diverse potential for wildlife safari tourism development in Kenya, the country’s tourism is spatially limited to a few national parks and reserves. This phenomenon has been mainly brought about by lack of appropriate land-use policy and regulations governing the location and distribution of tourism facilities and infrastructure in different wildlife parks and reserves in the country (Okech 2007; Sindiga 1996). Consequently, most private investors in the tourism and hospitality industry tend to put their capital investments in limited areas perceived to have high potential for quick profit returns such as Nairobi, Lake Nakuru, Maasai Mara, Amboseli and Tsavo. Most of the tourism and hospitality facilities, including first class hotels and lodges, have been developed in important and fragile wildlife habitats near breeding grounds or feeding areas. Continued growth in international visitation presents a serious dilemma for park planners and managers (KWS 2010).

The following example drawn from a meeting held in June 2007 between British tour operators and lodge owners (six in total), a representative from an international conservation organization and approximately 35 local Maasai males from a village located in one of Kenya’s pioneer national parks (name withheld to preserve anonymity) helps illustrate the power as well as economic and cultural domination of postcolonial relations in a wildlife and safari tourism setting. The meeting was attended by one of this paper’s authors as a guest observer. Its main purpose was to negotiate the lease of Maasai land to Western investors to operate wildlife tours. An important issue arose during this meeting that is relevant to postcolonial theory in tourism:

the economic and cultural domination exercised by foreign tourism investors, in this case, expatriates from former ruling countries, over Maasai villagers through a business proposal related to wildlife and safari tourism. The proposed agreement, ultimately accepted by the Maasai group, included the lease of 10,000 hectares of land for wildlife and safari tours as well as the development of luxurious lodges for international tourists.

Minority and disempowered groups are often enticed by the potential economic improvements that tourism may bring to their communities. Taking advantage of their economic vulnerability, powerful groups pressure disempowered groups to accept unfair and, on many occasions, exploitative economic agreements and demands, as discussed by dependency and political economy of tourism scholars (Britton 1982; Brohman 1996; Mowforth and Munt 1998, 2003; Nash 1989; Pleumarom 1994). The following interaction between foreign investors and Maasai villagers illustrates not only the rhetoric and discourse employed to lure local people to agree to unfair economic conditions but also the still prevalent relations of power and domination that are common in postcolonial states:

*Tour operator: We are here to submit a proposal to the Maasai. Right now (tourism) is not working well for you and us. For the Maasai, there is still poverty, disease.... This is a new thing we want to do; a new beginning.... A good portion needs to go to management...But our goal is for everybody to benefit from tourism....It is your choice. We need to discuss the consequences if you don't agree with the proposal...Tourists won't come here if you don't agree with the lease. On the other hand, if we make an agreement, we ensure that the Maasai get enough revenue.*

Requests for fair partnerships were made by the Maasai:

*In order to achieve this proposal we need to have an equal partnership, not special conditions. What you want is a better life for tour operators, not for us, for them.... We are poor, millions of shillings are going to the tour operators. We are not benefiting from tourism...We have been pressed a lot.... The agreement needs to reflect plans for the people...We need to establish our own conditions...We are always been left with leftovers. We need capacity building.*

Despite the plea for equitable economic benefits, foreign investors continued to pressure the Maasai attendees to sign the agreement:

*You have three options: you leave it as it is; develop wildlife tourism; or develop agriculture. We are proposing to find tourists, guarantee a fee as a lease for the whole area; a management company will manage the area under strict guidelines. You benefit from money from the park fees.*

Furthermore, foreign tour operators and lodge owners in this case had specific “rules” that the Maasai were

expected to agree upon once the lease agreement would take effect. These rules had direct consequences on the Maasai's way of life and long standing cultural tradition — the tending of their livestock. Pastoralism, as a traditional economic livelihood activity, has been in decline for several reasons, including lack of expertise in animal husbandry, human-wildlife conflict, dry seasons and tourism (Okello *et al.* 2009). Relations of power through wildlife tourism can be observed in the following quotes from two tourism investors participating in the negotiation:

*We need you to respect the rules; let the cattle go and stick to the contract.... We may repossess the village to make it more attractive, paint it green, but it will be yours. There will be no cattle; we are looking to control what happens on the land. "Let me explain. We are paying for this site but we are seeing more cattle and goats... I paid and the cattle did not move away. We even have dogs here!.... We have brought tourists from all over the world. I don't know much about your culture and land but I know about my colleagues around. They don't want to see the cows; they come to Kenya to see wildlife.... To make money in tourism for many years to come, we have to make sure tourists don't encounter crowds of men and that we can separate wildlife from your community.*

As seen above, cultural domination is not always coercive as enacted by colonial regimes in the past. Rather, it is facilitated through hegemonic practices and policies in communication, development initiatives and commerce, including tourism. But as Tucker and Akama (2009) argued, tourism can also be a setting for postcolonial resistance and contestation, as illustrated by the following counter-narratives of resistance from Maasai elders present at this meeting:

*You cannot tell me what to do with my cattle. My possessions are not less valuable than yours. Other potential investors are looking at it. We are looking at justice, not exploitation.*

*We don't want cattle to be stopped from grazing. Like the money you have in your wallet, cattle are our money. Cattle will be here forever. If all these men agree that we can have all together, tourism and cattle; that is the way it should be. You are to cope with the cattle.*

Discussions about the impacts and inequities created by tourism and conservation programmes on the traditional cultural practices of minority groups, in particular in the context of natural areas and ecotourism, have started to emerge in the tourism literature. Direct participation in conservation programmes and wildlife tourism in protected areas is essential not only for economic benefit, livelihood security and measurable gains in quality of life indicators such as health and education, but also for cultural survival. Self-determination, local control and direct involvement in decision-making related to tourism development and

conservation are necessary governance considerations to enable the Maasai to resist impositions of Western "ways of seeing" (Neumann 1995), such as the "no cattle" invective from the safari tourism investors above. The Maasai's cattle and livestock are an integral part of their cultural relationships with the Savannah grasslands of Kenya.

### Discussion and Implications for Tourism Certifications and Indicators

Sachedina and Nelson (2010) argue for maximizing the direct income to communities from wildlife and habitat conservation in Kenya, but as the case example above shows, issues of control, domination, regulation and governance will need to be carefully addressed if the Maasai are to derive genuine benefit and equity in negotiations and decision-making. The political economy of wildlife conservation and tourism development initiatives in Kenya and the other East African countries can be traced to the colonial policies of the early half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. While these helped conserve the diverse arrays of wildlife species and pristine habitats for the booming safari tourism industry that followed, exclusionary policies and dependency meant that the benefits to local Kenyans were marginal. Pastoral, nomadic populations like the Maasai faced socio-economic exploitation as well as cultural domination in regard to their traditional lands and practices. More recently, the Kenya Wildlife Service is attempting to redress some of these historical barriers by facilitating community-based conservation and local involvement (see Appendix A). Contractual land-use arrangements and partnerships that enable pastoral and nomadic populations like the Maasai to participate in monetary benefit, profit-sharing and pursue traditional lifestyles on indigenous lands are being encouraged (see Bruyere *et al.* 2009; McNeely *et al.* 1992).

Within this context, it may appear that the development and implementation of tourism certification programmes might be helpful in identifying best practices. The development of sustainability indicators might similarly assist in guiding responsible community development and marketing, monitoring and evaluation. However, Impink and Gaynor's (2010: 167) critique of the ongoing struggle faced by many Maasai 'as they attempt to continue pastoralism in an increasingly hostile environment' is worth heeding. They warn against implementing exogenous concepts of sustainability and top-down solutions, and favour greater effort to support and adapt local systems of knowledge and indigenous practice. Our discussion above indicates that eco-imperialism (Hall 1994) and cultural domination are especially to be watched out for in the development of certification programme and monitoring indicators.

Spenceley's (2005) review of the tourism certification programmes operating in Africa indicates that most certification programmes are oriented towards environmental issues within the hospitality and accommodations sectors. Socio-economic issues, fair trade, responsible purchasing and transportation take less priority. For instance, Kenya's ecotourism certification scheme, managed by Ecotourism Kenya, certifies tourism accommodation facilities. It incorporates mainly environmental and some social criteria, and provides ecolabels as marketing tools to illustrate service delivery standards (Spenceley 2005). The privileging of environmental dimensions has been widely noted in the tourism literature (Camargo *et al.* 2007; Font and Harris 2004; Honey 2002). These scholars call for greater attention to socio-economic and cultural criteria and indicators.

Such a holistic and integrated approach is essential in the Kenyan context. Wildlife safari tourism certification programmes should include criteria and indicators that help postcolonial states to move beyond dependency and subordination, and break off domination of the country's conservation and tourism development. To accomplish this, first, certification programmes and indicators should consider the historical and political context in which wildlife conservation and tourism takes place. Second, they should be devised to meet the basic economic, social and cultural needs of the local people over the economic interests and growth of the tourism industry in general. They must work towards elevating the dignity and self-respect of local people, ensuring they are agents of their own destiny and well-being. With respect to safari tourism, local residents, pastoral and nomadic populations should be empowered to determine what forms of safari tourism programmes they want to see developed, how the tourism costs and benefits are to be shared among different stakeholders (i.e., government, private investors, conservation groups and the local people), and how they are to "represented," not just in decision-making related to tourism and conservation, but also media-related representations (this last point is a difficult one requiring future research and discussion). Drawing on the postcolonial critique conducted in this paper, certification programmes for protected areas should specifically develop criteria and indicators to address:

- Direct participation of local people in tourism and conservation decision-making;
- Direct participation of local people in cultural heritage interpretation and display (consider Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1994 and the commodification

of culture in tourist media via image representation, etc.);

- Conservation and tourism education to enable informed participation;
- "Unequal" distribution of tourism benefits towards those who have the most economic needs (pro-poor tourism, see Scheyvens 2002);
- Access to natural and protected areas to conduct traditional economic, social and cultural practices;
- Respect and recognition of local cultures through meaningful host-guest interactions, and incorporation of local, traditional knowledge in decision-making along with the technical knowledge of scientific "experts."

The above are just but a few examples of the minimum criteria that should take priority in certification programmes in Kenya. The historical-political context and local dynamics of the setting in which certification programmes are to be applied are of paramount consideration. Achieving the socio-political and legal changes needed for local empowerment will require grappling with governance issues, such as decentralizing tourism authority and decision-making processes from the national level to democratically elected regional and grassroots institutions and organization (e.g., county governments, municipal councils, welfare societies and local tourism and environmental groups). Effective indicators will need to be developed to monitor tourism impacts on the socio-cultural fabric at the local destination level and the ability of the local communities to participate meaningfully in wildlife safari tourism in the Kenyan postcolony. In the absence of independent institutions and processes to facilitate transition towards self-empowerment and local control, safari tourism certification programmes and indicators should be regarded with caution – they may too easily constitute tools for cultural imperialism and external control over land-use, wildlife resources, and the rural, pastoral and nomadic inhabitants of the Savanna grasslands.

#### Endnotes

- 1 Under British colonial rule till independence came to Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika in the early 1960s.
- 2 Cited in Neumann 155–163. Original source: Tanganyika National Parks, Reports and Accounts of the Board of Trustees July 1959 to June 1960.

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## Appendix A: Recent Community-Based Initiatives

*The KWF initiated community conservation programs in 1993 in areas adjacent to Tsavo West National Park, in conjunction with the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF). The Kuku, Rombo and Mang'etele Community Projects commenced through its "Protected Areas: Neighbours as Partners" program aimed to involve local residents as stakeholders and beneficiaries of wildlife conservation and tourism. Measures are being implemented to reduce human-wildlife conflicts and to enhance conservation efforts in areas outside and around protected areas, aided by educational initiatives (see also Sinclair et al. 2011). Since 1996, the KWS decision-making forums have been established for community and stakeholder involvement in the Nairobi, Lake Nakuru, Hell's Gate, Amboseli, Mount Kenya and Shimba Hills areas. Conservation and lobby groups such as the Friends of Nairobi National Park and the Mwaluganje Conservation Group in Shimba Hills have become particularly involved in these initiatives (KWS 2010).*

*Community capacity building efforts are also being undertaken by the recently established Community Wildlife Service Department (CWS). However, local expectations related to wildlife conservation and management and the nonconsumptive value of wildlife to the community, are poorly understood in the Kenyan context (Okello et al. 2009). Currently, both individuals and groups are gradually being encouraged to host wildlife on their rangelands and communal land under the Kenya Wildlife Service program known as "Winning Space for Wildlife." Promoted hand-in-hand with nature-based tourism, the program seeks to ensure that conservation also plows back benefits to the host community. This is in line with what several other African countries have done and is often implemented in the form of integrated conservation and development projects (ICDPs). Such projects include the Communal Area Management Program for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) in Zimbabwe, Luangwa Integrated Rural Development Program (LIRD) in Zambia and Community-Based Wildlife Management in Tanzania (CWM) (IIED 1994).*