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# The role of tourism in the conservation of cultural heritage in Kenya

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*Due to the declining fortunes in agriculture, mining and manufacturing sectors, many developing countries have turned to tourism as a panacea to the numerous economic problems facing them. However, emphasis in Kenya has been mainly on beach and wildlife tourism, to the total exclusion of cultural tourism.*

*This paper discusses critically the contribution of international tourism in the conservation of cultural heritage in Kenya. The cultural impacts of international tourism are found to be both positive and negative and much more pronounced at the coast and in Maasailand.*

*Doxey's irritation index (irridex) is used as the main theoretical framework in the paper. Although Doxey suggests that in the last stage of tourism development the local communities are likely to be antagonistic to the tourists, in the case of the Maasai, the relation between them and the tourists has been rather harmonious. This could be so because the local community is actively involved in tourism development and derives benefits from the industry. The issues discussed in the paper are relevant to other parts of the world including Asia Pacific region. The paper concludes by emphasizing the need for proper visitor management through planning to minimize negative cultural impacts on local communities.*

**Key words:** commodification, cultural heritage, cultural tourism, tourist art, human zoo, irritation index.

## Introduction

In recent years, tourism has become important in the development process of developing countries. This is mainly because it is seen as the panacea of many problems: it promotes employment, it earns much-needed foreign

exchange and can also contribute to the conservation of natural and cultural resources (Whelan 1991). However, it has often been argued that international tourism is controlled by Euro-American entrepreneurs and that the benefits that trickle down to the local community in the developing World are minimal

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(Middleton 1992). For example, in Kenya the participation of local communities in the tourism industry is negligible. Most hotels and tour operation businesses are owned and controlled by foreign investors. Thus, the distribution of benefits from tourism in the country is skewed to the advantages of multinational corporations (MNCs).

Besides, foreign tour operators have tended to emphasize the country's wildlife and beach tourism abroad at the expense of cultural tourism. This has happened despite the fact that Kenya, like many other African countries, has a lot of potential for cultural tourism. Her rich and diverse indigenous cultures can be developed into an important and sustainable tourism product. This would help to diversify tourism products in Kenya and also redistribute benefits from the lucrative tourism industry.

The impact of tourism on cultural heritage is ambiguous. There is a lack of information on the subject which is of great polemic and political debate. Available literature tends to paint a negative view of the impact of tourism on culture. It has been argued that tourism leads to a rise in crime, a drop in morals and homogenization of culture. Indeed, this subject has many "grey" areas which need to be explored (Rajotte & Crocombe 1980, Brown 1998). This paper attempts to shed some light on some of the grey areas. The paper discusses critically the contribution of international tourism in the conservation of cultural heritage in Kenya. This involves an evaluation of the impacts of the international tourism on cultural heritage.

Although the emphasis in the paper is on Kenya, the issues raised regarding impacts of international tourism on culture have some relevance to other regions of the world such as Asia Pacific, the Caribbean and Latin America. Since the time Kenya became a leading tourist destination in Africa in the

1970s, it has come under increasing pressure from Westernization. The ways in which local communities such as the Maasai have been affected by and responded to the influences of Westernization provide useful lessons to the tourist destinations of other parts of the developing world.

### **Methodological approach**

The paper relies heavily on data and information obtained from personal observations in the field, interviews held with key informants from the Ministry of Tourism and Information of the Republic of Kenya, and secondary sources. The researcher visited the main cultural sites frequently visited by international tourists. Such sites included the National Museum, Fort Jesus, Gedi Ruins and Lamu World Heritage Site. By visiting these sites, it was possible to observe and record the various cultural aspects that interested foreign tourists such as artifacts, history, songs, dance and music.

Interviews were held with key informers in the Ministry of Tourism and Information and the Chief Curator of the Nairobi Museum. The informants provided relevant data and information on archeological and historical sites, socio-cultural expressions, cultural shows, sporting events and religious activities.

Interviews and personal field observations were supplemented by a thorough literature search and review of available published and unpublished documents on cultural tourism. Relevant research reports such as theses and journals were also critically reviewed.

### **Tourism development in Kenya**

This section reviews the development of wildlife and beach tourism in Kenya and provides a

justification for diversifying tourism products in the country.

### *Development of wildlife tourism*

Tourism in Kenya developed before 1930 when international tourists began arriving in the country in small numbers. Most of these early overseas visitors to the country were wealthy Europeans and Americans who could afford the time and resources for leisure recreation (Kamau 1999, Sindiga 1999). The rich wildlife resource was the base on which Kenya's tourism industry was founded. For example, Nairobi National Park was gazetted in 1946, followed by Tsavo in 1948, the Aberdares in 1950, Meru in 1966 and Lake Nakuru National Park in 1967. Later on, other National Parks and Game Reserves were established. At present, there are 25 terrestrial National Parks, four Marine National Parks, 22 National Reserves, five Marine Reserves, one animal orphanage and one national sanctuary (Table 1). In all, the protected areas cover about 8 percent of the country's total land area and accommodate a wide variety of wildlife species such as the rare loan antelope, the Hirola antelope, the sita-tunga antelope and the bongo, the forest antelope (Figure 1). The most popular national parks and game reserves in Kenya are shown in Table 2.

The first tourists to visit the parks in the 1950s and 1960s were interested in sport hunting, sport fishing, collection of trophies, and generally viewing wildlife. Some of the major activities included slaughtering game for food, skin, ivory, capturing live animals for sale abroad, and photography.

By the 1970s, sport hunting had combined with poaching and subsistence hunting to threaten certain species of wildlife. This led

to the banning of sport hunting and trade in game trophies in 1977 and 1978 respectively. Following the official banning of hunting, Kenya's tourism began to be promoted in terms of shooting wildlife with the camera, and greater emphasis went into the promotion of natural landscapes in the country including biodiversity, wildlife, unique eco-systems, beautiful scenery including the Rift Valley, volcanic mountains and sandy beaches (Olindo 1991). In addition, the country developed ornithological trips and botanical study tours and other such specialized tours. Within five years of the banning of sport hunting, the country was transformed into an important ecotourism destination (Sindiga 1999).

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, the number of international tourists visiting Kenya, mainly to view wildlife, increased dramatically (Othoche 1999). However, unregulated tourism was damaging some wildlife habitats and disturbing wildlife species, especially in Masai Mara Game Reserve and Amboseli National Park. The government of Kenya was becoming increasingly concerned about the future of tourism and the rich natural heritage. The wildlife conservation and management department, which had been formed as a merger between the game department and the Kenya National Parks, was replaced by the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) in 1990.

The new organization sees wildlife as an integral part of Kenya's natural life. It promotes revenue sharing as a means of spreading wildlife based earnings. The new organization recognized that it must, to a large extent, operate as a commercial entity in order to meet the costs of conservation. Thus, its plans to educate and compensate local communities around parks and reserves and involvement of the local communities in conservation and tourism are the keys to successful conservation in the future (Othoche 1999).

**Table 1** National parks and game reserves in Kenya: date of establishment and size (km<sup>2</sup>)

Game park/reserve	Date established	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )
Tsavo East National Park/Tsavo West National Park	1948	21,343
Amboseli National Park	1966	144
Aberdares National Park	1950	590
Meru National Park	1966	870
Mt. Kenya National Park	1949	588
Mt. Elgon National Park	1968	169
Lake Nakuru National Park	1967	57
Nairobi National Park	1946	120
Marsabit Game Reserve/ National Park	1948	1944
Saiwa Swamp National Park	1974	1.9
Shimba Hills National Park	1968	192
Oldonyo Sapuk National Park (Kilima Mbogo)	1967	18.4
Maasai Mara National Reserve	1961	1672
Lake Bogoria Game Reserve	1974	107
Samburu/Buffalo Springs National Reserve	1968	293
Kisite Mpanguti National Park	1978	39
Malindi/Watamu National Park	1968	240
Rurna National Park	1966	194
Mwea Game Reserve	1976	68
Tana River Private Game Reserve	1976	169
Losai Game Reserve	1976	1806
Boni Game Reserve	1976	1339
Ngai Ndeithia Game Reserve	1976	212
Arawale Game Reserve	1974	533
Shaba Games Reserve	1974	1643
Rahole Games Reserve	1976	1270
South Turkana National Park	1979	1091
Bisanadi National Park	1979	606
South Kitui National Reserve	1979	1833
North Kitui National Reserve	1979	745
Kerio Valley National Reserve	1983	66
Kiunga Marine National Reserve	1979	250
Mt. Longonot National Reserve	1983	52

*(Table continued)*

Table 1 Continued

Game park/reserve	Date established	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )
Sibiloi National Park	1973	1570
Central Island National Park (Lake Turkana)	1983	5
South Island National Park (Lake Turkana)	1983	39

a) Tsavo East and Tsavo West National Parks form one of the largest national parks in the world. They cover 4 percent of total land area in Kenya.

b) Central Island National Park on Lake Turkana has one of the largest concentrations of crocodiles on earth.

### *The Development of beach tourism*

Parallel to the development of wildlife tourism was beach tourism at the coast. Although the Kenyan coast has been in contact with other parts of the world for more than 2000 years, it was during the twentieth century that tourism began to develop there. A few years after the establishment of British colonial

rule, the coast began to attract resident Europeans from the interior (mainly European settler farmers). These early domestic tourists were attracted by the sandy beaches and the warm climate, especially in Malindi.

The first hotels directed at tourism were built in Malindi during the early part of the last century. In the last 30 years, rapid expansion in the recreation and tourism industry has

Table 2 Number of tourists visiting the most popular national parks and game reserves in Kenya

Game park/ national reserve	Number of tourists (000s)				
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Nairobi	122.3	139.2	130.3	101.6	90.4
Amboseli	62.9	77.0	93.9	91.9	92.0
Tsavo (West)	54.9	61.0	78.6	78.7	76.3
Lake Nakuru	111.0	189.1	193.3	209.4	229.8
Maasai Mara	100.4	171.0	193.5	207.2	231.1
Shimba Hills	16.8	17.7	20.5	18.3	14.4
Mount Kenya	10.2	22.7	11.5	26.3	27.9
Kisite Mpunguti	29.2	34.2	37.9	45.7	47.1

Source: Economic Survey 2003, Table 13.9, p. 192.



Figure 1 Kenya's protected areas.

occurred (UNEP 1998). The facilities that support the new expansion in the coastal tourism industry are located directly adjacent to the good swimming beaches.

Today, there are about 16 hotels on the coast, which boast a five-star category, 21 hotels each of four-star and three-star, and 55 other standard hotels. Three hotels have

600 or more beds, while five have 400 or more (UNEP 1998). Diving, snorkeling and scuba facilities are also available along the Kenyan coast. There is a variety of diving sites along the coast offering underwater cliffs, wrecks, canyons, caves and spectacular coral reefs. A wide variety of aquatic life forms exists here, including moray eels, scor-

pion fish, lionfish, octopus, lobsters, and occasionally manta rays and whale sharks are also seen. The Kenyan coast is one of the best big-name fishing spots in the Indian Ocean (UNEP 1998).

International tourism is concentrated in the coast province of Kenya, as evidenced by tourism revenue (Table 3) and hotel beds by area and country of residence (Figure 2). It is estimated that two-thirds (66 percent) of tourism expenditure takes place in the coast province, approximately 14 percent within Nairobi, 8 percent in the Rift valley and about 5 percent in Nyanza province (Kamau 1999). The coast is, therefore, the leading tourist resort in Kenya. Figure 2 shows that hotel-beds occupation in the coastal region was the highest among all other tourist regions in the country. Coast hotels were also popular with European residents (especially Germans) who account for 66.4 percent of the bed-nights (ROK 2003). Overcrowding by tourists and boats physically damage the coral reef (Schoorl & Visser 1991). Many tourists also collect shells and corals, and

boat anchors destroy the coral reef. Further, numerous tourist class hotels are clustered on the beaches without being connected to the municipal sewage system or possessing their own treatment works. Many hotels drain raw sewage into the Indian Ocean, thereby contributing to water pollution and threatening marine life (Schoorl & Visser 1991).

As we have already seen, certain tourist resorts have become overcrowded and saturated. Some of the coastal beaches, game parks and game reserves have become increasingly overcrowded and degraded. Besides, Kenya no longer has a competitive edge over her rivals in Africa such as South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Tanzania in terms of wildlife tourism. Hence, there is in fact need to diversify Kenya's tourism products to include cultural tourism. The development of cultural tourism could enhance local participation in tourism industry and thereby lead to a fairer distribution of tourism earnings. The impact of International tourism on cultural heritage is discussed in the following section.

Table 3 Estimated tourism revenue by province, 1996 (percentage)

Province	International	Domestic	Total	%
Nairobi	172.1	15.5	187.4	14.1
Coast	857.2	19.3	876.4	66.0
N. Eastern	11.4	0.4	11.8	0.9
Eastern	31.4	1.0	32.4	2.4
Central	38.2	2.0	40.2	3.0
Western	10.7	0.6	11.3	0.9
Nyanza	57.4	3.0	60.4	4.6
Rift valley	101.6	5.3	106.9	8.1
Total	1280.0	47.0	1327.0	100.0

Source: Kamau, Mary-Anne, N. (1999), p. 98.



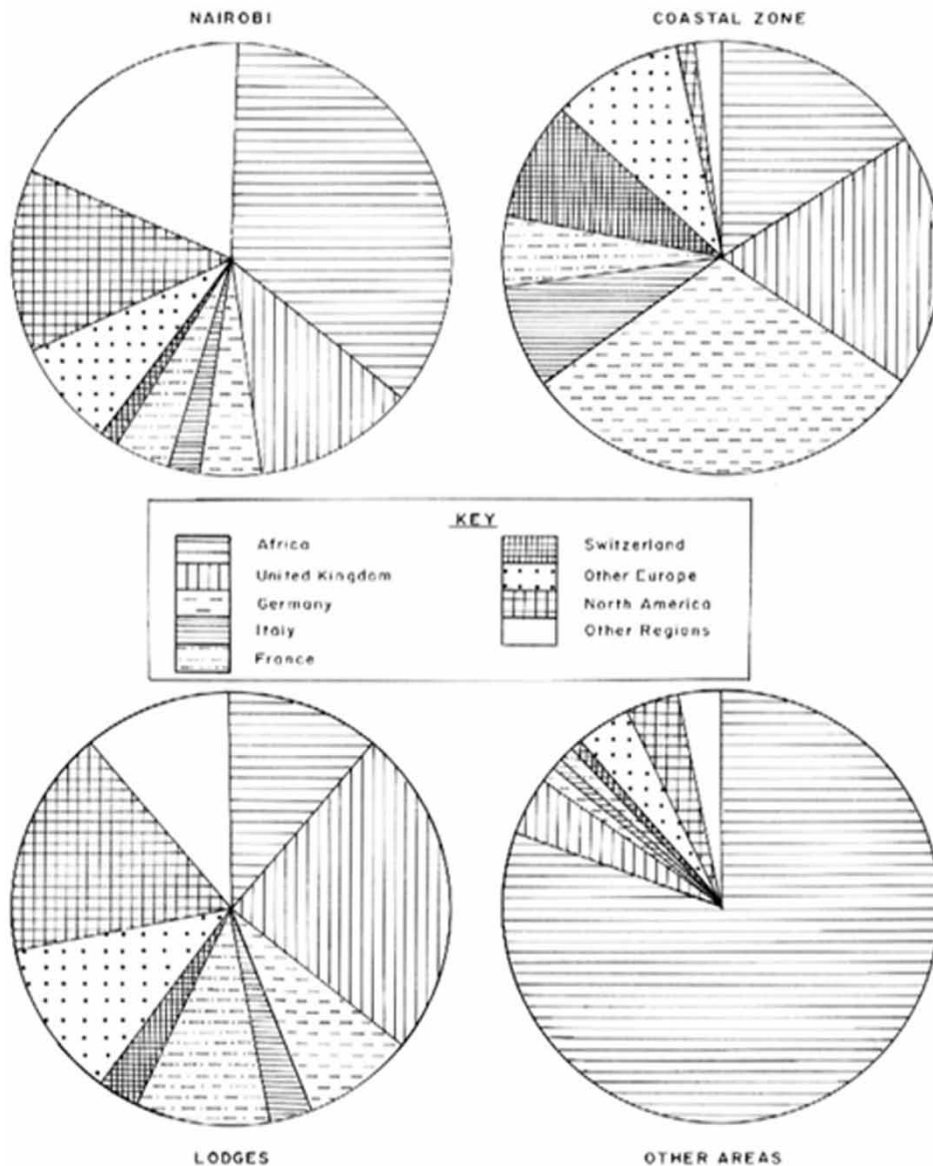


Figure 2 Distribution of hotel-bed nights by area and nationality (%), 2002.

### Tourism and cultural heritage

This section discusses the impact of international tourism on cultural heritage in Kenya. In analyzing the impact, Doxey's

theoretical perspective of irridex (irritation index) is used. The lessons learned from the Kenyan experience and their relevance to other developing regions particularly Asia Pacific are also examined.

### *The concept of culture*

Ralph Stacey (1996) defines culture of any group of people as a “set of beliefs, customs, practices and ways of thinking that they may have come to share with each other through being and working together”. In other words, culture is a set of assumptions people simply accept without question as they interact with each other. Some of the visible aspects of culture include ritual behavior, symbols, myths, stories and artifacts. Stacey’s definition is the one used in this paper.

### *Cultural impacts*

The impact of international tourism on the people of developing countries has sparked off much scholarly debate (Mathieson & Wall 1982, Harrison 1992, Wall 1996, Brown 1998). The debate has often focused on whether tourism destroys or preserves beauty and whether it trivializes or revalidates culture. The impact of international tourism on cultural heritage of a given community, region or country may be great given that in tourism, unlike in other sectors of the economy, the customer is brought to the product instead of the other way round.

The presence of large numbers of tourists, many from cultures that may be very different from those of their hosts, will have a profound effect. According to the interviews held with government officials in Kenya and from available literature, international tourism has both positive and negative impacts on cultural heritage. The major positive impacts identified are:

- Revival of traditional arts and crafts.
- Revival of traditional festivals, songs, music and dance.

- Restoration of historical sites and monuments.
- Demonstration effect.

### *Positive impacts*

*Revival of traditional arts and Crafts.* With regard to creativity and excellence, tourism may help the local communities such as the Maasai, Turkana, Pokomo and others to take pride in their art forms and culture. In this way, the identity of the local communities in Kenya is preserved. During the colonial era, art forms and other cultural attributes of the Kenyan people were nearly eradicated by the European colonizers who were determined to “Christianize and civilize natives” (Rajotte & Crocombe 1980). However, with the development of international tourism in Kenya since the late 1970s, there has been a revival of traditional arts and crafts. This is because tourism is an important change agent, just like international media, improved communications technology and globalization. International tourism may even slow the pace of cultural change. Tourism provides an economic incentive for destinations to maintain their culture as a means of attracting tourists.

*Revival of traditional festivals, songs, music and dance.* International tourism has also acted as a stimulus to festivals, songs and dances. In terms of cultural diversity, Kenya has many ethnic groups, each with unique cultural activities which have been developed and/or tapped to diversify tourism products. The various ethnic groups in the country have unique culture, food, music and rituals and folklore. The local communities attach a lot of meaning and value to such cultural attributes. For example, among the Maasai, ceremonies

are held to mark transition from boyhood to manhood, junior and then senior elders.

Unique dance, music and musical instruments are found among the various communities in Kenya. Many of these were almost dying until tourist demand led to their revival. Music is popular among the Abagusii of Nyanza province of Kenya. Gusiland is the home of the eight-stringed instrument called the "Obokano". The Luo traditional dress is the most decorative in the country. The body ornamentation, together with colorful headgear of feathers and hippo masks, makes Luo dancing and festivities an "eye-catching scene" (Othoce 1999).

Due to the tourism demand, several village tourist centers have been established along the Kenyan coast. In these centers, tourists can see traditional huts, dances, rituals, costumes, traditional furniture, jewellery, beadery and fine African art. These provide an opportunity to international tourists to experience authentic African culture. These centers also offer employment to village dance groups, local musicians and entertainers. However, data on such employment are not readily available. The factors influencing the location of village Tourist centers are summarized in Table 4. The results presented in the table are derived from a study carried out on the role of village tourist centers in the coast province of Kenya by Kamau (1999).

According to the table, economic motive appears to be more important in the establishment of village tourist centers. This finding supports Mathieson and Wall (1982) who argue that poor countries with low incomes, uneven distribution of income and high rates of unemployment can solve some of these problems by developing tourism. In this connection, conservation of cultural heritage is often of less importance. However, about 15 percent of the entrepreneurs interviewed

mentioned conservation of cultural heritage as one of the reasons for establishing village tourist centers. Cultural centers are viewed as a "journey back..." where ethnic groups present their past lifestyles in an unspoiled rural setting, giving tourists a chance not only to leave with knowledge of Kenyan traditions, but also with samples of activities of various ethnic communities as they lived in the past. There is much that is worth preserving in the culture of each ethnic group in Kenya (Ouma 1970, Kamau,1999).

*Restoration of historical sites and monuments.* Tourism also contributes to the restoration or preservation of historical buildings and sites. This is done through the collection of entrance fees, souvenir sales and donations (Weaver & Opperman 2000). International tourism in Kenya has stimulated the restoration and preservation of historical sites and monuments. Among the most popular historical sites in the country include Fort Jesus, a sixteenth-century Portuguese fortress in Mombasa, the old town, Mombasa, Gedi Ruins near Malindi and Lamu World Heritage Site (Figure 3). Lamu is one of the most spectacular historic sites on the East African Coast. It was recently declared a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) due to its unique cultural heritage. This has enhanced its status as a global heritage, thereby attracting an increasingly large number of tourists (Table 5). In Table 5 it is clear that the National Museum and Fort Jesus attract more tourists than other sites annually. Figures 3 and 4 show the number of tourists visiting National Museum (Nairobi) and Fort Jesus (Mombasa) respectively. An inspection of the five-year running means graphs shown indicates that the number of tourists visiting the two sites

**Table 4** Factors influencing location and establishment of village tourist centers by tourist entrepreneurs

Factors	Number interviewed (N)	Percentage (%) of respondents
Income generation and employment creation	40	67
Diversification of tourism products	11	18
Conservation of cultural heritage	9	15
Total	60	100

Source: Kamau, Mary Anne, N, 1999, p. 101.

has been increasing over the last 20 years. This tends to support the view that international tourism promotes cultural heritage. In Figure 3, there is a remarkable decline in the number of tourists in 1998 due to the bomb blast that took place in Nairobi. In Figure 4, a sharp decline in the number of tourists visiting Fort Jesus occurred in 1998 following the Likoni ethnic clashes of 1997.

*Demonstration effect.* One of the most significant cultural impacts of international tourism is what is referred to as the “demonstration effect”. This occurs where there are visible differences between tourists and hosts. For example, along the Kenyan coast, foreign tourists enjoy prosperity amidst abject poverty of the local Swahili and Miji-Kenda communities (Sindiga 2000). It is often theorized that simply observing tourists would lead to behavioral changes in the local population (Williams 1998). In such circumstances, the local communities will admire the superior material possessions of the visitors. This may have positive effects by encouraging local communities to work harder and be more

productive in order to emulate the luxurious way of life of their visitors. But it is doubtful whether this is the case, as one finds many “beach boys” following foreign tourists everywhere on the Coast.

*Negative impacts.* The major negative cultural impacts of international tourism reported in Kenya are commodification of culture and demonstration effect. These are discussed below.

*Commodification of culture.* The commodification of a destination’s culture or its conversion into a commodity in response to the perceived or actual demand of the tourist market is one of the major negative cultural impacts associated with international tourism (Greenwood 1989, King & Stewart 1996). As already observed, tourism may provide a monetary incentive to revive art forms, crafts and other cultural attributes of a given local community. However, the problem arises when the inherent quality and meaning of cultural artifacts and performances become less important than the economic motive of

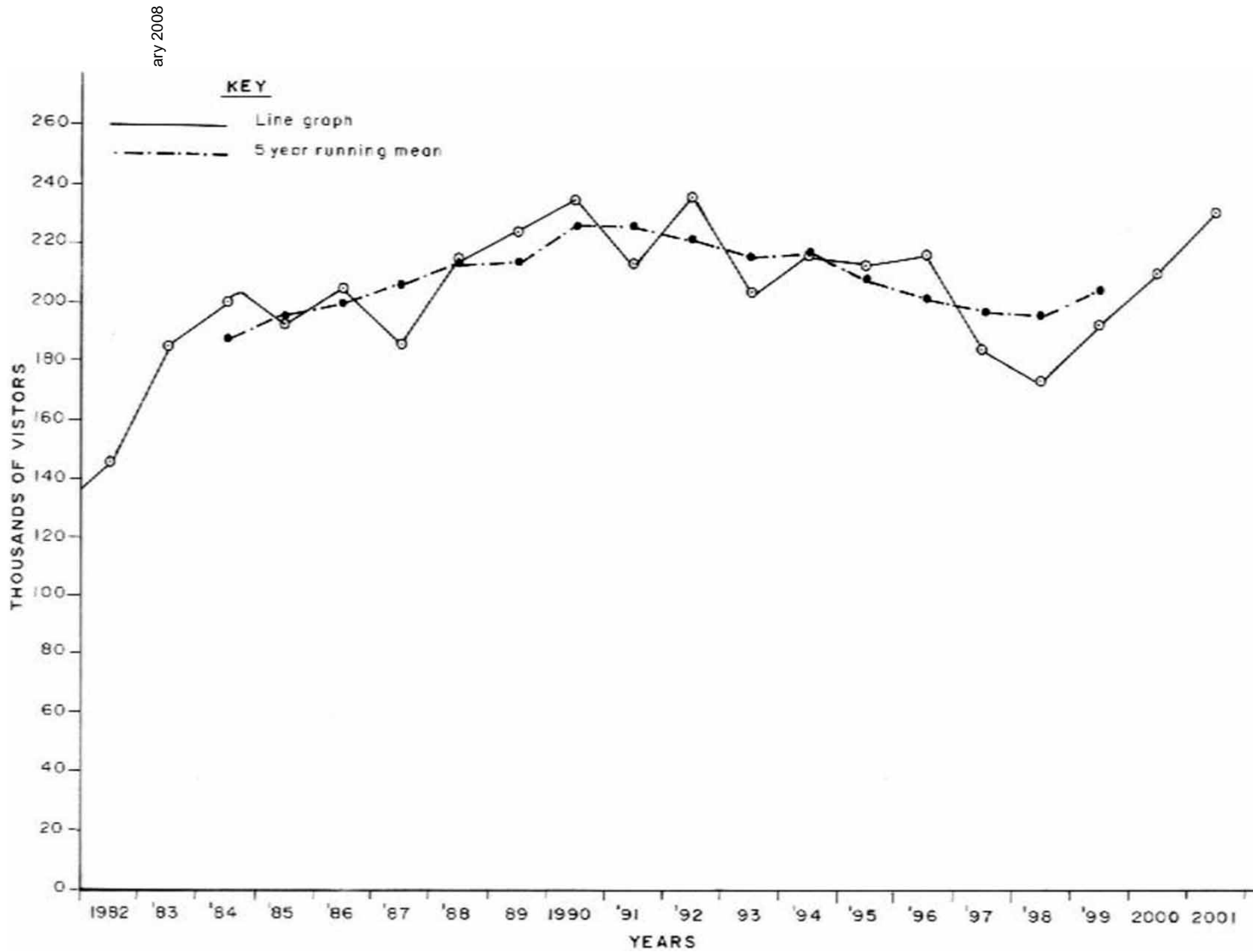


Figure 3 Running mean for number of visitors to National Museum, 1982–2001.

**Table 5** Number of visitors to museums and historical sites, 1998–2002 (1000s)

Museum/historical site	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
National Museum	173.4	196.4	210.9	251.6	202.7
Fort Jesus	88.9	107.8	96.5	140.3	140.7
Kisumu Museum	34.7	45.9	48.1	62.9	45.1
Kitale museum	27.3	22.5	29.1	29.6	21.5
Gedi Plains	14.9	29.3	21.8	18.1	23.3
Meru Museum	15.8	16.6	18.1	19.2	14.9
Lamu World Heritage Site	6.2	6.7	7.8	4.3	0.9
Jumba La Mtuana	4.0	5.5	5.1	4.6	0.0
Ologesailie	1.9	2.2	2.4	0.9	0.0
Kariadusi	4.5	5.2	5.0	4.6	0.0
Hyrax Hill	2.9	2.9	3.3	3.4	0.0
Others	49.8	60.1	61.5	60.4	52.9
Total	424.3	501.1	509.6	599.9	502.0

Source: Republic of Kenya, Economic Survey, 2003, Table13:10, p. 193

earning an income from their reproduction (Weaver & Opperman 2000). When this happens, the culture of a given community may be modified to suit the tastes of tourists, and its original meaning and significance is lost: it becomes a “pseudo-culture”. Available literature suggests that commodification is particularly evident in traditional and/or indigenous societies that are rapidly exposed to relatively intensive and increasing levels of tourism development. Using the “participant observation” method, it was found out that the Maasai Community of Kenya is a classic relevant case study. In promotional literature by overseas tour operators and travel agents, the Maasai culture is increasingly being used as a part of “package” on offer to attract tourists to Kenya. It was also observed that most of the cultural performances by Maasai morans in lodges in Maasai Mara or in beach hotels along the coast were more commodified than those in Maasai Manyattas. The lodges and beach

hotels are often patronized by foreign tourists. This tends to indicate that “venues” can play an important role in commodification (Tahana & Opperman 1998).

The extent of commodification of the maasai culture is best expressed by Loeffler (1993, 17) who observes:

The traditional Maasai are crowded in clusters around the perimeters of the Maasai Mara reserve. The morans found a nice niche in life: Strange cultures are a commodity that can be sold to consumers. They pose for photographs, they dance, they sing, they sell curios, they loiter about the gates and lodges to peddle what by now ceased to be a culture something which is increasingly contrived and sometimes outright fake... One wonders rather one hopes, that these young men are cynical enough just to exploit a market opportunity and do not actually believe that these are essential ingredients of their culture.

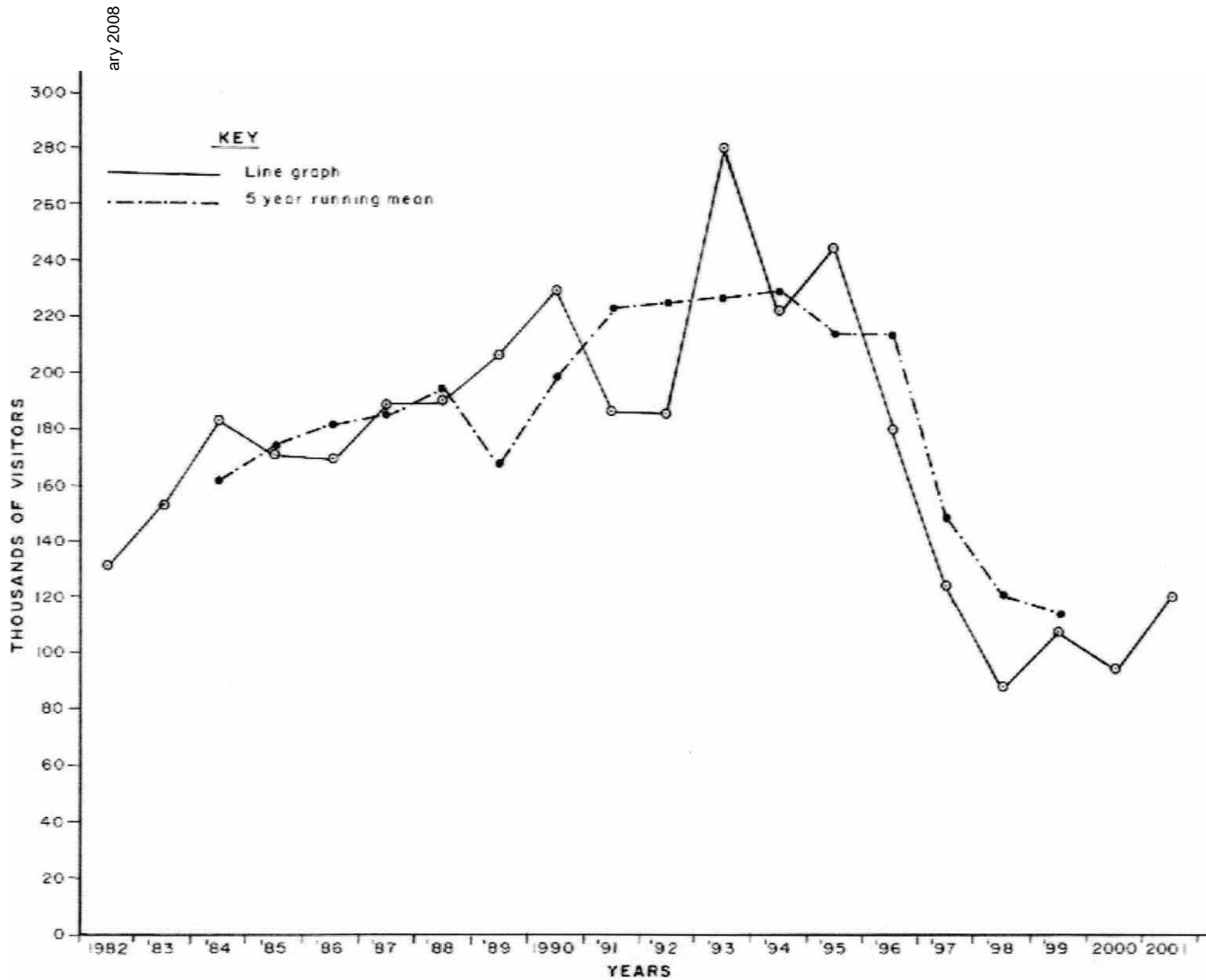


Figure 4 Running mean for number of visitors to Fort Jesus, Mombasa, 1982–2001.

However, there should be no conflict at all. It is possible for locals to produce culture for tourists, but nonetheless maintain culture for themselves. Studies indicate that the culture of a local community has a major bearing on its ability to absorb positively the different norms and values brought by tourists (Britton 1989). It is also argued that the socio-cultural changes brought about by tourism are inevitable and cannot be separated from those influences linked to the general economic development of a region or country (Vorlaufer 1990).

*Negative Demonstration Effect.* As discussed elsewhere, demonstration effect can have a positive effect on local communities. However, inability of the local people to achieve the same level of prosperity as demonstrated by the wealthy visitors may create a sense of deprivation and frustration which may find an outlet in hostility or open aggression. The most susceptible group is the youth who may be involved in crime, prostitution, gambling and drug trafficking (Archer & Cooper 1994, Burns & Holden 1995).

Available evidence indicates that such negative demonstration effect is strongly felt in the predominantly Muslim towns of the Kenyan coast, especially in the city of Mombasa and the tourist resort of Malindi. In this area, the school dropout rate for male children is high. Drug-peddling and prostitution are activities that are very much scorned by the local community and especially the older people. However, it is difficult to attribute these ills solely to tourism development. Other modernizing agents such as the mass media and industrialization may be to blame too.

### *Doxey's irridex*

Several theories have been put forward to explain the socio-cultural impacts of tourism

in a given destination. The most familiar theoretical perspective on how "hosts" and "guests" interact is probably George Doxey's Irritation Index or Irridex in short (Table 6). Doxey (1975) proposed an index of resident irritation (irridex) to describe the evolution of local attitudes to visitors. The main idea in Doxey's index is that hosts in a tourist area would modify their attitudes to visitors over time. He suggested several stages through which this modification of attitudes takes place. According to Doxey, when tourists arrive for the first time, they will be greeted with euphoria and then over time, this attitude changes to apathy, annoyance and finally, aggression. At the final stage, tourists and tourism become scapegoats for all that is wrong with society. Tourists are no longer perceived by hosts as individuals on holiday who need company. Instead, they are harassed, cheated, ridiculed or even robbed (Burns & Holden 1995, 120).

Empirical research has revealed only partial support for the irridex. Doxey treats a local community as a homogenous entity. But in reality, any community is likely to display an array of reactions to tourism development (Weaver & Opperman 2000). The degree of reaction depends on the community's involvement in the industry. If the local community derives benefits from tourism, its attitude towards tourists may be positive. For example, it has been observed that some Maasai are actively engaged in ecotourism activities and are also participating in cultural centers that have been set up in Maasailand by private developers. Education programs have also been set up to enable tourists to learn and appreciate the Maasai culture. The Maasai, on the other hand, are also made aware of how they should relate positively with their visitors. Hence, the Maasai community has been proactive rather than reactive to



**Table 6** Doxey's irridex

Doxey's irridex	
Euphoria	Initial phase of tourism development, visitors and investors are welcome, little planning or control mechanism.
Apathy	Visitors are taken for granted, contacts between hosts and visitors become more formal (commercial), planning concerned mostly with marketing.
Annoyance	Saturation is approached and local people have misgivings about tourist industry, planners attempt to control via increasing infrastructure rather than limiting growth.
Antagonism	Open expression of irritation, visitors seen as cause or all problems, planning is remedial yet promotion is increased to offset deteriorating reputation of destination

tourism development. However, some cases of robbery or rape have been reported in the Maasailand and also at the coast. Antagonism to tourists is more pronounced at the coast due to sharp contrasts in the wealth of the tourists and poverty of the local communities. But, there is no detailed study applying Doxey's Irridex in Kenya that has been undertaken so far.

### *Asia Pacific context*

In this section, the relevance of the cultural impact of tourism experienced in Kenya to the Asia Pacific countries is examined. As already discussed, tourism development in Kenya has promoted the revival and preservation of traditional art forms and crafts of the various ethnic groups such as the Maasai. This is very important in preserving the identities of the various communities in the country. This is relevant to the Asia Pacific countries

because they, too, need to revive their rich indigenous culture that almost vanished during the colonial period. The Pacific islands of Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Samoa and Fiji have a unique cultural heritage that needs to be preserved for tourism development and posterity. The same applies to Indonesia with its rich Balinese culture. However, as the Kenyan experience shows, there is a danger of art forms, dances and songs becoming devoid of their true meaning. This could happen if these traditionally valued practices were commodified: that is, they are performed for the sake of entertaining tourists and to earn money from the performances. For example, many local dancers or woodcarvers may not provide an adequate explanation of the meaning of their activities. Already, there is concern that overcommodification of indigenous people's art and culture in the Pacific has led to deterioration in the quality of mass-produced art forms and hand-

crafts. This has resulted in the much-derided term of “airport art” (Rajotte 1980, Douglas & Douglas 1996).

When a certain culture (e.g. Maasai, Turkana or Rendille) becomes a tourism resource, it has to be kept unchanged for tourists’ gaze all the time. In Kenya, local and overseas tour operators would like to market such a culture as if it was never changing. No culture is static as it always changes with time and changing technology. One wonders whether it is fair to deprive a given ethnic community of all the latest technological advances merely for recreation benefits of richer tourists from the industrialized countries. In the Pacific islands, the indigenous people are portrayed as a “human zoo”. In promotional literature, tourists are sold not only luxurious resorts and an attractive environment, but “smiling” and “carefree” islanders (Rajotte & Crocombe 1980). This means that the local residents are made part of the “package” the promoter offers. This tends to erode self-respect and dignity of the local population.

Tourists are looked upon by the local communities as successful people. This demonstration effect can have a positive effect by promoting intellectual development of the local people. That is, tourism tends to act as an incentive for the youth to work harder towards a higher educational attainment. In this way, the youth hope to secure rewarding careers so as to reach the luxuries displayed by tourists. But, as already discussed, failure to fulfil the locals’ expectations can lead to frustration and crime. Available evidence indicates that the attraction of obtaining “easy money” from tourism has led to problems of prostitution and begging in Tonga (Rajotte & Crocombe 1980, 22). The demonstration effect is exacerbated in the Pacific as only the richer tourists can afford the high transport cost. Hence, the financial gap between tourists

and local residents is probably greater here than other alternative destinations such as India, Singapore, Thailand or Indonesia.

## Conclusion

Since the 1970s when Kenya became one of the leading tourist destinations in Africa, planning and marketing of international tourism has been concerned almost exclusively with the satisfaction of the needs of tourists. Planners and politicians encouraged mass tourism as a way of maximizing financial benefits for the country. Tour operators and private developers, on the other hand, encouraged many tourists to visit the country as a sure way of realizing their financial returns on their investment and to recoup their operation costs. As already discussed, international tourism creates both positive and negative cultural impacts in a destination. Innovative planning strategies can help to minimize or even eliminate altogether negative cultural impacts of international tourism. Such strategies could lead to sustainable tourism, which would confer long-term benefits to both locals and visitors without damaging the cultural environment of the destination. Planners and policy-makers in Kenya and Asia Pacific region should work towards attaining this goal. In order to do so, issues regarding visitor numbers, type of visitors and the contribution of visitors in enhancing the standards of living of the host community should be adequately addressed.

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