ALTERNATIVE MODELS OF COMMUNITY TOURISM: BALANCING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE POOR

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While the World Tourism Organization asserts the potential of tourism for poverty alleviation, real-life scenarios on the ground do not necessarily provide supporting evidence for such an assertion. The anachronistic nature of current models of tourism development in Kenya, for example, do not address the key issues of poverty reduction as the poor do not derive significant benefits from tourism activity, either through employment or participation in community tourism initiatives. This study of two alternative models of community involvement in tourism development in the Samburu-Laikipia region of Kenya gives voice to the poor and develops a rich understanding of their aspirations for tourism development and their involvement in it. The study uses ethnographic techniques to uncover local people's attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and values as well as the unspoken cultural patterns that shape their behavior and livelihood practices. Moreover, it explores the local people's understanding of tourism and their perceptions of how poverty alleviation through tourism development could impact their lives.

Key words: Community tourism; Aspirations of the poor; Economic development; Poverty; Local people

Introduction

Poverty is a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including: food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education, and information (World Bank Group, 2002). Issues of poverty have been at the top of national, regional and international development agendas for many decades. For instance, in 1940 the US President Franklin Roosevelt declared his ambition to extend freedom from want not just to the people of the US, but also to people in other nations. Later in 1945, the United Nations (UN) Charter explicitly asserted the need to propagate social development and better living standards (UN, 2004). Since then, global poverty issues have continued to occupy a central position in international, regional, and national deliberations. The UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the latest, and perhaps the most earnest, efforts to

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combat world poverty (Jabry, 2005). The world-wide adoption of the MDGs confirms that poverty reduction is, indeed, a priority for the development ambitions of many nations (Jabry, 2005).

Many bilateral donors and development agencies have increasingly linked their policies and programs to the MDGs (Jabry, 2005). For instance, the World Tourism Organization (WTO), recently upgraded to a specialized UN agency, has taken up the cause of poverty alleviation. The WTO (2002) asserts explicitly that tourism has great potential for tackling poverty, particularly in developing and less developed countries, where poverty is endemic. Additionally, Ashley and Garland (1994), Goodwin (1998), Ashley, Boe and Goodwin (2001), Scheyvens (2002), and Yunis (2004) argue that tourism is better placed to address poverty compared to other economic sectors because: it can develop in poor and marginal areas with few other export and diversification options; it offers labor-intensive and small-scale opportunities compared with other nonagricultural activities; it does not require high academic skills, but vocational and basic skills, which the poor can easily acquire; it employs a high proportion of women; it has high degree of geographical expansion, thus spreading benefits even to isolated destinations; its long and diversified supply chain supports and complements other economic activities such as handicrafts, thus giving opportunity for resurgence of local industry; it values natural resources and culture, which may feature among the few assets belonging to the poor. Similarly, tourist visits to a destination provide opportunities for selling additional goods and services. Fittingly, as tourism expands, it encourages the development of infrastructure, such as airports, accommodation facilities, roads and telecommunications (Elliott & Mann, 2005), which in the longer term attract investment in other sectors of the economy.

According to Benette, Roe, and Ashley (1999), tourism is rapidly growing, particularly in the majority of countries suffering poverty. In 2001, international tourism receipts for developing countries amounted to US$142,306 million, while between 1990 and 2000 the export value of tourism grew by 154% in these areas (Yunis, 2004). The figures for international arrivals are projected to rise significantly to approximately 1.5 billion in the year 2020, with the highest number of arrivals being experienced in developing countries (Yunis, 2004), parallel closely to the growth in international air transport (Elliott & Mann, 2005). Tourists' arrivals in developing countries reached 112 million in 2004, representing 16.2% of international tourist arrivals in the world (Yunis, 2005). Such growth of the tourism sector is envisaged to disproportionately enhance government revenues and already generates a higher quantity of GDP, jobs and investment than most other economic activities (Elliott & Mann, 2005).

However, to tailor tourism to poverty reduction objectives in Third World countries, Scheyvens (2002) maintains that:

> we should be listening to the voices of Third World people regarding both their concerns about tourism and what they hope to achieve through tourism, before carefully considering if there are appropriate means of pursuing tourism, and appropriate types of tourism, which will readily meet the needs and desires of local communities. (p. 7)

Scheyvens (2002) further emphasizes that any efforts to address the needs and concerns of the poor will be unattainable unless their voices are heard. Furthermore, very little research has been undertaken on how tourism development meshes with the aspirations of the poor. Thus, this study assesses different approaches to tourism development in the Samburu and Laikipia districts of Kenya in order to evaluate the extent to which they contribute to poverty reduction and are consistent with community aspirations. It analyzes two alternative models of tourism development: government led and community led. Above all, the study is designed to enable the voices of the poor to be heard, for the poor to express their aspirations for tourism involvement and poverty reduction and for them to make explicit exactly what enhancing the quality of life would mean for them.

Poverty and Tourism in Kenya

Kenya has continued to experience escalating poverty incidence, with an overwhelming 56% of the total population living below subsistence level (Kenya Government, 2000). Numerically, 14.4 million people live in absolute poverty, unable to adequately meet the minimum daily needs for food,

shelter, clothing, education, transport, and other essential nonfood items ("The Great Divide," 2005). The aftermath of the current state of abject human deprivation coupled with poor economic performance has been increased insecurity incidents, such as petty theft, drug trafficking, prostitution, hunger and malnutrition, mortality rates, illiteracy levels, child labor, domestic violence, and housing problems.

Approximately 75% of the 14.4 million people in extreme poverty live in rural and marginalized areas (Kenya Government, 2004a) with few development opportunities apart from tourism based on exploitation of their spectacular landscapes and other natural resources. Accordingly, in its Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation, 2003–2007, the Kenya Government identifies tourism as one of the crucial sectors that will contribute significantly towards poverty alleviation. The government's vision for the future embedded in the Draft National Tourism Policy reflects the importance of tourism in poverty reduction as exemplified in the statement below.

> Kenya's tourism shall be dedicated to providing high quality facilities and services for enjoyment by citizens and visitors alike, while being at the same time an instrument for promoting the economy and livelihood of the people of Kenya, with particular reference to job creation, raising human living standards, earning foreign exchange, encouraging investment, and sharing of benefits with local communities. In this way, tourism shall become a rational basis for safeguarding the sustainable conservation of Kenya's unique assets of beaches, wildlife and culture for enjoyment by present and future generations. (Kenya Government, 2004b, p. 6)

However, notwithstanding the push by the Kenya Government to promote tourism for poverty reduction objectives, there has been growing anxiety about the manner in which tourism is being developed. Akama (2000) argues that Kenyan tourism is predominantly foreign owned; consequently, it is not an activity suited to poverty elimination, as significant benefits continue to leak outside the country. Elsewhere, Goodwin (1998) comments that although tourism brings with it demand for goods and services, most of these are sourced outside the local area, thus leaving an insignificant proportion of expenditure in the local economy. Furthermore,

local people are denied significant opportunities to participant in the tourism market: even those wishing to sell their products to tourists are often forced to be hawkers at entry or exit points to visitor attractions.

Like many developing countries, Kenya suffers from a history of colonial domination and episodes of multinational interests in the tourism sector. Most recently, Manyara and Jones (2005) emphasize that the current models of tourism development in Kenya do not address the key issues of poverty alleviation as the poor do not derive significant benefits from tourism, either through employment or from participation in community tourism initiatives. Thus, the poor are faced with insurmountable barriers to seizing the economic opportunities created by tourism.

So, despite substantial increase in tourist activities in Kenya, there is escalating poverty among the host population in many destination areas. The prime motivation for developing tourism is as a contributor to economic growth and much-needed foreign exchange earnings (Akama, 2000; Sindiga, 1999). Herein, the assumption is that the host community benefits positively from tourism as it advances development in their society and that the benefits of economic growth will automatically trickle down to the poor. According to the Kenyan Government, the need for economic development is far more urgent; hence, the political and legal means for controlling tourism and its impacts are far less evident (Griffin, 2002). Indeed, under the mantra of promoting tourism for economic growth, the government solely focuses on increasing the number of tourists visiting the country to far above 1 million per year (Kenya Government, 2002). Consequently, there has been unbridled development of tourist facilities in tourism honey pots with far-reaching negative environmental and social-cultural impacts (Akama, 2000).

Previous commentators argue that economic growth, in itself, is not a guarantee for poverty reduction (Aronsson, 2000; Elliot & Mann, 2005; Hardy, Beeton, & Pearson, 2002). This argument is exemplified by the current situation in Kenya where, for instance, tourism earnings increased from Kenya shillings (Kshs) 21,734 million in 2002 to Kshs 25,768 million in 2003. Likewise, international arrivals increased by 14.5% from 1,001,300

in 2002 to 1,146,100 in 2003 (Kenya Government, 2004a). The latest figures indicate further increases in tourism arrivals and tourism earnings. During the first 8 months to September 2005, tourist arrivals increased by 30% to 1,255,969 from the 2004 figure of 966,371 ("Tourism Earnings," 2005). Similarly, tourism earnings hit Kshs 23.4 billion in the first half of the 2005, which was Kshs 3.7 billion higher than the amount earned from tourism in the same period of 2004 ("Tourism Earnings," 2005). Ironically, during the same period, the country was reported to experience an upsurge in poverty with 14.4 million Kenyans officially being described as poor, an increase from 12.6 million reported in the National Poverty Eradication Plan, 1999–2015 (Kenya Government, 1999).

Despite obvious shortcomings in tourism development models for poverty reduction in Kenya and other Third World countries, the WTO asserts sustainable tourism development as a panacea to poverty reduction (WTO, 2002). Sustainable tourism development is thought to bring social equity, economic efficiency, and environmental conservation into harmony, to foster a balance between the economic benefits of tourism on one side and the welfare of residents, their social well-being and environmental preservation on the other (Mbaiwa, 2005). Indeed, according to the WTO (2002), the main touchstone of sustainability is the well-being of poor communities. Furthermore, Richard and Hall (2000) note that without community sustainability, tourism development cannot be expected to be sustainable.

Sustainable tourism development continues to dominate pro-poor tourism agendas, as an umbrella term for all forms of tourism. Though pro-poor tourism overlaps with sustainable tourism, it is different from the sustainable tourism agenda. Poverty is the core focus rather than an element of sustainability. While acknowledging the ongoing debate about sustainable tourism, Ashley et al. (2001) maintain that poverty reduction is not usually at the heart of many tourism agendas. Instead, Ashley et al. (2001) argue that poverty alleviation requires pro-poor tourism strategies and rigorous efforts to maximize tourism benefits. The WTO (2002), while in total agreement with the need for pro-poor strategies, upholds that certain forms of tourism, including ecotourism, community-based

tourism, and rural tourism, contribute substantially to poverty reduction. Such forms of tourism create proportionately more local economic opportunities compared to packaged tourism, such as cruises, all-inclusive, and enclave tourism, which tend to generate the fewest economic linkage (WTO, 2002). Other writers argue that, apart from the fact that ecotourism, community-based tourism, and rural tourism take place in rural and less developed areas, where the majority of the poor live, they are considered to advance the needs and concerns of local communities, offering them greater control and participation in the tourism agendas (Kontogeorgopoulos, 2005).

Community-based tourism is viewed as a more sustainable approach to development than traditional mass tourism for it allows host communities to free themselves from the hegemonic grasp of outside tour operators and powerful leaders at the national level (Timothy & Tosun, 2003). It is thought to be a viable means by which to offset the conventional tourism development models of the past and to redistribute control and decision making among the individuals within the community, not to those from outside (Fennell, 1999). Thus, it can be argued that community tourism ensures that members of local communities have a high degree of control over the activities taking place and a significant proportion of the economic benefits accrue to them (Scheyvens, 2002). Furthermore, according to Svoronou and Holden (2005), the basic principles of community tourism development underscore the economic, environmental, and social issues (the cores of sustainable tourism development). Economically, community-based tourism is thought to cultivate sustainable and rewarding employment that is made available to all members of a community; environmentally, it is said to encourage conservation through environmental education and sustainable use of natural resources, whereas socially, it is thought to boost social cohesion, harmony, and cooperation that enhance individual self-reliance, pride, and hope for the future.

Timothy and Tosun (2003) view community-based tourism in two ways: public participation in decision making and local involvement in the benefits of tourism. Participation in decision making means that the host communities have opportunities to voice their own hopes, desires, and fears for

development and contribute to the planning process from their own expertise and experience, thereby gaining a meaningful voice in the organization and administration of tourism Basically, local participation in, and control over, tourism planning and development decisions could be one method that could be adopted to maximize net benefits to the host communities. Because the goals and objectives for community tourism development should be defined in accordance with the ethos and aspirations of the resident population, each situation must be tailor-made for every locale on an individual basis. Furthermore, the: "defining characteristic of community development is that it is based on local initiatives, in that it advocates a site-specific approach to finding solutions to community problems using community members and community resources" (Fennell, 1999, p. 213). Thus, community tourism initiatives should explicitly mirror residents' aspirations for development and visitor management.

The Study Areas

This study used the case of the Samburu-Laikipia region, in the Rift Valley and Eastern Provinces of Kenya (Fig. 1). Government statistics indicate that poverty rates in this province are one of the highest in Kenya (Kenya Government, 1999). For instance, in 1999 over 50% of the Rift Valley province's population fell below the rural poverty line of Kshs 1,238 per capita a month (Kenya Government, 1999), with the highest incidences of poverty being reported in the arid and semiarid lands (ASAL). ASAL, which cover approximately 80% of the Kenya land surface, have very low agricultural potential (Kenya Government, 2003); consequently, the majority of people living in these areas considered to have very few economic proxies to livestock keeping. However, such ASAL have a myriad of fascinating landscape forms (such as rolling hills, mountains, rivers), fauna and flora, as well as rich culture, all of which can be harnessed for tourism activities.

The area under study holds three distinct types of land, designated mainly for tourism:

1. National parks—for example, Mount Kenya National Park, which is a formal conservation estate owned by the government of Kenya where land use is restricted to tourism and other non-consumptive utilization practices.
2. National reserves—for instance, Samburu National Reserve, Buffalo Springs National Reserve, Shaba National Reserve, and Mukogodo Forest Reserve, currently under the management of country councils.
3. Group ranches and/or conservancies, which are under private ownership either communally or individually. These group ranches include Namunyak, Ngutuk Ongiron, Mpalala, Koija, Tumamut, Kijabe, Ukiloriti, Kuri kuri, Il Ngwesi, and Lewa Wildlife Conservancy.

This study focuses on Samburu National Reserve (SNR), which is a government-led initiative and Il Ngwesi Group Ranch, which is a community-led initiative. Previous studies reveal that SNR and Il Ngwesi Group Ranch are among the most successful tourism initiatives in the Samburu-Laikipia region (African Wildlife Foundation [AWF], 2005). They both represent a vision of land use that meets the needs of the communities that live and own the areas, while providing a large and secure environment for wildlife populations to live and migrate (AWF, 2005). Pastoralism is the main land use practice of the Il Ngwesi Maasai and the Samburu people and, is generally compatible with wildlife conservation and tourism-related activities. Moreover, SNR and Il Ngwesi Group Ranch both embrace tourism as the main socioeconomic activity, with tourist numbers reported to have increased substantially over the last 5 years (AWF, 2005).

I1Ngwesi Group Ranch

The Il Ngwesi Group Ranch is a Maasai-owned and run ranch near Isiolo in the Laikipia District of Eastern Province. The affairs of the community are managed by the Group Ranch Management Committee, which is elected by the Annual General Meeting of all Il Ngwesi members. Other decision-making bodies elected by the Annual General Meeting and that work closely with the group ranch management committee include: the Board of Trustees of Il Ngwesi Community Trust; the Board of Directors of income-generating projects within the Group Ranch; the Natural Resources and
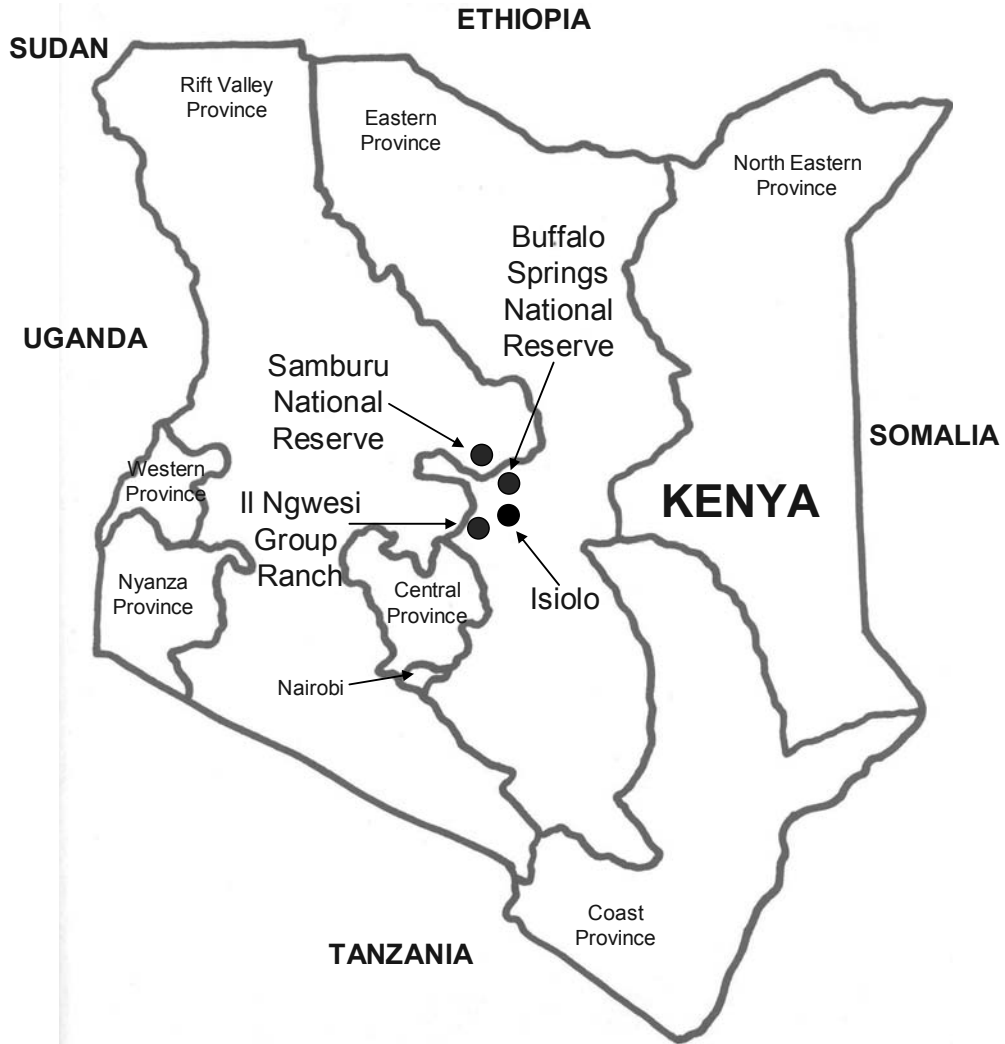
Figure 1.–Map of Kenya.

Community Development Management Committee that oversees proper implementation of conservation program in the community.

The ranch is well endowed with diverse wildlife species, including elephants, giraffes, elands, Grevy zebras, oryx, buffaloes, lions, leopards, black and white rhinos, Savannah baboons, vervet and colobus monkeys, and a wide variety of bird life. The main tourist activities practiced in the ranch include wildlife viewing, night game drives, bush walks, camel rides, visits to the cultural center and to a Maasai village.

Il Ngwesi Group Ranch maintains traditional use of the land, while offering safe refuge and freedom of movement to the wild animals. According to Lewa Wildlife Conservancy (2001), the ranch is one of the Kenya's critical ecotourism areas and a good show case of symbiotic relationship between wildlife and local communities. The group ranch members run two important tourist facilities.

1. Il Ngwesi cultural center, which demonstrates the customs and lifestyles of the Ndorobo tribe, the original hunters and gatherers. Inside the

cultural center are demonstrations of traditional bee-keeping techniques and the production of traditional concoctions used to treat diverse human and animal ailments.

2. Il Ngwesi Eco-Lodge, which was awarded the prestigious British Airways Best Eco-tourism Destination Award in 1997, Best Self-catering Camp by readers of *Travel Magazine* (Kenya's leading travel magazine), and The Equator Initiative Award at the World Summit in Johannesburg in 2002 (Lewa Safari Camp, 2004). Consequently, the Lodge has become a role model for upcoming community ecolodges throughout the East African region.

Samburu National Reserve

SNR is situated in Samburu district in the Rift Valley Province. The reserve is adjacent to the Buffalo Springs National Reserve, separated solely by Ewaso Nyiro River, and run by different district authorities. SNR is under the jurisdiction of Samburu district, while Buffalo Springs National Reserve belongs to Isiolo district, Eastern Province. The Samburu area is still referred to as the Northern Frontier District (NFD) because of the war in the 1960s and early 1970s with the Somali people (AWF, 2005). Previously no one other than government officials could travel within any part of the NFD and, due to this, the Samburu tribe was virtually isolated and largely unaware of the momentous changes taking place within the rest of the country. Even today, Samburu land remains remote and unspoiled, having escaped the negative impact of mass tourism (Carr-Hartley, 2001). The inherent serenity apparent in SNR has been linked to its distance from development and industries for many years (Africa Mecca, 2005).

The reserve covers a total land area of over 400 km^2. It has high populations of "mega" wildlife species (i.e., elephant, giraffe, rhinoceros, lion, and cheetah) and many antelope species including the Generuk (an endemic and rare antelope species mainly found in Northern Kenya). These nature-based attractions make the region ideal for wildlife safari tourism activities. Moreover, the region has diverse floral attractions and undulating hills that are ideal for sightseeing, photography, hill climbing, hiking, and trekking. The local people—the Samburu people—are well endowed with a rich and colorful cultural heritage as well as a well-established handicraft industry, some of which have been tapped for cultural tourism development. The diverse wildlife resources combined with the local Samburu culture makes the region attractive to tourists seeking an adventurous safari tourism experience combining wildlife viewing with scheduled visits to adjacent Samburu cultural villages. Thus, the reserve and the adjacent areas have great potential to attract diverse market segments with different motivational attributes. Presently, the reserve attracts over 200,000 international tourists annually plus many domestic tourists.

Tourism is the major revenue earner for the Samburu county council, generating about 85% of all revenue for the council (Samburu County Council, 2005). The revenue generated from tourism is used for various community development programs in Samburu District, after paying staff salaries and funding of management activities in the reserve. Whereas the day-to-day management of the reserve is vested with the senior warden, the major decisions concerning the reserve, such as the resource allocation and budgeting, award of contracts, giving of leases and concessions to tour/lodge operators, are handled by the county council. Additionally, the council makes the necessary bylaws that govern the management of the reserve in collaboration with the relevant ministries such as the Ministry of Tourism and Information and the Ministry of Local Government.

Research Methodology

The collection of data and information for this study was carried out in two phases. The first phase involved a literature search and compilation of relevant information and data on issues of poverty and the role of tourism development as a tool for socioeconomic development. Information was mainly gathered from documented and published sources, including textbooks, journals, economic surveys, government reports, sessional papers, academic research findings, consultancy and newspaper reports, and other published and unpublished materials.

The second phase involved collection of primary data on local people's stance on tourism (do the people want tourism?), its impacts on local people's livelihoods (does tourism improve or impoverish people living conditions?), tourism successes

and/or failures in reducing poverty and the local people's perception of the way forward for tourism development. In order to gain deeper insights on these issues, it was necessary to "get inside peoples lives"; that is, to use methods and techniques that would encourage people to tell stories about their experiences and lay open their thoughts, feelings, and knowledge about tourism development. Ethnography, with its focus on demystifying the setting or the context of social activities and participants' interpretations of their own actions (Castaldi, 1991; Crabtree, Nicholas, O'Brien, rouncefiled, & Twidale, 1998; Finn, Elliotte-White, & Walton, 2000; Light, 2002), seemed the ideal research methodological approach. Ethnographic techniques, including interviews and participant observation, were used to provide accounts of the meaning and interpretations held by the local people for poverty, tourism development, and their livelihood practices. This field work was carried out between the months of March and June 2006.

Rather than a schedule of interview research questions, a narrative method for interviewing was used to give a natural chronological story structure to the interview. In these narratives, research participants gave their own interpretation of everyday activities and their experience with tourism. Face-to-face individual interview was mainly adopted in order to bring to the fore the individual's unique experience of tourism. The research participants were interviewed at various places including cultural *manyattas* (special homesteads where the local culture is displayed), homesteads, shopping centers, and tourist facilities. English and Kiswahili languages were used. Every attempt was made to minimize distraction and ensure privacy during the interviews. The length of the interviews varied, ranging from 30 minutes to 1 hour.

Participant observation, through engaging with the local people in their daily activities, in beadwork and making of souvenirs, taking part in their games and amusements, taking meals together and sharing in their conversation complement the individual interviews.

Sampling Method

Selection of participants involved both purposive and snowballing sampling techniques whereby participants had to meet three predefined criteria: (i) the participant had lived in the study site for at least 5 years, (ii) the participant was conversant with the actual daily community life, and (iii) the participant was involved in the local community's affairs. The use of these criteria was aimed at ensuring that the research participants are sufficiently familiar with the community. Twenty-five participants were selected, 13 at Il Ngwesi Group Ranch and 12 at SNR (Table 1).

Data Analysis and Presentation

The interviews were tape recorded and retailed for transcription. The taping continued until each participant indicated that she/he was finished or had nothing else to say. The tapes of each interview were listened to several times and each tape was carefully transcribed as accurately as possible for systematic analysis. The analysis of the data actually began with listening to the interviews repeatedly during the transcription process. A set of themes that captured relevant aspects of the data were developed. Particular items of data were assigned to these themes. Of importance to this type of study is

Table 1

General Characteristics of the Research Participants

Study Site/Characteristics	No. of Participants
Il Ngwesi Group Ranch	
Gender	
Male	7
Female	6
Age	
Adult	11
Youth	2
Status in community	
Community elders	3
Managers in the ranch	2
Members of cultural *Manyatta*	2
Member of the group ranch	4
Samburu National Reserve	
Sex	
Male	7
Female	5
Age	
Adult	9
Youth	3
Status in community	
Community elders	3
Officers in the reserve	2
Members of cultural *Manyatta*	2
Community members	2

reflection on the essential themes that characterize the participants' feedback. The data are presented in a descriptive way and illustrated with verbatim quotes. This method was chosen for two reasons, first to present the data in their full richness and second to acknowledge that the participants are the experts and authorities of their own experience.

Results

Systematic data analysis of transcribed interviews resulted in the identification of three main themes. These were: tourism benefits to the local people, ownership and control, and empowerment.

Tourism Benefits

Participants from Il Ngwesi Group Ranch were optimistic towards tourism development and its contributions to their well-being as reflected in their comments.

> Tourism is our savior.

> Our hope is in tourism and our animals.

> All the wealth I have in my homestead is as a result of tourism. I use my salary to buy animals.

> I see tourism as a blessing to the community.

> Tourism is closer to us than the government.

> Our neighboring communities, the Turkana, are dying of hunger, but we are not, because of tourism.

> In future, tourism is likely to surpass our animals in terms of benefits accrued.

Participants spoke often of the significant communal benefits generated from tourism activities. One of the managers of the group ranch affirmed that revenue generated from tourism activities had stirred the community development projects to greater heights. Specific examples of how participants expressed this idea follow.

> We have upgraded the old primary schools and constructed new ones.

> We have supplied water to schools.

> We provide incentives in the form of bursaries to pupils who excel in primary schools. There has been a drastic increase in the number of children enrolling for primary school education.

Other participants cited improved security and communication as significant contributions of tourism.

> The tourist police unit is always alert for any insecurity incident.

> Some of our community members have communication facilities, which they use to alert the police and rangers in case of any insecurity problem.

One participant provided a comparison of the previous and present security status within their community.

> Previously, our neighboring pastoralist communities would raid our homestead and get away with our animals. It would take days, weeks and even months to trace the raiders. Today, it is different, with the communication facilities, the messages/ signals are sent to all corners of the community. Immediately the raiders are surrounded by the *moran* (warriors), rangers, and tourist police. In most cases, the stolen animals are recovered.

Other benefits cited by the majority of the participants included: creation of business opportunities for handicrafts and artifacts and creation of employment. One of the group ranch managers pointed out that over 33 local community members are employed in Il Ngwesi Lodge (a facility owned by the Il Ngwesi Group Ranch members). Of importance, "We have purchased land from the neighboring community, which is being used for grazing animals and settling of the unfortunate members of the community" (community elder).

There has been significant positive change in attitude towards conservation of natural resources and tourism development among the community members. The statements below, uttered by two community elders exemplify this.

> The community members are gradually appreciating the importance of tourism.

> There is minimal resistance from the local community. This has given room for smooth running of the ranch and protection of the natural resources therein.

However, unlike Il Ngwesi, the majority of the participants from SNR presented a less optimistic scenario in relation to tourism development and its benefits. There was a perceived devaluing by par-

ticipants of the tourism role in community development. For one of the participants, tourism is a governmental affair "well I am not involved in tourism, I have no interest in it, it wouldn't benefit me in any way." Rhetorically, one of the participants pointed that:

> Elephants are government's cows. Their breasts are too hard for us to milk—it is only the government that milks the elephants. There are hundreds of elephants in this reserve but the government gives us milk from one elephant, which is then shared to all the community members.

While the majority of participants stated that they receive insignificant tangible benefits, three of the participants point to the government's use of the revenue generated through entry fees to the reserve to construct schools and health facilities and to provide bursaries for needy students as a fundamental step towards community development. All the participants acknowledged that the reserve generates substantial job opportunities; however, they argued that the majority of these opportunities are often taken by people from outside the community.

> Only 10% of employees in the reserve are from within our community. The rest, 90% are outsiders. We even have one person from our neighboring country, Tanzania, working in the reserve whereas community members who have to bear with the costs of conservation are not given that chance (Angry community elders).

It is worth noting that all participants interviewed (from the two study sites) repeatedly identified inequitable distribution of benefits as problematic. Whereas participants from Il Ngwesi felt that the lions' share of the benefits goes to the local elites, particularly men, those from SNR felt that the local elites, tour drivers, and the government are the main beneficiaries. Participants' statements below illustrated their desire for fair and equitable distribution of benefits.

> I wish we could share equitably the cultural *manyatta* entry fees. (A participant from Il Ngwesi).
>
> We desire equal opportunities in running of the cultural *manyattas*. (A participant from Il Ngwesi).
>
> We won't mind if we could share the revenue with the tour drivers on a 50–50 basis. (A participant from Samburu)

> If there was equitable distribution of revenue, everyone would be comfortable. We would persevere and continue to live in harmony with wild animals as before. (A participants from Samburu)

Concern was voiced by 80% of the participants that individual benefits should be given more attention rather than individual benefits. These individual benefits should come in the form of employment opportunities and creation of viable business opportunities. Moreover, compensation for damages caused by wild animals featured prominently in the interviewees comments. As one of the participants from SNR asserted: "the government is the main recipient of tourism revenue therefore it should pay for the damages or loss of property caused by wild animals."

Ownership and Control

Il Ngwesi Group Ranch is basically community owned. A group ranch committee manages the ranch on behalf of its members. Furthermore, all the participants affirmed that a general meeting is held each year to deliberate on matters affecting the ranch, especially in regard to revenue sharing, management policies, registration of new members, the election of management, and reviewing development progress. However, two participants identified lack of full ownership and control of natural resources as a major impediment to their full participation in tourism development. Their comments included the following.

> There is very little that the community owns.
>
> The wild animals belong to the government.
>
> We cannot control the animals as we used to do, traditionally.
>
> We used to have controlled hunting to mitigate the effects of wild animals on ourselves and our animals. This is not the case, things have changed.

Generally, SNR is a state-protected area, thus any form of wildlife resource use by the local community for sustenance is classified as poaching—a punishable offense that can lead to imprisonment and other forms of punishment (Kieti & Akama, 2005). In fact one of the participants asserted that:

Killing of wild animals is treated like a murder case. You are arrested and charged for murder.

Even when you are caught collecting firewood from the reserve you are also arrested and charged.

Worse yet, one of the participants (SNR officer) pointed out that:

We do not allow the adjacent communities to graze their animals inside the reserve. When such happen, we mobilize our rangers, who immediately drive the animals away from the reserve. We have intensified patrols to ensure no animals are grazed in the reserve.

The majority of participants viewed their role in tourism development as being secondary. This included establishing cultural *manyattas* and supplying artifacts and handcrafts to them. Inside the cultural *manyattas* roles played varied depending on age and sex. Women displayed and sold handcrafts, as well as welcoming visitors to the *manyattas* with songs and dancing. Older men were involved in the production and supply of spears, clubs, and knives to the *manyattas* for sale, whereas the warriors performed dances to visitors.

Despite the valuable role the Samburu cultural heritage products play in enriching tourists' experience, all the participants attested that the payoffs were insignificant. "We have a problem of over-supply of cultural products as compared to the available demand, we are forced to accept extremely low payments for our products" (cultural *manyatta* member). "Our culture is on display for free" and "we are offering our cultural heritage for free: lamented one of the community elders.

The majority of participants spoke of the profound exploitation by the tour drivers.

Each tourist pays Kshs 1000 as entry fee to the cultural *manyatta*. If a tour van has 7 tourists, the total entry fee is Kshs 7000. Out of this only Kshs 300 is paid as entry fee to the cultural *manyatta*. The rest Kshs 6700 remains in the pocket of the tour drivers. Kshs 300 paid to the cultural *manyatta* is just peanuts compared to the number of people in each *manyatta*. Out of Kshs 300 paid, Kshs 150 is given to the *Muran* (newly circumcised) for their upkeep, because our traditions do not allowed them to take their meals from the *manyattas*/homestead.

If we raise any complain about the payment, the tour drivers switch to other *manyattas*.

One of the cultural *manyattas*, the Umoja cultural *manyatta* complained about the exploitative behavior of the tour drivers to Kenya Association of Tour Operators (KATO). Since then the tour drivers have totally boycotted taking their visitors to that *manyatta*.

"Something else" says a youth who works as a cultural *manyatta* guide "there is mushrooming of curio shops. All the way from Nairobi to here (Samburu) there are innumerable numbers of curio shops, mainly owned by the tour drivers. The tour drivers ensure that tourists purchase most of the items from their curio shop on their way to here." As a consequence: "tourists do not purchase our items, they tell us, we have purchased similar items on our way." It was not as bad as it is today when tourists used to purchase our handicrafts. "We are at the mercy of the tour drivers." He decries "Hawa madereva wametukata miguu kabisa" [these drivers have totally chopped-off our legs!].

Such a disquieting situation contravenes the assumption that artwork, crafts, and artifacts based on local culture can increase local economic impact.

Empowerment

All the participants, particularly those from SNR, supported the fact that they are never consulted in matters related to wildlife conservation and tourism development. All the decisions regarding the management of the reserve are made by the Samburu County Council in collaboration with the Kenya Wildlife Service. Consequently, there has been minimal involvement of the local community in the management and running of the reserve.

However, there was a general consensus among all the research participants (from both study sites) that lack of managerial and entrepreneurship skills in the business were the main hindrance to taking part in any meaningful decision-making process. Participants argued that their low knowledge on tourism, coupled with geographical isolation limited them from unleashing their full potential. Participants' statements included: "We have not discovered the right way to milk the elephant it is still kicking whenever we approach it for milking." "We need to be taken for seminars and exposure tours to renowned community based tourism enterprises." "Knowledge is not in-born but acquired."

There were increasing signs of disempowerment (as identified by Scheyvens, 2002), whereby:

- Tourism resulted in small spasmodic cash gains for the local community.
- Most profits went to local elites, outside operators, and government agencies.
- Only a few individuals or families gain direct financial benefits from tourism, while others fail to share in these economic benefits because they lack capital, experience, or appropriate skills.
- Rather than cooperating families and ethnic or socioeconomic groups compete with each other for the perceived benefits of tourism.

Table 2 provides a synopsis of the key issues identified in case studies of the Samburu National Reserve and Il Ngwesi Group Ranch.

Discussion

It is evident that the different models of tourism development impact differently on the local people's livelihoods. Il Ngwesi Group Ranch, which is community owned, is viewed as contributing substantially to the local people's well-being. Elsewhere, Kontogeorgopoulos (2005) notes that community-based tourism tends to advance the needs and concerns of local communities, offering them greater local control and participation in the tourism agendas. Furthermore, community-based tourism is thought to cultivate sustainable and rewarding employment that is made available to many members of a community; environmentally, it is said to encourage conservation through environmental education and sustainable use of natural resources; and socially, it is thought to boost social cohesion, harmony and cooperation that enhances individual self-reliance, pride, and hope for the future.

Even though community-based tourism, as practiced at the Il Ngwesi Group Ranch, seems to be more appropriate for poverty reduction, it can be argued that its effectiveness depends on ownership patterns and partnership. Bennett et al. (1999) and Dahles (2000) argue that community-owned tourism initiatives are less likely to repatriate profits overseas and are more likely to use local suppliers, resulting in more linkages and more money staying in the local economy. In addition, the local people are likely to enjoy the dividends arising from locally-owned enterprises (Goodwin, 1998; WTO, 2002). Currently, Il Ngwesi Group Ranch and SNR have not achieved sufficient local ownership. For instance, in SNR tourism development

is under the control of the government and tour drivers. Such forms of tourism development accentuate the economic structure of dependency on external market demand and also lead to alien development to which local people, such as the Samburu, cannot relate and respond positively, both socially and economically (Kieti & Akama, 2005). Grekin and Milne (1996) observe that external companies, such as tour operators, travel agents, and airlines, control and benefit from tourism expenditures through their direct dealings with clients. As such, the long-term sustenance of tourism responds to and is heavily dependent on external control and support. The overriding indication is that profits are drained out of the destination, leaving the local people in a state of deprivation. Additionally, Timothy and Tosun (2003) stresses that when control lies in the hands of external forces, community cohesion and cooperative spirit diminish and consequently practices, such as unhealthy competition and individualism, tend to replace the traditional social set-up where profound emphasis is laid on group welfare. This scenario is very evident in the research, particularly in the Samburu community, where tourism development fails to achieve sufficient ownership. Elsewhere, studies demonstrate that even with the well-documented, successful community-based initiatives, such as CAMPFIRE in Zimbabwe, issues of ownership continue to threaten their long-term performance (Elliott & Mann 2005).

Despite the profound benefits of community empowerment underscored in the literature, the current study elucidates a situation where empowerment has remain at the level of rhetoric, particularly in terms of extant social and cultural practices, which tend to discriminate against women and the youth. Some writers argue that some cultural practices tend to counteract any empowerment initiatives that are built on to support and develop local people's capacity to take better control of their lives (Richard & Hall, 2000). Consequently, the majority of local communities, mainly women and youth, find themselves marginalized, making it very unlikely that their priorities will be reflected in tourism development initiatives. Such situations trigger the urgent need for grass root empowerment to ensure that tourism development initiatives are in harmony with the needs and aspirations of host communities

Table 2

Key Issues in SNR and Il Ngwesi Group Ranch

	Samburu National Reserve	Il Ngwesi Group Ranch
Management	Government	Local community
Local people	Samburu	Lmwesi Maasai
Control of tourism development	Government through Samburu County Council Tour drivers Local elites	Local community through committees Local elites
Involvement of the local people	Establishment of cultural *manyattas* Running of the cultural *manyattas* Supply of handcraft and artifacts	Running of the Group Ranch through the Group Ranch committee Running of Il Ngwesi Eco-lodge Establishment of cultural *manyattas* Running of the cultural *manyattas* Supply of handcraft and artifacts
Local ownership	Cultural *manyattas*	Group Ranch Il Ngwesi Eco-lodge Cultural *manyattas*
Communal benefits from tourism	Building of schools Building of heath centers Provision of bursaries Enhancement of security and communication Provision of business opportunities	Building of schools Building of health centers Provisio of bursaries Enhancement of security and communication Water supply Purchase of extra communal land Provision of business opportunities Transportation
Individual benefits from tourism	Minimal in the form of: Employment opportunities (mainly menial jobs) Sale of handcraft and bead ware	Employment (substantial) Sale of handcraft and bead ware (minimal)
Constraints to tourism development	Gender bias (women and the youth are discriminated) Mistrust and disunity among the local people Lack of community ownership and control of tourism resources Lack of local people empowerment Elite domination Tour driver harassment Lack of sufficient markets for local cultural products Scarcity of development funds	Gender bias (women and the youth are discriminated) Lack of community ownership and control of tourism resources Lack of local people empowerment Elite domination Lack of sufficient markets for local cultural products Scarcity of development funds
Community cohesion	Cooperation spirit diminishing Individualism on the increase Unhealthy competition	Cooperation spirit strong More emphasis on group welfare
Form of participation in tourism development	Pseudoparticipation	Tenacious participation
Local people's attitude toward tourism	Less optimistic	More optimistic

in a way that is acceptable to them and which will not be detrimental to their culture, traditions, or, indeed, their day-to-day conveniences.

The success of Il Ngwesi Group Ranch is linked to its partnership with Lewa Wildlife Conservancy (privately owned)—something that is lacking in

SNR. Presently, the ranch is been assisted in the marketing of its products, both locally and internationally, by Lewa Wildlife Conservancy. Elsewhere (e.g., in Namibia), Bennett et al. (1999) observed community-based tourism initiatives under partnership with a private investor were more likely to thrive than those in which the local community tried to "go it alone." In most case, the majority of the local people have weak management skills and low understanding of the requirements of tourism (Goodwin, 1998; Mbaiwa, 2005). Again, tourism requires highly sophisticated marketing, which is particularly difficult for the majority of the local people (Bennett et al., 1999). Thus, public and private sectors need to work with local communities to develop the forms of tourism that bring sustainable local development and provide richer experiences for both domestic and international tourists. Such partnerships are envisaged to benefit both the host communities and the tourism industry, ensuring that more tourism earnings remain in the local community where they can make a significant contribution to the amelioration of socioeconomic problems, enhancement of better access to the tourism market, and avoidance of the existence of tourism enclaves (Goodwin, 1998). Mbaiwa (2005) denotes enclave tourism as a kind of "internal colonialism" where tourism resources in a tourism destination mostly benefit outsiders while the majority of the locals derive insignificant or no benefits.

Conclusions

Il Ngwesi Group Ranch and SNR provide good examples of tourism destinations that have embraced different models of tourism development. The research reveals that tourism impacts on the livelihood of the local people vary depending on the type of tourism development. The current forms of tourism development in SNR have not significantly contributed to the socioeconomic development of the local people. Instead, there is increasing control of the tourism by powerful interest groups—the tour drivers and local elites. Consequently, there is high percentage of leakage of tourism revenues resulting in lower linkage of tourism with local sectors. Community cohesion and cooperative spirit is gradually diminishing and practices, such as unhealthy competition and individualism, mistrust, and disunity as

evident in the haphazard mushrooming of cultural *manyattas* tend to replace the traditional emphasis on group welfare.

Il Ngwesi Group Ranch presents a more optimistic situation, whereby tourism development to a greater extent is being initiated and driven by community members. There is substantial involvement of the local community in identifying the resources to be maintained and enhanced, and developing strategies for tourism development and management. The success of Il Ngwesi Group Ranch suggests the need for a shift from government-led tourism model to community-led model. However, it is worth noting that a wide range of actions are needed to increase benefits to the local communities from tourism. This should go well beyond simply promoting community tourism.

The current wildlife and tourism policies need to be reviewed in order to reconcile local people's needs with wildlife conservation and tourism development. There is also need to reevaluate the roles of the government, social elites, and overseas companies in the tourism development, with eventual aim of minimizing external control, which tend to lead to overexploitation and increase leakages of tourism revenue.

Finally, the success of tourism should not be measured in terms of increased numbers of international tourist arrivals and gross tourism revenues, but should be evaluated according to how tourism matches the needs and aspirations of the local people as well as how it contributes to their overall development.

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