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"Decolonizing Tourism in Kenya: A case study combining Afrocentric theories on decolonization with arguments of local experts."

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Abstract English

Global mass tourism is generally impacted by the interplay of global and local influences, often tracing its origin to periods marked by financial boom in the Global North and the presence of former colonial powers in various regions of the Global South. Kenya was among those regions, in which the emergence of tourism was promoted by the presence of colonial administrators, who laid the foundation for what would later become one of the country's most important economic pillars. Recently, COVID-19 related lockdowns in Kenya sparked controversy over persisting issues engendered by historical colonial legacies within the industry calling for decolonizing tourism in the country. Intrigued to find out what this comprehensive demand implies, this thesis explores what it means and entails to decolonize Kenya's tourism industry. Embracing a sensitive and therefore transdisciplinary approach, the study engages with global debates on decolonization, thereby asking a second research question, namely whether decolonization theory and practice diverge from or relate to each other. Generally, the research process unfolds in three phases. After a foundational debate on 'Decolonization Theories', a second part, 'Evolution of Kenya's Tourism Industry', traces its origins from British colonial administrators to post-independence progress. These explorations pave the way for a third phase, which is grounded in semi-structured expert interviews with Kenyan stakeholders, supported by further literature review. Through a combination of theoretical frameworks and the lived experiences of Kenya's tourism practitioners, the analysis reveals continuous 'coloniality' across power, being, and knowledge dimensions within the industry. Strategies for decolonization, including equitable ownership distribution, narrative diversification, alternative marketing, and inclusive conservation, are synthesized from expert insights and scholarly discourse. The study underscores the urgency of a continuous transformation of Kenya's tourism sector to create a more equitable, inclusive, and authentic industry.

Abstract Deutsch

Der globale Massentourismus ist durch das Zusammenspiel globaler und lokaler Einflüsse geprägt. Steigende Zahlen im Tourismus haben ihren Ursprung in Zeiten des finanziellen Aufschwungs im globalen Norden während Regionen des globalen Südens, die als Destinationen entdeckt wurden, noch häufig von Konialmächten beherrscht wurden. Kenia gehörte zu den Regionen, in denen Tourismus von Kolonialbeamten entdeckt und gefördert wurde. Dadurch wurde eine Industrie erschaffen, die zu einer der wichtigsten wirtschaftlichen Säulen des Landes wurde. Kürzlich lösten die COVID-19-bedingten ‚Lockdowns' sowie weltweite Reiseverbote in Kenia eine Diskussion über die fortbestehenden Probleme aus, die durch das historische koloniale Erbe innerhalb der Branche hervorgerufen werden. Die Forderung einer Dekolonisierung des Tourismus im Lande rückte in den Fokus. Um herauszufinden, was diese umfassende Forderung bedeutet, wird in dieser Masterarbeit untersucht, was eine Dekolonisierung der kenianischen Tourismusindustrie bedeuten kann und mit sich bringt. Anhand eines transdisziplinären Ansatz setzt sich die Studie mit globalen Debatten zur Dekolonisierung auseinander und stellt damit eine zweite Forschungsfrage, nämlich ob sich Theorie und Praxis der Dekolonisierung voneinander unterscheiden oder aufeinander beziehen. Generell verläuft der Forschungsprozess in drei Phasen. Nach einer grundlegenden Debatte über „Dekolonisierungstheorien" wird in einem zweiten Teil, die Entwicklung der kenianischen Tourismusindustrie erforscht und dementsprechend deren Ursprung bis zum Fortschritt nach der Unabhängigkeit nachgezeichnet. Diese Untersuchungen ebnen den Weg für die dritte Phase, die auf Experteninterviews mit kenianischen Akteur*innen aufbaut und durch weitere Literaturrecherche unterstützt wird. Die Analyse zeigt auf, dass in der Tourismusindustrie Aspekte von ‚coloniality', in den Dimensionen ‚power', ‚being', und ‚knowledge' aufrecht erhalten sind. Strategien zur Dekolonisierung basierend auf den Antworten der Expert*innen inkludieren eine gerechte Verteilung des Eigentums in der Tourismusbranche, eine Diversifizierung der Angebote, alternatives Marketing sowie inklusiver Naturschutz. Die Studie betont die Dringlichkeit einer kontinuierlichen Transformation des Tourismussektors Kenias, um eine gerechtere und inklusivere Branche zu schaffen.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Preface

Tourism constitutes a complex interplay of generating and experiencing various moments. Its nature is inherently global, but manifests itself locally and regionally, and is thereby intricately tied to the formation of distinctive places. Delving into the evolution of tourism in the East African country Kenya offers a valuable avenue for exploring the interaction between producing and consuming, the dynamics between global and local influences, and fundamental matters related to societal and spatial divisions. In the course of the 20th century, the British colony Kenya developed into a popular tourist destination. The origin of today's tourism industry in the region goes back to British colonial administrators settling in the late 19th century. Fueled by exploration, hunting, and the allure of the exotic, safari tourism emerged, combining indigenous practices with European influences. Especially, the possibility of 'Big Game Hunting' in park-like landscapes combined with the abundance of wild animals, in particular attracted wealthy Europeans as well as Americans including Theodore Roosevelt.

The interwar period in the first half of the 20th century marked a transformative phase, witnessing the growth of motorized safaris and wildlife photography, thereby setting the stage for mass tourism. Consequently, the post-World War II period saw a global surge in tourism, driven by economic prosperity, improved transportation, and the development of organized initiatives. The establishment of national parks, legislative efforts, and marketing strategies contributed to the industry's expansion despite early infrastructure constraints. This development coincided with decolonization processes of many African countries, including Kenya, which became independent in 1963 after it had been colonized by Great Britain for almost 70 years.

The newly formed government, with Jomo Kenyatta as president, recognized the potential of the country's tourism industry. With natural endowments in wildlife and further rich cultural resources, the opportunity presented itself to generate revenue necessary for the newly independent country's development. As an alternative to the deteriorating business of exporting primary resources during the 1960s, which in the case of Kenya were coffee and tea, the focus was laid on the global promotion of its tourism industry in the hope of economic growth to foster the country's development (Smart 2018:135ff.). The Kenyan government played a central role in this matter as it filled the gap of the hardly existent private sector, a fairly common process among formerly colonized countries in the Global South. By formulating a tourism development plan, the government directly guided the tourism industry, which led to a meteoric rise in the 1970s as well as the 1980s, soon becoming Kenya's top economic sector (Akama 2002:1ff.).

However, the tourism industry suffered setbacks over the following two decades due to factors like declining quality of the offered products, direct government involvement, mismanagement and inefficiency, political instability, and terrorist attacks. Furthermore, the unregulated expansion of tourism facilities led to environmental disruptions, especially along the coast. Kenya's new constitution, enacted in 2010, brought about decentralization, allowing national and county governments to share responsibilities for tourism development, which aimed at counteracting the deterioration of the industry. Moreover, the government introduced various acts and initiatives to improve tourism, including the 'Tourism Master Plan', the 'Kenya Tourist Board', and the 'Wildlife Conservation and Management Act'. Nevertheless, challenges persisted, including increased competition from neighboring countries (Akama 1999, 2000) (Smart 2017).

1.2 Problem Statement and Research Question

Most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted Kenya's tourism industry and demonstrated its precarious character due to its reliance on international travelers. The pandemic therefore highlighted the interconnectedness of various sectors within tourism, triggering a domino effect on the economy. COVID-19 related lockdowns and travel warnings lead to a substantial decline in revenue, closure of hotels, and job losses. In response, the government implemented measures to mitigate the effects, focusing on recovery plans, marketing efforts, and partnerships. Moreover, the pandemic sparked a discussion, both online and offline, on the colonial character of the industry. For example, international travel restrictions necessitated actors within the industry to attract Kenyan citizens for the first time, which up until then, for the most part, had been excluded from experiencing their home country's rich natural resources. Consequently, calls by Kenyans were made to 'decolonize' the tourism industry (Chakanetsa 2022), which was reported by Kim Chakanetsa in an episode of the BBC podcast (The Comb) dealing with 'Decolonizing Tourism' in Kenya.

Intrigued to find out more about this demand, the research process began, which led to the realization that within the academic world, the topic of decolonizing the tourism industry in Kenya has not yet been given much attention. Motivated to fill this gap in academia, my goal was to find out how 'Decolonizing Tourism' could be approached in the case of Kenya and which spheres of tourism are affected. Therefore, the first research question of this thesis reads as follows: Based on an Afrocentric perspective, what does it mean to decolonize Kenya's tourism industry and what would it entail? Being aware of the broad nature and the many facets of this topic, a comprehensive elaboration of what 'Decolonization' and therefore also 'Colonization' and 'Colonialism' mean in this context is of utmost importance. Hence, the theoretical discussion leads to a second research question, through which I aim at analyzing in which way theory and practice diverge from or relate to each other. Overall, this thesis follows the objective of demonstrating the colonial character of the tourism industry in its various aspects to consequently be able to provide an Afrocentric inspired answer on how to decolonize the industry, which would contribute to solving certain issues that have developed over the years.

1.3 Research Procedure

To be able to answer the research questions, delving into different academic spheres is necessary as the investigated issues are broad, sensitive and multi-layered, which necessitates transdisciplinary debates throughout the thesis. During the research process, my objective is not only focused on finding an answer to what 'Decolonizing Tourism' in Kenya means and entails, but also on contributing to decolonizing research overall. Therefore, before approaching the thematic chapters of this thesis, the aim is to position myself and my objectives as a young researcher within social sciences in chapter two ('Research Objectives'), which involves the inclusion of challenging power structures, addressing epistemic injustices, and amplifying marginalized voices and knowledge systems. The following chapter, hence, encompasses an intersectional reflection on the researcher's positionality, a commitment to decolonizing research, and an introduction to the concept of 'Afrocentricity'. Thereby, the historical roots of academic research and its imposition of colonial paradigms are examined, leading to the call for decolonization. The thesis furthermore acknowledges the importance of cooperation between researchers from the Global South and North, emphasizing critical reflection, reciprocity, embracing diverse ways of knowing, and embodying transformative praxis as essential practices in research. An important role in this thesis plays the concept of 'Afrocentricity', which is explored as a philosophical paradigm that centers the historical and cultural experiences of individuals from African cultures. By employing and incorporating it, I seek to counter colonial legacies, promote ethical research practices, and center African perspectives to contribute to the broader goal of decolonizing research.

The following third chapter, 'Decolonization Theories', lays the groundwork for the theoretical framework of this thesis. To achieve this, the study engages with global scholarly debates on decolonization, aiming to clarify the specific interpretation of 'decolonizing' within the Kenyan context. The chapter sets a conceptual and contextual framework by exploring key terms such as 'colonialism', 'imperialism', 'decolonization', 'coloniality', and 'decoloniality' in a dual structure based on Frederick Cooper's (2005:92f.) concept of 'analytical' meaning (=working towards comprehending and elucidating a specific phenomenon) and 'native' meaning (=depending on specific situations), which will be renamed as 'contextual' meaning. Understanding these concepts is vital to grasp the historical impact of colonialism and ongoing imperialism on decolonization efforts in former colonies. The chapter acknowledges the contributions of notable scholars like Frantz Fanon, Achille Mbembe, and Ngugi wa Thiong'o, whose theories will be synthesized. The subsequent section delves into concepts derived from colonial legacies, including 'coloniality', and 'decoloniality'. These concepts, originally formulated by Latin American scholars but adapted to the African context by Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, are especially relevant within this thesis as they fill the gap of previous theories and therefore provide a timely analytical tool for 'Decolonizing Tourism'.

Having established the theoretical underpinning in the previous chapter, the focus shifts to the 'Evolution of Kenya's Tourism Industry' in chapter 4. The exploration of the country's tourism industry begins by tracing its origins back to the late 19th century, when British colonial administrators ventured into East Africa. This chapter is divided into two distinct time periods: the formative years spanning from the early 20th century to Kenya's independence in 1963 (Chapter 4.1 'Early Developments'), and the post-colonial era up to the present day (Chapter 4.2 'Postcolonial Developments'). Chapter 4.1 examines the initial phase including foundational developments that shaped the industry, while the subsequent section (Chapter 4.2) delves into post-independence progress, including the integration of tourism into development strategies, the roles of marketing and government, the emergence of beach tourism, and the challenges faced such as security concerns and pandemics. This chapter serves as an introductory exploration of Kenya's tourism industry, acknowledging its historical connections to colonialism and colonization, with a more comprehensive analysis of colonial legacies to follow in the subsequent chapter.

This thesis generally embarks on a multifaceted exploration in three distinct phases. After elaborating on the theoretical groundwork in the initial phase and captivating the evolution of Kenya's tourism industry in chapter 4, the third phase aims at encompassing the information from the previous chapters and incorporating it in the qualitative research process, dealt with in the fifth chapter titled 'Decolonizing Kenya's Tourism Industry'. This endeavor intends to infuse the theories of decolonization into the context of Kenya's tourism, unraveling the nuanced layers of 'Decolonizing Tourism' within this dynamic landscape. Rooted in qualitative research, semi-structured expert interviews were chosen to illuminate the intricate process of 'Decolonizing Tourism' in Kenya. Three voices from Kenya's tourism industry will shed light on critical insights, namely Esther Munyiri, a professor at Kenyatta University, Alex Kamau, the visionary behind 'Lets Drift', and Julius Owino, the CEO of the 'Kenya Coast Tourism Association'. Each interview demonstrates unique perspectives, enriching the analysis. Using the experts' arguments as a foundation, further information on the respective topics has been incorporated based on academic literature and reports of multilateral organizations, NGOs, etc. The transformative paradigm underpins this combination of methodologies, inviting a participatory and contextual approach. The analyses of the interview transcripts begin with a categorization of the expert's arguments into three categories of coloniality, namely Coloniality of Power, Being, and Knowledge. These dimensions, which are discussed in more detail in chapter 3, however, do not constitute distinct entities but rather intricately interwoven elements. Guided by the insights of experts and supported by academic literature and reports from organizations, the investigation deeply explores the core of colonial dynamics. Within this context, the path towards decolonial transformation becomes evident. Moving towards the realm of decoloniality, suggestions on decolonizing the industry put forth by the interviewees pave the way for transformative shifts, which are elaborated on in chapter 5.5 'Decoloniality – Suggestions on Decolonizing the Industry'. In the final subchapter titled 'Discussion', the attempt is made to answer the research questions. Moreover, further research findings are addressed, and the question of whether following a decolonization trope in the tourism industry in Kenya can lead to improvements within the country is asked.

In the concluding chapter, key elements explored in this thesis are being summarized, drawing from academic literature in the first half of the thesis, and from the expert interviews in combination with literature review in the second, more analytical half. A reflection on the investigation of decolonizing Kenya's tourism industry as well as on the research objectives, achievements, and limitations is included.

2 Research Objectives

In this Master's thesis on 'Decolonizing Tourism in Kenya', the issues under research are sensitive, multi-layered, and discussed in a transdisciplinary way. During the research process, my objective has not only been focused on finding an answer to what 'Decolonizing Tourism' in Kenya means and entails, but it has also aimed to contribute to decolonizing research overall. Therefore, I have set high standards for myself and the information I am producing and subsequently publishing. Consequently, I considered it necessary to include a chapter in which I present my research objectives, reflect on my background, and articulate my intention of contributing to decolonizing research to support dismantling structures of power, challenging epistemic injustices, and centering marginalized voices and knowledge systems. Hence, the following subchapters will include an intersectional reflection on my positionality, information on how I aim to contribute to the decolonization of research, and, finally, an introduction of a concept, namely 'Afrocentricity', through which perspectives of African peoples and polities are being centralized.

2.1 Decolonizing Research

"For those who have been oppressed by colonisation, research is a dirty word.", say Vivetha Thambinathan and Elizabeth Anne Kinsella (2021:1) in their article focusing on 'Decolonizing Methodologies in Qualitative Research'. The two are not the only ones who describe research as something 'dirty'. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2021), a scholar from New Zealand, whose book 'Decolonizing Methodologies' has been edited for a third time just recently, argues similarly, thereby highlighting the negative connotative meaning of research for "Indigenous persons and communities" (Smith 2021:xi). To find an answer to why this is the case, one needs to trace back the roots of academic research to the times of colonial rule as well as the beginning of the advancement of (Western) theories of knowledge. A process related to the period of Enlightenment, the evolution of shared beliefs among a discipline, also known as paradigms, have their origin in natural sciences, in which empiricism played an important role. Auguste Comte argued that rules within natural sciences can be transferred to social sciences, and that values and facts are distinct. Thereby he emphasized the importance of objectivity in academia, which, overall, is a positivist way of thinking, which dominated social research throughout the 20th century (Snape/Spencer 2003:6). The claim by researchers of former colonial powers to conduct objective research, however, transformed into oppressive acts, which resulted in a dehumanization of the colonized by violently dismissing their knowledge. This “imposition of the positivist paradigm approach to research on the colonies” (Chilisa 2012:27) is described by Bagele Chilisa in her book ‘Indigenous Research Methodologies’ as scientific colonialism, which coexisted in an intertwined way with the occupational type, namely political colonialism. Chilisa elaborates by stating that researchers had unlimited power and thereby conducted ‘scientific’ work within their own reality, which turned people into objects of research (ibid.).

Unequal power structures within the academic world have remained throughout independence processes. Only little progress was made within academia to create a more equal space where research, irrespective of where and by whom it is conducted, is given the same value. Consequently, in the second half of the 20th century, the discourse has shifted, and the call to ‘decolonize’ research has grown loud, especially within circles of pioneering academics, who aim at “turning spaces of marginalization into spaces from which resistance and hope flourish” (Thambinathan/Kinsella 2021:1). These changes in discourse have also translated into paradigm shifts within social sciences, which generally depend on ontology (=nature of being/reality), epistemology (=theory of knowledge and the nature of it), axiology (=values), and methodology (=research procedure) (Held 2019:1). The most prominent paradigms, namely positivist, postpositivist, constructivist, transformative, and pragmatic paradigms, stem from a Western background. While more recent paradigms, like the transformative one, which focuses on issues of power and social emancipation, encapsulate the complexity of neo colonial processes more appropriately than earlier paradigms, research paradigms from the region being focused on in this thesis were and are still being disregarded (Held 2019:1ff.). To counteract these unequal structures, Bagele Chilisa (2012), an Associate Professor from and in Botswana, demands a critical analysis of dominant literature and devotes her book to ‘Indigenous Research Methodologies’, thereby joining the circle of activist scholars by highlighting the importance of indigenous[1] research practices when analyzing processes involving formerly colonized regions. In

[1] While the term ‘Indigenous’ is defined differently depending on the scholar and the discipline, Chilisa describes it as “a cultural group’s ways of perceiving reality, ways of knowing, and the value systems that inform research processes” (Chilisa 2012:29) in her book.

this thesis it will be attempted to apply Chilisa's counteractive strategies, which is why they will be elaborated on in the following paragraph.

According to Bagele Chilisa, Indigenous research is characterized by four key aspects. First, it focuses on local phenomena instead of than relying on existing theories from the Western world to identify and define research issues. Second, it is sensitive to the local context and creates constructs, methods, and theories that are relevant to the community and based on local experiences and indigenous knowledge. Third, it can integrate both Western and indigenous theories. Finally, it is guided by an indigenous research paradigm that shapes its assumptions about reality, knowledge, and values in research (Chilisa 2012:34f.). When integrating the indigenous research paradigm into the matrix of Western paradigms subdivided into ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology, the stress on the relational aspect stands out the most. In the indigenous research paradigm, relational ontology means that the social reality under scrutiny can be comprehended in terms of the interconnections that exist among human beings. The emphasis in this context is on an I/We relationship that differs from the Western I/You relationship, which prioritizes individuality. This principle is encapsulated by the philosophy of 'ubuntu', and a transcription of the I/We relationship could come close to the principle of 'I am because we are'. Next, a relational epistemology encompasses all the knowledge systems that are constructed based on interconnectedness. Consequently, relationship knowledge is shared with everyone. Regarding axiology, the attention is centered on relational responsibility, considerate depiction, and mutual assimilation. Renee Pualani Louis (2007:133) elaborates by stating that a relational axiology is encompassed by the four Rs: relational accountability, respectful representation, reciprocal appropriation, and rights and regulations during the research process. Finally, taking methodology into account, the impetus of an indigenous paradigm lies in decolonizing methodologies. According to Chilisa, this includes challenging researchers to directly participate in the discussions concerning the representation of historically oppressed and muted people. It incorporates questions on ownership rights and representation (Chilisa 2012:35ff.).

2.2 Positionality

In order to contribute to decolonizing research as a graduate student writing a Master's thesis dealing with colonial legacies, one must reflect on one's own positionality and act accordingly throughout the research process. Coming from and growing up in a central European country, I am aware of my privileged position within academia, as well as my limited possibility to access theories of African scholars due to lack of representation. To break down these barriers, the following research results comprehend the main aim of the research process as well as, in particular, the qualitative research being conducted in this thesis.

Within academic work on how to decolonize research, the majority of scholars stress the importance of cooperation between researchers from the Global South and the Global North. While the matter of location is often centered in these debates, the following concepts highlight that it is not so much about the location of the researcher but rather about their critical reflection processes. In the article 'Decolonizing Methodologies in Qualitative Research: Creating Space for Transformative Praxis', the Canadian scholars Vivetha Thambinathan and Elizabeth Anne Kinsella (2021) highlight the importance of countering oppressive research practices and stress professional responsibility of scholars in order to achieve this necessity. Before elaborating on their reinvention of qualitative research practice, they affiliate with other scholars like Mirjam B. E. Held (2019) in asking important questions such as: "Is it in fact possible to decolonize research when using pre-existing colonial paradigms created by Western scholars?" (Thambinathan/Kinsella 2021:2). While no direct answer is given by either of the academics, they see it as an absolute necessity to avert the production of knowledge that is centered solely on Western perspectives, and consequently agree on jointly co-created paradigms between Indigenous and Western researchers. Referring to Frantz Fanon's explanation of 'decolonization' as a "program of complete disorder" (Fanon, 1963: 36), their objective is to clarify that there is no established model or practice for the decolonization research methodology. Therefore, they draw upon existing theories of decolonization as well as ongoing scholarly conversations to propose four practices on how a decolonized practice of qualitative research could possibly be exercised (Thambinathan/Kinsella 2021:3). These practices are employed especially throughout the interview process of this thesis.

The first of their four practices deals with "Exercising Critical Reflectivity" (ibid.). As a researcher, one must be aware of often invisible unequal power relations between the researcher and the participant. Reflective behavior towards these imbalances, however, must not convert into simplistic confessions that lack depth or nuance. As part of questioning one's own position within these unequal power relations, Thambinathan and

Kinsella advocate examining one's "epistemological assumptions" as well as one's "situatedness with respect to the research" (ibid.). This reflective behavior consequently enables "reciprocity and respect for self-determination", which the scholars list as the second practice. Generally, in the relationship between the researcher and the participant, reciprocity, in terms of continuous negotiation for example, plays a crucial role. To contribute to the achievement of reciprocity and self-determination within research, the act of listening is of utmost importance to generate an open dialog. The scholars add theories of other researchers, who highlight the importance of effective listening, and explain that it translates into accountability and should be an active instead of passive process (McDermott 2013). Valuing self-determination and reciprocity are essential components and assist in approaching research from a humanistic perspective. Conducting research within social sciences often means collaborating with people from different geographical locations, cultures, and lived experiences. Thereby, 'Embracing Other(ed) Ways of Knowing', which is the title of the scholar's third practice, is indispensable for respectful and 'decolonized' research practice. As summarized by Thambinathan and Kinsella, being sensitive towards cultural diversity is not enough. Decolonizing research requires each researcher to reflect on their own worldview, which could still be influenced by colonial legacies, and to consequently notice differences to the worldview of the participant. This third practice, therefore, revolves around understanding and integrating other ways of knowing, namely those of research participants. Working together collaboratively while conducting research through for example interviews leads the way in pursuing ethical and significant research rooted in solidarity. The scholars summarize that demonstrating humanity by proving cultural competence, reflectivity, and compassion is of utmost importance. Furthermore, they warn not to reduce their research partners according to checklists as this would resemble the problematic and over-simplistic process of 'Othering' (Thambinathan/Kinsella 2021:4ff).

Taking all the aforementioned practices into consideration, the scholars complete their concept with a practice titled as 'Embodying a Transformative Praxis', in which they emphasize the researchers' role as activists. Many scholars, according to Linda Smith, actively decide to dedicate themselves to promoting social justice and collaborating with communities who are on the fringes of society (Smith 2021:260). Thambinathan and Kinsella cite Margaret Kovach (2010), who stresses that every researcher has the responsibility to create opportunities for the incorporation of decolonizing perspectives. One must be careful, however, to not use the word and concept of 'decolonization' inconsiderately. In summary, they agree with other scholars that academia needs to change, which can be approached by being reflective, by conducting community-engaged research, by taking reciprocity seriously, and by taking on the role of activists (Thambinathan/Kinsella 2021:6), which are practices I aim at incorporating in my research to the best of my ability.

2.3 Afrocentricity

Last but not least, forming part of the title of this Master's thesis, the concept of 'Afrocentricity' plays an important role throughout the whole research project as it is central in decolonizing research. Molefi Kete Asante (2021), an Afro-American scholar who is known for his writings on 'Afrocentricity', defines it as a philosophical paradigm that highlights the importance and autonomy of individuals from African cultures in their historical and cultural contexts. Therefore, applying this concept in the process of scientific writing means focusing on the perspectives of African peoples and polities. Described as a critique of Eurocentric attitudes, the counter-hegemonic, anti-racist 'Afrocentric' idea, especially in education, aims at repositioning "Africans in the center of their own historical experiences rather than on the margins of European experiences" (Asante 2021:84). Hence, it is about liberating the mind from the idea that Africa is the student and Europe the teacher, and consequently necessary for African people to perceive themselves as central figures within their own history (ibid.:84ff.).

Not to be confused with 'Afrocentrism'[2], 'Afrocentricity' is not achieved by merely being interested in or writing about Africa, its people, and issues. According to Danjuma Modupe four theoretical aspects must be given in order for a piece of scientific work to be called 'Afrocentric', namely 'agency', 'centeredness', 'psychic integrity', and 'cultural fidelity' (Modupe 2000). Asante integrated Modupe's concept and introduced five characteristics by himself, which he describes as important guidelines for every researcher. First, researchers must be aware of their psychological location, which is determined by symbols, rituals, or signs. Moreover, it's important to consider the appropriateness of a question being asked in its context, as a Eurocentric question may not be relevant in an African setting. In the case of this thesis and its research question, the goal is to conduct 'Afrocentric' research, thereby aiming at discussing

[2] The term 'Afrocentrism' has been used by opponents of the 'afrocentric' idea and described as a "religious" movement rooted in an essentialist paradigm (Asante 2021:87).

theory and papers produced by African scholars and stakeholders. Secondly, the 'subject-place' of Africans in economic, social, and political fields must be found, and its implications for questions related to gender, sex, and class must be detected. Thirdly, Asante highlights the need to defend "African cultural elements as historically valid in the context of art, music, education, science and literature" (Asante 2021:89). The assumption that Africans have not participated in cultural, scientific, and economic activities, needs to be challenged and the opposite must be proven. Next, Asante takes up the aspects of centeredness and agency and defines them as important stepping stones in eliminating pejoratives about Africa. In this process, lexical refinement and the thoughtful use of certain terms are of utmost importance. Lastly, the scholar names the revision of the collective text of African people as an indispensable component of 'Afrocentric' research. Due to the long history of negative portrayals of Africa, it is crucial to correct this text for true liberating knowledge (Asante 2021:88f.). By saying this, Asante refers to Cheikh Anta Diop, a scholar from Senegal, who was "confident that the history of Africa could not be written without throwing off the falsifications of Europe" (ibid.:91). Based on Asante's paper, Diop was committed to reintroduce the African as a subject within the framework of African history and culture, surpassing the efforts of others (ibid.).

Although Molefi Kete Asante speaks directly to African scholars as well as to those in the diaspora, the 'Afrocentric' concept needs to be applied by researchers no matter their location when writing about topics related to African issues. Concerning the matter of location, Asante highlights four areas of investigation in 'Afrocentricity', namely 'cosmology' (myths, literatures, etc.), 'axiology' (values), 'aesthetics' (art, dance, etc.), and 'epistemology' (question of knowledge; proof of truth) (Asante 2021:93). Overall, 'Afrocentricity' can be seen as both a corrective, when centering African people with agency and accountability, and a critique, by denying hegemonic behavior in academia, and is supposed to challenge paradigmatic inequalities as part of general colonial legacies (ibid:92), which represents a continuing topic and objective of this Master's thesis.

3 Decolonization Theories

The primary objective of this Master’s thesis is to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the meaning and implications of ‘Decolonizing Tourism’ in Kenya. To achieve this goal, it is crucial to engage with global scholarly debates on decolonization in order to discern the specific interpretation of ‘decolonizing’ within the context of this research. This chapter aims to provide a conceptual and contextual framework by addressing key terms and concepts that are essential for understanding subsequent chapters. Accordingly, the chapter focuses on academic discussions surrounding ‘colonialism'' ‘imperialism’, ‘decolonization’, ‘coloniality’, and ‘decoloniality’. A thorough examination of these topics is warranted as it is imperative to grasp the historical processes of colonialism, ongoing imperialistic practices, and their influence on decolonization efforts in formerly colonized regions. Generally, it is crucial to acknowledge the indispensable contributions of prominent scholars such as Frantz Fanon, Achille Mbembe, and Ngugi wa Thiong’o, whose theories will be synthesized and interrelated. The subsequent subchapter will explore concepts derived from colonial legacies, namely ‘neocolonialism’, ‘coloniality’, and ‘decoloniality’. The latter two concepts, originally formulated by Latin American scholars but adapted to the African context by Sabelo Ndlovu Gatsheni, hold particular significance in defining the notion of 'decolonizing' within the context of this Master’s thesis.

3.1 Imperialism vs. Colonialism

Imperialism and Colonialism share some characteristics like a general subjugation of certain people by another. The terms are therefore often lumped together and treated as homogenous concepts, but they are two different practices and need to be treated and applied as such (Young 2016:15). Subsequently, a discussion on the definition of these terms will be carried out in a dual way based on Frederick Cooper’s (2005:92f.) concept of ‘analytical’ meaning (=working towards comprehending and elucidating a specific phenomenon) and ‘native’ meaning (=depending on specific situations and considerations of identity politics), which will be renamed as ‘contextualization’ in this thesis due to the controversy of the original term.

3.1.1 Analytical Meaning: Empire, Imperialism, Colonialism, Colonization

Empire and Imperialism

As with the overall comparison between 'imperialism' and 'colonialism', the terms 'imperialism' 'empire', and 'imperial', are all terms that should not to be totalized. Historically, 'empire', which is described by Michael Collins (2016:1) as "a political and economic structure", came first, with the Spanish creating the first modern European empire, by ruling over much of the American continent. Based on the analysis by Robjert J.C. Young (2016:25f.), this counted as a pre-capitalist and "bureaucratic form of imperial rule" (ibid.:26) which was based on the model of the more ancient Roman and Ottoman empire. At that point, the adjective 'imperial', was used as a synonym for 'magnificent' or employed to signify supremacy, transcendence, or the highest source of power (ibid.). The following 'British Empire', which Kenya later on formed part of, also pre-dated British imperialism as it lacked the complete ideological implications that would today define the term 'imperialism'. According to Eric J. Hobsbawm (1987:60), 'imperialism' as a term only became apparent in the late 19th century. Definitions of 'imperialism' are generally multi-faceted, as they entail a broad spectrum of power dynamics characterized by subjugation and dependence. In the English language, however, two meanings of the term have crystallized: initially, it referred to a political structure centered on conquest and occupation, but as of the early 1900s, it gradually acquired a Marxist interpretation denoting an overall framework of economic supremacy, where political dominance was optional but not obligatory (Young 2016:26). To encompass these definitions, 'imperialism' is marked by the exertion of authority via either outright subjugation or, more recently, via political and economic influence. This being said, "'imperialism' signified an ideology and a system of economic domination" (ibid.:27), which today is associated with the United States. In other words, 'imperialism' includes a practice of creating political and economic structures including its cultural and ideological justification (Collins 2016:1). According to these definitions, 'imperialism' as a global political system has not yet ended and continues to rule to roost.

Colonialism and Colonization

Defining colonialism is a difficult task due to its historical variations, difference in geographical scope, complex dynamics, and interpretive differences. Colonialism has taken different forms throughout history and across regions, making it challenging to encapsulate in a single definition. The motivations behind colonialism, including economic, religious, political, and cultural factors, vary. Furthermore, differing perspectives and interpretations of history contribute to the lack of a universally accepted definition. In general, colonialism, which comprises an extensive array of diverse forms and practices executed among different societies for many centuries, is defined as the material circumstances of political domination over subjugated populations by the former colonial powers of Europe (Young 2016:15f.). While ‘imperialism’ operated from the center of power and can be analyzed as a concept, ‘colonialism’ “functioned as an activity from the periphery”, was “economically driven” and sometimes “hard to control” (ibid.:17). Therefore, it needs to be analyzed as a practice rather than as a concept (ibid.). In ‘Discourse on Colonialism’, Aimé Césaire, the Martinican poet, writer, and politician, provides a critical analysis of colonialism by arguing that it is not only an economic or political system but also a comprehensive project of domination and dehumanization that entails the destruction of the colonized people's culture, history, and identity (Césaire 1955:2f.).

It is common that two types of practices of colonialism are distinguished, especially when discussing the subjugation of the African continent starting with the Berlin Conference in 1854-85. On the one hand, colonies were established for different types of settlements, while on the other hand, colonies were directly or indirectly administered and enacted for the purpose of economic exploitation. Young stresses that proposing a general theory is hardly possible due to the historical and geographical diversity (Young 2016:17). Further, the British scholar illustrates the fact that analyses of one scholar, for example Frantz Fanon, were and are often used to analyze colonial situations in different locations and at different times. Consequently, Young highlights that the “uniformity or diversity of colonialism depends very largely on your own subject position” (ibid.:18).

Before moving on to the contextualization, another term needs clarification, namely ‘colonization’, which is often confused with ‘colonialism’. According to Young, the term ‘colonization’ was initially employed by Europeans to refer to the movement of communities, and not to indicate subjugation of indigenous peoples or acquisition of resources. Colonization was, thus, often the result of a need to export people to escape a possible population excess and to prevent or export social conflict. Consequently, indigenous economies were transformed on the basis of capitalist Eurocentric values.

The main aims of colonization were trade, economic exploitation, and settlement, while the transfer of cultural values was often a secondary consequence (ibid.:19ff.). To sum up the difference, colonialism refers to the practice of a foreign power exerting political and economic control over a region or people, while colonization is the act of establishing a settlement or colony in a new area, often with the intention of creating a permanent presence and exploiting its resources.

3.1.2 Contextualization: British Colonial Imperialism and Colonization Processes

In order to contextualize the ongoing conceptual discourse, the examination is now directed towards British Imperialism and its manifestations through colonialism and colonization in Kenya. As this thesis concentrates on the case study of Kenya, a country in East Africa subjected to the colonization efforts of Great Britain over a certain time period, it is imperative to acknowledge that delving into this topic comprehensively could constitute an extensive thesis in its own right. Consequently, the aim here is to furnish a concise yet informative overview, serving as an introduction for the subsequent chapter and the exploration of the case study. Furthermore, it should be emphasized that by solely focusing on Kenya's colonial history, the country's rich heritage before Europeans intervened should not be dismissed. Its elaboration would, however, simply go beyond the scope of this thesis.

Great Britain's role in the development of imperialism during the 19th and 20th century was both influential and subject to varying perceptions among its citizens. During the 1880s and 1890s, 'imperialism' arose as a positive concept in British society through its association with the concept of an imperial federation of British-descended individuals residing in settler colonies. This entailed constructing a fresh British national identity encompassing all individuals of Anglo-Saxon ancestry residing throughout the globe to ultimately form a union of a constantly expanding British diaspora. In the 19th century, Great Britain possessed the most extensive empire, and, although it kept on expanding throughout the second half of the century, 'imperialism' started to be regarded as "unethical to the British model" (Young 2016:34). Despite resistance from within Britain and little support of liberals, the British Empire evolved into a dispersed system of military and administrative power that became progressively difficult to govern and restrain. Nevertheless, Young states that "by the 1880s, imperialism had become by general consensus a common policy in the British establishment, and the overall guiding strategy of British foreign policy" (ibid.:40). Césaire criticized this hypocrisy of Western civilization, which highlights the values of liberty, equality, and fraternity while simultaneously justifying and perpetuating the oppression and exploitation of non-Western peoples (Césaire 1955:9f.).

It was during this time, namely the late 19th century, that the gradual colonization process of what today is known as Kenya started, which set the course for colonialism. Between 1884 and 1885, the Berlin Conference took place, in the course of which the rules for the division of Africa were laid down. Two years later, an Anglo-German Agreement allocated different territories in East Africa between the two countries and designated Kenya as part of the British sphere of influence (Ogot 1981:ix). The British swiftly implemented a framework to exert their political authority and proceeded to restructure the economic landscape in Kenya according to their own interests (Wa Kinyatti 2019:ix). In 1887, the 'Imperial British East Africa Company' was founded by Sir William Machinnon based on the concept of the 'East India Company' (Ogot 1981:76), which laid the foundation for similar exploitational practices in India. Around a decade later, in 1895, the British declared a 'Protectorate' over the region situated between the coastline along the Indian ocean and Uganda. In the first few years, the headquarters relocated many times before settling in Nairobi in 1907. After this establishment was made, initiatives were undertaken to attract European settlers to the region (ibid.:5f.). Numerous European settlers, including farmers, game hunters, missionaries, and others, were granted exclusive privileges to exploit and pillage the resources and labor for their own benefit (Wa Kinyatti 2019:23f.). At the same time, agreements like the 'Masai Agreements' were made in 1904 and 1911, which included the relocation of the Masai to make room for white settlers (Okot 1981.:x). Further, inhuman and racist laws were enforced like the 'Crown Lands Ordinance' of 1902 and 1915, through which the indigenous population was deprived of its land rights and reduced to the status of tenants, consequently being subject to the arbitrary control of the white oppressor (Wa Kinyatti 2019:23f.). The colonial process also represents the starting point of the incorporation of the region into the global capitalist system. Alongside capitalist production, indigenous household commodity production continued to exist, which led to social contradictions. Another contribution to social fractions were punitive expeditions (1895-1905), which included the appropriation of African resources. Looted livestock was distributed among collaborators, sold to white settlers, or kept by the government. African labor was coerced, and a Hut Tax was imposed. By

1910, Africans paid 40% of total revenue in taxes and import duties, compared to 20% paid by settlers (Ogot 1981:6). These taxes were collected by 'local puppet chiefs', as Maina Wa Kinyatti describes them, who operated under British indirect rule[3] as an extension of the colonial state apparatus. By means of looting and corruption, these individuals not only gained wealth but also became influential allies of British imperialism within their own country, leading to the emergence of capitalist class divisions within the African population (Wa Kinyatti 2019:26). Finally, 1920 represents another decisive year within the colonization process as the 'Protectorate' was turned into a 'Colony' of Kenya (ibid.:x-xi). One could say the colonization process had finished by this point, but further practices to oppress Kenya's inhabitants followed, most often as a reaction to defensive movements. These incidents and developments, however, will be covered within the elaboration of the contextualization of 'decolonization' in the next subchapter.

3.2 Decolonization

As in the previous section, the focus will first be placed on the analytical meaning of the term 'decolonization' before dealing with the contextualization in the case of Kenya's decolonization process. As part of the analytical elaboration, a summary of academically well-known decolonization debates will be provided and interrelated.

3.2.1 Analytical Meaning: Decolonization

Within the fields of history and social sciences, there are commonly recognized differences between the aforementioned terms and concepts (empire, imperialism, colonialism, and colonization). According to Michael Collins, 'decolonization', however, is a "roomy concept that encompasses actions and processes that counteract, reverse, or terminate all of these phenomena" (Collins 2016:1). Christopher J. Lee elaborates by saying that "decolonization equally constitutes a complex dialectical intersection of competing views and claims over colonial pasts, transitional presents, and inchoate futures" (Lee 2010:8). Hence, an elaborate discussion of the term is important.

To build a foundation for this conceptual debate, a distinction needs to be drawn between the two main understandings of 'decolonization'. Among many scholars,

[3] Indirect rule was a governance system employed by the British and other colonial powers to exercise control over their colonial empires. This approach involved leveraging existing indigenous power structures as a means of administration. Under this system, the day-to-day governance and administration of both small and large regions were delegated to traditional rulers, who gained prestige, stability, and protection as a result.

Olúfẹ́mi Táíwò, whose arguments in his recent book 'Against Decolonization. Taking African Agency seriously' will be dealt with at a later point, points out this difference very clearly. He distinguishes between 'decolonization1', as the process of "making a colony into a self-governing entity with its political and economic fortunes under its own direction" (Táíwò 2022:3), and 'decolonization2', which manifests in various forms and concerns "any aspect of an ex-colony that mirrors what was there during the colonial period" and "is treated as evidence of continuing colonization" (ibid.). At this point, it is important to note that in this thesis, the understanding of 'decolonization2' is applied, which does not undermine the importance of also discussing the first meaning. The authors that will be discussed first have different comprehensions of 'decolonization', which are often regarded as postcolonial theories. While this part will be dedicated to a general discussion and contextualization of 'decolonization1', the following subchapters titled 'neo-colonialism' and 'coloniality/decoloniality' will deal specifically with the second understanding, namely 'decolonization2'. A clear distinction in this case, however, is, once more, difficult to draw.

To general questions like what gets decolonized, Jennifer Wenzel (2017:450f.) provides an answer by saying that it is the colonies that get decolonized, meaning that 'decolonization' generally involves political aspects and matters of state sovereignty. According to Michael Collins (2016), 'decolonization' in the 20th century was chiefly based on the concept of national self-determination, which suggests that colonized individuals had the right to govern themselves and organize into a nation. Therefore, demands for decolonization were frequently linked to involving the public in decision-making processes and implementing democratic forms of governance (Collins 2016:3). What will follow is a summarized debate on theories of decolonization by well-known scholars.

3.2.2 Scholarly Debate on Decolonization

On a more general level, the postcolonial scholar Frantz Fanon is regarded as a key thinker on decolonization. His theories, which are not free from ambiguities, are based on political and psychological effects of dehumanization and oppression (Fanon 2001), which are still relevant when analyzing colonial legacies around the globe. In a Manichean world, in which it was distinguished between colonizer and colonized, it was partly through language, Fanon argues, that the native population was oppressed and consequently dehumanized, which lead to an eventual eradication of their cultural traditions and practices (ibid.:32f.). Nevertheless, the native population is never entirely persuaded of their subjugation, and Fanon states that at this moment of realization, the natives recognize their humanity and prepare to fight for independence. In essence, the violent imposition and maintenance of colonialism inevitably lead to its own demise, which is one of Fanon's most well-known arguments. He nevertheless stresses the fact that violence should not be an end in itself, but means to higher ends, namely in paving the way to self-realization by telling people "where they are going and why" (ibid.:156). Only then, an independent national identity can be constructed. His warnings of the dangers of one repressive system being replaced by another, is the reason why he is treated as a subject of matter in decolonization debates concerning the meanings of 'decolonization1' as well as 'decolonization2'.

Another prominent postcolonial scholar discussing the topic of 'decolonization' is Achille Mbembe, who, based on Fanon's thoughts, takes an interdisciplinary approach on the topic and furthermore gives specific examples on what needs to be decolonized. For Mbembe, "the time of decolonization had a double character" (Mbembe 2015) as a time of both closure and possibility, namely to "realize a shared project" by "standing up on one's own and to create a heritage" (Mbembe 2021:3). He criticizes colonialism as well as its legacies and argues that decolonization is not simply a matter of political independence, but also something that requires a fundamental transformation of the structures of power and knowledge that underpin the global order (Mbembe 2021). In his public lecture called 'Decolonizing Knowledge and the Question of the Archive', Mbembe provides an overview on what a decolonization project ought to look like. On the one hand, it entails practicing critique of the prevailing Eurocentric academic model to combat 'epistemic coloniality', a Latin American concept which will be dealt with at a later point of this chapter. On the other hand, he extensively discusses colonial legacies within knowledge production, institutions like universities, archives as well as public spaces and its architecture, and stresses the importance of decolonizing these particular fields (Mbembe 2015). Decolonizing the mind forms part of these discussions and is not only addressed by Mbembe but also by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, a Kenyan author and academic, whose book 'Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature' is prominently cited in decolonization debates. He defines 'decolonization' not as a singular event, but as an ongoing process to seeing oneself clearly (Thiong'o 1981:87), which Mbembe (2015) explains in relation to oneself and to other selves with whom the universe is being shared. Both scholars agree that “decolonization is not an end point”, but the “beginning of an entirely new struggle” (ibid.), in which Africa needs to be placed at the center. Finally, Ngugi's conclusions have practical applications in which he highlights the usage of native languages. According to him, among other institutions, universities in particular ought to prioritize African languages (Thiong’o 1981) to turn them into a creative repository of concepts (Mbembe 2015).

Amilcar Cabral, another influential anti-colonial thinker and key figure in the liberation struggle of Guinea-Bissau, agreed with other scholars that what I call ‘decolonization1’ in this thesis “nearly always brought independence, but almost never liberation” (Wenzel 2017:460). He took a completely different stance on violence and revolution than Frantz Fanon, but agreed with Mbembe that decolonization was not just about achieving political independence but also about creating a new society based on the values and aspirations of the people. While Cabral states that the struggle for liberation was primarily a political and material one, the culture that has survived from colonial history has become an essential component of the liberation movement (Young 2016:285). He argues that, since culture is the outcome of a society’s history, the process of national liberation inevitably involves a cultural dimension (Cabral 1973:43f.). Overall, Amilcar Cabral's ideas on decolonization emphasize the importance of cultural liberation, and the creation of a new society based on the values and aspirations of the people.

As mentioned before, decolonization processes with the goal of independence from the colonial power were in many cases, including Kenya never fully completed as Arno Sonderegger puts it:

> “It is well to remember that decolonization was not complete – not even in political terms, for the sovereignty of African post-colonial states remains precarious, much less in the economic spheres of world capitalism.” (Sonderegger 2015:15)

Therefore, a closer look at discussions on what Olúfẹ́mi Táíwò named ‘decolonization2’ is important for the further course of this thesis. For several decades, scholars have commonly conceptualized ‘decolonization’ as an antithesis of ‘colonization’. As a consequence, scholars from diverse fields, ranging from anthropology to philosophy and beyond, typically interpret decolonization as an effort to counteract the adverse effects of colonialism on contemporary society, academia etc. (Emmanuel 2022:304). While the Nigerian philosopher Olúfẹ́mi Táíwò fiercly rejects the indiscriminate application of ‘decolonization2’ as he argues that “you cannot decolonize in a situation where ‘the colonial world’ is no more” (Táíwò 2022:25), many (already mentioned) scholars, dedicated academic papers and books to disclose the many facets of decolonization and what needs to be decolonized. Continuing with the philosophical debate concerning ‘decolonization’, the current question revolves around whether or not to abandon the ‘decolonization-trope’ altogether. As mentioned before, Táíwò argues in favor of a rejection of an indiscriminate application of what he labels as ‘decolonization2’, which he calls a ‘catch all idea’ that harms scholarship on and in Africa. According to Abímbọ́lá Olúwafẹ́mi Emmanuel (2022), Táíwò names at least four arguments to prove his point. Táíwò's first argument is that African advocates of decolonization have not presented a clear vision of what a philosophy that is completely decolonized would entail. Secondly, with regard to language, Táíwò argues that those advocating for decolonization in Africa may have set unrealistic expectations regarding what can and should be accomplished. The third argument presented by Táíwò is that the prevailing understanding of colonialism in the African dialogue on decolonization does not adequately acknowledge the complexity and historical context of the concept. Fourthly, Táíwò proposes that decolonization has become a new barrier, initially emerging to dismantle the walls of Eurocentrism within philosophy, but now obscuring more than it reveals (Táíwò 2019). In his book ‘Against Decolonization. Taking African Agency seriously’, Táíwò (2022) elaborates on his arguments and stresses that one needs to focus on African agents and how they contributed to current issues, rather than solely blaming colonial related processes. He believes that a continuation of the narrative as if Africans are still living in the colonial world is unhelpful to find solutions. Aspects like forming states and constructing societies were not “part of the colonial world” (ibid.:30.) and should therefore not be “the domain of decolonization” (ibid.). Rather than blaming colonial legacies, Táíwò, along with Obafemi Awolowo, point to the failure of African leaders to exercise their agency after the ‘decolonization1’ process was done (ibid.:29).

Táíwò’s position leads to counter-reactions from philosophers like Toyin Falola (2023) and Abímbọ́lá Olúwafẹ́mi Emmanuel (2022), who argued based on Kwasi Wiredu’s arguments. Emmanuel, a philosopher from Ghana, for example, has a clear answer to what the goal of decolonization is and thereby challenges Táíwò’s first argument. According to Wiredu, decolonization means “cultural and philosophical synthesis” (Emmanuel 2022:311) and consequently involves a process of discerning what to discard and what to retain from both indigenous and foreign (colonial) schools of thought, which can lead to the affirmation or rejection of ideas that are of colonial origin (ibid.). At the same time, he argues that there is no favoritism towards African concepts solely based on their African origin as “there is no assumption that what comes from Africa is necessarily true” (Wiredu 2002:54). He suggests that African philosophers must be willing to question and challenge traditional beliefs in order to develop a more self-critical and reflective approach to philosophy (Wiredu 1980). The overall objective is thus to promote a culture of introspection and critical evaluation, regardless of the result of decolonization efforts (Emmanuel 2022:311). Regarding Táíwò’s second argument, Wiredu might acknowledge that recommendations concerning decolonization are not easy to implement (ibid.), but this complexity must be accepted and embraced as it is the solution to the problem. Overall, contrary to Táíwò, Wiredu stresses the need to decolonize African intellectual traditions and to develop a more self-critical and reflective approach to education, philosophy, and other fields of inquiry.

Toyin Falola argues that Táíwò has effectively warned against the loss of the integrity of the original intentions and meaning of decolonization but states that Táíwò’s perspectives are contradicted by African realities and experiences (Falola 2023:125). Táíwò’s arguments imply that making progress is possible by ignoring capitalism. Falola, however, stresses that

> “while colonialism, as it was practiced, seems to have ended, the ghosts of its reign still haunt Africa, and if it takes decolonisation to correct the ills and subjugate the system put in place, then it makes perfect sense to do so.” (ibid.:126)

The colonialism-like situations, which are argued to be the reason for “the ills” and which the mentioned authors aim at decolonizing, are described within the concept of ‘neo-colonialism’, which will be conceptualized in the following subchapter. Prior to that, ‘decolonization1’ processes in Kenya will be historicized. As with the previous subchapter on the contextualization of colonial processes, a thorough elaboration on the extended decolonization processes would go beyond the scope this thesis. The goal is to simply provide a concise and understandable overview to guarantee comprehensibility in the next chapters.

3.2.3 Contextualization: Decolonization in Kenya

Defensive behavior and resistance in Kenya towards colonial structures and its administrators date back to the late 19th century, coinciding with first British colonial undertakings in the region. They aimed at defending their land as well as themselves, but the British defeated them in the beginning (Wa Kinyatti 2019:ix). For this reason, namely the continuous and fierce resistance of local inhabitants, I will start by elaborating on what I would call occurrences during colonial times and not just on decolonizing events around the official independence in December of 1963. Maina Wa Kinyatti, a Kenyan historian and former political prisoner under Kenya's second president Daniel arap Moi, argued that the anti-colonial resistance underwent four stages (ibid.). The initial phase between 1884 and 1920 witnessed primary resistance against the establishment and solidification of colonial rule, with the British encountering courageous defiance throughout the region. In many instances, the leaders of these early resistance movements consisted of pre-colonial rulers from diverse backgrounds (ibid.). From 1920 until 1940, the second stage of resistance took place. During that time, an alliance between peasants and workers in opposition to colonial occupation emerged as those groups were increasingly discontented due to being expropriated of their land and imposed limitations on the cultivation of cash crops (ibid.). Furthermore, given the circumstances prevailing both globally and within the country after World War I, it became imperative to exhibit certain manifestations of open, democratic resistance (Wa Kinyatti 2019:28). As a consequence, anti-imperialist schools and churches were constructed, and there was a heightened focus on cultural nationalism, with the language Kiswahili evolving into the uniting language. Further, the first political organizations were established like the East African Association, the Kikuyu Association, and the Kikuyu Central Association. The Kikuyu Association was established in 1919 by chiefs in Kiambu with the aim of safeguarding their land from further encroachment. Starting from 1925, the Kikuyu Association exerted significant influence over the Kiambu Local Native Council, transforming it into a progressive institution focused on agricultural advancements, educational expansion, and the elimination of customs believed to hinder development. The government supported the Kikuyu Association due to its comparatively moderate stance in contrast to the more militant Kikuyu Central Association (KCA), which emerged from the East African Association in 1925 as a pan-Kikuyu political organization. In general, the Kikuyu Central Association operated within the colonial framework and placed greater emphasis on self-help initiatives rather than self-government. Its primary objective was to foster unity among the Kikuyu people (Ogot 1981:105f.). According to Maina wa Kinyatti, the third stage, from the mid-1940s until October of 1952, witnessed the emergence of two social tendencies. The first tendency was that of compromise, where conservative Africans obtained positions of leadership granted by the colonial regime, which included pro-British teachers, church leaders, etc. The second tendency comprised anti-colonial nationalists who sought to dismantle the colonial system through electoral politics and to establish a non-racial democratic society. The fourth and last stage (1952-1963) encompassed the emergence of armed independence movements, which included the formation of the 'Mau Mau Movement' (MM) and the 'Kenya Land and Freedom Army' (KLFA), which had one main goal of completely eliminating the colonial system (Wa Kinyatti 2019:x). The Mau Mau was a radical movement founded in the 1940s that promoted the utilization of organized violence to advance its political agenda and resist colonial oppression. Mau Mau and the moderate Kenya African Union party, which was formed in 1944 and attempted to be more inclusive than the Kikuyu Central Association, shared similar political objectives with little distinction between them. The primary divergence lay in political strategy, as Mau Mau leaders asserted that political objectives could only be achieved through armed conflict (Ogot 1981:135). For the first time, a revolutionary program of action was formulated, defended, and safeguarded by armed forces of the Mau Mau. They offered an alternative to the liberal leadership within the Kenya African Union Party led by Jomo Kenyatta. The movement successfully mobilized oppressed masses, establishing a visible and confrontational anti-colonial movement. They trained disciplined and dedicated cadres of revolutionary activists who were prepared to make sacrifices for the attainment of national independence. Furthermore, the Mau Mau movement introduced guerrilla warfare not only in Kenya but also across the rest of the continent. In October of 1952 a state of emergency was declared, followed by a state of war during which many people died (Wa Kinyatti 2019:x). As a response, the British occupiers employed various means to suppress the armed resistance in Kenya. However, they were unable to fracture the revolutionary unity of the people. Eventually, in 1963, after years of bloody armed struggle, British imperialism conceded, leading to the establishment of an independent state in Kenya. The leadership was granted to Jomo Kenyatta, a right-wing pro-imperialist, instead of those who had bravely fought and sacrificed their lives. The freedom fighters who had made significant sacrifices were disregarded and marginalized by the Kenyatta regime. Instead of being rewarded, Kenyatta employed brute force to disarm and humiliate them (ibid.:xi). Moreover, according to Wa Kinyatti, Kenya's first president and his KANU party (Kenya African National Union) collaborated with Anglo-American imperialism, which, in Wa Kinyatti's opinion, meant that "independence was betrayed" and "the country turned into the backyard of world imperialism" (ibid.), which is a topic addressed within the concept of 'neo-colonialism'.

3.3 Neo-colonialism

The term 'neo-colonialism' can be traced back to Kwame Nkrumah, a pan-African figure and first president of Ghana, who published a book titled "Neo-colonialism. The last stage of Imperialism" just eight years after the West African countries had become independent from Great Britain. According to him, 'old-fashioned colonialism' still affects African countries, resulting in neo-colonial perseverance, which Nkrumah not only sees as the last but also the most dangerous stage of imperialism (Nkrumah 1965:ix). A more elaborated definition of the term goes as follows:

> "The essence of neo-colonialism is that the State which is subject to it, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside." (ibid.)

The consequences can be noticeable in different forms, but in general, neo-colonial states, which are often directed by the former colonizing country, are controlled in monetary and economic terms and are "not masters of its own destiny" (ibid.:x). In other terms, the ruling class forms an exclusive group that collaborates with the requirements of global capital to advance their own interests. Therefore, Robert Young, who emphasizes Kwame Nkrumah's strikingly detailed economic analysis, argues that international influence is maintained through economic tools, like the control of capital and technology as well as the regulation of global financial institutions such as the WTO (World Trade Organization), the IMF (International Monetary Fund), or the World Bank (Young 2016:45f.)

In his book, Nkrumah names a process as a reason for the development of a neo-colonial agenda. He argues that rich, capitalist countries faced much pressure after the two world wars and a solution was seen in creating welfare states to soothe class conflicts. To finance this undertaking, it was attempted to continue with pre-war systems, in which money was made from colonial possessions, which consequently led to colonial wars and the independence of many African countries. By maintaining a 'neo-colonial' system, the former colonizers would continue to benefit economically and consequently also socially. Moreover, Nkrumah suggests that through neo-colonialism, social conflicts of capitalist countries are exported (ibid.:xii-xiii). Another explanation is provided by Young, who sees lost agency of the formerly colonized in the process of colonial rule to independence as one reason why a neo-colonial system was able to be established (Young 2016:45).

Important questions to ask are why former colonizing countries, next to exporting social conflicts, are still interested in maintaining a close relationship with their former colonies and how this dependency is maintained. Nkrumah argued that Africa's rich primary resources, like petroleum, iron, gold, etc. are among the reasons. The lack of industrialization in African countries, which Nkrumah describes as an historical accident for which it must pay a huge price, opened the door for foreign countries to take advantage of the countries' rich resources (Nkrumah 1965:6). In the case of Kenya, which was a settler colony without major primary resources except for agricultural products, the situation was and still is not any different, as the market price for primary products is controlled by the wealthy consumer countries (ibid.:11). Nkrumah states that while agriculture is important, first and foremost, industrialization and industrial output are required (ibid.:7). Economic and financial ties through monetary zones and foreign banks based in France and Great Britain are related to controlling the market price. While Nkrumah recognized the importance of foreign private investment, he emphasizes the necessity to carefully regulate these processes to ensure that it is channeled into significant areas of growth, without relinquishing control of those sectors to foreign entities (ibid.: 220f.). Another neo-colonial trap listed and explained by Nkrumah concerns multilateral aid for development, which has an effect of establishing and maintaining control. Furthermore, he mentions the consequences of neo-colonialism reaching religious, political, ideological, and cultural spheres, but does not elaborate on them (ibid.:239f.). As a solution to all of these dependencies, the pan-Africanist highlights that "only a united Africa through an All-African Union Government"[4] (ibid.:36) could counter "the workings of neo-colonialism" (ibid.).

The consequences of neo-colonial structures on the tourism industry, which constitutes the main focus of this thesis, are not mentioned by Nkrumah, most certainly because the tourism industry only started to develop a few decades later. Therefore, the next subchapter will deal with a more recent and broader concept based on Latin American

[4] The 'All-African Union Government' is a reference to what today is the African Union.

theories on coloniality and decoloniality, in which aspects of the aforementioned theories on decolonization and the concept of neo-colonialism are reflected.

3.4 Coloniality/Decoloniality

The linked concepts of 'coloniality' and 'decoloniality' were first established by Latin American thinkers like Walter Mignolo, Anibal Quijano, Nelson Maldonado-Torres, and Ramon Grosfoguel. By adding on or countering postcolonial theories of decolonization in the 20th century, they aimed at contributing to resolve what Grosfoguel called "the most powerful myth of the 20th century" (Grosfoguel 2007:219), namely "the myth of decolonization" (ibid.), which is described as the "notion that the elimination of colonial administrations amounted to the decolonization of the world" (ibid.). As before, I will attempt to divide this subchapter into analytical and contextual meaning. Using this approach, I can solely focus on defining the concepts, based on works by the scholars mentioned above, before dedicating myself to the contextualization of these concepts in the case of Africa, and specifically Kenya, based on academic papers and books written by Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni from Zimbabwe.

3.4.1 Analytical Meaning

To contextualize this theoretical debate, a distinction needs to be drawn between the aforementioned postcolonial critique by Fanon and Mbembe and the concepts of coloniality/decoloniality, which can be traced back to the difference between the cultural and the decolonial turn. The cultural turn, which generated postcolonial critique, refers to a focus on and emphasis of cultural phenomena that is primarily centered around Euro-North American modernist traditions and perspectives (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2019:20). Coloniality and decoloniality, on the other hand, are predicated on the following decolonial turn, which was "born at the borders of Euro North American-centric modernity and fueled by a decolonial spirit of epistemic disobedience and delinking" (ibid.). It involves bringing to light what and who is often invisible and examining the systems that create this invisibility. According to Mignolo, this necessitates "interventions at the level of power, knowledge, and being through varied actions of decolonization" (Mignolo 2007:262). He furthermore states that this process results in a 'border gnosis' or 'border thinking', which describes a new perspective on the contemporary global system (Mignolo 2000:3ff.). Ramon Grosfoguel elaborates by defining 'border gnosis' as an "epistemic response of the subaltern" (Grosfoguel 2011:23), which is not based on a complete rejection of modernity but rather on the cosmologies and epistemologies of the subaltern. According to him, it involves redefinitions of humanity, knowledge, human rights, democracy, and further aspects (ibid.).

Coloniality

Continuing with definitions, the notion of coloniality emerged from the perspectives and regional histories of political theorists in Latin America (Mignolo 2014:47) and generally describes the ongoing impact of historical colonialism as well as how it continues to dominate and affect contemporary society (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2019:2). Nelson Maldonado-Torres argues that coloniality differs from colonialism as the latter "denotes a political and economic relation" (Maldonado-Torres 2007:243), while coloniality refers to the continuity of power structures that arose as a consequence of colonialism. Therefore, he states that "coloniality survives colonialism" (ibid.), and that it is something we breathe in every day at all times as modern subjects as it persists in various facets of modern life, including literature, academic standards, cultural norms, popular beliefs, national identities, personal goals, and numerous other domains (ibid.).

Anibal Quijano identified four key aspects of 'coloniality', namely 'control of economy', 'control of authority', 'control of gender and sexuality', and 'control of knowledge and subjectivity' (Quijano 2007:173). Additionally, Grosfoguel places the aspect of 'race' at the center of 'coloniality' as a fundamental concept that upholds unequal power dynamics on a global scale and promotes a Eurocentric perspective that purports to be universally applicable (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2019:13). Further, he states that "global coloniality cannot be separated from Euromodernity" (ibid.:10), which he describes as "racially hierarchized, patriarchal, sexist, Christian-centric, heteronormative, capitalist, military, colonial, imperial and modern form of civilization" (ibid.:11). 'Modernity' was furthermore included by Mignolo in his analyses as he created a formula: modernity/(de)coloniality, which includes two fundamental interpretations. On the one hand, modernity and coloniality are two sides of the same coin, which means that there is no modernity without coloniality and vice versa. On the other hand, the emergence of decoloniality can be attributed to the conditions produced by modernity/coloniality (Mignolo 2014:27).

After elaborating on both 'neo-colonialism' and 'coloniality', definite similarities can be found between the two concepts. Quijano, however, argues that 'coloniality' represents a deeper and more pervasive form of colonial domination that shapes social relations, knowledge production, and cultural practices in Latin America and beyond. He sees neo-colonialism as a more recent form of domination that operates through economic and political means (Quijano 2000). To demonstrate how deep the concept is, I will continue by elaborating on 'decoloniality', before moving on to describing the three main pillars: 'Coloniality of Power', 'Coloniality of Knowledge', and 'Coloniality of Being'.

Decoloniality

'Decoloniality' can generally be seen as a reaction to the failure of 20th century decolonization approaches to deliver a postcolonial and post-racial world. Based on arguments by the Latin American thinkers, Ndlovu-Gatsheni states that the main goal of 'decoloniality' is to "to unmask, unveil, and reveal coloniality as an underside of modernity and to problematize its rhetoric of progress, equality, fraternity, and liberty" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2019:15). Therefore, it is both a critical theory and political initiative that aims to untangle former colonies from the pervasive effects of colonialism (ibid.). Mignolo, on the other hand, states that decolonial thinking is "neither a discipline nor a method" (Mignolo 2014:34). He suggests it is rather a "way of being, thinking, doing, and becoming in the world" (ibid.), which should include two basic tasks, namely the "analytic of coloniality" and "building communities based on a vision of a society that delinks from coloniality (ibid.:35). What sets 'decoloniality' apart from other critical social theories is its origins and historical lineage, which go beyond Europe, and the perspectives and voices it prioritizes in its analysis. As the problem lies in the tendency to elevate one region's knowledge to a universal status, another defined goal of 'decoloniality' is to mobilize and deploy non-Western ways of thinking, doing, and acting to contribute to construct somewhat of a pluriversality (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2019:15ff.).

The process of achieving these goals can be described with the verb 'to decolonize'. The crucial question of what it means to decolonize X or Y, which builds the main question of this chapter, is also asked by Walter Mignolo. According to him, one needs to start the process with oneself, as we all have, no matter the location, been westernized. This analysis and recommendation on how to decolonize was inspired by Frantz Fanon's emphasis on 'self-decolonization', by which he meant the "self-awareness of decolonial subjects" (Mignolo 2014:37). Consequently, in order to decolonize, Mignolo suggests pursuing theoretical and analytical work alongside advocacy efforts and institution building. This should be carried out in a communal and generational way as decolonial healing requires a community in process and progress, which ultimately strives for “disavowal, devaluation, and disobedience” (ibid.:38). The Latin American scholars agree on three overall aspects that are all entangled and intrinsic to ‘decoloniality’, namely ‘Coloniality of Power’, ‘Coloniality of Being’, and ‘Coloniality of Knowledge’.

Coloniality of Power, Knowledge, and Being

First, ‘Coloniality of Power’, is in essence a framework employed by decolonial theorists to examine the power dynamics of the contemporary global system and its functioning (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2019:16). According to Anibal Quijano, the concept “is based upon racial social classification” (Quijano 2007:171), and although he sees ‘race’ as a key element, he argues that ‘Coloniality of Power’ extends beyond the issue of discriminatory social interactions based on race (ibid.). Consequently, Grosfoguel (2007:217) coined ‘Coloniality of Power’ to describe the complex and diverse global systems of subjugation and exploitation based on hierarchies of race as well as, sex, politics, knowledge, economy, spirituality, and language. Additionally, Mignolo once again points out to the invisibility, in this case of ‘Coloniality of Power’, caused by the rhetoric of modernity, which includes terms like salvation, progress, or development. The role of decolonial thought is to make the effects of it visible (Mignolo 2014:25f.).

‘Coloniality of Knowledge’ focuses on “epistemological inequalities and politics of knowledge generation as well as questions who generates which knowledge and for what purpose” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2019:16). This aspect helps us to comprehend how local and traditional knowledge systems have been marginalized and relegated to the fringes of society (ibid.). Mignolo (2007:162) even argues that non-Western epistemologies have been silenced. To sum up, ‘Coloniality of Knowledge’ deals with how colonial modernity suppressed modes of imagining, seeing, knowing, and knowledge production (Ndlovu-Gathseni 2013:33).

Lastly, ‘Coloniality of Being’, which emerged from discussions concerning the impacts of ‘Coloniality of Power’ across various spheres of society (Maldonado-Torres 2007:242), is an effective analytical instrument for examining the dehumanization and depersonalization experienced by those who were colonized and experience its effects

(Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013:34). In this case, points of origin are colonial mindsets, which underpinned a racist and imperialist perspective that involved a Manichean, misanthropic, and skeptical outlook toward the humanity of colonized individuals, even questioning the existence of their souls. A process in which 'race' once more played a central role, colonized individuals were deprived of their humanity, and suffered from alienation but also depersonalization (Maldonado-Torres 2007:251).

3.4.2 Contextualization: Coloniality and Decoloniality

In his book 'Empire, Global Coloniality and African Subjectivity', Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni focuses on the application of the (de)coloniality concept on the African continent, whose citizens perceive the legacies of colonialism, fueled by racism and modernity, on a daily basis. He considers today's structural crisis as global and multi-layered, in which capitalism results in continuous exploitation and exhaustion of Africa's, resources to the fullest extent (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013:vii-viii). The foundation, Ndlovu-Gatsheni argues, is a maintaining imperial structure, which is demonstrated in topics like material resources, securing hegemony, and exerting control over territory and individuals. The core of what he calls the 'real existing empire' revolves around a contemporary global structure characterized as "racialized, colonial, capitalist, patriarchal, hierarchical, asymmetrical, imperial, hetero-normative, hegemonic, Christian-centric, neo-liberal and Euro-American-centric" (ibid.:10). Applying the three aspects of coloniality, he states that through Coloniality of Power, Knowledge, and Being, African subjectivity has been maintained until today. One aspect worth mentioning at this point, through which colonial legacies are being maintained, deals with the process and theories of development. To put it simply, the concept of development implied the restructuring and conversion of African communities to align with the requirements, requests, and mandates of colonial administrations (ibid.:86). When African nationalism emerged in the second half of the 20th century as a response to colonialism, it crystallized that "development occupied the heart of the African national project" as "every African state was busy implementing some five-year development plan in one form or another" (ibid.:90f.). This specific aspect of coloniality will be dealt with extensively in the following chapter.

Only with a comprehensive understanding of the shape and essence of the empire, one is able to grasp current African conditions (ibid.:29). In his opinion, African and diasporic initiatives like African Renaissance, Negritude, or African Humanism have failed to disrupt these powerful traps and constraints of the neo-colonial demands of the global system, which is why his demand is to work towards creating another world, new knowledge, and another logic open to pluriversality based on decolonization predicated on the concept of decoloniality (ibid.:xii). However, Ndlovu-Gatsheni also includes arguments by Toyin Falola (2005), who emphasizes African agency and thereby heavily criticizes Africans in power, who “have contributed to the destruction of Africa in a myriad of ways: corruption, inept leadership, authoritarianism and tyranny, civil wars, endless political crises, and lack of concern for the poor” (Falola 2005:3f.). Nevertheless, issues like corruption can, according to Ndlovu-Gatsheni, once again be traced back to colonialism and its logistics, which was corrupt itself (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013:85). Therefore, he summarizes that only by applying the concept of decoloniality through decolonizing colonial legacies, a “graduation from coloniality into liberation” and from “objecthood into subjecthood” (ibid.:232) is possible.

While this was a more general contextualization of coloniality/decoloniality in the case of African countries, a more specific elaboration on coloniality in the context of tourism in Kenya will be provided at a later point.

4 The Evolution of Kenya’s Tourism Industry

After expanding upon the theoretical foundation of the thesis, namely the decolonization debate, taking a closer look at tourism in Kenya and therefore the introduction of the case study is next on the agenda. When tracing the development of the country’s tourism industry, one needs to start at the end of the 19th century, when British colonial administrators first started to settle in the East African region. What follows is an elaboration of developments, which formed the industry to what it is today. This chapter is divided in two time periods. First, early foundational developments from the beginning of the 20th century until independence of Kenya in 1963 are at the center off attention. Subsequently, post-colonial developments until today will be dealt with in detail, which include the discussion of tourism as part of development plans, the essential role of marketing and the first government after independence, the origins of beach tourism, as well as challenging contemporary developments (i.e. terrorism, pandemics etc.).

4.1 Early Developments

In this subchapter, the main focus is laid on the origin of Kenya’s tourism industry from the late 19th century until the country’s independence in 1963. To be able to delve deep into its development, however, a constructive discourse on the meaning of important terms needs to be conducted, which includes information which will be elaborated on in the following subchapter. While everyone has certain images in mind, when thinking about safari tourism, one needs to highlight the evolution of its meaning especially in the case of Kenya, which is often described as the originating country of this type of tourism. Safari-tourism combines the concepts of ‘safari’ and ‘tourism’ and requires clarification to understand its meaning. First, the word ‘safari’ originates from Kiswahili and derives from the Arabic verb ‘safara’, which means to unveil, discover, or embark on a journey. Beyond its linguistic roots, the term enjoyed a distinct association with East Africa. The English explorer Richard Burton introduced the term ‘safari’ in 1859, using it to refer to any caravan or expedition traveling in East Africa. British colonial administrators also embraced this usage to describe their official tours in the region. A shift in the meaning of ‘safari’ occurred when hunters from Europe and the US arrived in East Africa around the turn of the century and adopted the term for their hunting expeditions. This adoption of the term by English-speaking sportsmen reinforced its emergence as a specific type of tourist activity. The concept of a ‘safari’ combined African and Arab travel methods with European notions of hunting. Moreover, the word ‘safari’ gained widespread recognition in 1908 when Abel Chapman (1908), an American tourist, used it in the title of his book, “On Safari: Big-Game Hunting in British East Africa.”. The popularity of the term increased further following Theodore Roosevelt’s publicized safari in 1909-10. Secondly, ‘tourism’, a somewhat ambiguous term, generally refers to travel pursued for pleasure and as an escape from everyday realities (Zuelow 2016:9). Consequently, Trevor Mark Simmons (2015), author of the dissertation titled ‘Selling the African Wilds: A History of the Safari Tourism Industry in East Africa, 1900-1939’, defined safari tourism as something that encompasses traveling for pleasure through the African wilderness for activities such as hunting, wildlife observation, and photography. To apply this definition in this thesis for analyzing the decolonization of today’s tourism industry in Kenya, one must exclude hunting, as a legal prohibition was imposed in 1977, which means that all forms of hunting have been illegal ever since (Wildlife Act 2012).

The origin of Kenya’s safari tourism industry can be traced back to the first decades of the 20th century. Equatorial eastern Africa was part of a region that had remained largely unknown to Europeans until the late 19th century. Before then, mainly Arab and African caravans had traveled through the area in search of ivory and slaves (Mayaka/Prasad 2012:49). European explorers and missionaries only started to arrive when Europe began to establish its presence in Africa. European leaders, motivated by both competition with other empires and territorial ambitions, made plans for colonization following the Berlin Conference in 1884-85 (Simmons 2015:1ff.). The few people traveling to the region, who John S. Akama (1999:11) described as adventurers motivated by a desire to venture into uncharted territories, compared it to a paradise from the Pleistocene era, where an abundance of pristine landscapes and a diversity of wildlife species thrived undisturbed by modern civilization. The land stood out because of its vast plains, park-like landscapes, dense forests, and rugged mountain peaks as well as thousands of wild animals that inhabited this region. These characteristics proved to be the region’s natural endowment, which laid the foundation for a continuously developing safari tourism first established by British administrators (Simmons 2015:1ff.).

Although tourism and hospitality infrastructure were not yet existent (Akama 1999:11), big-game hunting and traveling to exotic locations started to become more popular around the turn of the century. Early hunters influenced the image of the safari as their accounts were published in books and articles. Moreover, fictional stories about hunting adventures in Africa had a significant impact on popularizing African safari. These tales, consequently, attracted people seeking to relive the adventures, which lead to safaris becoming a viable business pursuit (Simmons 2015:29ff.). Therefore, the period around the turn of the 19th to the 20th century marked the emergence of the safari as an organized economic industry, resulting from a combination of historical changes. Furthermore, the origins of East Africa's modern tourism industry can be traced back to the establishment of dedicated and all-inclusive safari companies around 1904. These pioneering companies, such as Newland, Tarlton, and Co., Ltd., marked a significant development by encompassing the entire business of outfitting, organizing, and guiding tourists with the help of these so-called 'white hunters'. This shift signaled that safaris were no longer a niche activity for a few amateurs or independent adventurers but had become a profitable business capable of attracting foreign visitors on a larger scale (ibid.: 42f.). In relation to this topic, Akama (1999:12) emphasizes the pivotal role played by external interest groups in the inception and progression of tourism, which consequently means that the establishment of tourism and hospitality infrastructure in Kenya primarily originated from European settlers and the colonial government.

The expansion of the safari industry from 1900 onwards was facilitated by favorable conditions (natural endowments) as well as political, economic, technological, and social changes that made East Africa an appealing and viable destination for tourists. The attractiveness of East Africa as a tourist destination in the early 1900s was primarily due to its abundant and diverse wildlife, as well as its scenic landscapes. The region was home to a wide variety of big-game species, which captivated visitors with their uniqueness and abundance. Further, East Africa's geology and topography contributed to its rich wildlife attractions, with high plateaus, mountains, plains, and the Rift Valley creating diverse habitats. The highlands, such as Nairobi, offered a favorable climate with cool temperatures and pleasant weather throughout the year. Furthermore, the region's location near the equator resulted in minimal seasonal variation, except for the monsoonal rains. The absence of extreme weather events and the inhospitality to disease-carrying mosquitoes and tsetse flies added to the appeal. Additionally, East Africa's open savannahs and navigable roads facilitated easy observation and travel, distinguishing it from other wildlife destinations that were often located in dense forests or inaccessible regions plagued by diseases. Overall, the combination of abundant wildlife, picturesque landscapes, pleasant climate, and ease of exploration made East Africa a highly attractive destination for tourists (Simmons 2015:82ff.).

Political, economic, technological, and social changes can be attributed to the establishment of the British colonial state in the East Africa Protectorate, which played a crucial role in the development of the safari tourism industry. Politically, following the first ‘International Conference for the Preservation of the Wild Animals, Birds, and Fishes of the African Continent’, held in London, the colonial state introduced comprehensive game laws in 1900 and established the colonial ‘Game Department’ to enforce them, ensuring the preservation of wildlife as an economic resource for tourism (ibid.:104). Related to social changes, British colonial rule brought a certain level of security that European travelers sought. The presence of the British administration and the perceived security provided by imperial rule reassured tourists considering safaris. Simmons, however, highlights that this does not imply that tourist travel in Africa was inherently unsafe without imperial rule, but rather that the British administration provided a sense of security to the tourists of that era (ibid.:94f.). What can be classified as technological changes, are projects that aimed at improving traveling infrastructure. East Africa benefited from a transportation revolution that made the region accessible to travelers, leading to the growth of its tourism industry. The completion of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the construction of the Uganda Railway between 1895 and 1902, along with the development of various transportation infrastructures such as roads, bridges, tramlines, and cart-paths, as well as the advancements in steamships and combustion engines, enabled a larger number of people to travel both to and within East Africa quickly and with relative ease (ibid.:123). Improved infrastructure also attracted a greater number of white settlers, who had an impact on the region’s economy and consequently affected the development of the tourism industry as they dominated the industry. These advancements provided the industry with essential services and amenities. However, such endeavors often marginalized local communities, and benefited primarily white settlers. While, at the beginning, there was limited social interaction between early Western explorers and the indigenous population of Kenya, the dominant form of interaction between the ruling class and the governed, as soon as the tourism industry gradually developed, could be described as a hierarchical ‘Master-Servant’ relationship. Consequently, Kenyans were predominantly employed in subservient roles such as porters, cleaners, waiters, cooks, and guards (Akama 1999:12).

Another occurrence which gave rise to the region's tourism industry, was Theodore Roosevelt's aforementioned visit to the region. The publicity surrounding the safari was immense, fueled by his prominent status and his recent retirement from the presidency of the United States. The safari was intended to commemorate the conclusion of his political career, despite his premature announcement of retirement from politics. Classified as a renowned scientific institution, he obtained special authorization to collect a substantial quantity of animal specimens, ostensibly for scientific research. Roosevelt's adventures, with immense publicity and prestige, generated a significant surge in business for the East Africa safari industry (Akama 2004:142).

4.1.1 Tourism in the Interwar Period

Tourism practically came to a standstill during the years of World War I. Despite being far away from the main theaters of conflict in Europe, the British East Africa Protectorate and its regional allies engaged in their own campaigns against German East Africa from 1914 to 1918. Consequently, the safari industry suffered greatly as a result of the war. The influx of visiting hunters ceased abruptly when hostilities broke out, and the industry remained dormant until well after the war had ended. Unlike other industries that can adapt and continue operating during wartime by producing essential goods and services, tourism is particularly vulnerable to global instability and war. Furthermore, by 1916, conscription was enforced in the colony, compelling local settlers and many indigenous Africans, including those employed in the safari industry, to redirect their efforts towards military service (Simmons 2015.:241). The crisis within the newly established tourism industry exacerbated later on by the Great Depression of the 1930s, was particularly severe for regions heavily reliant on primary product exports, such as East Africa. The aforesaid pioneering safari firm Newland and Tarlton suffered the consequences of the postwar economic crises in East Africa and ultimately collapsed in the early 1920s. Additionally, the 1920s and 1930s brought a series of droughts, locust infestations, and recurring crop diseases to East Africa, further worsening the situation (ibid.:239).

Despite the odds, the interwar years became known as the "golden age of the hunting safari in Kenya" (Simmons 2015:238) and laid the crucial foundation for the start of mass tourism after World War II. The safari industry underwent transformative developments with the increasing adoption of automobiles as the primary mode of transportation being one of them. This innovation revolutionized travel methods by replacing human and animal transport, making previously distant locations accessible. Motorized safaris brought efficiency and convenience, enabling a level of luxury previously unimaginable, but it also resulted in foreign visitors observing the African land from a controlled perspective, maintaining a significant distance from the local culture. However, the introduction of automobiles also posed challenges. Traditionalists felt that the romance and allure of the traditional caravan safari were diminished and that hunting became too easy and accessible, leading to a loss of adventure and excitement. Obtaining spare parts for safari vehicles was difficult, and breakdowns and setbacks added to the already substantial costs of safaris. Moreover, motorized transport had a detrimental impact on wildlife conservation, facilitating both legal sports hunting and illegal poaching. Consequently, it grew increasingly harder for authorities to monitor wildlife due to motorized safaris. In response to concerns about wildlife conservation, the Kenya Game Department established regulations and laws regarding motor vehicles and airplanes in the early 1930s (Simmons 2015:257ff.). Further, the introduction of wildlife photography contributed to the growth of Kenya's safari industry, even as the number of hunters declined. The photographic safari offered similar adventure and thrill without harming wildlife, making it more appealing to a broader range of tourists. This new form of tourism also led to significant conservation efforts, including the establishment of national parks in Kenya, laying the foundation for the subsequent growth of wildlife tourism after 1945 (ibid.:343f.). Moreover, professional and publicity associations emerged to organize and enhance the industry, building a foundation for future progress, despite being in their early stages by the outbreak of World War II. For example, in 1938, the formation of the ‘East Africa Publicity Association’ marked a significant development in the region’s tourism industry as it became the first government-sponsored agency dedicated to promoting tourism in the region. Although short-lived due to the interruption of World War II, the association played a crucial role in engaging governments and establishing a framework that led to the establishment of the ‘East African Tourist Travel Association’ after the war, which became instrumental in promoting tourism in the postwar years after 1945 (ibid.:463f.). Last but not least, literary accounts further contributed to the growing fascination with the region. In addition to written works, other forms of media, especially wildlife documentaries, captured a substantial amount of attention. They played a significant role in providing the visual imagery that the Western world associated with safaris (Akama 2004:142).

4.1.2 Post War Period

After the World War II, the overall number of tourists grew rapidly worldwide because of the interrelation between several developments. Reflected in numbers, international tourism revenues increased significantly between 1950 and 1998, climbing from US$2.1 billion to US$445 billion. Concurrently, the number of international tourist arrivals surged from 25.3 million to 625 million (Milne/Ateljevic 2001:371). Reasons for this, first of all, included that many countries in the Global North witnessed economic recovery and growth in the post-war period, resulting in increased income for individuals. This economic prosperity played a vital role in fueling the growth of the tourism industry as people had more resources to spend on leisure activities, including travel (Yale 1995:37). Furthermore, the development of commercial aviation and improvements in transportation infrastructure, significantly reduced travel time and made tourism more accessible to the masses. This transportation revolution expanded the possibilities for long-distance travel and made it easier for people to explore different destinations as the international flight schedule was improved and flight-ticket prices were reduced (Akama 1999:16). Additionally, the growing establishment of professional tour and travel companies as well as their enhanced marketing resulted in enhanced offerings for travelers (ibid.:37). Another reason concerns social and cultural changes including increased leisure time, a shift towards consumerism, and the emergence of a middle class. To sum up, these external factors, combined with rising levels of disposable income in the northern regions, led to a rapid growth and expansion of international travel to tourist destinations in nations like Kenya (Akama 1999:16).

Next to external factors, several endogenous developments during this era further supported the industry's growth in the colony. A notable feature emerged with the advent of organized and institutionalized initiatives dedicated to the development and promotion of tourism, involving both the public and private sectors. The colonial government, for instance, embarked on formulating and enacting diverse legislations aimed at safeguarding Kenya's exceptional wildlife resources. This was attempted by realizing the pre-war objective of creating national parks. The government proceeded to establish these pioneering national parks in Kenya, like for example in Nairobi in 1946, Tsavo in 1948, Amboseli in 1947, and Mt. Kenya in 1949. In accordance with state legislation, these parks were designated as protected public lands, specifically reserved for the propagation, safeguarding, and preservation of objects possessing aesthetic, geological, prehistoric, historic, archaeological, or scientific significance (ibid.:13).

Furthermore, to support the promotion and marketing of tourism, the government, which collaborated with conservation organizations, established the 'East Africa Travel and Tourism Association' (EATTA) in 1948. Its task comprised the coordination, the development, and the promotion of tourism in East Africa. Soon, EATTA got in contact with the 'International Union of Official Travel Organizations' (IUTO) and consequently embraced internationally recognized guidelines for tourism management, promotion, and marketing. EATTA actively undertook the collection, organization, and dissemination of crucial information about East Africa's tourism attractions and existing hospitality facilities, which was subsequently disseminated to tour and travel companies, as well as to travelers coming mostly from Western regions (ibid.:13f.). The association furthermore supported the implementation of new tourism policies with the objective of transitioning tourism activities in the recently established national parks and reserves from hunting to wildlife viewing and photography – a process which was already set in motion during the last decades of the first half of the 20th century. They envisioned that by promoting and marketing wildlife viewing and photography, instead of the initial big-game hunting expeditions, which was primarily geared for affluent individuals, they would encourage a greater influx of international tourists to visit Kenya. Another reason for this new focus was that wildlife viewing and photography were typically accessible to a broader demographic, especially individuals from the middle-class. Nevertheless, despite the progressive growth of the industry, which was triggered by this strategic shift in policy, the absolute count of tourist arrivals remained comparatively modest during the 1950s (ibid.:14). This information can be extracted from the following table.

Year	*Arrivals* (in '000')	*Revenue (million Kenya shillings)*
1955	39.54	–
1956	40.46	–
1957	43.12	–
1958	41.20	–
1959	44.93	–
1960	35.80	86
1961	42.04	96
1962	49.92	110
1963	61.35	144
1964	65.54	140
1965	81.45	–
1966	106.52	–
1967	117.15	290
1968	262.00	328

Source: Ouma, 1982

Figure 1_Tourist arrivals and revenue, 1955-1968 (Ouma 1982)

According to John S. Akama (1999:14), the primary hindrance during the 1950s was the constrained availability of tourism and hospitality infrastructure, both along the coast and within the wildlife parks and reserves. Further, international air transportation was not adequately developed, which is something that changed during the 1960s when Kenya became independent.

4.2 Post-colonial developments

The global phenomenon of growing tourist numbers also positively affected Kenya as a tourist destination. Next to external factors, which were elaborated on at the beginning of the previous subchapter, the upward trend of incoming tourists can, however, also be ascribed to endogenous factors, which included several interventions of the newly established government. Due to global economic changes, tourism was among the industries being focused on by the new government. Upon achieving independence in 1963, the newly formed nation was motivated to acquire foreign exchange revenues to support economic growth and foster employment opportunities. Initially, the country relied heavily on the export of cash crops, particularly coffee and tea, as the primary sources of foreign exchange earnings. However, from the mid-1960s onwards, the prices of agricultural commodities in the global market experienced a significant decline compared to manufactured goods. Against the background of the prevailing national and international socioeconomic circumstances, the Kenyan government recognized an invaluable and already existent ‘commodity’ within the country. This ‘commodity’, namely tourism, held the potential for effective marketing, leading to the generation of highly sought-after foreign exchange and the creation of employment opportunities. Kenya’s distinctive tourism features, specifically the remarkable wildlife heritage and the pristine white beaches, could be a magnet for many tourists (Akama 1999:15). Additionally, this approach, as Devin Smarts (2017:137) highlights, also further intertwined Kenya's economy within a global network of communication, capital, and consumer preferences. Because of its significance for the country’s overall development of the tourism industry, ‘tourism as development’ as well as the country’s distinct marketing strategies will be elaborated on in the following subchapters, before continuing with the industry’s past and contemporary challenges.

4.2.1 Tourism as Development in Kenya

To benefit economically from the aforementioned comparative advantages (abundance in wildlife, natural heritage, etc.), the government implemented targeted policy measures. Kenya's first president Jomo Kenyatta, together with the conservative faction within his party, the Kenya Africa National Union (KANU), drew upon global notions of development and modernization, while also embracing the indigenous moral economy of honor derived from individual diligence and perseverance. In doing so, they advocated for economic development through the implementation of a liberalized capitalist system. Within the framework of Kenyatta's ideology and politics on development, tourism fit in perfectly. According to a sessional paper published by KNAU in 1965, the aim was to foster economic growth in Kenya through the encouragement of foreign direct investment. Within this framework, tourism played a pivotal role, as it was perceived as a significant avenue for generating foreign exchange and capital, thus serving as a crucial component in their envisioned trajectory for Kenya's economic prospects (Smart 2017:138).

In pursuit of these objectives, the Kenyan government undertook a comprehensive strategy aimed at fostering the development of a state-supported tourism industry. As a primary step, attention was directed towards resolving transportation-related challenges. This included the modernization of the Nairobi International Airport, today JKIA (Jomo Kenyatta International Airport), as well as the airport in Mombasa, today 'Moi International Airport', to enhance the scope of air travel options (ibid.:139). Moreover, the introduction of charter flights directly to Mombasa, which were made affordable to gain a wider target group, is among the reasons why the tourist influx, especially at the coast, gained momentum (Sindiga 1996:427). Another part of the agenda was dedicated to the establishment of an efficient road infrastructure, which was deemed necessary to facilitate transportation between Nairobi and the game parks, as well as between Mombasa and beach hotels. As a result, road construction endeavors were initiated to enable ground transportation to both existing tourist sites and newly emerging destinations. Devin Smart names another measure targeted towards increasing the tourist numbers, namely the facilitation of visa requirements (Smart 2017:139).

To further support the realization of these objectives, the Kenyan government established specific institutions, like the 'Kenya Tourism Development Corporation' (KTDC) in 1965, which can be described as a quasi-government organization. This corporation played a role in developing new tourist destinations by planning and creating new accommodation opportunities. Its tasks comprised being in charge of tourism investment initiatives as well as overseeing the establishment and functioning of tourism and hospitality infrastructure. As part of this, the KTDC was directly involved in providing loans to Kenyans so they could invest in small-scale hotels and lodges. Further responsibilities included the promotion and marketing of Kenya as a tourism destination. Consequently, the Corporation was involved in the opening of promotion offices outside the country (Ondicho 2004:12f.). The recognition of the tourism industry’s potential, moreover, resulted in the establishment of the ‘Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife’ (MTW) in 1966. The newly formed ministry was responsible for the comprehensive development and execution of the nation's tourism policy. Additionally, it was authorized to manage Kenya’s tourism as well as wildlife resources and was required to collaborate with other government departments (such as agriculture, forestry, commerce, and transport) whose actions could impact the advancement of tourism resources (Akama 1999:15).

As a consequence of these actions, the overall number of tourists traveling to Kenya grew as this new tourism policy endeavor effectively drew foreign and multinational investments into the Kenyan tourism sector. The majority of these investments were concentrated geographically in key regions for the industry, namely Mombasa, Nairobi, as well as renowned wildlife parks and reserves, including the Maasai Mara, Tsavo, or Amboseli (Akama 1999:15). Starting as a limited venture catering to the privileged few in colonial times, tourism in post-colonial Kenya witnessed an astounding surge as it tapped into the expanding global mass tourism market. Throughout the 1960s, the industry exhibited an annual growth rate of 20 %, resulting in 100,000 tourists visiting Kenya by 1967 (Figure 1), a significant increase from around 60,000 tourists during the last year of colonial rule. The number of international tourist arrivals had, thereby, experienced a remarkable increase, surpassing a ten-fold growth from 1960 to the late 1980s (KNBS 1989). The official tourism policy of the government even aimed at exceeding one million international tourist arrivals by the turn of the century. Consequently, the tourism industry turned out to be the dominant economic sector, surpassing the combined earnings from coffee and tea in the 1990s (Figure 2), which were Kenya’s most important export crops at that time.

Year	*1990*	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*
Coffee	4.07	4.05	4.37	7.70	5.87
Tea	6.94	7.80	8.93	19.87	–
Tourism	10.66	11.88	14.26	14.44	14.05

Figure 2_Earnings from coffee, tea and tourism (billion Kenyan Schillings) (KNBS 1995)

Furthermore, the cumulative revenue from tourism in that time period accounted for more than 12% of Kenya's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), while the sector itself offered over 120,000 direct employment opportunities for the local population (Akama 1999:17).

4.2.2 The Role of Marketing

The aforementioned post-colonial developments were supported by the government's decision to promote Kenya's tourism product. In the immediate aftermath of attaining independence, the Kenyan government embarked upon an extensive international marketing campaign, which involved a substantial amplification of information dissemination regarding Kenyan tourism across Europe and North America (Smart 2018:135ff.). The overall aim was to generate interest and, more significantly, attract a larger number of tourists to the recently independent nation. By 1969, the government had established official offices in cities such as London and New York, which were primarily staffed by Kenyan individuals who were entrusted with the responsibility of promoting a carefully crafted image of 'Kenya'. These agencies served as the institutional intermediaries that facilitated it for Western tourists to access various destinations across the globe. Furthermore, driven by financial constraints, mobile teams traveled to various small towns and communities within Europe and the US to actively promote Kenya's tourism offerings as it was financially unviable to conduct a mass advertising campaign in Western media. The focal point of these small-town visits were informal gatherings with tourism officers designated as 'Kenya Evenings', with the goal of evoking the essence of Kenya through sensory stimulation by showcasing documentaries or offering Kenyan food. Moreover, tourism officers attended travel and trade conventions within North America and Europe. These marketing strategies, ordered by the Kenyan government, facilitated direct interactions between government representatives and (Western) travel agents throughout Europe and North America, thereby enabling Kenya to establish crucial connections for enhancing its global visibility as a sought-after tourism destination. Another marketing strategy included

Western journalists, who partnered with airlines, hotels, and tour companies. As in the first half of the 20th century, they played an essential role in advertising Kenya especially throughout the 1970s (ibid.:140ff.).

These mechanisms facilitated the emergence and dissemination of a 'global idea of Kenya', which permeated into and circulated across various regions of the world. According to Devin Smart, these campaigns of the 1960s and 1970s allowed us "to see the new forms of African agency that emerged in the postcolonial world" (ibid.:145). However, this endeavor was constrained by the economic and political realities inherited from the colonial era. Smart highlights that the global construction of tourism discourse regarding Kenya was influenced by a particular combination of lingering colonial structural inequalities, which allowed white voices to represent Kenyans within government realms also concerning the tourism industry (ibid.:146). Soon, all-inclusive package tours started to be marketed and sold mainly through privately-owned travel agencies. In these travel arrangements, prospective visitors pay overseas tour companies for comprehensive travel packages, encompassing various components such as air tickets, food, accommodation, and recreational activities (Sindiga 1996:29). Furthermore, it was significant for this time period that Kenya transitioned from modest-scale public and private ventures to the development of extensive tourism projects, primarily funded by multinational investors from abroad. Further, this time period was marked by increased ownership and management of the country's tourism and hospitality facilities by foreign and multinational companies as well as the establishment of prearranged tour packages. Notable international tourism companies, including Hayes and Jarvis, Universal Safari Tours, or France Russo, substantially invested in Kenya's tourism and hospitality industry. These multinational companies established top-tier hotel and lodge facilities, particularly in popular destinations such as Mombasa, Nairobi, and the country's popular national parks and reserves. At the end of the 20th century, it was estimated that more than 50% of Kenya's major tourism and hospitality establishments in prominent tourist centers were under foreign ownership and management (Akama 1999:17). The reliance on foreign-direct investment, the trend of full-package tours sold by foreign travel agencies, as well as the high percentage of foreign ownership within Kenya's tourism industry eventually led to what economists call 'leakages'. This means that "large percentages of the revenue generated through tourism [...] are repatriated out of the host country" (Smart 2018:140).

What becomes apparent after elaborating on ‘tourism as development’ and the country’s marketing strategies, is that there is continuous substantial external control over nearly all aspects of Kenya’s tourism product, including its design and packaging, provision of hospitality services, transportation and communication arrangements, as well as tourism product promotion and marketing (Akama 1999:18), an aspect, which will specifically be focused on in the next chapter.

4.2.3 The Origins and Development of Tourism at the Coast

Historically, prior to the advent of tourism, the coastal region had enjoyed a favorable economic position due to its trading links with upcountry regions and foreign destinations. The maritime trade extended across the East African Coast, the Middle East, and present-day India. Numerous small trading hubs thrived along the coastline, with Lamu, Malindi, and Mombasa emerging as prominent examples. Eventually, Mombasa evolved as the primary port, benefiting from its superior natural harbor, widely regarded as the most advantageous among all ports along the East African Coast and therefore the nation of Kenya (Hoorweg et.al. 2000:5). After the establishment of the colonial administration in 1895, minimal changes in the region followed initially. Mombasa served as the administrative center of the British East Africa Protectorate. In 1901, the Uganda railway, connecting Mombasa and Lake Victoria, was completed, and, shortly thereafter, Nairobi became the capital. Consequently, the colonial government’s development efforts focused increasingly on areas with white settlers in the inland regions, thereby narrowing the significance of the Kenyan coast to Mombasa's role as a transit point for people and goods (ibid.). This, however, changed in post-colonial times.

After elaborating on the early developments of Kenya’s ‘Safari-Tourism’ and the growing tourism industry in post-colonial times, it becomes evident that the region’s tourism industry demonstrates a notable spatial concentration. On the one hand, wildlife-based tourism has been predominantly located in upcountry protected areas like Tsavo, Amboseli, or Masai Mara. On the other hand, the coastal region and therefore beach tourism, which centers along the Indian Ocean, developed into another prominent upcoming tourist destination (Sindiga 1996:425). While the focus in the first half of the 20th century was mainly laid on wildlife-tourism, traveling specifically to the Kenyan coast for vacation proved to be “the most rapidly expanding sector of the tourist industry” (Jackson 1973:62) within the region. Between 1965 and 1971 the number of foreign bed nights at the coast grew from 52,000 to 464,000 (ibid.). This development can partly be ascribed to the increased number of accommodation opportunities as the number of hotels grew at the beginning of the second half of the 20th century, especially around the important port city of Mombasa. Up until the 1960s, mostly expatriates from upcountry Kenya visited the coastal region for pleasure renting holiday cottages during Christmas time. From then on, more incoming foreign tourists, almost all of them from Europe or North America, traveled to the coast as part of the newly established package tours, staying in hotels, located not only in Mombasa but also in Malindi, which rapidly emerged to be a “leisure boom town” (ibid.). The number of incoming tourists further grew in the 1970s. Over time, the coast has emerged as the primary region for tourism, accounting for the highest number of overnight stays across the entire country. In 1994, approximately 66% of the total bed nights were spent specifically at the coast (KNBS 1995:165).

Reasons for the coastal region’s popularity are various. First, the region offers stunning white sandy beaches stretching for miles, with warm turquoise waters of the Indian Ocean, which provides ideal conditions for swimming, sunbathing, and water sports. The picturesque beaches, such as Diani Beach, Watamu, and Malindi, have become renowned for their natural beauty and have played a crucial role in establishing the coast as a tourist hotspot. The marine ecosystem, with coral reefs teeming with colorful fish, is equally captivating, making it a paradise for snorkeling and diving enthusiasts (Sindiga 1996:427). Furthermore, the Kenyan coast offers a diverse range of activities and attractions beyond its beaches. Visitors can explore the vibrant coastal cities like Mombasa, which showcases a fusion of Arab, Swahili, and European influences in its architecture, cuisine, and cultural practices, which can be attributed to ancient economic and trading relationships. The old town of Lamu, for example, a UNESCO World Heritage site, where no cars but only donkeys are allowed, presents a unique blend of Swahili, Arabic, Persian, and European cultures, with its narrow streets, ancient mosques, and traditional Swahili houses (Ondicho 2004:8f.). In addition to its cultural and historical significance, the Kenyan coast is close to Tsavo National Park, which offers safari experiences, allowing tourists to spot a variety of wildlife species relatively close to the beach. Finally, the coast was also among those regions in Kenya which witnessed a notable increase in investments dedicated to improving infrastructure, hospitality, and tourism, as discussed in the previous subchapter.

4.2.4 Challenging Developments

The country experienced a growing number of hospitality businesses in the second half of the 20th century, especially in the 1980s. Nevertheless, the demand for its tourism product did not grow in parallel despite recording the highest number of tourists visiting Kenya per year at the end of the century (Akama 1999:18). These developments were followed by two decades in which the country’s tourism industry suffered serious setbacks. Regardless of implementing price adjustments to attract more visitors, Kenya experienced a continuous decline in international tourist arrivals. For instance, in 1995, there was a significant 20% decrease in international tourist arrivals. By 1997, the country only received approximately 500,000 international tourists, a significant drop from the over 800,000 arrivals recorded in 1989 (ibid.:19). Responsible for this downturn are various factors, which will be elaborated on in following paragraphs.

According to Akama, the continuously declining quality of the country’s tourism product at that time played an essential role, which he ascribed to laissez-faire policies adopted during the development stage soon after gaining independence. This laissez-faire approach, which lacked appropriate land-use policies and regulations to guide the location and distribution of these facilities and infrastructure, resulted in uncontrolled and disorderly expansion of tourism and hospitality facilities. As a result, private and multinational tourism investors focused their capital investments in areas perceived to offer quick and lucrative returns on investment, which included the Coast, Nairobi, and a limited number of popular wildlife parks and reserves (Akama 1999:19). Akama elaborates and highlights that particularly the coastal and marine ecosystems were affected by the uncontrolled and rapid expansion. The influx of tourists in these vulnerable areas has resulted in issues like overcrowding, which has disrupted fragile marine ecosystems such as lagoons, sandy beaches, and coral reefs (ibid.:19f.). Therefore, Akama stresses the need for re-evaluating the role of multinational investment as well as its laissez faire policy (Akama 2002:11f.).

The “direct government involvement in the operation and provision of tourism and hospitality services” was partly responsible for these developments, according to Akama (ibid.:1f.). Kenya was among those countries in which private sector initiatives were hardly existent right after independence. Therefore, the government aimed at filling the gap by directly intervening with the industry, which depended on many different stakeholders. To provide a combined product for tourists, the government ought to work on a common legal and socio-political environment. In the incipient stage after obtaining independence, the tourism industry was prioritized in relation to other economic sectors. This included collaborating with multinational tourism as well as granting financial incentives and soft loans. Akama describes these tasks by the government as a balancing act, which needs regular re-evaluation due to changing socio-economic conditions over time, and which should eventually incorporate the growing private sector. In Kenya, however, as Akama argues, "government initiatives are usually driven by political considerations instead of economic and financial expediency" (ibid.:10). Consequently, especially government owned establishments proved to be mismanaged and thus inefficient. As a result, Akama suggests that the "government should as much as possible detach itself from direct involvement" (ibid.:13), and consequently let the private sector take over. In 2010, the Kenyan constitution was revised, which led to a general decentralization of the country's political system. What impact the decentralizing constitutional change had, will be explained in the following subchapter.

Additionally, Kenya started to be perceived as an insecure tourist destination. One reason for this includes socio-political feuds. In many cases, these political disputes, in which "different political groups attempt to seize the reins of power " (Akama 1999:21), have resulted in physical confrontations and violence. As a result, what is known as 'politically instigated violence' has been occurring more frequently in recent years, even in popular tourist spots like Mombasa, Malindi, Diani, and Nairobi (ibid.). Consequently, the inflow of tourists as well as different sectors of the economy of the country have been affected negatively. Steven Buigut and Brain Masinde (2022), for example, analyzed the impact of 'Kenyan elections and election related events on tourism, financial and media sector stock returns'. Every five years, Parliamentary, Senate and County government elections are taking place in Kenya. Therefore, conducting an election is a monumental and high-stakes endeavor that spans the entire country. Presidential elections in the nation, following the reintroduction of multiparty elections in 1991, have been fiercely contested as the results in particular often held elements of surprise (Buigut/Masinde 2022:505f.). Consequently, the aforementioned study focused on general elections of 2007, which were followed by the most violent disputes, those of 2013, which were relatively peaceful, as well as those of 2017, which were worse than in 2013 but more peaceful than in2007. The results showed that the 2007 elections significantly impacted tourism firms and led to a drop in stock prices. Similar yet less negative developments could be observed in the two following elections. As Kenya is dependent on tourism, the scholars advise stakeholders to acknowledge the unique vulnerability of this industry and contemplate the development of tailored initiatives aimed at ensuring the safety of tourists during times of heightened risk (ibid.:509f.).

Another reason for why the country started to be perceived as an insecure destination are terrorist attacks. Again, Steven Buigut (2018) analyzed the impact of terrorism on the tourism demand in Kenya. In the last decade, there has been a noticeable decrease in the number of visitor arrivals to the country, with a decline from a peak of 1.8 million visitors in 2011 to approximately 1.5 million in 2013, which translated into a decline by 26.2% (Buigut 2018:28f.). This exact decline can, according to Buigut, be “attributed to an increased threat of terrorism mainly due to Kenya’s involvement in the Somalia conflict” (ibid.:29). Kenya’s military engagement in the Somalia conflict was triggered by a series of kidnappings targeting European visitors within Kenyan territory, which were attributed to the Somalia-based militant group, Al Shabaab. These abductions, primarily concentrated in the coastal region frequented by tourists, coincided with increased international efforts to enhance maritime security in the Gulf of Aden to combat piracy. As piracy became less lucrative due to intensified security measures, Somali militants sought alternative targets. The resulting raids, causing multiple casualties, severely disrupted Kenya's tourism sector, leading to hotel closures and layoffs. Kenya faced a dilemma, as failure to respond would likely escalate the kidnappings and cripple the tourism industry, while taking action would involve the country in the longstanding Somalia conflict it had previously avoided, potentially leading to retaliatory attacks. Under mounting pressure from the tourism industry, the Kenyan government opted for a military response. Consequently, on October 16, 2011, the Kenyan defense force crossed the border to Somalia, and, subsequently, in February 2012, it formally joined the African Union Mission in Somalia. This military involvement provoked the Al-Shabaab to launch a campaign of terror against Kenya (ibid.:29f.). According to the ‘Global Tourism Database’, the incidence of terrorist attacks in Kenya witnessed a significant rise from an estimated 12 attacks in 2010 to approximately 74 attacks in 2013 and around 80 in 2020 (Global Tourism Database 2023). While the majority of these attacks were relatively minor to moderate in nature, resulting in few casualties, a subset of them proved devastating. One illustrative incident occurred on September 21st, when Al-Shabaab militants launched an assault on the West Gate Mall, an upscale shopping complex in Nairobi. This particular attack claimed the lives of at least 67 individuals, with more than 175 sustaining injuries (Buigut 2018:30). The most recent attack, which caused more than a dozen deaths, occurred in 2019 in the Dusit hotel compound in the capital Nairobi. One significant discovery, derived from a study conducted by Buigut in 2015, is that a mere 1% increase in terrorism-related fatalities leads to a notable decline of 0.13% in tourist arrivals, which results in a monetary loss of approximately 157 million Kenyan Shillings per year. Consequently, terrorism has been shown to have an adverse impact on the inflow of tourists as well as the overall economic growth (Blomberg et al. 2004; Gaibulloev and Sandler 2011). Furthermore, research suggests that in addition to deterring tourism within the affected country, acts of terrorism also have a spillover effect by discouraging tourism in neighboring nations (Buigut 2018:30). In addition to examining the impact of terrorism on the demand of developed countries, he drew a comparison to its effect on emerging economies, thereby realizing that "arrivals from emerging countries do seem to be much less sensitive to terrorism" (ibid.:36). Therefore, Buigut concluded by suggesting that Kenya ought "to put more emphasis on non-traditional countries" and that overall, security must be improved to promote tourism in Kenya in the long run (ibid.).

Lastly, increased competition from neighboring countries like Tanzania and Uganda, whose tourism industry developed and started to offer similar experiences, played a role in the decrease of tourist arrivals at the end of the 20th century (Akama 2002:7).

4.2.5 Further Evolution

To counteract the negative developments, Kenya's government reacted with the establishment of new institutions and policies at the end of the 20th century. This led to the implementation of the tourism master plan in 1994, which incorporated a long-term development plan, a five-year strategic plan, as well as field surveys. The plan was to expand the country's tourism sector while also focusing on sustainable development. In more detail, the plan included aspects like the diversification of the tourism demand, marketing improvements, and upgrades of tourism facilities and travel conditions. After Kenya had been negatively affected as a tourism destination as a result of negative publicity by foreign media concerning safety and the quality of the tourism 'product', the strategy was to promote Kenya as safe to highlight its various attractions as well as its focus on sustainable development in all aspects related to society, culture, and environment. Further institutional measures resulted in the establishment of the ‘Kenya Tourist Board’ (KTB) in 1996, which started to be responsible for tourist market promotion, private sector tourism development, as well as infrastructure development (Ondicho 2004:14f.). The issue of poaching, which is not directly related to the economy, gained the government’s interest and was counteracted with the establishment of the ‘Kenya Wildlife Service’ (KWS) in 1990, a semi-autonomous body. Up until today, the abatement of poaching but also the overall management of certain national parks and reserves has formed part of its agenda. The goals of KWS are various and include the development of sustainable practices within the tourism industry while focusing on the economic outcomes. Overall, it is “responsible for the protection, conservation, and promotion of wildlife tourism, which is also expected to generate revenue for the government and local people” (Ondicho 2004:14).

At the beginning of the 21st century, namely in 2010, the introduction of a new Constitution in Kenya proved to affect the tourism industry in many aspects. It transformed the nation’s governance structure from a centralized system to a devolved one, characterized by the establishment of a central national government alongside 47 semi-autonomous counties. Additionally, this constitution provided a clear demarcation of administrative responsibilities between the national government and the county governments (GoK 2010). The reasons for this transformation are diverse. Within centralized structures, national governments make sector policies and provide infrastructure and services. However, centralized systems often lack local stakeholder input and knowledge, leading to decisions that may not align with local needs. In contrast, decentralized approaches, which delegate power to lower levels, offer potential improvements in service delivery and decision-making. Nevertheless, decentralization can face challenges such as insufficient expertise at the local level and limited financial resources. However, Rayviscic Mutinda Ndivoa and Roselyne N. Okech (2020:170) argue that if decentralization, especially within the tourism industry, is “well embraced and strategically implemented”, the concept “presents a more viable tourism administration pathway”. In practice, this means that the ministry of tourism on a national level assumes strategic responsibilities, which include defining a national tourism policy, establishing regulatory frameworks aligned with overall development goals, coordinating international promotion, providing statistical data and research for industry development, and facilitating coordination between public and private initiatives. Local or regional authorities focus on developing tourism in their respective areas, such as setting regional objectives, promoting the region as a tourism destination, primarily in the domestic market, collecting and disseminating regional tourism data, and coordinating tourism development initiatives within the region (ibid.:170f.). In Kenya, this includes “the development of cultural, heritage, recreation, and beach products” (ibid.:171). Furthermore, since 2013, when the ‘Wildlife Conservation and Management Act’ was passed, counties have been allowed “to develop the wildlife product by managing national reserves created by the national government Minister of wildlife” (ibid.). Overall, the national government is always present to offer technical support to the counties for effective implementations within the tourism industry (ibid.). For a seamless functional connection between the two levels of government, a fully developed institutional framework is necessary. This, however, is exactly what Ndivo and Okech criticize in their study on ‘Tourism Governance in Transition Period: Restructuring Kenya's Tourism Administration from Centralized to Devolved System’. According to them, several public institutions at the national level have been assigned mandates for tourism development, but they do not explicitly recognize or mention the existence of the counties. Only the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) specifically focuses on the counties and communities. In general, they highlight the lack of a deliberate institutional linkage between the national and county levels of government, which hampers effective tourism development and limits the support provided by national bodies to the counties (ibid.:182f.).

Further developments after the decentralization include several key tourism acts that aimed at regulating and promoting the tourism industry in Kenya. For example, one year after the constitution had been changed, the ‘Kenyan Tourism Act of 2011’ was implemented, which provides a comprehensive framework for the development, management, and regulation of the tourism sector in Kenya. As part of this act, various institutions and bodies responsible for tourism development, marketing, and conservation were established. An example would be the ‘County Tourism Committees’ in each county of Kenya, which are responsible for coordinating tourism activities at the county level, developing county tourism strategies, and promoting tourism within their respective regions. Furthermore, the aforementioned ‘Kenya Tourism Board’ was enshrined in this act as a state corporation under the Ministry of Tourism (GoK 2011). Next, the ‘Wildlife Conservation and Management Act of 2013’ is a legislation in Kenya that focuses on the conservation, management, and sustainable utilization of wildlife resources in the country. It further strengthened the legal framework for wildlife conservation, and highlighted the importance of community participation as well as sustainable utilization and protection of wildlife resources to ensure the long-term survival of Kenya’s diverse wildlife species and their habitats, which includes socio-economic benefits (GoK 2013a). The same year, Kenya’s government presented a ‘National Tourism Strategy 2013-2018, which provided a roadmap for the development of tourism in the country. Several challenges and leverage opportunities were addressed. Amongst the goals was, for example, to increase tourist arrivals, to enhance the infrastructure, to work on sustainability, etc. (GoK 2013b).

Taking a closer look at numbers in this time period, in 2013, the travel and tourism sector in Kenya contributed KES 462.8 billion, equivalent to 12.1% of the country’s GDP. The industry also attracted investments totaling KES 55.8 billion, accounting for 7.6% of the overall investment in Kenya. Furthermore, it provided employment to approximately 589,500 individuals, which constituted 10.6% of the total employment in the country (GoK 2020). In 2018, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council (ibid.), the travel and tourism industry's total contribution to Kenya's economy was estimated to be approximately 8.8% of the GDP, which indicates a decline since 2013. Moreover, the plan was to increase tourist arrivals from 1.71 million in 2012 to 3 million visitors by 2017 and boost tourism earnings from KES 96.0 billion in 2012 to KES 200 billion by 2017. However, the actual number of arrivals in 2018 was only 2 million, and earnings amounted to mere KES 157.4 billion in the same year (ibid.). Nevertheless, in public statements, the ‘Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Heritage’ highlight that there has been consistent growth in the industry since 2015. According to reports, reasons for this include growing political stability, growing investor confidence, improvements in the aviation sectors, as well as a growing number of hosting international conferences (GoK 2020:6).

4.2.6 The Effects of a Pandemic

Despite the aforementioned internal and external crises as well as different developments, Kenya’s tourism industry has shown great resilience (GoK 2020:7). Nevertheless, the COVID-19 pandemic, which brought the global nature of international tourism to the forefront, became one of the most significant obstacles confronting the tourism industry (GoK 2020). In terms of numbers of infected people and fatalities, Kenya is among the least affected countries by the virus. However, the east African country found itself facing economic hardship primarily due to the repercussions brought about by the pandemic. Kenya’s tourism industry was especially affected by the number of infections originating from the top six countries that serve as major sources of tourists for Kenya, namely the USA, UK, India, Italy, Germany, and China. These countries collectively contribute to nearly 50% of the global infection count, thereby exerting a profound impact on Kenya’s tourism sector (Muragu et.al. 2021:15). In response to the rapid spread of the disease, governments worldwide implemented measures aimed at suppressing and mitigating the pandemic. These measures, coupled with the looming threat of the virus, have adversely affected several sectors of the economy, including tourism. Within Kenya, starting from March 2020 soon after the first case in the country had been confirmed, the government took a gradual approach in implementing a range of measures aimed at alleviating the risk of imported COVID-19 cases and curbing the transmission of the virus. The initial step involved the suspension of all international flights operated by Kenyan airlines as part of the travel restrictions put in place. By the end of March, travel restrictions to and from Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kilifi counties were implemented. These three regions serve as vital pillars of Kenya's tourism industry. Considering the extensive influx of new arrivals who favored these destinations, it is unsurprising that they were the initial regions to register imported cases of the virus. These restrictions, consequently, lead to reduced hotel bookings as well as little to no national park visits (ibid.:8f.).

The effects of the pandemic are far-reaching, especially in the case of Kenya and its reliance on the tourism industry. According to Mercyann Muragu (et. al 2021:2), “the tourism and travel industry is an umbrella with complex inter-industry linkages” as the tourism industry comprises numerous sectors like the aviation sector, hotel sector, or the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) sector, which had been on the rise until early 2020 (Muragu et.al. 2021:2) (GoK 2020). These sectors mutually reinforce and support each other within the tourism industry. As a result, tourism serves as a catalyst for the development of diverse industries and plays a crucial role as a key sector in the economy, especially in African countries in which tourism has been manifested as an important pillar of the national economy. Kenya, positioned as one of the prominent tourism and travel destinations in Sub-Saharan Africa, is among these countries as the industry plays a pivotal role in Kenya’s economy, serving as a significant source of income. According to statistics published before the pandemic hit, tourism in the country contributes approximately 6.1 billion dollars, equivalent to 10% of the country’s GDP, and generates over one million jobs, particularly in rural areas where employment opportunities are limited. Notably, tourism was the third-largest contributor to Kenya's GDP, trailing behind the agriculture and manufacturing sectors (GoK 2020). Following a survey carried out by the World Bank in 2020, it was stated that more than 90% of hotels in Kenya had to suspend operations or shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The hospitality industry experienced a staggering a decline of 80% in revenue during the first half of 2020. As a consequence, it is estimated that around 2 million jobs were lost in the tourism sector as a direct impact of the pandemic (Central Bank of Kenya 2020). Further intermediate and long-term impacts predicted in the ‘Government of Kenya: Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife research report’ on the ‘Impact of COVID-19 on tourism in Kenya, the measures taken and the recovery pathways’ include struggles with low levels of activity, increasing borrowing, financial constraints, further loss of revenues, as well as complete business closures and evictions (GoK 2020:xxvii).

To mitigate the effects of the pandemic, the ‘Government of Kenya’ and the ‘Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife’ have immediately proposed several measures. The government has focused on recognizing the significance of tourism in national recovery policies, which is important as it has significant direct, indirect, and induced economic effects. Therefore, the government aims at prioritizing tourism in recovery plans, which can help stimulate economic growth and create employment opportunities. Furthermore, increased marketing efforts shall position Kenya as a desirable tourism destination. Encouraging private-public partnerships is necessary to alleviate the effects of COVID-19 and provide support to hospitality businesses. Another mitigation measure includes the provision of tax relief or vacations for tourism businesses by both national and county governments as it could further alleviate financial burdens and aid in a more effective recovery (ibid.:xxviii). The Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife established the ‘#TourismCares’ campaign, which focuses on providing food support to vulnerable individuals, including communities reliant on tourism, those who have lost their jobs, and Kenyans under mandatory quarantine. Additionally, the campaign aims to support frontline workers by supplying linen to COVID-19 hospitals and offering free holidays to medical frontline workers once the pandemic subsides. Furthermore, plans are underway to establish a tourism recovery scheme that includes low-interest loans with extended repayment periods. The government is also providing support for wildlife conservation activities and actively marketing the destination in preparation for the post-COVID-19 era (ibid.:xxix). Further recovery pathways defined in the

'Government of Kenya: Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife research report' of 2020 provide detailed proposals for tourism industry actors regarding topics like finance, marketing measures, product improvement and diversification, accessibility, pricing revisions and research, crisis preparedness, and partnerships (ibid.:xxx). The recovery pathways for the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife include initiatives to translate fiscal, monetary, and social measures into targeted action plans that directly benefit individuals and tourism businesses. This requires implementing institutional reforms and re-engineering tourism-related government departments and agencies, thereby transforming the tourism public sector. Additionally, creating a destination marketing system through digitalization strategies will inform the process of improving and diversifying tourism products. Initially focusing on domestic and regional markets in the short and medium terms, the system should eventually expand to international markets in the long run. Regular research should be conducted to keep the government and tourism stakeholders informed as the situation evolves, providing valuable insights for decision-making (ibid.:xxxi). In line with the topic of this paragraph, Muragu et.al. concludes that

> "...while the COVID 19 pandemic has led to a complex combination of public health, social and economic crises that have hurt the tourism sector, governments can benefit from structuring their post-COVID 19 recovery plan to reflect its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the tourism sector." (Muragu et.al. 2021:16).

This task of establishing recovery plans is subject to the work of the 'Global Tourism Resilience & Crisis Management Centre (GTRCMC), which works towards enhancing the ability to predict, prepare for, manage, and respond to disturbances that negatively impact the travel and tourism sector. One department located in Nairobi focuses on East Africa and is directed by Esther Munyiri from Kenya, who is one of the expert-interview partners of this thesis.

The aforementioned recovery plans have continuously been executed, and gradually, the numbers of incoming tourists have risen in the last two years. The number of international tourists visiting the country amounted to 1,483,752, which reflects a substantial growth of 70.45% in comparison to the arrivals recorded in 2021 (870,465). Furthermore, the revenue generated from tourism experienced a significant increase, reaching KES 268.09 billion, translated into an impressive growth rate of 83% when compared to the revenue of KES 146.51 billion in 2021 (Tourism Research Institute

2022). In Kenya's 'Annual Tourism Sector Performance Report' of 2022, further plans for 2023 were presented. They include improvements in the promotion of regional tourism to increase the number of domestic tourists. Moreover, the focus will be laid on niche products such as adventure, culture, and sports tourism. To accomplish this goal, diversification plans are being established as niche products in this sector have a growing capacity to enhance competitiveness and augment the value of the tourism sector. Another plan aims at supporting the sector fostering the bottom-up economy meaning, which means encouraging affordable and easily accessible travel within Kenya, which directly translates into benefitting local enterprises from hotels to transportation services as well as entertainment activities. By taking these aspects into consideration, the overall goal remains to further increase tourism earnings so that earnings trickle down to Kenyans (ibid.).

5 Decolonizing Kenya's Tourism Industry

The overall research process of this thesis is generally divided into three different stages. The first part was dedicated to building up a theoretical base, focusing on decolonization debates. Secondly, in the previous chapter, the case study, namely the evolution of the tourism industry in Kenya, was introduced. The third part, which will commence after this introduction, will be based on qualitative research supported by literature review of academic works dealing with 'Decolonizing Tourism' focused on other geographical locations or academic work on related issues. Thereby, the discussed theories of decolonization are intended to be applied in the case of Kenya's tourism industry, and, consequently, it is aimed to find an answer to what 'Decolonizing Tourism' in Kenya means and entails. In academia, it has, so far, hardly been attempted to draw a connection between these topics, in particular in the case of Kenya. This lack of research serves as the main objective behind selecting expert interviews as the primary methodology for this thesis. Additionally, by conducting literature review through analyzing written academic work on the respective topics, it is aimed to ascertain the various arguments put forth by other scholars regarding various issues of the decolonization of the tourism industry and to illustrate arguments articulated by the interview partners. The following subchapters will provide a comprehensive exposition of the analytical process in order to elucidate this third stage of research.

5.1 Conducting Expert Interviews

The foundation of conducting expert interviews is qualitative research, which is not restricted to one single way of approaching it as it depends on different research objectives, ontology, epistemology, etc. To understand the diverse and complex social phenomena involved in the process of 'Decolonizing Tourism', a "flexible nature of research design" (Snape/Spencer 2003:3) is required, which is listed as one of the defining characteristics of qualitative research in the guide for social studies students and researchers on 'Qualitative Research Practice'. On account of this, my research approach will be mainly based on the transformative paradigm, which foresees participatory and contextual qualitative or mixed methods. However, although the transformative paradigm focuses on issues of power and social emancipation, it was clearly established within a Western background. Nevertheless, Mirjam Held (2019:5), author of the academic paper 'Decolonizing research paradigms in the context of settler colonialism: An unsettling, mutual, and collaborative effort', argues that the methodology within this transformative paradigm can be informed by different theories. In the case of this Master's thesis, decolonization theories with an emphasis on 'coloniality/decoloniality' serve as the foundational theory.

As part of the research, semi-structured expert interviews were conducted, which means interviewing experts, who, according to Stefanie Döringer (2021:267), can be defined as "persons with specific knowledge who hold a certain status or exercise a function in decision-making processes in a particular field of action". Accordingly, expert knowledge possesses a social relevance as it actively shapes and determines a particular field of topics. By operating based on these definitions, the goal in this thesis is to inductively develop knowledge based on empirical evidence, with a focus on revealing interpretive knowledge, which refers to the subjective perspectives, viewpoints, and orientations that experts draw upon when answering the interviewer's questions. Furthermore, Döringer (ibid.:268) mentions that expert interviews are generally not bound to a particular interview design. Therefore, she recommends adapting the interview design to align with the specific research requirements and maintaining flexibility throughout the research journey. A semi-structured interview method was chosen in this thesis as it provides a flexible research procedure that employs a combination of open-ended and theory-driven questions to gather data from the interview partners. Lastly, conducting an expert interview excludes anonymizing data, which means that the name of the interviewed person will be provided. This process necessitates a signed consent form by the interview partners, in which they allow the collection and processing of their personal data. The consent form used for the interviews conducted as part of this Master's thesis can be found in the annex.

In total, three Kenyan experts working in the country's tourism industry were interviewed. Before explaining the way, the research process was executed, the interview partners will be introduced. Esther Munyiri, who holds a Master's degree and PhD in 'Tourism Management', was interviewed first, namely on June 8, 2023 at 10 a.m. CET (11 a.m. EAT). She has been working as a teacher and researcher at Kenyatta University in Nairobi for ten years, and her research interests include crisis management in tourism, climate change vulnerability as well as tourism management, community tourism development, and tourism marketing. Furthermore, she is the director of the 'Tourism Resilience and Crisis Management Centre – Eastern Africa', which was established in 2019 in response to the imperative of addressing the issues in the tourism sector of East Africa. Next is Alex Kamau, head of a community business called ‘Lets Drift’, which aims at making adventure travelling in Kenya accessible to everyone, irrespective of their income. He came to my attention in an episode of the BBC Podcast ‘The Comb’, in which the decolonization of the tourism industry was discussed in the case of Kenya. The interview took place on June 12, 2023 at 8 a.m. CET (9 a.m. EAT). Lastly, Julius Owino, CEO of ‘Kenya Coast Tourism Association’ (KCTA) was interviewed on June 14, 2023 at 10 a.m. CET (11 a.m. EAT). KCTA is an umbrella body working together with tour operators, travel agency hotels, etc. to address issues within Kenya's coast tourism collaboratively.

5.2 Research Procedure

In the third chapter, dedicated to ‘Decolonization Theories’ scholarly discourse has brought a burgeoning conceptual framework known as ‘coloniality/decoloniality’ into focus, which has its roots in the Latin American context. This emerging paradigm is identified as a valuable instrument for effecting decolonization within specific domains of study and is therefore used as an analytic instrument when categorizing and presenting the interviewees’ arguments to attempt to find out what ‘Decolonizing Tourism’ in Kenya means and entails. Consequently, based on the conducted semi-structured interviews with local exports on Kenya’s tourism industry, aspects of coloniality are being carved out first to detect colonial legacies within the industry, which is crucial before moving on to the process of ‘decoloniality’ at a later stage. A thematic analysis of the interview transcripts indicated that the topics mentioned by the interviewees can be sectioned into the three mentioned categories of coloniality, namely Coloniality of Power, Being, and Knowledge. Before immersing into each category, however, it is imperative to underscore that the subdivision should not be considered in isolation; instead, they should be regarded as interdependent facets constituting a cohesive analytical framework. Using the experts’ arguments as a foundation, further information on the respective topics will be incorporated based on academic literature and reports of multilateral organizations, NGOs, etc. Subsequently, an overview of supplementary concerns, which may not have a direct correlation with colonial legacies, will be presented before elaborating on the aspect of decoloniality. In this respective subchapter, the focus will be placed on the interviewees’ suggestions on how to decolonize the industry, thereby drawing a connection to the aforementioned aspects of coloniality. Again, based on the arguments, literature review of newspaper articles, official documents by the Government of Kenya, as well as academic papers will be included.

Towards the end of the analysis, the arguments will be summarized, the research question will be answered, and the question will be asked whether following a decolonization trope in the tourism industry in Kenya can lead to improvements within the country. Answers will be provided based on the interviewees' arguments including critical arguments found in academia. This discussion is furthermore motivated by Olufemi Taiwo's critical assessment of the decolonization trope, thereby establishing the nexus between theoretical analysis and the reality on the ground.

5.3 Coloniality

As elaborated on in chapter 3.4 'Coloniality/Decoloniality', coloniality stems the perspectives of Latin American political theorists, describing the continuous influence of colonialism on contemporary society. It signifies the persistence of power structures arising from colonialism, which leads to the emergence of "decoloniality" as a response to the conditions produced by this dynamic. The Latin American scholars agree on three overall aspects that are all entangled and intrinsic to 'decoloniality', namely 'Coloniality of Power', 'Coloniality of Being', and 'Coloniality of Knowledge', which serve as a theoretical tripartition to analyze and structure the analysis of this research.

5.3.1 Coloniality of Power

As mentioned in chapter 3, 'Coloniality of Power', is, in essence, a framework employed by decolonial theorists to examine the power dynamics of the contemporary global system and its functioning (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2019:16). Anibal Quijano argues that 'Coloniality of Power' interlinks with 'Coloniality of Being' but extends beyond the issue of discriminatory social interactions based on race (ibid.). Further, Ramón Grosfoguel (2007:217) coined 'Coloniality of Power' to describe the complex and diverse global systems of subjugation and exploitation based on hierarchies of race as well as, sex, politics, knowledge, economy, spirituality, and language. Additionally, Walter Mignolo points to the invisibility, in this case of 'Coloniality of Power', caused by the rhetoric of modernity, which includes terms like salvation, progress, or development. The role of decolonial thought is to make the effects of it visible (Mignolo 2014:25f.), which is why, in a first step, traces of 'Coloniality of Power' within Kenya's tourism industry will be elaborated on in this subchapter. After analyzing the interviews and respective literature, the aspects of 'Coloniality of Power' can be subdivided in 'Foreign Ownership', 'Marketing', and 'Conservation'.

Foreign Ownership

When analyzing the interviews, it becomes clear that the aspect of ‘Coloniality of Power’, namely foreign ownership within the tourism industry, was given much attention and divided the interviewees’ opinions. “One of the challenges we have is most of the facilities, you know, either the hotels or tour companies, or lodges, most of them, are still owned by Westerners […]”, says Alex Kamau, one of the interviewed experts. Esther Munyiri, professor at Kenyatta University, holds the same opinion but generally differentiates between the positive and negative impacts of overall foreign influence. On the one hand, she highlights the fact that tourism in Kenya has generally been established in the country as a “foreign concept”, which she sees as “extremely positive” as the external influence “is what has built tourism from scratch”. On the other hand, she argues that negative influences include the “dominance of the foreigners in business”. However, she added that positive changes with respect to foreign ownership are happening – a topic discussed in more detail in the chapter focusing on ‘decoloniality’. The CEO of ‘Kenya Coast Tourism Association’ (KCTA), Julius Owino, differs in his opinion in comparison with the other two interviewees. He does not see the high percentage of foreign ownership within the tourism industry in Kenya as a threat but rather as an opportunity. Further, he argues that, due to the increase in prices over the years, it is difficult for local Kenyans to be able to afford, what he called, a ‘beach block’. Therefore, the dominance of foreign ownership of hotels, restaurants, etc. is, according to him, not preventable. What matters to him more, is the ratio of local as well as foreign managers and workers, a topic which will also be elaborated on in the chapter on how to decolonize the industry.

The issue of ownership of Kenya’s tourism industry is historical. In chapter 3, the elaboration on the establishment of the industry indicates that British colonial rule played a crucial role. Consequently, the development of tourism was built on colonial structures. To be able to explain the high percentage of foreign ownership, however, one needs to take a closer look at occurrences after independence in 1963. According to John S. Akama (2004:145), “the Kenyan government pursued foreign investments and this set Kenya on a trajectory of foreign ownership and management of its tourism industry by foreigners”. The Kenyan scholar elaborates on this issue in another article titled ‘The Role of Government in the Development of Tourism in Kenya’ (2002). As the newly established Kenyan government identified tourism as a valuable 'commodity', the aim was to attract foreign along with local investments. Furthermore, a "conductive socio-economic environment [...] through tax concessions, creation of favorable fiscal policies for capital investment and profit repatriation" (Akama 2002:5) was established, which led to "increased foreign and multinational investment" in the 1970s and 1980s (ibid.). An overall consequence of foreign owned businesses includes leakages and therefore a loss of revenue (Nowak/Sahli 2010). According to a report by the World Bank in 2010, "roughly 55% of income from the tourism business received by developing countries is transferred abroad" (Nowak/Sahli 2010). Concerning this matter, Esther Munyiri, reinforces this issue by saying that "the leakages are much higher if there is foreign ownership in any business". Quantifying the precise magnitude of external leakages poses a considerable challenge; nonetheless, these leakages seem to be significant enough to exert a detrimental influence on the profitability of specific tourism endeavors or impede their successful execution (Nowak/Sahli 2010:2). Isaac Sindiga, a Kenyan scholar, therefore, concluded that the Kenyan government was providing financial support to an unprofitable tourism sector (Sindiga 2000:143f.).

Based on the consulted literature and the answers given in the interviews, one can argue that Kenyan politicians and hence local agents can be held responsible for the high percentage of foreign ownership in the respective industry. Through these policies, however, dependent relationships with foreign investors, hotel owners, etc. were nurtured and foreign influence was maintained, which Alex Kamau described in the interview as an "overreliance on the Westerners to feed" the industry. Furthermore, in the transition from a colony to a free state in the 1960s, many British settlers remained on what they claimed as their property, which Munyiri confirms by arguing that after independence "some regions were left with the foreigners". A logical consequence would be that former settlers with enough capital found themselves in the suitable condition to establish businesses like hotels, lodges, restaurants, etc. At the end of the 20th century, it was estimated that more than 50% of Kenya's major tourism and hospitality establishments in prominent tourist centers were under foreign ownership and management (Akama 1999:17). Nevertheless, no data has been found to prove this perception. A report by UNCTAD, moreover, disproved the perception of foreign dominance in the industry by stating that about 57 % of hotels and restaurants as well as 75 % of tour operators were dominated by local investors at the beginning of the 21st century. They, however, added that "most of the local owners are of Asian and British origin" (UNCTAD 2008). This controversy is also addressed by Munyiri, who stated: "We call them foreign but we have to be very careful because of course they are Kenyans. They have Kenyan IDs and all that, but they are white landowners [...]".

In academia as well as in two out of the three expert interviews, dominant foreign investment and consequent ownership are voiced as an issue. When analyzing the 'New Tourism Strategy for Kenya 2021-2025', attracting further foreign investment is not perceived as a main goal. However, Kenya hosted the 'Africa Hospitality Investment Forum' (AHIF) in June of 2023. The aim of the conference, which was attended by stakeholders from many different countries, was to discuss investment in tourism, infrastructure, and hotel development. The 'Kenya Investment Authority', which was established in 2004 with the mandate of promoting and facilitating private investments in Kenya for both local and foreign investors, is also still active. Furthermore, looking at websites of international embassies (i.e. Germany, France, etc.), one can find words of encouragement to invest in Kenya's tourism industry. The Embassy of Kenya in Germany states: "On investment opportunities, Kenya has a wide range of potential tourist attractions which can be exploited by foreign investors". In conclusion, foreign influence regarding ownership of hospitality businesses and following leakages is received ambiguously, but it, nevertheless, can be analyzed as a trace of 'Coloniality of Power' due to its exposure to complex and diverse global systems of subjugation and exploitation. Ongoing transitions and constructive transformations regarding this topic have begun to materialize and will be examined in the next subchapter, in which the phenomenon of 'decoloniality' will be at the center of attention.

Marketing

"The weakness is that the Safari experience is very exclusive. Actually, for the longest time it's been targeted to white people.", says Alex Kamau. This assertion suggests the presence of the 'Coloniality of Being', whereas the origins of this predicament can be traced back to elements of the 'Coloniality of Power', specifically pertaining to marketing strategies employed during the 20th century. In chapter 4.1, the early developments of the tourism industry in Kenya were laid out. It clearly demonstrated that tourism was established by British colonial administrators for fellow Britons, which is also highlighted in a BBC-Podcast called 'The Comb', in which it was stated that from the beginning onwards the industry had been created by Europeans for Europeans (Chakanetsa 2022).

During the time of colonial rule, the primary medium through which knowledge about Kenya and its allure as a big-game hunting destination encompassed published accounts as well as documentaries written by foreign visitors. One prominent figure was Theodore Roosevelt, who ventured to the East African region subsequent to his presidency, and documented his hunting expedition in elaborate detail (Akama 2004:142). Others, like Abel Chapman or Ernest Hemmingway, wrote so-called ‘adventure classics’, which according to Akama are widely read until today (ibid.). One of the most popular novels, however, was written by Karen Blixen in 1937. In ‘Out of Africa’, she delved into the lives of professional hunters, which according to Trevor Mark Simmons (2015:440) “added benefit for the safari industry”. At the same time, namely in the first half of the 21st century, film makers started to produce wildlife documentary films. As with written dissemination, Simmons argued that these movies played an essential role in “creating, disseminating, and popularizing images of Africa” (ibid.:424).

After gaining independence, the Government of Kenya “had the opportunity to craft their own narratives of nation, modernity, and tradition, free from the direct constrictions of colonial repression and control”, according to Devin Smart (2018:145). They actively promoted its tourism sector as part of post-colonial developments, implementing an international marketing campaign to attract tourists from Europe and North America. This involved establishing foreign offices in key cities, organizing promotional events, and partnering with Western journalists, airlines, hotels, and tour companies. While the overall aim was to rewrite Eurocentric narratives, their agency was limited by global capitalism, the geopolitics of the Cold War, and the entangled nature of ideas produced in these endeavors (ibid.). The promotional materials were generally multi-authored, involving both European and African writers. When looking closer at a promotional document called ‘Kenya: Agent’s Sales Manual’, which served as a foundation for further brochures, etc., however, only two of the 30 authors were from Kenya. Nevertheless, the group of authors worked closely together with tourism focused government entities, which were mostly staffed with Kenyans. Consequently, it can be put forward that the discourse surrounding tourism in Kenya was generally shaped on a global scale (ibid.:146).

According to Smart’s analysis, during the 1960s and 1970s, the tourism marketing campaign for Kenya aimed to present the country as a ‘land of contrasts’. It sought to highlight Kenya as a center of African post-colonial modernity while still emphasizing its natural beauty. Furthermore, marketing materials emphasized the modernity of Nairobi as a cosmopolitan city. Moving towards the end of the 20th century, Andrew Norton argued, following an analysis of safari brochures from the 1990s, that Kenya was constructed as an ahistorical space mainly populated by the Maasai, which according to him neglects the rich history of the coast and instead emphasizes a romanticized pastoralism (Norton 1996). Through these marketing strategies, mainly Westerners, who demand to explore and encounter diverse and exotic surroundings, have been targeted (Smart 2018:147). John S. Akama (2004:147) argues that Kenya's perception is still influenced by colonial exposition of the 1930s, which is continuously reinforced through advertisements of tour companies, travel agencies, and the promotion of Kenya's natural attractions. Furthermore, he stated that the promotion of tourism attractions in Kenya is dominated by overseas travel agents and tour operators, which Munyiri sees as a detrimental issue as it, according to her; "kills the locals completely". Whatever can yield immediate and maximum profits is marketed most intensely, thereby presenting incomplete and selective information about Kenya's diverse natural and cultural offerings. For example, the Maasai, a community mostly living along the border to Tanzania, is presented as the only African community within Kenya, while it is in fact home to more than 40 ethnic communities (Akama 2004:147).

In addition to the previously mentioned tour companies and travel agencies as key stakeholders involved in marketing, a more recent category of actors, referred to as influencers, was mentioned by Alex Kamau, one of the interviewed experts. He refers to them as having a "huge responsibility" as he perceives their storytelling as the "biggest form of sales". Nevertheless, Kamau draws attention to the perils associated with incomplete storytelling, which can further contribute to the dissemination and reinforcement of unbalanced stereotypes.

Related to the topic of marketing, and a manifestation of the unequal power dynamics inherent to the contemporary global system, pertains to the issue of detrimental media coverage. Alex Kamau highlights sanctions and travel warnings to be one of the consequences, stating that they "can be very unfair" and "very biased because they tend to paint our country in a bad light". Moreover, he raised the concern regarding the selective depiction of only partial narratives in media discourse rather than presenting a comprehensive and holistic account. To illustrate the inherent inequality, Kamau reversed the perspective, contending that Kenya has refrained from imposing sanctions on other nations in response to incidents of mass shootings or terrorist attacks occurring within the Western world. Furthermore, he criticized advanced warnings issued by European countries or the United States prior to elections in Kenya, which according to him has led to the closure of hotels before.

Generally, Akama puts forward that the globally shared information is "based on existing dominant Western cultural values and economic systems" (ibid.). Nigel Morgan and Annette Pritchard (1998:6) delve deeper into this matter, providing a more comprehensive analysis as they argue:

"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. The images projected in brochures, billboards, and television reveal the relationships between countries, between genders, and between races and cultures. 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" (Morgan and Pritchard 1998:6).

This concluding statement marks the end of the current subchapter by summarizing that unequal global power relations have affected product promotion within the tourism industry greatly in contemporary times as well as during colonialism. At the same time, this quote introduces a discussion on the impact of the 'Coloniality of Power' in marketing, specifically in relation to foreign dominance and its influence on the 'Coloniality of Being' experienced by Kenyans as a consequence. However, this topic will be addressed in depth at a later stage.

Conservation

The topic of 'Conservation' was mentioned once during the semi-structured export interviews, namely by Esther Munyiri, who grew up close to Lewa Wildlife Conservancy in Meru county in the north of Kenya. In general, she spoke positively about conservancies after she gave a disclaimer saying that she has worked at Lewa Wildlife Conservancy for more than 20 years. At a later point in the interview, she highlighted the positive effects of local ownership of conservancies as it is "much easier for the locals to actually feel like this is our thing, our industry, this is something that we need to support [...]". While the discourse surrounding this subject was predominantly portrayed in a positive manner during the expert interview, research, podium discussions, and literature reviews have unveiled that the realm of conservation in East Africa, along with other regions, continues to grapple with persistent colonial legacies. Therefore, this subchapter will revolve more around information found in respective literature. In light of this, traces of 'Coloniality of Power' concerning conservation will be elaborated on in the upcoming paragraphs, followed by a discussion on the traces of 'Coloniality of Being' of this respective topic in the next subchapter.

Throughout the research process, various sources have pointed towards issues created through conservation in Kenya and the neighboring country Tanzania. In a documentary called 'Impact of Tourism', information was given on the Endorois families, who were forcibly kicked off their land between 1973 and 1986 in the name of conservation to, in the end, make way for tourism (TV Choice 2011; Dominguez/Luoma 2020:10). What had started during colonial times, and continued after independence, persists until the present. Recently, members from the Maasai community in Tanzania have traveled through Europe, visiting Austria, Germany, and EU headquarters in Brussels seeking assistance and support in light of their predicament following the implementation of conservation initiatives, which started in 2022. With the assistance of UNESCO, GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit), and the 'Frankfurt Zoological Society', the Tanzanian government argues in favor of conservation due to overpopulation in Ngorongoro crater and the Serengeti, which are among the most popular tourist destinations in northern Tanzania close to the Kenyan border (McQue 2022; IWGIA 2023). However, several scholars have written academic papers on the colonial character of wildlife conservation, thereby addressing the story of the Ogiek community having been evicted from the area of the Mau forest until recently in the area of the Mau forest.

In chapter 3 on 'Decolonization Theories', the exploitational aspect of colonialism in Kenya is addressed. The process of acquiring land and natural resources was Included in the colonial project. The aim was to maximize economic gains through individual property regimes, which was rooted in the principle of productivity, where individual land titles facilitated wealth generation through the utilization and/or transfer of individual land allocations (Dominguez/Luoma 2020:3). This included the "separation of indigenous peoples from their natural environments", which "was a crucial component of colonisation, one that persists in contemporary conservation strategies" (ibid.:1).

Consequently, Elizabeth Garland argues that wildlife conservation can “be conceived as a particular kind of capitalist production” (Garland 2008:62), in which wealth is generated from nature and wildlife as animals are incorporated into the global capital flows.

In contemporary times, what is called ‘fortress’ conservation is grounded in the notion that protecting biodiversity is most effectively accomplished by establishing protected areas, in which ecosystems can operate without interference of human activities. Underlying this assumption is the belief that local communities engage in “irrational and destructive” utilization of natural resources, leading to the decline of biodiversity and environmental degradation (ibid.:2). As a result, human rights are being violated as highlighted in a report by the ‘Human Rights Council on the Rights of Indigenous People’ (Tauli-Corpuz, 2016). The rapporteur furthermore claimed that major international conservation non-governmental organizations and international donors are complicit in these violations, which is the case in the aforementioned example of the Maasai in Tanzania. Based on the information and the examples, it is argued that “the maintenance of fortress conservation policies by large conservation NGOs is a colonial legacy” (Dominguez/Luoma 2020:7).

In Kenya, scholars and journalists have extensively documented two notable post-colonial instances where convictions have been carried out under the guise of conservation. As mentioned, in the second half of the 20th century, Endorois families were forcefully evicted from the area around Lake Bogoria in the Rift Valley (central Kenya) to turn the region into a national reserve and to make room for tourist facilities (Human Rights Watch 2010). According to the research of Domínguez and Luoma, the aim was to build the ‘Lake Bogoria Game Reserve’. Since the beginning of the 20th century, another group of people, namely the Ogiek from the Mau forest, a region in the Rift Valley constituting Kenya’s largest water catchment area, serving as the origin of seven rivers, are under threat. After independence in 1963, evictions by the governments were planned, once again naming conservation as a reason (Vigliar 2017). Official orders came into operation in October of 2009, when a 30-day eviction period was served by the ‘Kenyan Forestry Service’. Although the ‘African Commission on Human and People’s Rights’ (ACHPR) got involved in the case in the following years, in November of 2019 Kenya’s government enforced another eviction order concerning more than 60,000 people (Dominguez/Luoma 2020:12), which suggests that forceful displacements resulting in human rights violations have ocurred in this area until recent times.

In July of 2022, 'The Wildlife (Conservation Management) Bill' was published in Kenya, which will be analyzed in detail in the following paragraph. First, 'conservation' is defined as "the protection, maintenance, rehabilitation, restoration, enhancement, management and sustainable use of wildlife" (GoK 2022:16). The exclusion of human beings is not mentioned, neither is it part of the definition of 'conservation area'. In part two on 'Ownership, Devolution and Security', access rights are mentioned and co-management between communities and landowners is stressed. 'Policy Direction and Strategy' is discussed in the following part, in which it is stated that "every person or community has a right to use their land for wildlife conservation and management" (ibid.:30), and that an application must be submitted if the converted land shall be transformed for the use of something else. The general conservation and management strategy, furthermore, does not mention the displacement of people. In a later part of the bill, 'Terrestrial Wildlife habitat conservation on community and private land' is discussed. According to the provisions outlined in the act, individuals, groups, communities, or corporate bodies that possess or oversee land inhabited by wildlife have the authority to establish a wildlife conservancy or sanctuary either individually or collectively (ibid.:63). Furthermore, 'Wildlife orders and easements' or 'Wildlife conservation easements' relate to general orders to turn an area into a wildlife conservation area with the goal to conserve and manage sustainable wildlife, preserve flora and fauna, facilitate the establishment of migration corridors to support wildlife movement, and protect exceptional natural and cultural features (ibid.: 85). The topic of compensation is also addressed. The bill states that "compensation for any loss or diminishment of value of land due to creation of easement" (ibid.:88) needs to be negotiated appropriately. Towards the end of the bill, the role of different stakeholders concerning conservation financing is mentioned. Overall, the topic of possible evictions in the name of conservation is not explicitly mentioned. The only topic through which one can draw conclusions about wrongdoings when it comes to human right violations, is the topic of compensation, which is an issue that remains overlooked in relation to the aforementioned examples including the Ogiek and the Endorois communities.

According to Dominguez and Luoma (2020:14f.), the unifying element connecting all these principles is the exploitation of natural resources for the (formerly) colonizer's gain and the dispossession of indigenous communities from their lands. They moreover argue that this practice is reminiscent of contemporary conservation methods, ultimately indicating the persistence of colonial conservation practices despite the era reaching well into the twenty-first century. Garland furthermore draws attention to the lack of importance to dealing with the “ways in which conservation in Africa relies upon global power relations rooted in the continent’s history of colonization” (Garland 2008:59). Described as an “unacknowledged elephant in the room” (ibid.), she continues to argue that conservation practitioners often overlook the unequal and racially charged transnational elements that characterize African conservation practices. Finally, Garland concludes by asking the question whether ‘conserving’ wild animals implies a necessity for (neo)colonial power dynamics to persist (ibid.:60).

5.3.2 Coloniality of Being

‘Coloniality of Being’ emerged from discussions concerning the impacts of ‘Coloniality of Power’ across various spheres of society (Maldonado-Torres 2007:242) and is an effective analytical instrument for examining the dehumanization and depersonalization experienced by those who were colonized and have to deal with its effects (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013:34). A process in which ‘race’ plays a central role, colonized individuals have been deprived of their humanity, and suffered from alienation as well as depersonalization (Maldonado-Torres 2007:251), which has affected Kenyans until today. The discussed aspects of ‘Coloniality of Power’ within the country’s tourism industry have influenced the livelihood of Kenyans. A thorough elaboration of these implications are the focus of this subchapter and are divided in sections on ‘Exclusivity’ and ‘Effects of Conservation’.

Exclusivity

“The weakness is that the Safari experience is very exclusive”, said Alex Kamau. Further, he estimated that “up to 80% [of Kenyans] have never visited a National Park”. To provide reasons he, on the one hand, argued that traditional safaris are very expensive, while on the other hand, tourist activities in Kenya have been “targeted to white people” for the longest time. In fact, in an analysis by Rayviscic Mutinda, it is argued that “the percentage of domestic market of overall tourism activities is small despite the industry being relatively mature” (Mutinda 2011:1). Following these two examples, exclusivity as a trace of ‘Coloniality of Being’ can therefore be traced back to foreign ownership as well as distinct marketing strategies - two topics that have been discussed in the previous subchapter. However, various additional reasons will also be explored in the upcoming paragraphs, encompassing a broader range of factors for consideration.

To start with an overall depiction, it can be said that the colonial system of domination in Kenya, employed to consolidate power over colonial holdings and subjects, was underpinned by an enduring racist ideology (Dominguez/Luoma 2020:3). The perpetuation of exclusion persists through diverse asymmetries of power, including gender, class, race, ethnicity, culture, and episteme. According to Freya Higgins-Desbiolles (2022:9), “tourism has been revealed as a force for the continuation of these attitudes and practices”. Jennifer Devine and Diana Ojeda furthermore elaborate on the connection between tourism and coloniality in their paper on ‘Violence and dispossession in tourism development’. According to them, “(Neo)colonialism flags the ways in which tourism has been, and continues to be, deeply implicated in racialized projects and practices of imperialism, as well as tourism’s ongoing role in capitalism’s colonization of space.” (Devine/Ojeda 2017:611). Consequently, this leads to unequal and oppressive processes within the tourism industry (Higgins-Desbiolles 2022:10). Alex Kamau, one of the expert interviewees, exemplifies this debate by saying:

“That influence from the western world over tourism experiences has shaped a lot of travel experiences. I mean if you are walking in a park or you’re going to a park, as a local person and as a Western person, I mean, let me not use the word ‘white’, but as coming from the international community, you are more likely to be treated better than a local person because you’re perceived as more valuable. You are perceived as having money, you are perceived as someone spending more than a local person, which is typically a bias, you know. “

Marketing strategies of the past as well as present can be analyzed on how their messages translate into traces of ‘Coloniality of Being’. As mentioned in the previous subchapter, unequal power relations on product promotion within the tourism industry are an example of ‘Coloniality of Power’ and can therefore be traced back to times during colonial rule. Their effect on the livelihoods of locals in contemporary Kenya are detrimental. From the beginnings of tourism in Kenya on, the discourses crafted by those working in marketing in Kenya as well as abroad were and still are directed more often than not towards a Western demographic (Smart 2018:146). Kamau exemplifies this statement by saying that marketing material often excludes locals. Moreover, hardly any Kenyan influencers exist advertising the country’s tourism opportunities, according to him. Devin Smart (ibid.:152) concludes that “the livelihoods of many will continue to be tied to the entangled and contested idea of Kenya as it is revised, reproduced, and circulated throughout the world”. The perpetuation of colonial standards in advertising Kenya as a tourism destination reinforces exclusivity, resulting in limited accessibility and ultimately reflecting manifestations of racism.

Following an exploration of the trajectory of ‘Coloniality of Being’ within Kenya’s tourism industry, the subsequent focus will be directed towards specific illustrative examples dealing with the effects of leakages. First, tourism generally constitutes approximately 10 % of the Gross Domestic Product, positioning it as its third most significant contributor after agriculture and manufacturing (Kibara/Idhuambi/Njunga 2012:518). Nevertheless, Akama (2004:149) states that the majority of Kenyans in various regions across the country do not receive any direct financial benefits from the tourism industry. It has been estimated that only between 2 and 5 % of Kenya’s total tourism receipts trickle down to the local population in forms of low paying and servile jobs, as well as the selling of souvenirs and agricultural produce (ibid.). On the one hand, this is due to the concentration of tourism to a limited number of destinations within the country, a pattern that can be traced back to decisions made during colonial times. On the other hand, a substantial amount of foreign ownership within businesses in the tourism and hospitality industry can negatively influence the trickle-down effect and increase prices, making more domestic tourism hardly possible. Akama named another cause, namely the trend of booking all-inclusive package tours, through which tourists seldomly venture outside their lodges to reach locals at a grassroots level in order to support them financially (ibid.).

In conclusion, the analysis of ‘Coloniality of Being’ within Kenya’s tourism industry reveals the continuing impacts of ‘Coloniality of Power’, which are evident in the perpetuation of exclusivity and unequal power dynamics. The industry’s marketing strategies and limited direct financial benefits for the local population exemplify the repercussions of historical decisions made during colonial times, posing challenges to achieving more equitable and inclusive tourism practices in the country.

The effects of Conservation

In this subchapter, a comprehensive exploration of the intricacies within Kenya's tourism industry, where 'Coloniality of Power' has left a lasting impact on the consequential 'Coloniality of Being' experienced by indigenous communities in their struggle for protection and equitable conservation measures. In the 21st century, Kenya is dealing with adverse consequences of increasing mass tourism as well as poorly planned and managed tourist activities including the degradation of natural environments. An aforementioned issue, namely population concentration at certain sites, may, furthermore, exceed the capacity to handle the influx, leading to further environmental deterioration that jeopardizes the livelihoods of Kenyans (Nowak/Sahli 2010). Overexploitation and ecological damage were already perceived as an issue during colonial rule. As a consequence, conservation models were introduced, which include practices that are seen as a continuation of exploitative colonial strategies, where natural resources are used for economic gain, leading to the dispossession of indigenous communities from their lands (Dominguez/Luoma 2020:3). This is often conducted without obtaining their free, prior, and informed consent, and the consequences are multilayered. It poses a significant threat to the survival of traditional, indigenous livelihoods that rely on access to these lands. Moreover, the eviction processes result in the destruction of their cultural heritage and traditional knowledge, disrupts kinship structures, and often triggers adverse consequences such as famine, disease, and mortality (ibid.:7). Dominguez and Luoma highlight that indigenous communities have a "proven track record as the world's best environmental custodians" (ibid.), which means that depriving fortress conservation often results in conservation outcomes that are less desirable. Hence, when indigenous communities take charge of safeguarding certain areas, it would not only improve the protection of those regions but also prevent potential human rights violations (ibid.).

In all of the cases cited in the preceding subchapter, human rights violations have been observed. The pastoralist Endorois community, evicted in the 1970s and 1980s, had to largely give up its self-sustaining life, which has made them reliant on food aid. Members of the community claimed to have never been given an alternative land to settle (TV Choice 2011). In their pursuit of justice, they have decided to raise awareness about their story by sharing it with the public. In 2011, the African Union endorsed the ruling by the 'African Commission on Human and People's Rights', which stated that the Kenyan government must compensate the Endorois for their loss (ibid.). The research by Dominguez and Luoma (2020:11), however, revealed that Kenya has shown limited compliance with the recommendations of the Commission. Ever since, progress has been made regarding revenue sharing, but the overall outcome remains unsatisfactory as Baringo County, in which the Endorois are living now, has withheld direct payment of royalties, thereby limiting the community's autonomy (ibid.). In the case of the Ogiek, evictions have been performed until recently, which banned them from the Mau forest based on the claim that they would damage the environment. In 2017, a history judgment was rendered as the African Court "recognised the special relationship indigenous peoples have to their ancestral lands and held that the African Charter protects both individual and collective property rights" (ibid.:12). Nevertheless, abusive eviction continued to be performed, which, according to 'Human Rights Watch' (2019), included the death of nine people. To sum up, 'Coloniality of Being' within Kenya's tourism industry is evident through the historical and contemporary practices of resource exploitation and displacement of indigenous communities.

5.3.3 Coloniality of Knowledge

'Coloniality of Knowledge' focuses on "epistemological inequalities and politics of knowledge generation as well as questions who generates which knowledge and for what purpose" says Maldonado Torres (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2019:16), so it deals with how colonial modernity suppressed modes of imagining, seeing, and knowing (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013:33). The implications of 'Coloniality of Knowledge' when it comes to tourism in Kenya were implied during one of the expert interviews. Academic literature, furthermore, rarely features this type of coloniality, which is why this chapter turns out to be relatively short.

In one of the conducted expert interviews, Alex Kamau says "So, I think that there are a lot of links with colonialism, but I think most of it is not just even the physical and what we can see, but it's also in the mindset. It's about the mindset that is being carried around." First, concerning foreign ownership of land, Dominguez and Luoma (2020:5) state in their paper that "the principle of the land belongs to those who cultivate it remained central to postcolonial land policy." Furthermore, they even argue that in the postcolonial era, the influence of Western ideals of productivity continues to prevail, shaping perceptions of successful land use, while indigenous alternatives are still undervalued and overlooked (ibid.:4). This mindset, which has continued to be present after independence, has shaped the foundation of the global economy as it stands today (ibid.:5). The same scholars have addressed traces of 'Coloniality of Knowledge' concerning the topic of 'conversation'. A suggestion made in an earlier subchapter includes that indigenous communities know best how to conserve the environment. According to them, however, enduring obstacles hindering the recognition and enforcement of customary indigenous title to ancestral lands stem from "legacies of a colonial world" (ibid.:2) and certain "systems of knowledge creation and law" (ibid.) leading to far-reaching consequences that are still resonating. The example of the Ogiek community demonstrates the continued institutionalization of colonial norms and knowledge systems in formerly colonized territories, which happens at the expense of the most marginalized and consistently exploited groups (ibid.:6).

5.4 Further Challenges

In the expert interviews, several issues within Kenya's tourism industry were discussed. Some of them cannot be directly listed as colonial legacies of British colonialism, which is why they will be dealt with in this separate subchapter. However, indirect correlations, especially to coloniality, displayed through power dynamics of the contemporary global system and its functioning, could still be analyzed. The expert interviewee Julius Owino, when being asked on whether external influences impact Kenya's tourism industry, generally provides answers concerning different topics compared to Esther Munyiri and Alex Kamau. While the issues discussed may have global influences and be influenced by foreign power dynamics, direct traces to British colonialism in the context of the discussed topics are relatively limited. As a main issue, Owino names connectivity regarding the lacking number of direct flights from and to the Kenyan coast. This is a reason, he argues, why international conferences are not taking place along the coast but rather in Nairobi or Zanzibar, which belongs to Tanzania. Another issue he addresses concerns high and continuously increasing taxes, through which tourism in Kenya is becoming more expensive. According to him, this happens "not because the service providers and suppliers are offering expensive products or services, but because the cost of doing business is high". The next topic is mentioned by all three interviewees, namely climate change and how it affects the tourism industry in Kenya. Owino goes more into detail about plastic waste and how non-effective regulations in Kenya decrease the population of the marine ecosystem. Alex Kamau addresses the unsustainable aspects of the tourism and hospitality industry and highlights the need for more sustainable practices, which will be discussed in the following chapter on 'decoloniality'. Finally, Esther Munyiri mentions climate change when she talks about recent droughts affecting the wildlife in their diet and habitat.

5.5 Decoloniality - Suggestions on Decolonizing the Industry

Based on the aspects of Coloniality of Power, Being, and Knowledge within Kenya's tourism industry elaborated above, the aim is to focus on decoloniality or how to decolonize the industry. The content analysis of the conducted expert interviews and further literature review will serve as the foundation for the following arguments, even though the focus will be laid on the interviewee's arguments as scholars are found to be rather vague when giving an answer on how to decolonize the industry. The suggestions of 'decoloniality' are subdivided in subchapters dealing with 'Local Involvement', 'Diversification' of the tourism products, 'Alternative Marketing Strategies', as well as advice on 'Decolonizing Conservation'.

5.5.1 Local Involvement

In the previous chapter on 'Coloniality of Power', the topic of 'Foreign Ownership' was discussed first. As one of the most popular topics during the expert interviews, the interviewees present their suggestions on how to solve the issue. In the first expert interview Esther Munyiri mentions: "Decolonization to me in the tourism industry is about getting the tourism businesses out of foreign ownership" and "to balance it with local ownership". As a result, she proposes an ideal ratio of 80:20, wherein 80% of the ownership should remain local, while the remaining 20% may be held by foreign investors. The demand for greater involvement of locals in the tourism industry is steadily growing, encompassing various roles such as investors, workers, and active participation in tourism and conservation initiatives. Munyiri highlights the importance of encouraging locals to invest in the industry, as well as the participation of local communities in tourism related business ventures or conservation. In her opinion, this would include many benefits as it would be "easier for locals to actually feel like this is [their] thing, [their] industry, this is something that [they] need to support". Consequently, Munyiri suggests that this would lead to less opposition to developments surrounding tourism investment. Accountable for creating a greater balance regarding foreigners and locals in the industry is according to Munyiri, the government. Moreover, Alex Kamau holds the same opinion saying that "politicians especially should be the ambassadors of their own community" and should therefore be "first in line of crafting and amending policies”, which could “make it easier for people to start tourism businesses”. Furthermore, he agrees with Munyiri in saying that local people should have better opportunities being offered than ‘people from outside’. Overall, his vision entails fostering a sense of individual responsibility for driving their own economic growth, and states that ‘Decolonizing Tourism’ is about “putting the destiny back in the hands of the local people”, which according to him would “change the travel space” and “create a paradigm shift”.

The introduction of the new constitution in 2010 has generally contributed to the fulfillment of this goal, namely to regionalize tourism development as it included “a more devolved approach to management of resources and specifically mandates regional governments to have control over the tourism within their jurisdictions” (Mayaka/Prasad 2012:52f.). As addressed in chapter 4.2.4 ‘Challenging Developments’, effective decentralization within the tourism industry through the new constitution led to a more viable tourism administration pathway, where local or regional authorities focus on developing tourism in their respective areas, including promotion and coordination of initiatives (Ndivoa/Okech 2020:170). Thereby, consensus among stakeholders and the need for inclusivity are of utmost importance (Mayaka/Prasad 2012:53). Esther Munyiri also believes that the new constitution has offered opportunities to bring about positive changes in the tourism industry by promoting local attractions owned by the communities. However, implementing these changes is challenging as she accuses tourism ministers of prioritizing other responsibilities, like trade, which they find easier to handle, leading to slower progress in the development of tourism in the local communities.

Further political acts include the regulation of the ratio of foreign and local workers within the tourism industry. As previously mentioned, Julius Owino does not see the high percentage of foreign ownership within Kenya’s tourism industry as a threat, but rather as an opportunity. Concerning this matter, however, Owino mentions an important regulation regarding the ratio of local and foreign workers within hospitality facilities decided by the ‘Tourism Regulatory Authority’ as well as the ‘Department of Immigration’. According to him, at least three-quarters of the hotel ownership and senior management positions must be held by locals, with a quarter of these roles open to individuals from foreign countries. A regulation like this, further supports local involvement and thereby supports a ‘decolonization’ of the industry.

5.5.2 Diversification

Generally, in academic literature, ‘disrupting dependency’ as part of the process of decoloniality within the tourism industry is highlighted. This includes breaking colonial legacies of focusing solely on Safari- and Beach-Tourism and working more towards tourism diversification. While the UNCTAD and UNWTO report of 2021 suggests that developing countries reliant on tourism should explore avenues to diversify their resources away from this industry, Alex Kamau is currently working on diversifying the travel industry itself and opening up opportunities for adventure traveling to everyone no matter how much they earn or where they come from. The community-based organization ‘Let’s Drift’ with Alex Kamau as ‘Head of Community’, was founded in 2018. Their mission statement revolves around making adventure more accessible, affordable, and safe as well as taking the power back to the people by hiring locals as tour guides as well as including local communities as much as possible. Consequently, domestic tourism, which is also described as a way to decolonize the industry, is being promoted.

A realization made by Kamau was that the pandemic has had an enormous impact on domestic tourism. Countries reliant on tourism, like Kenya, started to promote domestic tourism more heavily in order to compensate for the loss of international tourists, which according to Higgins-Desbiolles (2022:8) “invites critical questioning on the dynamics of tourism”. In the BBC-Podcast ‘The Comb’ by Kim Chakanetsa (2022), the episode revolving around ‘Decolonizing Tourism’ addressed the respective topic, namely reporting about Kenyans starting to voice their displeasure online as well as offline after local hotels suddenly advertised solely for Kenyans. Esther Munyiri gave an example of lodges at Lewa Conservancy becoming cheaper during the pandemic, so more Kenyans could afford to go. However, soon after, the prices were increased to what Munyiri called ‘factory settings’ leading to an apparent return to normalcy, seemingly indifferent to the past occurrence of the pandemic. Nevertheless, Kamau argues that Kenyans have also “started to appreciate the beauty and the diversity of their own country”, which is what he believes drew people to make use of the offers by ‘Let’s Drift’.

5.5.3 Alternative Marketing

In the context of marketing strategies, as explored in the preceding chapter under the heading of ‘Coloniality of Power’, Alex Kamau delves into the matter of colonial legacies and offers potential approaches for their decolonization. During the interview he highlights once or twice, how advertisements have reduced Kenya to solely being known for the Masai, and therefore wildlife-safaris and white, sandy beaches. While these statements are followed by addressing the lack of local (financial) involvement, they furthermore suggest that marketing strategies are deeply rooted in coloniality, which was elaborated on in the previous chapter. The continuous stereotypical advertisement, partly monitored in European countries or the US, reinforces these problematic portrayals. Part of the solution could be influencers, as Kamau perceives them as having a big responsibility as they play an indispensable role in today's marketing sphere. In terms of the "power of information", he further addresses the responsibility of famous Kenyans, who according to Kamau could contribute greatly when using their fandom for advertising Kenya. Although Kamau sees influencers and famous people as an asset in changing the narrative, he warns about continuous biased coverage through ignorant and unreflective storytelling, which according to him is "not truthful to the core".

5.5.4 Decolonizing Conservation

The topic of colonial legacies within conservation was not addressed during the expert interviews. However, due to its presence in media and academia, this issue is included in this analysis. Regarding conservation in Kenya, as being discussed in the previous chapter, 'Coloniality of Power' leads to a consequential 'Coloniality of Being' experienced by indigenous communities in their struggle for protection and equitable conservation measures. After analyzing cases of displacement in the name of conservation in Kenya (Ogiek, Endorois), it becomes apparent that colonial narratives have persisted and been coupled with (neo)colonial power relations. To be held accountable for the harms of conservation policies are large conservation NGOs as well as international donors and local governments. Regarding the involvement of NGOs, Elizabeth Garland names specific examples like the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), and the Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS), who according to her must "begin to exercise restraint in glorifying the accomplishments and personas of individual charismatic conservationists" (Garland 2008:70). To further address this issue, effective mechanisms must be established that allow victims of fortress conservation to seek redress, ensuring adequate restitution and compensation for the harm caused, say Dominguez and Luoma (2020:15). They furthermore highlight the importance of devoting "funds to better understand how indigenous traditional knowledge helps preserve the environment, integrating it into modern conservation science" (ibid.). The same opinion is held by Garland (2008:70), who argues that people working for these conservation organizations should engage in an educational process that delves into the intricacies of African culture and history, expanding their understanding beyond their previous knowledge. A question that remains to be asked is whether or not the Kenyan government can be held accountable as well. As explored in the preceding chapter, both the Endorois and the Ogiek communities experienced government involvement in their evictions, and despite the passage of time, these families are still struggling to obtain the promised compensations. Despite this, Garland argues that even experienced and well-institutionalized African states often struggle to exert effective control over the capital generated from their nation's wildlife populations, resulting in a weakened capacity to do so. She holds the state and therefore the government accountable but blames neoliberal reforms for the "downsizing of government bureaucracies, privatization of government-run wildlife enterprises, reduction in private sectors oversight and regulation" (Garland 2008:68) as well as for opening the door to more foreign investment. Consequently, she draws the conclusion that only a few African governments have been in significantly robust positions to influence the conservation landscape (ibid.).

Finally, the approach towards decolonizing conservation by Dominguez and Luoma is based on a "rights-based approach to conservation" (Dominguez and Luoma 2020:15) grounded in the international human rights law. They argue that this would be the "best way to effectively conserve the environment and mitigate climate change" (ibid.). Garland is in favor of encouraging international conservation NGOs to change their agendas even though it might be challenging due to the benefits they receive from the current system. However, the support and willingness of African communities to back conservation efforts depend on the NGOs' transformation. She further argues that the future of African wildlife conservation lies in moving away from colonial narratives and redefining it as a source of dignity and equality for African people globally (Garland 2008:70). To effect a profound change in the global perception of African nature, it is essential to replace colonial narratives with more authentic representations of African environments in their historical, inhabited complexity. This shift requires redirecting the desires underlying wildlife conservation and tourism without undermining the value-creation of conservation efforts, involving African states, non-state actors, and international conservation players (ibid.:68). Human Rights Watch (2010), furthermore, stresses the importance to “treat indigenous peoples as active stakeholders rather than passive beneficiaries”.

Lastly, Esther Munyiri, one of the export interviewees, reports about a successful conservation project at Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, which is necessary to be included in this subchapter. Even though it is not owned by people originally from Kenya, Munyiri highlights the efforts of including and supporting local communities. Programs have been established that support locals concerning education, agriculture, women businesses, etc., and they have agreements with communities when it comes to grazing within the conservancy in times of droughts. Therefore, little to no havoc within the community was created. She attributes the success of Lewa Wildlife Conservancy to the close collaboration and the inclusion of locals residing in the area. According to her, the consequence is that “then the local community is always ready to take up whatever there is and to support the industry” as they vividly experience the benefits. Esther Munyiri alludes to the concept of community-based wildlife conservation, a strategy that, as highlighted by John S. Akama (2004:150), has been under consideration for implementation in Kenya since the mid-1980s. For example, the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) has been involved in the implementation of community-based wildlife tourism projects around Amboseli National Park and Maasai Mara National Reserve since the 1980s. This policy seeks to foster local participation by encouraging the formation of wildlife conservation associations, enabling direct involvement in wildlife safari tourism development. The Kenya Wildlife Service and further tourism groups have been involved in the implementation of such projects around Amboseli National Park and Maasai Mara National Reserve since the 1980s with the aim to foster local participation by encouraging the formation of wildlife conservation associations, enabling direct involvement in wildlife safari tourism development. Akama, however, argues that the majority of these programs have resulted in the co-optation of local elites in wildlife conservation and tourism development, while offering limited meaningful involvement to rural peasants, especially in project design and management (ibid.).

5.6 Discussion

The aim of this Master’s thesis was to work towards answering the research questions, questions of what ‘Decolonizing Tourism’ in Kenya means and entails as well as in which way theory and practice diverge from or relate to each other with respect to this matter. Such an undertaking requires a comprehensive examination on related topics, which is why the thesis started with an elaborate theoretical debate on how to define ‘decolonization’ in this context, followed by an introduction of the case study, namely the evolution of Kenya’s tourism industry. Therefore, after introducing foundational decolonization theory in chapter 3 and the case study in chapter 4, the analysis of the semi-structured interviews juxtaposed with scholarly sources in chapter 5 supplemented the process, which altogether culminates in this chapter summarizing the main arguments and thereby addressing the research questions. Additionally, a comprehensive discourse on the overarching theme of ‘decolonization’ is undertaken.

To ascertain the dimensions inherent in the process of ‘Decolonizing Tourism’ within a more focused domain, the viewpoints expressed by the interviewees were methodically segmented according to the three fundamental aspects of coloniality: ‘Coloniality of Power’, ‘Coloniality of Being’, and ‘Coloniality of Knowledge’. First, the concept of 'Coloniality of Power' within Kenya's tourism industry was addressed, focusing on three topics that have emerged in the course of the analysis, namely ‘Foreign Ownership’, ‘Marketing’, and ‘Conservation’. Regarding the first, highlighted how foreign ownership of hotels and businesses, rooted in colonial history, perpetuates subjugation and economic dependency. Furthermore, an elaboration on coloniality within marketing demonstrated how the advertisement of Kenya as a tourist destination is historically catered to Western perspectives thereby reinforcing colonial legacies and stereotypes. Additionally, it was discussed in the subchapter how conservation efforts often lead to forced evictions of indigenous communities, maintaining neo-colonial power dynamics. In all three cases of ‘Coloniality of Power’, direct links to British colonialism were demonstrated. Moreover, the examination suggests broader concerns regarding the asymmetrical power dynamics inherent in the functioning of the present-day global system, thereby proposing the perpetuation of an imperialistic framework as elucidated in the earlier discussion in chapter 3.

The concept of ‘Coloniality of Being‘, which us build upon discussions about the repercussions of the ‘Coloniality of Power’ across various societal domains, served as a valuable analytical framework for comprehending the dehumanization and depersonalization experienced by those subjected to colonization and its enduring effects. Consequently, the subchapter was divided in a part on ‘Exclusivity’ and a second one on the ‘Effects of Conservation’. The exclusivity of the safari experience, stemming from historical and contemporary factors, perpetuates unequal power dynamics and biases that treat local and international tourists differently. The analysis also explored the enduring impact of colonial practices on conservation, leading to the dispossession of indigenous communities, disruption of livelihoods, and human rights violations. Ultimately, the persistence of exclusivity and unequal power dynamics in the tourism industry underscores the lasting influence of colonial legacies, which resembles the conclusions of the chapter on ‘Coloniality of Power’.

The aspect of ‘Coloniality of Knowledge’ certainly plays a crucial rule when analyzing colonial legacies in different subject areas as it addresses epistemological inequalities and the politics of knowledge generation by exploring how colonial modernity suppressed alternative ways of imagining, seeing, and knowing. However, it was not discussed as extensively within the interviews and the respective literature. In the context of Kenyan tourism, aspects of ‘Coloniality of Knowledge’ were mentioned explicitly only in the expert interview with Alex Kamau, who emphasizes the enduring presence of colonial mindsets shaping perceptions even after independence. The influence of Western ideals on land use and conservation practices continues to undervalue indigenous knowledge, perpetuating legacies of colonial norms and marginalizing communities like the Ogiek. A more comprehensive analysis could have included an analysis of the arguments by the interview partners themselves in terms of how they might be affected by ‘Coloniality of Knowledge’. However, this would have gone beyond the scope of this Master’s thesis.

Based on the expert interviews in conjunction with the relevant literature as well as the analysis of the three types of coloniality, suggestions for decolonizing the tourism industry in Kenya were presented. Following the analysis, it can be stated that the pursuit of decoloniality within Kenya's tourism industry, informed by an analysis of colonial power dynamics, modes of being, and knowledge, is characterized by multifaceted strategies. These strategies, derived from expert interviews and corresponding literature, encompass ‘Local Involvement’, ‘Diversification’, ‘Alternative Marketing Strategies’, and ‘Decolonizing Conservation’. Concerning 'Local Involvement', emphasis is placed on the need to redress foreign ownership imbalances by proposing a more equitable distribution of ownership between local and foreign entities, with specific suggestions of an 80:20 ratio, by Esther Munyiri, thereby favoring local ownership. ‘Diversification’ entails a departure from colonial narratives and the sole emphasis on

'Safari' and 'Beach', supporting a shift towards inclusive, adventure-focused travel experiences that engage local communities and foster domestic tourism. Addressing 'Alternative Marketing Strategies', it is proposed that the industry ought to disrupt colonial imagery by engaging influencers, leveraging the influence of famous Kenyans, and employing truthful and reflective storytelling. Finally, 'Decolonizing Conservation' focuses on advocating a rights-based approach to conservation, involving Kenyan communities as active stakeholders and promoting authentic representations that value dignity, equality, and collaboration. To sum up, 'Decolonizing Tourism' in Kenya generally involves a comprehensive and multifaceted process informed by an analysis of colonial power dynamics, modes of being, and knowledge. This endeavor, based on expert interviews, scholarly literature, and the exploration of colonial legacies within the tourism industry, culminated in a set of strategies aimed at dismantling historical imbalances and promoting equity. Additionally, it is important to note that due to the fact that the framework of 'coloniality/decoloniality' was primarily employed for the purpose of subdivision and analysis, the process of decolonizing the industry in this thesis extends beyond the mere disengagement from Great Britain as the former colonial power. It encompasses addressing contemporary inequalities that resonate on a global scale.

Overall, it can be concluded that these strategies underscore the urgency of transforming the tourism sector to ensure a more inclusive, equitable, and culturally sensitive framework. Nevertheless, this does not indicate a lack of efforts towards implementing measures for improvement so far. In the analysis chapter, respective measures were discussed. First, the introduction of the new constitution in 2010 decentralized Kenya's political system and laid the foundation for improved inclusion of local communities within each county when it comes to tourism endeavors. Moreover, concerning a balance of foreign and local ownership, Julius Owino, one of the expert interviewees, mentioned an important regulation regarding the ratio of local and foreign workers within hospitality facilities decided by the 'Tourism Regulatory Authority' as well as the 'Department of Immigration'. Accordingly, at least three-quarters of the hotel ownership and senior management positions must be held by locals, leaving a quarter of these roles open to individuals from foreign countries. Regarding the topic of conservation in the cases of the Ogiek and the Endorois, the African Union as well as the 'African Commission on Human and People's Rights' have intervened, and the latter has rendered an historic judgment, demanding the Kenyan government to compensate the communities for their losses. What these examples demonstrate is that, according to the meaning of ‘Decolonizing Tourism’ in this thesis, the process of decolonization is already in progress. The suggestions addressed by the interviewees and scholars are therefore improvement measurements to further boost the progress in order to ensure a more inclusive, equitable, and culturally sensitive industry.

Concerning the second research question, namely in which way theory and practice diverge from or relate to each other, a comparison between the theoretical foundation and the experiences and arguments by the expert interviewees must be drawn. An exact blueprint for decolonizing the tourism industry of a particular country was hardly existent in academia and will remain elusive due to different contexts in each case. Because of this, the focus when answering this question should be channeled towards a comprehensive theoretical framework for the process of decolonization. The main conclusion of the theoretical debate in chapter 3 underscores that the notion of ‘coloniality/decoloniality’, constructed in response to the limitations of former postcolonial 'decolonization’ concepts, emerges as a pertinent and adaptable analytical framework as it exhibits the versatility necessary for its application across diverse subject domains. This assertion was confirmed in this chapter through the analysis of expert interviews. Moreover, distinct arguments pertaining to ‘decoloniality’, specifically addressing strategies for decolonizing the industry, were successfully distilled from the interview transcripts and subsequently organized into coherent groups. The ability to categorize their arguments into the trisection of colonial power, being, and knowledge facilitated the analysis and enabled a more transparent analytical process, which proved the flexible applicability of the concept. Hence, the theory employed in this thesis establishes a meaningful connection with real-world practical instances, facilitated by its inherent adaptability. To address the second research question about the relationship between theory and practice, a comparison was made. The absence of a precise theoretical foundation for decolonizing specific industries in academia necessitates a focus on a comprehensive theoretical framework. Throughout chapter 3 on ‘Decolonization Theories’, the ‘coloniality/decoloniality’ concept emerged as an adaptable analytical framework. The trisection of colonial power, being, and knowledge aided in categorizing and analyzing arguments, demonstrating the concept’s flexible applicability and meaningful connection with practical instances.

Before moving onto the conclusion, it is necessary to address and counteract Olúfẹ́mi Táíwò’s aforementioned rejection of ‘decolonization’ presented in his recent book ‘Against Decolonization. Taking African Agency Seriously’ as it was included in the debate in chapter 3 on ‘Decolonization Theories’. It is imperative to emphasize that Táíwò's perspective does not outrightly reject the utilization of 'decolonization' as an analytical instrument. Rather, he advocates for a more discerning and deliberate approach when employing the term. This perspective prompted me to deeply engage with the term, which culminated in the elaborate debate on ‘Decolonization Theories’ in chapter 3. Moreover, he warns about declaring not quickly enough that the presence of X under colonialism and its persistence post-independence constitute an uninterrupted sequence of causation. When analyzing the viewpoints presented by the interviewees, I made deliberate efforts to establish explicit linkages where they were evident. Simultaneously, I also approached the task with a willingness to confront not only direct correlations but also indirect associations, as well as to acknowledge the culpability of the global capitalist system as opposed to solely attributing it to British colonialism, which can be ascribed to the usage of ‘coloniality/decoloniality’ as an analytical tool. Olúfẹ́mi Táíwò’s critical stance towards ‘decolonization’ has therefore enriched the research process of this thesis.

6 Conclusion

In the dynamic landscape of Kenya's tourism industry, this thesis embarked on a research journey that investigated the interplay between colonial legacies and decolonization imperatives. Rooted in an Afrocentric perspective and guided by an integrative approach to research, the complex layers of 'Decolonizing Tourism' in Kenya were investigated in this thesis to unravel its multifaceted dimensions. To accomplish this, scientific debates of a diverse array of topics were necessary to ultimately answer the research questions, which read as follows: "What does it mean to decolonize Kenya's tourism industry and what would it entail?", and, "In which way do theory and practice diverge from or relate to each other?".

Before delving into the thematic chapters of the thesis, the chapter called 'Decolonizing Research' focused on addressing the multifaceted and sensitive issues underpinning the research questions. This required embracing transdisciplinary dialogues and positioning myself within social sciences as a young researcher committed to challenging power structures, addressing epistemic injustices, and amplifying marginalized voices. Subsequently, throughout this thesis, the comprehensive exploration of the respective topics was divided into three distinct phases. First, the chapter on 'Decolonization Theories' established the theoretical foundation by engaging with global debates on decolonization, thereby encompassing key concepts in a dual structure (analytical and contextual meaning), while recognizing analytical and native meanings. Noteworthy scholars' contributions were synthesized, culminating in a focus on 'coloniality' and 'decoloniality' as pertinent analytical tools for 'Decolonizing Tourism'. Secondly, the 'Evolution of Kenya's Tourism Industry' was explored, tracing its inception back to British colonial administrators in the late 19th century. This chapter was sectioned into two time periods, focusing on foundational developments during the early 20th century before elaborating on post-independence progress. These explorations paved the way for the third phase, which was grounded in qualitative research and captured in chapter 5, 'Decolonizing Kenya's Tourism Industry'. This phase combined theoretical frameworks with the lived experiences of Kenya's tourism practitioners, captured through semi-structured expert interviews with Esther Munyiri, Alex Kamau, and Julius Owino. Guided by their insights and supported by academic literature and reports, the investigation examined colonial dynamics across the dimensions of Coloniality of Power, Being, and Knowledge, highlighting their interconnectedness, thereby providing the answers for the first research question.

The analysis unveiled the influence of coloniality across the tourism spectrum. The examination of the ‘Coloniality of Power’ exposed how foreign ownership, marketing practices, and conservation efforts continue to perpetuate power imbalances and economic dependencies, echoing a colonial framework. The concept of ‘Coloniality of Being’ illuminated the enduring dehumanization and depersonalization stemming from colonial pasts, exemplified by exclusivity within the industry and the repercussions of conservation on Kenyan communities. Additionally, the ‘Coloniality of Knowledge’ highlighted the suppression of diverse ways of knowing, fostering a dominance of Western ideals in land use and conservation. This comprehensive analysis of aspects of ‘coloniality’ intersected with strategies for decolonization. Drawing from the insights provided by the interviewees and a comprehensive review of the literature, four overarching themes were delineated: ‘Local Involvement’ advocated for equitable ownership distribution; ‘Diversification’ called for narrative shifts; ‘Alternative Marketing Strategies’ aimed at disrupting colonial imagery; and ‘Decolonizing Conservation’ emphasized an inclusive approach. To sum up, these strategies underscored the urgency of transforming the tourism sector to ensure a more inclusive, equitable, and culturally sensitive industry. The synthesis of expert insights, academic literature, and research outcomes resonated with the theoretical framework established earlier on and reinforced the adaptable nature of the ‘coloniality/decoloniality’ paradigm. The exploration delved into the interplay between theory and practice, showcasing how the theory employed in this thesis establishes a meaningful connection with real-world practical instances, which provides an answer to the second research question, namely in which way theory and practice would relate or diverge from each other.

Further realization processes included the intricate engagement with 'decolonization' and the need for an accurate consideration and usage of the term. Enlightened by Olúfẹ́mi Táíwò’s cautionary perspective on ‘Decolonization’, this careful reflection enhanced the depth of the debate on ‘Decolonization Theories’ in chapter 3, while also acknowledging the complexities of causality and accountability in colonial dynamics, which proved to be helpful in the chapter focusing on the analysis. As the tourism industry in Kenya confronts its challenges, from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic to historical legacies, this thesis highlighted the necessity for collaborative efforts. The multifaceted strategies proposed in this study offer a roadmap towards fostering a more equitable, inclusive, and authentic tourism sector. By acknowledging the complexities of ‘coloniality’ and ‘decoloniality’, this research contributes to the ongoing pursuit of justice, agency, and empowerment within Kenya’s tourism landscape and beyond. In closing, this study has underscored the significance of examining the connections between historical colonial legacies, racial disparities, and worldwide challenges, highlighting the need for further in-depth exploration and understanding of coloniality in specific areas such as tourism.

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8 Appendix

8.1 Consent Form

Expert Interviewee Data Protection Consent Form

Thank you very much for being available as an expert for an interview as basis for a master's thesis at the University of Vienna. According to the Austrian Data Protection Act (section 7, para. 2, subpara. 2 of the Data Protection Act), you have to give your consent to this type of interview since statements mentioning your name are used (quoted) in the master's thesis. The contents of the interview are transcribed.

You will receive the transcription for approval before it is used in the thesis. The interview transcript will be attached to the thesis in the appendix. An academic thesis must be published according to the Austrian Universities Act (by shelving it in the Austrian National Library and the Vienna University Library). It is usually also accessible online. The data can be consulted by the supervisor of the academic thesis for the purpose of performance assessment. In principle, it is permitted to store the collected data for an unlimited period of time according to article 89, para. 1 of the GDPR. You can withdraw your consent to the use of this interview at any time. However, any statements used in the academic paper until this date are in accordance with statutory requirements and do not have to be removed from the paper. You also have the right to be informed by the person responsible for this study about the personal data collected, the right to rectification, erasure, restriction of processing of data and the right to object to processing as well as the right to data portability.

If you have any questions regarding this survey, please contact the person responsible for this study: Hannah Magnes (a121732130@unet.univie.ac.at), a student in the degree programme in the Masters in Global History and Global Studies at the University of Vienna. For general legal questions regarding the GDPR/FOG and research conducted by students, please contact the Data Protection Officer of the University of Vienna, Daniel Stanonik (verarbeitungsverzeichnis@univie.ac.at). You also have the right to lodge a complaint with the Data Protection Authority (for example, via dsb@dsb.gv.at).

I, ______________________, hereby consent to the use of my personal data as part of the master’s thesis by Hannah Magnes. I consent to my interview being recorded, and I understand a transcript of my interview will be included in the thesis appendix, which may be rectified, erased, or objected to at any time at my discretion. I understand and hereby approve that direct quotes cited from my interview included within the thesis cannot be removed.

Name: ____________________________ Place: ____________________________

Signature: _________________________ Date: _____________________________

8.2 Interview Questionnaire

Your professional opinion is crucial to our research, and I appreciate your time and contribution in this semi-structured expert interview. Kindly be aware that due to the nature of the semi-structured format, not all questions may be asked, allowing flexibility to delve deeper into relevant topics.

Interviewer: Hannah Magnes
Interview partner:
Date of the Interview:

Topic 1: Icebreaker

1) You are a professor at Kenyatta University and director of the "Tourism Resilience and Crisis Management Centre". What made you choose to study Tourism Management? What are your research topics, and your tasks at university and at the center?
2) In your expert analysis of Kenya's tourism industry, where would you identify notable areas of strength or competitive advantage?

Topic 2: Issues within the tourism industry

3) Could you elaborate on the multifaceted challenges and complexities that the country encounters related to tourism?
4) How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect the tourism industry? Which issues did it generate or perpetuate?

Topic 3: Colonialism/Colonization

5) To what extent do external influences impact Kenya's tourism industry
    a. Could you highlight the potential implications that arise from such external forces and how it effects the indust ry's overall development and autonomy?
6) Do you see linkages between colonial legacies and issues within the country's tourism industry?
    a. Could you elaborate on the intricate ways in which the historical legacies of colonialism and neocolonialism have permeated the tourism industry in Kenya?

Topic 4: Tackling the problems → decolonization?

7) How would you define processes of ‘decolonization’?
8) Do you see decolonization as a necessary process to tackle issues within Kenya’s tourism industry? If yes, what would this process entail?
9) Are there any initiatives working towards decolonizing the tourism industry in Kenya?
    a. If so, what have been the outcomes or achievements?
10) From your perspective, what are the potential long-term benefits for Kenya in decolonizing its tourism industry?
    a. Can decolonizing tourism in Kenya benefit both the economy and local communities?
11) In your opinion, what role can local actors and communities play in tackling issues within Kenya's tourism industry that are related to colonial legacies? How can their voices and perspectives be amplified?
12) In your opinion, how can non-local stakeholders (i.e. travel agents, investors etc.), who are involved in Kenya’s tourism industry, contribute to decolonizing the industry?

Final Question:

13) In envisioning a utopian state for Kenya's tourism industry devoid of any issues, how would you describe its ideal characteristics, structures, and operations?