

Sex Tourism on the Kenyan Coast

Sex Tourism on the Kenyan Coast:

Romantic Safaris and Unfulfilled Dreams

By

Rose Omondi and Chris Ryan

**Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing**



Sex Tourism on the Kenyan Coast: Romantic Safaris and Unfulfilled Dreams

By Rose Omondi and Chris Ryan

This book first published 2024

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2024 by Rose Omondi and Chris Ryan

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN: 978-1-0364-0942-5

ISBN (Ebook): 978-1-0364-0943-2

Dedicated to all those women who shared their private life
experiences

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables and Figures	viii
Preface	ix
Abbreviations	xii
Chapter One.....	1
Introduction	
Chapter Two	11
Sex Tourism: Theory, Concepts, and Implications	
Chapter Three	67
Kenyan Tourism, the Kenyan Coast, and Prostitution Policy in Kenya	
Chapter Four.....	85
Researching Kenyan Coastline Sex Tourism	
Chapter Five	122
Female Sex Workers – Roles and Voices	
Chapter Six	231
The Impact of Covid-19	
Chapter Seven.....	239
Discussions, Conclusions, and Study Recommendations	
Bibliography	272
Glossary	299

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 3.1 Tourist attractions in Kenya

Table 4.1 Participants' Profiles

Figure 7.1 Romantic Entertainment in Kenya's Coastal Tourism

PREFACE

This book emanated from Rose Omondi's doctoral thesis, for which the original fieldwork was done in 2008/9. Chris Ryan was her chief supervisor, and the original material has been significantly updated, drawing upon both primary and secondary materials. In the traditional manner of academic work, refereed journal papers did finally emerge from the original thesis. However, we found it took a long time to achieve because we suspect the subject matter and our approach often caused at least one referee to reject the paper. For example, in one case, one referee was unable to conceive male clients could be the victims of sex workers. We therefore concluded that the word limits imposed by journals would not permit us to explore the subject's totality, nor indeed Rose's experience and findings. Hence this book.

We believe this book provides insights into the lives of sex workers on the Kenyan coastline. Much of this is in chapter five. The reader will note that this chapter departs in some ways from the somewhat detached tone of the other chapters in that it is taken from Rose's original thesis and primarily retains her own words and observations. While significantly edited by Chris, it still retains a rawness of comment, and we have specifically included some of the parlance of the streets, clubs, and bars to describe the daily lives of the sex workers. The book is primarily about female sex workers, specifically those who seek older European males. It is a niche within the Kenyan coastline sex work – but it was one where we felt that males who engage in these activities should be fully aware of what it is they are doing. They exploit women and in turn are exploited. Notwithstanding this specific focus, of necessity several observations are also made about more general issues of heterogeneous sex tourism between female sex workers and male clients.

Time passes, but much of Rose's writing remained true until the emergence of Covid in late 2019 and certainly from about March 2020. Significant research, both in person and on-line, was undertaken and Chapter six explores what has happened in Kenya's sex work industry in 2020 and 2021. The personal stories of the informants from earlier chapters are a mix of death, retirement, breakdowns in health, and some success, but these are not the focus of chapter six. That chapter is a little different in tone for two main

reasons. First, to retain the anonymity of our informants, but secondly because as discussed in chapters six and seven, Covid may well be a point of disjuncture.

It should be noted we have used pseudonyms for both our informants and the bars and clubs. Any replication of any name of an individual, bar, club, hotel, or other place of accommodation is coincidental, and the use of that name for any individual or site is not deliberate.

This work was in many ways challenging, given the nature of the research topic and Rose very much appreciates the support received from various individuals who contributed in one way or the other to make it reach its conclusion.

Prostitution is a profession not acceptable to many, and not everyone will eagerly talk about it, let alone accept that they are sex workers or clients. Talking to strangers both makes things easier, and yet harder, especially if a relationship is sustained for more than a year. The primary informants for this book were sex workers who willingly gave their time, worked through personal issues, each in their own way. Some were proud of what they had achieved, some saw it a matter of fate, others saw themselves as making the best of their circumstances, but few adopted the role of victim. Many became good friends of Rose, welcoming her into their houses and showing her their private letters from the tourists. They would tell stories about bits of their personal lives with much enthusiasm and joy, although sometimes they broke down and cried. We could do little to help them at the time of the research but hope the result of this work might someday bring them some relief. We are truly grateful for their time, stories, and company; without this generosity, this work would not be here. This book is based on their stories, but any interpretation and commentary are those of the authors. We also want to recognize and thank police officers, bar and hotel workers, and others who provided insights.

Much has changed since the original work undertaken by Rose. As noted in the text, today the internet plays a significant role in sustaining sex work through the period of Covid with the advent of “cam girls” and examples of this exist in Kenya. The internet has also blurred many boundaries. In Rose’s original work, we suggested that in many instances the relationship between the sex workers and their older male clients was based upon the males’ desire for company and “romance” as much as upon a demand for physical sex, and we coined the phrase “romantic entertainers” to describe the sex workers. It implies that there is a theatrical aspect to the relationship,

but it should be borne in mind that the theatre engages emotions and causes both laughter and tears, joy, and despair – and such factors are present in this text. There is physical abuse, deception, including self-deception, and physical and financial loss. One feature not explored is the impact of some forms of social media, including Facebook and Tinder. Tinder, a dating app created in 2019 was still relatively new to Kenya, and had not yet, as far as we could judge, made a great impression on the sex tourism market of Malindi, but its implications are thought to be significant for that market, including who might be the actors in the theatre of romantic entertainment.

Finally, among the many to be thanked are Lori Kiyama and David Pomatti for their material and financial contribution to the study. Carol Thomsom was a support during Rose's time in Hamilton, New Zealand, and during the work and writing of this book. For Rose and her family, the period of study meant tight finances to the point when it looked as if the thesis on which this book is based would not be completed. But when Rose thought of withdrawing, for her family, that was not an option. We both wish to thank them for their support, especially given the topic of this book. We appreciate and acknowledge their courage in supporting a family member researching what many in Kenya still regard as an untouchable topic, namely sex tourism. From an academic perspective, we would also wish to thank Mike Hall from the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, Neil Carr from Otago University and Liza Berdychevsky from the University of Illinois for their comments, advice, and sharing early proofs of their own work. We would also express our gratitude to Dr Janet Bujra of the University of Bradford who gave us permission to cite long passages from her past work on the history of Kenya's colonial development during the 1980s. Her work helped us better understand the history of Kenya and the social conditions of the time.

ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ATM	Automated (Bank) Teller Machines
ARVs	Anti-Retro-Virals (AIDS control medicines)
CSEC	Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
CSW	Commercial Sex Workers
EAPA	East Africa Publicity Association
EATTA	East Africa Tourist and Travel Association
ECPACT	End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes
EPZ	Export Processing Zone
FIDA	Federation of Women Lawyers (Kenya Chapter)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ILO I	International Labor Organization
IUOTO	International Union of Official Travel Organization (present UNWTO)
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (formerly CBS)
KTB	Kenya Tourist Board
KTDC	Kenya Tourism Development Corporation
KWS	Kenya Wildlife Service
MCC	Mombasa City Council
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCS	(Police) Officer Commanding Station
PC	Provincial Commissioner
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SOLWODI	Solidarity with Women in Distress
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
TB	Tuberculosis
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
VCT	Voluntary Counselling and Testing

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

An Explanation

This book started with a working title - *The Nature and Implications of the Sex Tourism Market at the Kenyan Coast*, situating it within the larger context of international tourism in Kenya. After data collection and analysis however, it emerged that sexual desires and activities amongst participants, both the local women and older tourists are minimal, and the women serving the tourists are more involved in what might be termed “romantic entertainment” in general rather than sexual liaisons. Consequently, the title was changed to *Romantic Entertainers: Sex Tourism on the Malindi Coastline, Kenya*. The term “romantic entertainment” is thought to be appropriate at many different levels. At one level, the clients often possess a romantic empathy or affection for the women with whom they engage, as will be shown in later chapters. Additionally, in several instances, the women may find themselves having affection toward some longer-term clients. Finally, however, the current title was determined to better place the book within the wider genre of work on this global phenomenon, but in a way that identified its Kenyan roots.

The motives of the sex workers are many, are in part pecuniary, but also (as later discussed) shaped by a desire to travel overseas – to some place and in some relationships that promise a better life. Finally, we selected the current title to emphasize that much of the discussion relates to the sex workers and relationships with older male clients, but reference is made to other aspects of the sex tourism market.

The attitudes of the clients may also be partly based on the images and perceptions of Africa in general, particularly in Kenya - perceptions derived from past romantic writings of Africa born of past nineteenth-century European literature where Africa (and its women) are seen as “natural”, “exotic”, “closer to nature”, sexual, or as being “the noble savage” as portrayed in various writings that range from the works of Rice Edgar

Burroughs to reports of the London Geographical Society (e.g., see Wels, 2004). “Entertainment” exists as the women act as local guides offering potential glimpses into the “real” Mombasa Coastline – to places and experiences not promised by the standard package holiday. Additionally, “entertainment” within its theatrical sense can offer a drama of escape, comedy, pain, introspection, and self-examination – and it is through such arts that entertainment reveals truths about the human condition. So too, can the state of tourism, as has long been recognized in both academic studies and by playwrights including Willy Russell’s hit play, *Shirley Valentine*.

Sex tourism has become such a large part of coastal tourism in Kenya to the extent that the Government must now think about its consequences and how it might be managed, particularly so in a period of Covid-19 and its aftermath. For this to be done successfully, the views of all stakeholders must be incorporated into any proposed management program. The overall goal of this study was to give sex tourism workers a voice to speak about their experiences so that such views can also be included in the management of sex tourism in Kenya. The participants’ voices indicate that their involvement in sex tourism is as much about “romantic entertainment” as tourism prostitution. They enter relationships motivated by hope for a better life that only a *Mzungu* can provide, but the desired outcome is very elusive for many, and the women often engage in fraudulent activities with their *Wazungu* partners that generally involve faking their love. For many, there are health, physical and psychological risks. Their involvement with this romantic entertainment is summarized in a concept of “Romantic Entertainment” in Kenya’s coastal tourism as presented in Figure 7.1 in Chapter seven. The structure shows that there are women who can achieve their dream or hope of finding a *Mzungu* and after may live a better life. However, many continue to work sustained by the hope of a *Mzungu* and because they know no other lifestyle. Others can only maintain their lifestyle by becoming cynical and enduring it for the money alone, while for others, the end is illness, poor health, and economic vulnerability. Given this understanding, this study proposes a legal framework to manage sex tourism in Kenya, holding the view that “romantic entertainment” should be allowed to continue but in a manner that does not infringe on the public’s safety and order. For those women who have become vulnerable because of sex work, a long-term rehabilitation program is suggested to help them leave the trade, learn new skills, and so engage in alternative economic activities. This study also aimed to produce data that can be used to inform public policy and advocacy programs for sex tourism and prostitution in Kenya.

The Subject Matter

Sex tourism is travel where tourists are seen to be sexually involved with local persons in relationships that are generally serial and where there is exchange of money and/or gifts for shared intimacies (Cohen 1982; Gezinski et al., 2016; Katsulis, 2010; Pruitt & LaFont, 1995; Rivers-Moore, 2012). It is increasingly becoming a significant segment of the international tourism market (Kempadoo, 2004; Ryan & Hall, 2001; Clift & Cater, 2000, Berdychevsky & Carr, 2021). In the past, popular destinations for sex tourism have predominantly included the South East Asian countries (Truong, 1990; Cohen, 1996; Hall, 1994; Odzer, 1994; Lim, 1998; Robinson & Bishop, 1998; Clift & Cater, 2000) but, in recent years, sex tourism has spread to other regions of the world, including parts of the Caribbean, South America, Eastern Europe and African countries including Kenya, The Gambia, Tunisia, Morocco, Swaziland and South Africa (Harrison, 1994; Herold et al., 2001; Kempadoo, 2004; Kibicho, 2009; Meisch, 1995; Nyanzi et al., 2005; Pruitt & Lafont, 1995; Ryan & Hall, 2001; Sindiga, 1999, 2018).

In terms of research on sex tourism, there has been a consistent perspective within feminist studies that sees sex tourism as a global phenomenon in which socially and economically marginalized women, often from third-world countries, are sexually exploited and violated; their bodies turned into objects and commodities to be bought and sold (Barry, 1979; Enloe, 2000; Jeffreys, 1997). However, there is also a countervailing approach that sees sex work as a form of work freely chosen by thousands of women, and as such, it is not entirely exploitative (Chapkis, 1997; Herold et al., 2001; Kempadoo, 1998; Nagle, 1997) but a legitimate form of work. Additionally, there is also some emerging literature that sees sex (tourism) work as an activity that can both empower as well as enable women to gain sexual pleasure and economic independence (Nagle, 1997; Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Hall, 2001). It has also been observed that sex tourism occurs not only in third-world countries but also in wealthy nations (Ryan, 2000; Wonders & Michalowski, 2001). Between these competing views exists a continuum whereby sex work is a constrained choice representing a logical response to economic deprivation that generates income that permits sex workers to gain economic independence (Rivers-Moore, 2016; Berdychevsky & Carr, 2021). Such independence enables them to fulfill other functions as parents, citizens, nodes in local economic structures, and as people able to make different choices. On the other hand, it is also necessary to recognize that prostitution has connections with pimping, organized crime, and drug abuse, but ironically, such linkages are arguably most prevalent when society

makes prostitution illegal or generally is intolerant of it, thereby forcing sex workers into marginalized positions of criminality that imprisons them even more (Brooks & Heaslip, 2019). Worse cases are reported in Dubai where women have been raped, reported to the police, and subsequently jailed even while those who conducted the assault remain free (Suchland, 2016).

Studying sex tourism is important because it is a worrying public health problem due to its potential to contribute to the transmission of HIV/AIDS, and other sexually transmitted diseases and viruses such as Covid-19 through inter-regional and international movements of both sex-oriented tourists and sex workers (Jozaghi & Bird, 2020). Tourists seeking sex can not only travel the world in search of pleasure but can do so within their own cities and towns by using the internet. There is an increasing demand for cheap and exotic sexual services in wealthy nations, including Western Europe, North America, Japan, and the Middle East, contributing to the trafficking of women and children to serve in these growing sex industries abroad and in the demand-generating countries, while some women also travel as independent sex workers (Barry, 1979; Farr, 2005; Kempadoo & Doezema, 1998; Ryan & Hall, 2001).

In Kenya, sex tourism has been a feature in its travel and tourism industry for at least a century (Bujra, 1982) and has grown to almost the same magnitude as that of the South East Asian countries during the last four decades (UNICEF Kenya, 2006; The Vatican representative to WTO, 2003; Kenya Times, 1996; Chissim, 1996; Kisia-Omondi, 2004, the East African, 1995) but to date, little academic work has been done on sex tourism in Kenya to understand its nature, magnitude, and factors promoting it (Kibicho, 2009; Sindiga, 1999; Migot-Adhola et al., 1982; Kleibe & Wilkie, 1995).

The little information that is available indicates that the phenomenon has been on the rise in Kenya, partly due to the increased number of orphans who turn to sex work after losing their parents to AIDS, the increased number of street families in major urban centers in Kenya who tend to derive their living from begging and prostitution, and the rampant poverty in the country where about 35% of the population live below the poverty level, a figure that has been reduced from 45% in 2009 (Kenya, 2009; Mundi Index, 2021) with the majority being women due to their gender and class. On the other hand, it can be argued sex tourism in Kenya cannot be blamed entirely on the desperation and/or poverty of the female participants since several women get into sex tourism work not because they are poor but with the hope of a “better life” that only a *Mzungu* can provide.

Justification for the Study

As mentioned above, there has been a relative lack of interest in studying sex tourism in Kenya, despite its rapid growth. This lack of interest is partly due to reluctance by Kenyan academics to research sex-related topics, and worse, it touches on a profession, prostitution, which is generally despised by many in the population. Researching such a topic in the minds of several demeans the researcher and lowers one's perceived respectability among colleagues who may think a respectable person should not research such a topic. As a result, most Kenyan academics have shied away from studying sex tourism. The phenomenon has, however, reached such a level that the Government will inevitably have to develop policy guidelines on how it can be managed. Such guidelines can only be made with a sound understanding of the nature, magnitude, and implications of sex tourism in the country. It is argued that this book provides information that can prove useful not only to the Kenyan Government in developing policy guidelines but also to the international community since sex tourism is a global problem.

It should be noted, however, that despite the taboos associated with the topic, some researchers have brought the subject to the fore since 2015. Among these is the work of Isaac Sindiga (2018), whose review of Kenyan tourism has included the subject of commercial sex in an updated version of his earlier book (Sindiga, 1999). Similarly, Kibochi updated his earlier book of 2009 in 2016 (Kibochi, 2009, 2016). Both authors have published several academic journal articles and have been joined by others cited elsewhere in this book. Various factors have influenced the increase in publications. They include a global recognition of a diversity of gender self-identification in the gay, lesbian, transgender, bi-sexual, and cross-dressing communities, some of whom have careers in or touching the commercial sex industry as they grapple with issues of self-identification. In addition, non-governmental bodies associated with sex workers and sex trafficking have generated reports. Schulze (2017, p5) in his report for Awareness Against Human Trafficking (HAART) reveals the complexity of the issues in his introduction when noting, "... there appears to be a culture of silencing around SECTT (Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism) as well as a resulting reluctance to make interventions when the issue pertains to children from other families. Another issue lies in the fact that a considerable number of children in prostitution do not appear to hold a negative attitude towards their occupation and that continued financial security forms an essential precondition for their willingness to leave prostitution behind them".

To this end, several reasons justify this kind of study in Kenya. First and foremost is the need to give a voice to the women involved in sex tourism work so that their views can also be included in any sex tourism management program. In the past, concerned NGOs have initiated programs to help the “victims,” and the Kenyan Government has made policy statements targeting sex tourists concerning child sex tourism. While understandable because of a wish to protect minors, such measures would do little to manage the broader issues of adult sex tourism unless the views of sex tourism workers are also considered. This book provides a voice for these sex workers to speak about their experiences in the hope that such views can also be incorporated when developing future policy guidelines.

Next, the relationship between sex tourism and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS, justifies this kind of study because of the health risks for the women involved in commercial sex tourism and the sex tourists themselves. It is important to note that while sex tourism is still prevalent in many third-world countries, including Kenya, risks to health remain where incidents of sexually transmitted diseases remain relatively high (D’Costa et al., 1985; Lockhart, et al., 2019). The information indicates that despite these risks, several sex-oriented tourists are unwilling to use protective measures such as condoms, even though the women will often insist on such measures. The tourists also have a misconception that children are not likely to be infected, and older sex workers are vulnerable to high rates of infections due to the nature of their work. The information gathered in this study can help propose appropriate measures to reduce these health risks that might include educating tourists about the health risks at the destination areas, legalizing sex work so that the women could have legal grounds to protect themselves or, alternatively, have a total ban on sex tourism industry altogether.

It is suspected that the latter decision is simply impractical, but thus far the Kenyan Government has proven reluctant to step into the contentious area of sex work legal reform, which is discussed in chapter three.

The third justification for this study relates to the international trafficking of third-world women and children to the industrialized world for sexual services. This practice is a human rights abuse that should be condemned with the contempt it deserves. Ways and means of controlling it must be found, but these can only be done with an understanding of the nature and organization of sex tourism, which is one of the main links in trafficking. The present study has gathered some information on the link between sex tourism and human trafficking in Kenya and hopes that appropriate actions

can be taken by the Kenyan Government and the people who are likely to fall victim to trafficking.

Lastly, but still an important justification, is that tourism is a significant contributor to the Kenyan economy, and the industry should be guided against sex-related activities that harm the men, women, and children involved, which may adversely affect the country's image. An UNICEF report (UNICEF Kenya, 2006) estimated that approximately 30% of children between the ages of 18 years were involved in sex tourism, often missing out on their education because of the income they could generate. Given that many tourists are uneasy about witnessing such instances on the coastline, the existence of such cases could quickly adversely impact Kenya's tourism industry. Such a dented image may well affect the choice of some tourists to travel to Kenya. Information from a study like this can help draw up appropriate actions to help counter any negative image that might arise from sex tourism-related activities in Kenya.

The Book's Structure

This book comprises seven chapters. Chapter One introduces the subject matter, provides justifications for the study, and then outlines the content of the following chapters. It briefly presents a global picture of the sex tourism phenomenon and introduces the Kenyan context indicating why it was important to undertake this kind of study.

Chapter Two reviews the literature on sex tourism, focusing on its definition, theoretical explanations, the sex tourism prostitution market, and then discusses both the negative and positive impacts of sex tourism. Theoretical explanations that have been used in the past for the study of sex tourism are reviewed in this chapter, including feminist conceptualizations about prostitution in general; Baul's (1964) concept of love, social exchange, and economic exchange theory as adapted by Cohen (1996) to explain commercial sex tourism in Thailand; the theory of liminality by Ryan and Hall (2001) based on Turner's (1982) comparative symbology; and Truong's (1990) analysis of prostitution in South East Asia based on four discourses of sexuality, and sociobiology and intimacy theory used by Trauer and Ryan (2005) to analyze tourist place experience. These theoretical reviews were necessary to help understand and conceptualize the Kenyan case. The chapter also reviews the literature on the sex tourism prostitution market, focusing on the nature of the market, the customer, the client, the agent, place, price, and promotion in other regions of the world to compare that information with the Kenyan situation. Finally, the chapter looks at both the

negative and positive impacts of sex tourism to inform any policy recommendations.

Chapter Three discusses the study context for sex tourism research in Kenya. It is divided into three sections. The first section discusses the Kenyan tourism industry in general, highlighting its historical development, tourist attractions, and the contribution of the tourism industry to the Kenyan economy, while the second section introduces the Kenyan coast, which is the study area, and the presence of sex tourism activities there. The last section presents the prostitution policy in Kenya, as these are the laws relevant to sex tourism activities in the country. It can be seen from the discussion in this chapter that the tourism industry has been a good vehicle for development in Kenya, but this has not been without a cost, and for many, one of the negative impacts is the emergence of sex tourism, particularly in its present form on the Kenyan coast.

Chapter Four presents the study methodology and is divided into two broad sections. The first section discusses the major paradigms in tourism research in general, while the second part explains the research methodology and methods used for sex tourism study in Kenya, giving reasons for the methodological choice. It also highlights research problems experienced in the field and how the researcher met such challenges. Section one thus presents, at length, the inquiry paradigm in tourism research focusing on the paradigms proposed by Jennings (2010): Positivism, Interpretive paradigm, Feminism, Postmodernism, Critical theory, and Chaos and Complexity theory. The section then focuses on the qualitative research process, starting with analyzing different types of qualitative research methods: Ethnography, Phenomenology, Grounded Theory, Biography, Case Studies, and Action Research. The section further presents methods of qualitative data collection techniques, including participant and direct observations, in-depth interviewing, and focus group discussions. Issues within the data collection process, such as a researcher's dimension (reflexivity and subjectivity) and ethical concerns when dealing with informants in the field, are also discussed. Several issues, such as the role of the researcher, multi-vocality, and the power of the researcher to choose whose voice to present or is silenced in the report, are also discussed. The criteria for qualitative research findings focus on credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. Section two discusses the research process, methodology, and methods used for this research project. This study used a qualitative research approach grounded in an interpretive/ constructivist paradigm. An ethnographic approach was chosen to gather information from female sex workers servicing older foreign tourists. The section then presents the data collection

process for this sex tourism study in Kenya. Both primary and secondary data were collected. Secondary data was gathered from various government records, books, newspapers, and NGO records, while primary data was collected through limited participant observation. The section also describes how data analysis was done through an induction process and presents that information in texts extracted from recordings. Lastly, the section highlights problems experienced during primary data collection, given the sensitivity of the research topic.

Chapter Five presents information on the nature and implications of the sex tourism market on the Kenyan coast based on data collected from the field under six sub-themes: (1) Chasing the elusive dream when becoming a sex tourism worker, indicating various reasons for the women's entry in sex tourism work at the Kenyan coast; (2) Playing hard to get, a game of skill, luck, and supernatural powers, explaining how hard it is to land a tourist so the women must constantly hope for luck, employ different seductive skills or consult supernatural powers in order to achieve their ambition; (3) Selling romance, the intrigues of a love market, explaining the nature of this market in terms of customers, product, place, and price; (4) Guilty without a crime, sex workers experience with law enforcement describing women's experience with the law enforcement agencies (the police) despite adult prostitution not being strictly illegal in Kenya; (5) The aftermath! Wasted lives, risks, and limited options explaining the illusionary nature of tourism prostitution that makes it risky and challenging for the participants to have a decent life or to leave sex tourism for something else; and (6) The liminal industry, stakeholders' views on the sex tourism industry in Kenya, indicating how the stakeholders see sex tourism to be making a positive contribution to the lives of participants and the coastal economy in general, including job creation and hence feeling that the industry should remain liminal.

Chapter Six draws upon more general literature as well as that specific to Kenya about the impact of Covid-19 on the sex industry. However, regarding research specific to the Kenyan coastline, it must be admitted that the research is both anecdotal and speculative, as the virus has adversely impacted the number of visitors to the coast. Indeed, several women offering "entertainment" have also returned to their original areas of the country and in several cases returned to their families.

Chapter Seven offers discussions, conclusions, and recommendations for policy and advice on improving the socio-economic status of female sex workers who desire to leave sex work. The chapter also summarizes recommendations and contributions to the sex tourism literature and

indicates areas for further research. Discussions have shown that most of the study's results align with the sex tourism literature. However, some findings are unique to the Kenyan situation, such as use of supernatural powers by the women to help them "attract and to confuse the tourists to give them more money," various "bizarre" acts, prostitutes sleeping with the spirits, and reverse racism. In line with the discussions, especially those touching on the conceptualization of sex work and Kenyan women's motivation to select sex tourism work, various proposals about sex work in Kenya are presented in this last chapter. As previously noted, the study recommends abolitionism as a legal framework for managing sex tourism in Kenya and a long-term rehabilitation program for those women who want to leave sex work. Areas suggested for further research include a comparative study with domestic prostitution, female sex tourism, and sex tourists' motivations, targeting the tourists themselves as the study subjects.

CHAPTER TWO

SEX TOURISM: THEORY, CONCEPTS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on the theory, concepts, and implications of sex tourism in an exploratory manner to provide a background to the current text. This process is considered necessary since little is known about the nature and extent of sex tourism in Kenya. Theoretically, there is no universally accepted definition and theoretical explanation of sex tourism; hence, each study must create its own conceptualization pertinent to the context being studied (Ryan & Hall, 2001; Troung, 1990). Six theoretical explanations used in the past for studying sex (tourism) work are reviewed in this chapter. They are again discussed in detail in Chapter Seven to suggest an explanation for the Kenyan case. This current chapter also discusses issues existing within the tourism industry that make it possible for travelers to want to engage in sexual relations and agrees with the perception that tourism, by its very nature, must lead to prostitution and that, in many ways, one is simply a reflection of the other (Graburn, 1983). This perspective adopts a stance whereby the sex tourism market is seen to be a market like any other since there is the customer, the product, the agent, the place, and the price within it. Finally, the chapter looks at the negative and positive impacts of sex tourism. On the negative side, sex tourism can contribute to health problems like HIV/AIDS, Covid-19, and other communicable diseases that sex-oriented tourists can transmit across national boundaries. It is also associated with the trafficking of women and children to serve in the sex industry abroad and child prostitution (Jeffrey, 2009; Brooks & Heaslip, 2019). On the other hand, sex tourism can contribute to the well-being of society in terms of income generation, infrastructure development, cultural exchange, and employment creation in the entertainment industry, and for many sex workers may establish senses of independence and self-worth (Doezema, 1998).

Issues of Definition

This section deals with definitional issues in sex tourism. It attempts to define “sex” and “tourism” to derive the meaning of “sex tourism.” Several tourism definitions exist in the literature but need universal acceptance. The variety of definitions reflects the multi-disciplinary nature of tourism studies that cover a wide range of subjects such as economics and business, geography, anthropology, sociology, education, psychology, and law, among others (Leiper, 2004), and often reflects the ethical stances adopted by the various commentators when discussing the impacts of tourism (Ryan, 2020). Tourism involves diverse activities such as transport, accommodation, recreation, and catering. Tribe (1994) suggests any definition of tourism must include the following features, which, in his view, must be present for tourism to occur: (a) an act of travel from one place to another, (b) a particular set of motives for engaging in that travel, and (c) the engagement in an activity at the destination.

One definition of tourism is that of Goeldner and Ritchie (2006, p.5), who defined tourism as:

... the process, activities and outcomes arising from the relationships and the interactions among tourists, tourism suppliers, host governments, host communities and surrounding environments that are involved in the attracting and hosting of visitors.

On the other hand, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) see tourism as the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for less than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes (UNWTO, 2006). According to Leiper (2004, p. 35), tourism is “the theory and practice of being a tourist” and he defines tourists:

...as persons who travel away from their normal residential regions for temporary period of at least one night, to the extent that their behaviour involves a search for leisure, experiences from interactions with features or characteristics of places they choose to visit.

This definition involves traveling and visiting places for leisure-related purposes. Tourism comprises the ideas and opinions people hold that shape their decisions about going on trips, about where to go (and where not to go) and what to do or not to do, and about how to relate to other tourists, locales, and service personnel. And it is all the behavioral manifestation of those ideas. Ryan’s (2003, p. 23) definition of tourism is:

... the demand for, and the supply of accommodation and supportive services for staying away from home, and the resultant patterns of expenditure, income creation, and employment.

Goeldner and Ritchie's (2006) observation is that each of the available tourism definitions is aimed at fitting a special situation and solving an immediate problem, and that the lack of a uniform definition has hampered the study of tourism as a discipline. Ryan's (2003) definition, for example, emphasizes the economic and business aspects of tourism, while Leiper (2004) and UNWTO (2006) emphasize the distance traveled, the length of time spent and the purpose of the trip. In this study, the UNWTO definition of tourism is adopted because sex is seen as one of the many activities in which people traveling and staying in new environments can decide to engage.

Sex

Boothby's (2005, p. 62) observation is that:

... across widely varying cultures and throughout different history, sexuality has been conspicuously a subject of elaborate restrictions and taboos as it is surrounded by a special sensitivity for it is the subject of our most ready embarrassments, our most familiar guilt and our most biting sense of shame.

He further observes "... sex is at once the fondest dream of human pleasure but also the point at which pleasure is most conspicuously refused." Foucault (1990, p. 17) suggested the beginning of this secrecy started with the rise of bourgeois societies around the seventeenth century and states:

... thereafter, calling sex by its name became more difficult and more costly. As if in order to gain mastery over it, it had first been necessary to subjugate it at the level of language, control its free circulation in speech, expunge it from the things that were said, and extinguish the words that rendered it too visibly present. And even these prohibitions, it seems, were afraid to name it.

For their part, Whiteley and Whiteley's (1967, p.7) felt it was:

... difficult to be reasonable about sex because it is an emotionally disturbing topic since people cannot think about it without some activation of their sexual impulses...The organic disturbance is further reinforced by taboos and inhibitions built up through sex education in almost every society.

They conclude that the entire system of sexual morality can be understood as a means of maintaining family life so that all may benefit by providing a stable environment for the upbringing of children and sexual partners and the expectation of support in old age. “The family also provides emotional security and companionship for all” (Whiteley & Whiteley, 1967, p. 17). In Judaism, from which the other two Abrahamic religions, Christianity and Islam are derived, sex is recognized as the highest expression of the Divine, and sex and reproduction are the acts through which one can imitate God, the creator. Hence to preserve its sanctity, there are many boundaries and regulations (Leavitt et al., 2021).

In Africa, the origin of restrictions on sex is not well understood, but its magnitude is unimaginable as there are countless taboos and rituals surrounding sex. Such confusion was partly a cause for the difficulty in curbing the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa when the disease was first discovered in the early 1980s because nobody could talk about the “sex disease”. This confusion, ambiguity, and reluctance to talk about sex is now slowly eroding and items including condoms are now advertised openly. It can be argued that people in Africa started talking about sex more openly with the discovery of AIDS because they had to choose whether to talk about the sex disease or continue to die in large numbers. This explanation can also be extended to include the many research studies on sexuality conducted during the last two decades in Africa, with virtually every study on sexuality touching on AIDS whether it was intended or not (Oinas & Arnfred, 2009). However, by 2020, with the advent of Covid-19, any recognition of its impact on sex workers was initially lacking, and relatively little support was provided for reasons discussed in Chapter Six. It should be noted, however, that HIV continues to be a serious concern.

Despite being restrained by these cultural narratives, sex has long been recognized as a basic human need. It is believed to be a basic biological urge that demands fulfillment against the claims of morals, beliefs, and social restrictions, and, as such, it is seen as “really dangerous and the source of most human troubles from Adam and Eve onwards” (Weeks, 2003). Maslow (1970, p. 36), in his theory of human motivation, identified sex as one of the physiological needs, the other needs being food, shelter, warmth, air, and maternal concern. These basic needs, he notes, are essential for human life, and the lack of any one of them would lead to death. Boothby (2005), on the other hand, sees parallels between sex and food and concludes both are important for bodily functions and are motivated by powerful forces since they are required for the survival of the species, and thus, they are rewarded by an intense yield of pleasure. Sex is again regarded

highly by K'ung Fu-Tzu, who noted that “After people are clothed and fed, then they think about sex” (K'ung Fu-Tzu (Confucius) 551-479 BC (cited by Mackay, 2001 p. 71)).

Sex today is a term that is frequently used and is by far the most frequently searched subject word on the internet, given the availability of many chat rooms where users can enjoy cyber-sex relationships that are entirely anonymous (Boothby, 2005; Weinstein et al., 2015). It is perhaps notable that Pornhub searches significantly increased during the periods of lockdown restrictions imposed by various governments during the Covid pandemic as individuals sought some proxy for sex (Cerdán Martínez, Villa-Gracia, & Deza, 2021; Zattoni et al., 2020).

Kinsey's (1948) observation about sex is that “... there is no aspect of human behaviour about which there has been more thought, more talk and more books written” (cited by Weeks, 2003, p. 91). Despite its importance in human life and frequent use of the word, sex remains a poorly defined term (Randal & Byers, 2003), and in a world where a dichotomous sexual identity is being challenged, traditional perspectives are found wanting. As Schudson, Beischel, and van Anders (2019, p. 1) comment, “Evidence suggests that contemporary understandings of gender/sex are less static and less binary than they have been in the past.” The mystery of sex, including its lack of proper definition despite its importance in human life, is not well understood, despite, for example, occupying Sigmund Freud throughout his research career. In terms of definition, this study found that people would list different types of sexual acts, such as vaginal, anal, oral, or would describe different types of sexual orientation, such as heterosexual, homosexual (gay or lesbianism), bisexual, or transsexual in their definition of sex, but not actually say what sex is. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, however, defines sex as “... the physical contact between individuals involving sexual stimulation of the genitals, sexual intercourse specifically; copulation, coitus” (Hornby et al., 2005, p. 1078) – a definition that yet again refers to function rather than mystery or emotion.

Sex Tourism

As noted above, this thesis adopts the UNWTO definition of tourism as:

“... the process, *activities and outcomes arising from the relationships and the interactions* among tourists, tourism suppliers, host governments, host communities and surrounding environments that are involved in the attracting and hosting of visitors” (emphasis added),

and the definition of sex from the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary as "the physical contact between individuals involving sexual stimulation of the genitals, sexual intercourse specifically; copulation, coitus." The questions to ask in the search for the definition of sex tourism are (1) What is the activity? - Sexual intercourse; and (2) The relationships and interactions are between the tourists and who? – Members of the host communities. Thus, sex tourism can be defined as sexual intercourse resulting from the relationships and the interactions among tourists and members of the host communities. In the literature, sex tourism has however been defined as: "Tourism where the main purpose or motivation of at least part of the trip is to consummate sexual relations" (Graburn, 1983, p. 438; Hall, 1996, p. 179).

Such a definition, despite the inclusion of the word "relations", tends to neutralize what is considered more important in this text, namely relationships. However, in her work, Enloe (1989) also sees sex tourism as the behaviour of male tourists whose purpose is to engage in commercial sex with local women in tourist destinations. However, this traditional definition (and view) has been recognized as partial in nature (Oppermann, 1998, 1999; Ryan, 2000). Oppermann (1998, p. 2) questions several aspects of this traditional definition of sex tourism. These include whether the intention to have sex is enough and whether there should be a sexual act and with which partner, the unknown or usual partner, and what is meant by sex? His conclusion is that previous definitions were an oversimplification of the concept of sex tourism, and a need existed to understand the issues listed above before sex tourism could be positioned. In his subsequent work, Oppermann (1999, p. 261) again took issue with traditional definitions of sex tourism that implied a typical "sex tourist" who takes a holiday to have sex, stays away from home for at least 24 hours, meets the sex provider for the first time, has sexual intercourse because of direct monetary exchange, and obtains sexual gratification in encounters which last a relatively short time. His observation is that this type of sex tourist rarely exists. It has been noted that sex tourists and providers often spend several days together, have repeated visitation, and that monetary exchange may not always occur (Cohen, 1982; Ryan, 2000). In their preface, Ryan & Hall's (2001) observation about this traditional definition of sex tourism is that the solidity of such a definition will start to fade away as soon as one starts to explore marginalities and states of sexualities within sex tourism. Berdychevsky (2018) also commented that 20 years later, there still remains a lack of a commonly agreed definition of sex tourism.

Nonetheless, Ryan (2000, p. 36) offers a simple definition of sex tourism as “sexual intercourse while on holiday” and cautions on the restriction or limiting of the definition of sex tourism to red-light capitals that are seen as places of exploitation and degradation since these places can also be locations where positive statements of femininity are made. He further notes that sex tourism should not be seen purely as heterosexual or commercial, implying that other forms of sex tourism exist. Additionally, Ryan points out that sex tourism should not be seen as only being “over there” as it starts within homes, in locales, and with local people before it is “over there”, a point that can be interpreted to mean that sex tourism not only takes place in third-world countries (over there), but its existence has to be contextualized within developed societies (over here). Jeffreys (2009) believed that the term sex tourism is broader than is usually presented and can be applied to the behaviour of tourists who expect sexual interaction with fellow tourists and prostitutes in resorts or non-commercial sex with locals or with other holidaying strangers in western destinations as a routine part of their holiday experience. She prefers the use of the term “tourism prostitution” which, in her view, would be more suited to make the phenomenon’s gendered nature and its harm to women visible.

Truong’s (1990) definition of sex (tourism) work is based on prostitution in general but is one which can be extended to include commercial sex tourism. She defines prostitution as:

... the practice of habitual or intermittent sexual union, more or less promiscuous, for mercenary inducement. It is thus characterized by three major elements: payment, promiscuity and emotional indifference (Truong, 1970, p. 1).

She notes that by implication, therefore, sexual intercourse is only accepted within the confines of marriage, (a socially acceptable union), and that which is unpaid for and involves emotional attachment. However, this view is not universally accepted since it has been argued that marriage is the biggest form of prostitution where a woman agrees to render sexual services to one man in exchange for economic protection (Berdychevsky & Carr, 2021; Jeffreys, 1997; Enloe, 1989; Graburn, 1983). People can thus have good sex while on holiday, that is, if it is within the socially acceptable union, unpaid for, and if it involves emotional attachment or bad sex (commercial sex tourism) if it involves purchase and partners who are within socially unacceptable unions and who have no emotional attachments (Truong, 1990).

This study focuses on commercial sex tourism but one which is heterosexual in nature, focusing on local adult female prostitutes serving sex tourists on the Kenyan coast. It defines the commercial sex tourist (in this context) as “having a romance with a local partner while on holiday- whether that romance be fake or real.” It is worth noting that the word sex has been avoided in this simple definition because it is not always what the tourists or the local Kenyan women look forward to, but because the relationships appear romantic, whether such be real or fake, the term romance is preferred. In this sense, the study adopts the stance proposed by Pruitt and LaFont (1995) in their paper entitled *For love and money*.

Tourism and Commercial Sex: The Relationship

It is important to analyze the relationship between commercial sex and tourism as it has been claimed that tourism activities in the third-world countries can generate prostitution (Cohen, 1982; Graburn, 1983; Brooks & Heaslip, 2019). This section attempts to answer the question - Does tourism cause prostitution? Such an analysis is vital for policy advice, and while the Kenyan government declared the country “a no-go zone for sex tourists” (BBC, 2006), this may not deter the sex tourists, the women or children engaging in the activity. It is thus essential to understand the causes and dynamics of sex and tourism to provide policy recommendations for managing sex tourism in Kenya as envisaged in the study goals.

There has been a linkage between tourism and sex since the earliest days of travel and thus the decision to travel, in many instances, is influenced by prospects of sexual encounters at the destination or somewhere along the way. These links can be positive if the sex is between two consenting adults is associated with honeymoon or romance but may be less favorable if associated with commercial sex (Bauer & McKercher, 2003; Kibicho, 2009). Tourism is also linked to commercial sexual activities in that there are several commercial sex tourism websites that often describe prospective partners as models or escorts, thus promoting sex tourism. An example of such a website was Travel and Single Male (TSM), an American-based organization run by sex tourists for their “gain” in a variety of ways. O’Connell (2004, p. 36) describes the organization as:

... having 5000 members who maintain their membership at US \$50 per year. It publishes a guidebook, quarterly newsletters, discounts in some hotels and brothels and most importantly they provide information on travel and prostitution in various countries around the world, access to soft-core pornographic photographs of female sex workers from those countries, two