

SPORTS TOURISM AND PERCEIVED SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT IN KENYA: THE CASE OF MACHAKOS COUNTY

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Preliminary communication
Received 15 November 2016
Revised 27 January 2017
6 August 2017
Accepted 27 September 2017
<https://doi.org/10.20867/thm.23.2.9>

Abstract

Purpose – Smaller events have been favoured by many commentators in sports research because mega events have been criticised for failing to have an aggregate positive advantage to local communities, especially in developing countries. On 4th August 2010 Kenya promulgated a new constitution which paved the way for a federal system of government. After three years into this new system of governance, most county governments have embarked on developing sports facilities and promoting sporting events in their respective counties. Machakos County is viewed as a model county that has invested remarkably in sports and recreation facilities which have attracted major sporting activities to this new sports destination. This research intends to evaluate the role of devolution in promoting sports tourism in Kenya and how sports tourism has contributed to social economic development in the region.

Design/methodology/approach – A survey was undertaken with a case study of Machakos County. Both secondary and primary data were collected and analysed. Follow up interviews and focused groups were also included as rich data sources in exploring the host community's perception on social impacts related to sports tourism development in Machakos.

Findings – Sports tourism has both positive and negative impacts. The positive impacts include: Infrastructure and Urban development; economic benefits; community consolidation; Social-cultural exchange; Community visibility and image enhancement; Knowledge and entertainment. Negative impacts include: Economic costs; Traffic problems; Security risks; Environmental concerns and Social conflicts. This case also highlights the role of devolution in sports tourism development and how it has helped cushioning Kenya's tourism sector from declining international tourist arrivals. Challenges of sports tourism development and event management are discussed. A number of recommendations are made.

Keywords Sports Tourism, Impacts, Devolution, Diversification, Domestic Tourism, Kenya

1. INTRODUCTION

It is an undisputed fact that tourism is an important social economic sector. This is even more important for most developing countries as it contributes to about 10-13% of their GDP (Njoroge, 2015; KIPPRA, 2009). For Kenya, tourism has been an important sector which led to strategic development of the sector since 1970s (Akama 1997). Its role is also acknowledged in achieving Kenya's ambitious plan of 'Vision 2030' adopted in the year 2008.

However with the rise of extremist groups who have been associated with a number of terror activities along the Kenyan coast, North Eastern Kenya and Nairobi, many countries which represent a big share of the international tourist market including Great Britain, France, and Netherlands among others have from time to time given travel advisories to their citizens not to travel to Kenya.

The last three years have been the worst in Kenyan tourism history. Due to active pockets of *Alshabab*¹ militia groups in the coastal region, most western European countries held longest travel advisories to their citizens intending to travel to Kenya. This led to massive withdrawal of all charter flights from western countries, and considerable cancellations of bookings especially to the coastal region which was hard hit.

As a result of the travel bans, beautiful sandy beaches at the Kenyan coast were deserted and the effect was felt as over 5,000 direct jobs were lost as most hotels remained closed. Following frustrations from the west, the government went east to lure tourists from Asian countries and from time to time there have been charter flights from South Korea, China and other Eastern countries. Other recovery strategies included a promotion of domestic tourism through a presidential directive to provide all civil servants free holiday in order to revive tourism. This drastic measure remains elusive and has never been implemented.

The coastal tourism region remained shut for sometime because of withdrawal by holiday makers, but sports related events kept the industry a little bit busy including the coast region's city of Mombasa which had been hard hit by massive withdrawal from international arrivals. Among all regions, Machakos County has been a popular venue for a number of sports since government functions and resources were devolved in the new structure of government that came into place in 2013 i.e. devolved government. The county has not only hosted local sports but also regional games including hosting the Confederation of Eastern and Central Africa Football Association (CECAFA) in 2013 and annual International rugby series named Masaku 7s which attracted both local and international participants.

Indeed, more and more countries are moving from centralised to decentralised forms of governance. Devolution is one form of decentralised governance. Despite the existence of different levels of devolution, devolved resources and decision making have been favoured by most governments because it provides opportunities for local governments to promote local tourism strategies.

On 4th August 2010 Kenya promulgated a new constitution which paved the way for a federal system of government with 47 counties. This offered fertile grounds for county governments to peg their developmental agendas to key economic activities that contribute substantially to the country's income. Amongst these activities was tourism, whose real growth has been estimated to stimulate a larger percentage growth in real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as compared to other economic sectors (Njoroge et al. 2015; Odunga and Folmer, 2004). Therefore tourism development would be a strategic

¹ Alshabab is a Somali's extremist group which has claimed responsibility of terror attacks in Kenya.

avenue for devolved governments to boost their revenues from services, industry and agriculture.

With a central government in Kenya, tourism development in some areas was marginalized as preference was given to the coastal destination along the Indian Ocean as well as range lands, and this would limit the diversity of tourism products that Kenya has to offer to beach and wildlife based tourism. Devolved governments have enabled the emergence of new inland destinations with diversified products like sports tourism for the domestic market, a niche that is primed to curb the seasonality problem that traditional destinations face during off peak seasons for the international visitor. Specific social impacts of such a move touches on individual's livelihood, and this aspect is important owing to its close direct variation with other positive impacts of tourism to the environment as well as economy.

There is a growing interest on studies aimed at understanding local social and economic impacts of sports tourism. This is because sports tourism produces both positive and negative economic and socio-psychological impacts. However, emphasis has been placed on the economic impacts and little interest has been placed on the intangible social impacts (Kim et al. 2015). Some research has suggested that sports tourism have psychological benefits beyond economic gains (Crompton 2004). Such non economic gains include, for instance, image enhancement (Dalamere 2001; Kim and Walker 2012). This study confirms improved perceived regional image as a result of events hosted in the study site, the devolved County government of Machakos.

Whilst some governments have recently undergone devolved processes and others are still in the process, the link between devolution and sports tourism development is under-researched. Focusing on perceived social impacts of sports tourism in Machakos County, our objective specifically draws attention to how devolution addresses the dilemma of marginalization of destination development and diversification of tourism products from the popular beach and nature based attractions, to sports tourism. The study further explains the perceived social-psychological impact of sports tourism development in the post devolution period between the year 2013 and 2015.

Hosting events can be part of community urbanization through development of infrastructure (Kim and Walker 2012). Sports tourism development in Machakos County has led to the development of general infrastructure and sports and leisure facilities. These developments have attracted investment in lodging and catering industry. The investment appeal has been attributed to image enhancement of Machakos County which has attracted investors into the region. As noted for the case of Tomsk region Russia, events stemming from tourism provide opportunity for small scale business growth (Chibir and Shirko 2015) and provide opportunities for the establishment of sports industry chain (Huang 2015). In line with this, our paper has two objectives. First is an attempt to understand the role of devolution in sports tourism and secondly, to evaluate the perceived social impacts of sports tourism in Machakos County. Considering that there has been no previous study and limited access to official data, this paper is an exploratory study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Sports tourism and regional development

Hall (1992) defines sports tourism as travelling for non commercial reasons to participate or observe sporting activities away from home. It is involvement in sporting activity organised casually or in an organised manner for non commercial reasons which necessitates travel away from home (Standeven and De Knop 1999). These definitions underscore participation and the need to travel away from one's home environment.

Therefore, sport represents a key attraction not only to tourists but also to local residents. Higham and Hinch (2003) acknowledge sports as an attraction to cultural tourists. In a framework of defining an attraction by Leiper (1990), attractions must have three elements that include the human element (sports tourist), the central element (nucleus) and the information element (marker). He further explains that the human element, the tourists, are the people travelling as participants, spectators, media, official and others; the informative element are marketing activities whose main agenda is to draw the human element (tourist) to the destination where the nucleus or central element is the key attraction. An attraction would exist when these elements are available. Table 1 provides further definitions and elaboration on sports tourism, sports tourist and tourism sport by Hinch and Higham (2001).

Table 1: **Elaboration on sports tourism, sports tourist and tourism sport**

Dimension	Definition and source
Sports tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Travel for non-commercial reasons to participate or observe sporting activities away from the home range (Hall, 1992: 194) - An expression of a pattern of behaviour of people during certain periods of leisure time – such as vacation time, which is done partly in specially attractive natural settings and partly in artificial sports and physical recreation facilities in the outdoors (Ruskin, 1987: 26) - Holiday involving sporting, activity either as spectator or participant (Weed and Bull. 1997) - Leisure-based travel that takes individuals temporarily outside of their home communities to participate in physical activities, to watch physical activities or to venerate attractions associated with physical activity (Gibson, 1998:5) - All forms of active and passive involvement in sporting activity, participated in casually or in an organised way for commercial or business/commercial reasons, that necessitates travel away from home and work locality (Standeven and De Knop, 1999:12)
Sports tourist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A temporary visitor staying at least 24h in the event area and whose primary purpose is to participate in a sporting event with the area being a secondary attraction (Nogawa et al., 1996:46) - Individuals and/or groups of people who actively or passively participate in competitive or recreational sport, while travelling to and/or staying in places outside their usual environment (sports as a primary motivation to travel) (Gammon and Robinson, 1997)

Dimension	Definition and source
Tourism Sport	- Person travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment and participating in, actively or passively, a competitive or recreational sports as a secondary activity (Gammon and Robinson, 1997)

Source: Higham and Hinch (2001)

Travel associated with sports can be traced as early as 17Bc and the focus on sports tourism has continued gaining interest among practitioners and policy makers alike. Sports tourism is one of the fastest-growing segments of the travel industry and is receiving increasing attention because of its social, economic and environmental opportunities (Hritz and Ross, 2010: 122).

Understanding regional development through sports tourism is an important yet relatively unexplored research domain. This remaining underdeveloped area of studies is highly composed of studies on sporting events, such as mega sporting events like the Olympics, and it's impacts for the local development of host cities (Chalip, 2006; Daniels and Norman, 2003; Gibson et al., 2005; Huang et al, 2015; Waller et al. 2015,). Conclusions in regards to the effects of sports tourism, even sporting events tourism, for regional development are rather vague in the literature. Most of the research in this area group tourism impacts into positive or negative without distinguishing specific types of impacts. Besides, the majority of past studies have focused on smaller towns and more rural locations (Hritz and Ross, 2010: 123).

Generally, results reveal social-, economic-, and environmental- impacts of tourism activities in destinations. Benefits of sporting events include, for example, economic, community, recreation and tourism benefits as well as increased employment, social and human capital and city improvements (Clark and Misener, 2015). Moreover, increased cultural identity and social interaction opportunities are also positive impacts of sports tourism practices (Hritz and Ross, 2010). In addition to that, among the environmental benefits of this activity are raising awareness, instilling a conservation ethic, and increasing protective measures (Gallagher et al, 2015). In a research about shark-diving tourism, authors Gallagher et al. (2015) have found out citizen science initiatives were created. Also, the economic development of a range of local businesses and conservation and research initiatives were also stimulated by this sports tourism practice. They also observed a growing trend in creating Marine Protected Areas around shark diving locations (Gallagher et al, 2015: 373) and that community-based management was fostered. For instance, in Fiji, "conservation groups and dive businesses have established long-term partnerships with the local community, returning part of the revenues generated by shark diving to the villages in exchange for the fishing rights at shark diving sites" (Gallagher et al, 2015: 374).

Although studies have found evidence of positive impacts of sports tourism (see Ap 1992; Brida and Disegna 2011; Chen 2008; Coakley 2004; Costa and Chalip 2005) for broader civic and local development of hosting cities, and it is commonly assumed that this will create lasting economic benefits to destination cities (Demir et al, 2015), long-term social benefits for host regions seems improbable and are not guaranteed

(Clark and Misener, 2015). Instead, literature has evidenced that the long-term benefits are increased international publicity and recognition; in other words, image promotion (Demir et al, 2015), and that these marketing benefits are volatile in time (Demir et al, 2015; Chen 2008; Coakley 2004)

There seems to clearly exist limitations for regions to maintain the benefits on a long-term basis. In fact, some sports tourism activities may aggravate existent social problems instead of solving them as evidenced by a study on tourism project for aid and social development through football in South Africa (Cubizolles, 2015). It is therefore important to stress that the regional costs, benefits and risks associated with sports tourism is probable specific to the region in which the activity is being developed.

2.2. Sports tourism and devolution

Sports tourism has opened up spaces in rural areas for tourism development (Costa and Chalip 2006). In Kenya tourism's linkage with rural communities has been facilitated through agitation for devolution which not only transfers resources but also encourages local level decision making on how resources should be used. Devolution is the transfer of power to a lower level i.e. from the central government to local or regional administration. It is the transfer of resource management function (Edmunds et al. 2003); transfer of rights and assets to local communities (Sayer et al. 2005); and transfer of government responsibility and political decentralization (Gregersen et al. 2004).

Devolution enhances legitimacy, perceived fairness and accountability of the government in the eyes of the public (Crooks and Manor, 1994). It brings greater efficiency and effectiveness if implemented in the best manner (Turner and Hulme, 1997). Smith (1985) notes the six key benefits of decentralisation (including devolution) which includes: 1) Political education, 2) Political leadership training, 3) Political stability, 4) Political equality 5) Accountability and, 6) Government responsibility as the local authority decides what best suits the local needs.

Devolution brings services closer to the people (Pearce et al., 2005). A case in point is that of George municipalities, western cape, where local government is able to support emerging tourism enterprises at a Local Economic Development Strategies (Ramukumba et al., 2012). Elsewhere, in a study on rural policy making and implementation in English West Midland, there is evidence that government administration reforms and decentralised responsibility promotes greater coordination at regional level (Pearce et al. 2005).The research however suggests that there is a need for resource allocation to support the transfer functions (Pearce et al. 2005).

Despite devolution, challenges of coordination efforts may be faced hence there is a need for 'centralised decentralization' as demonstrated by Kimbu and Ngoasong (2013). Furthermore, there is a need to coordinate linkages, and working relationships between various stakeholders in tourism planning (Maguigad 2013). In sports tourism research, there are limited scholars exploring themes around devolution and sports tourism. Moreover there are limited studies on tourism and devolution in general. For

example Kerr (2003) explained the impact of devolution on Scottish tourism where a system failure is reported considering that the local parliament not only lacked political will but also had limited influence on local policy. Kerr et al. (2001) had earlier on examined the Scottish tourism board funding where they note difficulty in funding of Scottish tourism boards. The study suggests the need for centralised funding mechanism coupled by local accountability and deliverance of tourism services as a prime and necessary strategy.

While evaluating economic impact of sports tourism remains a central concern for sports tourism researchers, it is equally important to evaluate social impacts of sports tourism (Kim et al. 2015). Therefore, it is important to understand the balance between economic and social goals of sports tourism (Kim and Petrick, 2005).

As a number of economies in the global south are moving towards devolved governance, it is important to continue advancing knowledge on how such moves affect local sports tourism development. It is based on this background that we examine how devolution has influenced sports tourism regionally using the case of Machakos County in Kenya. For that, this paper describes the background on devolution and sports tourism in Machakos County between the years 2013-2015 i.e. immediate post devolution periods in Kenya. Local perceptions of sports tourism are also evaluated and reported.

2.3. State of Kenya's devolution and sports tourism

Following heavy rains in Nairobi where the Council for East and Central Africa Football Association (CECAFA) 2013 series challenge were to take place, football management in Kenya felt there was a need to give the City stadium a 'rest' for three days in order for the grass to recover. The management of Football Kenya Association (FKA) in collaboration with Machakos County government scheduled two matches Sudan vs. Rwanda and Eritrea vs. Uganda to be played at Kenyatta stadium in Machakos.

This was enabled by the efforts of the Machakos county government in improving the state of its sole sports facility, Kenyatta stadium. Another strategic move in hosting the event was the development of an amphitheatre at Machakos People's Park (MPP) which was opened on Valentine's Day of 2014. The MPP has become a favourite spot for hosting events and a recreation facility not only for the locals but also for day trippers from other regions neighbouring Machakos e.g Nairobi. The park has hosted a number of events including the locally famed gospel music annual award ceremony i.e. Groove Awards. The two facilities (Kenyatta stadium and MPP) have been key for future sporting events in Machakos since 2013. Based on Leiper (1990) framework for defining a sports attraction in a destination, County government effort in renovation of the stadium created a central element (nucleus), to complement the existing human and information element needed to package a sports tourism product for the region. In various occasions, this nucleus has been matched to wide ranging human and information elements to portray a spectacle of sports tourism for the region.

After successful hosting CECAFA matches, the county government of Machakos has continued to host other events that have attracted both local and international teams and spectators. Since 2013 the county has not only hosted CECAFA but also annual International Masaku 7s Rugby Series - which have attracted a dozen of local teams and foreign teams including Fiji, Australia, USA and UK - and the Kenya Commercial Bank Safari rally which have also attracted both local and foreign contestants and sports enthusiasts. In 2015 the *Tour de Machakos*, a local cycling contest which will be an annual event was launched. The event attracted over 500 cyclists. Locally, there is a home Premier League Challenge. Alongside these events other sports related events are also held such as music performances.

Exploring the case of Kenya's tourism industry three key issues concerning the relational angle between devolution and sports tourism can be identified: 1. Devolution empowers the push for tourism development in less known destination counties in their representative involvement with national government. 2) Tourism development at the devolved government level necessitated a rethink for diversification of tourism products offered in the country. 3) Sports tourism as a diversified product at devolved government level has great potential for progression owing to a unique sport identity for Kenya in athletics, soccer, and rugby among other sports.

First and foremost, before devolution, the central government had mapped out economic activities according to regions, confining tourism to coastal destinations and ecotourism focal points in major national parks. Maps on socio economic activities in Kenya have similarities in representing main regional contributors to the country's GDP with tourism fixed at the coastal strip of the Indian Ocean, agriculture in highland arable lands south of the equator, industries and services in urban locations across the country, and scant representation of economic activities for arid and semi-arid lands mostly located north of the equator. When these patterns of mapping are used to guide national tourism bodies in planning for tourism development, national interests are often biased to focus development plans in usual popular destinations, consequently pushing to the periphery county efforts in developing tourism for unpopular destinations.

Discussion in the previous section shows how the post devolution period has seen Machakos County evolve from an unpopular destination to a leading sports tourism attraction in Kenya. Actually in 2014 county governments argued for the urgency of their involvement in overall tourism planning in the country. In the devolution push, county governments called for their representation in National Tourism Bodies. These include Kenya Tourism Federation, Kenya Tourist Foundation and the Tourism Authority. County representation at these bodies would allow a participatory approach in tourism development; consisting inputs from grass root devolved governments as well as contributions from national tourism bodies. Without joint effort from these two levels of government, marketing of the country's tourism products which emphasizes on usual popular destinations, leaves out tourism activities in upcoming county destinations. Coordinating linkages in tourism planning as stressed by Kimbu and Ngoasong (2013) and Maguigad (2013) is actually needed to address setbacks county governments face in tourism planning

Secondly, tourism's extensive linkages to other sectors of the economy give it an upper hand as an activity of choice to achieve developmental goals. With this in mind, county governments had to incorporate tourism in their developmental agenda, and this necessitated a rethink of options for diversification of tourism products offered in the country. Subsequently, cultural tourism and sports tourism were the new products promoted by the devolved governments. For instance in Kakamega county Western Kenya, scheduled bullfighting events are portrayed as the hallmark of cultural tourism products the county has to offer. Details from all 47 counties' strategic plan for the post devolution period show that most counties in non-traditional destinations foregrounded tourism as an economic pillar.

Thirdly, sports tourism development at the devolved government level has great potential to pick up and integrate in well in county line up of economic activities. With a triumphant sports identity for Kenya in athletics, rugby as well as other field events, a product diversification along dimensions of sports tourism is highly likely to appeal across segments of the domestic market. This was the case for Machakos County, where sporting events marked the debut of a remarkable influx of domestic tourists to the county. Sports tourism was a new concept in Machakos County, and stabilized at its first inception, tagging along social and economic benefits for residents. Detailed impacts of the sports tourist influx to Machakos County are discussed in the next section.

3. METHODOLOGY

Evaluating social impacts is challenging and problematic. This is because it has been argued that psychological impacts need separate considerations from social impacts (Gibson, 1998; Ritchie and Aitken, 1985) whereas others argue that socio-psychological attitudes are inseparable (Kim et al, 2015). This is an exploratory study. We employed mixed methods involving a two stage sampling approach. A survey was done using questionnaires. The questionnaire variables used for the study adapted from Kim et. al (2015) were slightly modified. The six positive impact items were identified and they include: infrastructure and urban development; economic benefits; community consolidation; social-cultural exchange; community visibility and image enhancement (see Figure 1). Out of these items 32 positive and 25 negative variables were derived (see Kim et. al. 2015: 26-25). A five point Likert scale was used where 1= strongly disagree; 2= Disagree; 3= No idea; 4= Agree; 5= strongly agree.

Fig. 1: Proposed model of the scale of perceived social impacts



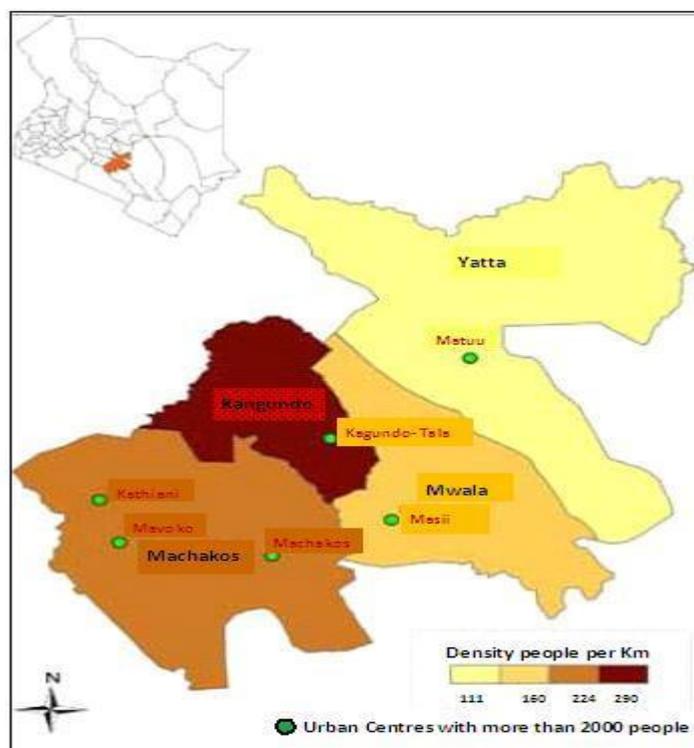
Source: Kim et al. (2015)

Two thousand and five hundred questionnaires were issued within Machakos town and its environs. One thousand two hundred and forty six questionnaires were filled and returned. A total of 1192 questionnaires which represent 47.68% response rate were considered for this analysis. As a follow up to the survey, six group discussions with 10 to 17 members were undertaken. Further, 18 interviews with county government officials (CG), local administrators (ADM), hoteliers (HOT), facility managers (FM), researchers (RES), Educators (EDU) and taxi operators (TO), were undertaken. This approach favoured lack of official data especially on cost and benefit data of the sports and related events.

3.1. The geographical area in tourism context: Machakos County

Machakos County borders Nairobi, Kenya's Capital City. Its administrative centre is Machakos town located approximately 63km from the capital city. It is inhabited by slightly over a million residents according to Kenya Institute of Public Policy Research (2009). Machakos was established in 1887, ten years before Nairobi, the current capital city. Machakos was the first administrative centre for the British colony, but it moved the capital of Kenya to Nairobi in 1899.

Fig 2: Machakos county map



Source: www.kenyampya.com

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Descriptive statistics

From the final 1192 considered respondents, 59% were male and 41% were female. The average age of the respondents was 28.25 years and majority (57%) have been living in the county for between 5 to 10 years. Moreover 32% are on formal employment whereas 39% were self-employed and 19% are still in studying with no form of employment. Furthermore majority of the respondents (64%) have attended

more than one of the sporting events for the years between April 2013 and December 2015. This is considered the 'post devolution' period under study.

The descriptive statistics of the study can be seen on Table 2 below. They are divided into: positive social impacts variables and negative social impacts variables.

Table 2: **Descriptive Statistics**

N=1192	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Positive social impacts variables			
<i>Infrastructure and urban development</i>			
1. Enhanced community beauty	1192	4.3062	.62580
2. Increased shopping facilities	1192	3.7232	.94990
3. Increased leisure facilities	1192	4.2743	.29190
4. Enhanced sanitation facilities (e.g., toilet)	1192	4.3347	.61996
5. Increased number of lodging facilities (e.g., hotels, guest house)	1192	4.2878	.62471
6. Accelerated development of general tourism infrastructure	1192	3.9992	.62858
<i>Economic benefits</i>			
7. Increased trade for the local business	1192	4.3104	.62440
8. Increased employment opportunities	1192	4.3062	.62580
9. Accelerated community growth	1192	4.3221	.62253
10. Increased community development investments	1192	4.2743	.29190
11. Improved economic condition	1192	4.3112	.62354
<i>Community consolidation</i>			
12. Enhanced the community pride of local residents	1192	4.3221	.62253
13. Reinforced community spirit	1192	4.2743	.29190
14. Enhanced social unity of the community	1192	3.9161	.87472
15. Enhanced the sense of being a part of community	1192	3.9161	.87472
<i>Socio-cultural exchange</i>			
16. Increased number of cultural events	1192	3.9195	.87374
17. Increased the understanding of the other cultures and societies of visitors	1192	3.9169	.87344
18. Provided an incentive for the preservation of the local culture	1192	3.9086	.87467
19. Provided residents opportunity to meet new people	1192	3.9069	.87481
20. Increased interest in international sport events	1192	3.9094	.87374
<i>Community visibility and image enhancement</i>			
21. Increased opportunity to inform hosting community to the world	1192	3.9069	.87343
22. Increased opportunity to inform hosting community to Machakos	1192	3.9010	.87323
23. Enhanced media visibility	1192	3.8968	.87323
24. Improved the image of Machakos County	1192	3.8968	.87357
25. Enhanced international recognition of hosting community	1192	3.9035	.87354
26. Increased community identity in the country	1192	3.8993	.87337
27. Generated a prestigious image regarding hosting sports in the country	1192	3.6586	.95667

N=1192	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
<i>Knowledge and entertainment opportunity</i>			
28. Increased the opportunity of enjoying sports	1192	3.8977	.87351
29. Increased volunteering opportunity	1192	3.6594	.95741
30. Provides learning opportunity of a new sports	1192	3.8960	.87364
31. Provided a high quality of entertaining opportunity	1192	3.6879	.96274
32. Generated excitement to the host community	1192	3.6879	.96274
Negative social impacts variables			
<i>Economic costs</i>			
1. Excessive spending on new infrastructure for sporting events	1192	3.9144	.87417
2. Excessive spending for building the Machakos Peoples Park	1192	3.7366	.94664
3. Increased price of real estate	1192	3.7097	.94232
4. Increased product prices	1192	3.7089	.94340
<i>Traffic problems</i>			
5. Resulted in traffic congestion	1192	4.0067	.62443
6. Increased hardship for finding parking spaces	1192	3.7164	.95409
7. Increased problems for using public transportations	1192	3.7282	.94604
8. Resulted in damage on local road due to increased traffic	1192	3.7232	.94547
9. Increased road closures/disruption	1192	3.7072	.96140
<i>Security risks</i>			
10. Increased crime	1192	3.7844	.92354
11. Increased risk of terrorism (e.g., bomb threat)	1192	3.9463	.87360
12. Increased risk of cyber-attack	1192	3.9035	.87354
13. Attracted interests of terrorists for future events	1192	3.7794	.92632
14. Increased disturbance from visitors (e.g., hooligans, disorder, and vandalism)	1192	3.7894	.92104
15. Increased psychological anxieties due to security risks/concerns	1192	3.7198	.95420
<i>Environmental concerns</i>			
16. Increased the amount of litter and waste	1192	4.3456	.84289
17. Increased air pollution	1192	3.9035	.87354
18. Increased noise levels	1192	4.2383	.88425
19. Urban development will be negatively affected long-term	1192	3.9354	.87613
20. Construction of new facilities increased pollution	1192	3.7852	.92948
21. Caused environmental damage to local community	1192	3.7164	.96633
<i>Social conflicts</i>			
22. Local residents were not a primary consideration in the event planning and implementation	1192	3.7097	.97903
23. Disrupted the lives of local residents	1192	3.7290	.94584
24. Brought conflicts and antagonism between visitors and local residents	1192	1.5302	.6265
25. Increased social conflicts between supporters and non-supporters	1192	3.7114	.6310
Valid N (list wise)	1192		

Source: Field data 2015

In the descriptive statistics above all the 32 positive social impact variables had a mean above 3.5 which underscores strong agreement to positive social impacts associated with sport events in the region. Very strong means above 4.0 were scored on eleven variables including: enhanced community beauty (4.30); increased leisure facilities (4.27); enhanced community pride (4.32); reinforced community spirit (4.27); increased trade for the local business (4.31); increased employment opportunities (4.30); accelerated community growth (4.32); increased community development investments (4.27) and improved economic condition (4.3).

Equally 24 out of 25 negative social impact variables had means above 3.5 which demonstrate strong agreement of social costs associated to the hosted sporting events in the region. Three variables had means above 4.0 including: traffic congestion (4.00); increased amount of litter and waste (4.34) and increased noise levels (4.23). Contrary respondents did not think that these events brought antagonism between visitors at a mean of 1.5.

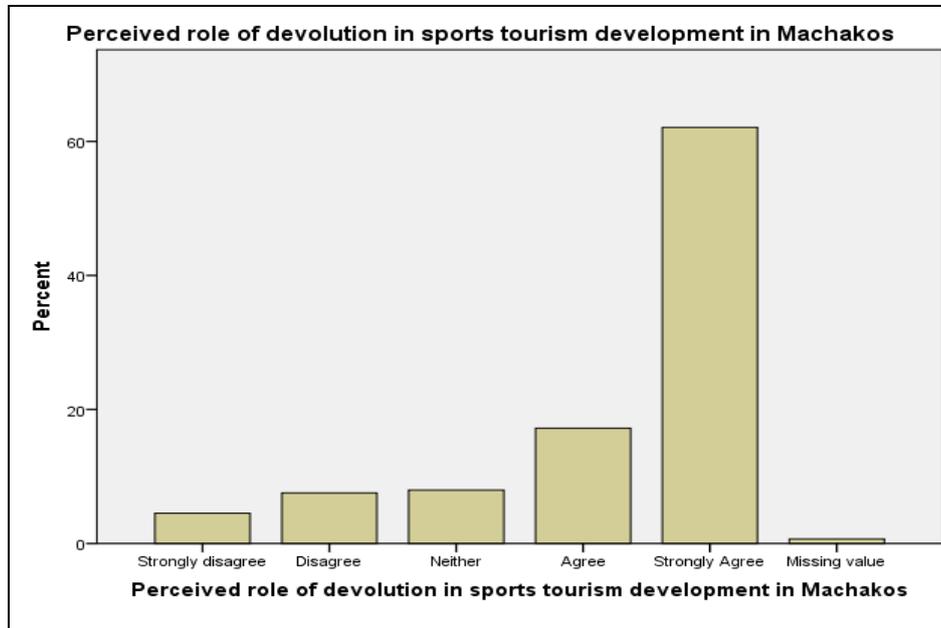
In an attempt to understand the link between perceived social impacts, devolution and sports tourism development, respondents were asked about the role devolution has played in the current state of sports tourism development. Majority (62.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed that that devolution has played a role in sports tourism development because devolution provided an opportunity for local county Government to invest into sports tourism development through devolved resources and functions (please refer to Table 3).

Table 3: Perceived role of devolution in sports tourism development in Machakos

		Freq.	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	54	4.5	4.5	4.5
	Disagree	90	7.6	7.6	12.1
	Neither	95	8.0	8.0	20.1
	Agree	205	17.2	17.2	37.2
	Strongly Agree	740	62.1	62.1	99.3
	Missing value	8	.7	.7	100.0
	Total	1192	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field data, 2015

Fig. 3: Perceived role of devolution in sports tourism development in Machakos



Source: Field data, 2015

4.2. Focused groups discussions and interviews

A follow up with the focus group discussions shows a general agreement of improved infrastructure development including the development of sports facility and leisure facilities which are seen as a product of devolved resources and decision making as noted by a local hotelier.

“Devolution has brought about the development of infrastructure in the county. This is because funds have been devolved to the local level where the local leaders make informed decisions on what we need at the local level” (HOT 3)

The county government has recognized potential for sports tourism hence it has embarked on the development of infrastructure that supports its strategic objective to attract sports enthusiast and in the process to show case what Machakos has to offer in terms of investment opportunities.

“Machakos county recognizes the potential of Machakos county to be a popular sports and recreation destination in the country and that is why the Governor has been keen at developing the Kenyatta sports stadium and Machakos Peoples Park. The two facilities are central in hosting sports and related events in Machakos” (CG 6)

On the other hand further discussion on economic benefits of hosting sporting activities in the county, the group discussion was informed that the sporting events held in Machakos led to an economic boost through increased trade especially for lodging and catering establishments as noted by one local hotel operator.

“During the sports event seasons we are normally fully booked as some events like Masaku 7s International Series attracts over 20,000 people in the three day event which is a huge number considering the size of Machakos town where the main sports events take place”(HOT8)

The sporting events are also seen as an opportunity for showcasing Machakos County to the sports tourist as well as for investment opportunities considering the extent of local and international media coverage that Machakos has received during the sporting events. According to a local university media lecturer:

“Machakos county receives a lot of media attention and mentions both locally and internationally especially during the Masaku 7s International rugby series”(EDU 2)

Moreover while Kenya has continued to do well in sports, Machakos County had never hosted any rugby event in its history before devolution. However in the post devolution period the County hosted regional and international events attracting both local and international teams which provided an opportunity for enjoying quality sports, learning about new sports, as well entertainment offers which generated excitement to the host community.

On the contrary, despite these positive social impacts, the sporting events have been on the focus due to negative social impacts associated with Machakos events.. The events are associated with immoral behaviors and underage drinking. Few instances were reported during the events more so the Masaku 7s rugby series. One administrator stated that:

“One of the negative sides of these events is immorality especially during the night events organized in the sidelines of the main sports events. However we have put up strict measures to curb such unfortunate events.”(ADM 1)

Other concerns include vandalism and tension due to active terror groups targeting massive crowds like sporting events. Furthermore environmental costs include air pollution and littering.

“Environmental concerns include noise pollution especially night events and music concerts associated with sports is a big nuisance”(RES 14)

Finally traffic related issues were raised considering that these events are associated with ‘road trips’ as it has become a popular culture for the middle class Kenyans. It has been reported that during the last day of Masaku 7s International series motorists were stuck in traffic jam for over 7hrs in an attempt to exit Machakos.

From the group discussions it can be drawn that the central argument revolves positive and negative impacts of sporting events hosted in Machakos County. It is evident that the events have increased community's pride, increased trade and many other positive benefits. However there are costs associated with the events that include traffic jam, over spending on infrastructure at the cost of other priority issues like spending in infrastructure and education and social services. It is therefore prudent for the county government to explore better ways in developing and promoting sports tourism in the region.

5. DISCUSSION

Despite these positive social impacts, sports tourism development has negative social impacts. For Machakos County, these negative impacts include negative environmental impacts, economic costs, traffic challenges and security risks e.g. terrorism. The findings concur with a study by Kim et al. (2015) where negative impacts have been reported.

Other emerging issues include the challenges associated with event management. One event management challenge is ensuring that the sports destination retains fair share of economic gains from an event. The case of Machakos County as a sports destination shows that smaller events enhanced local community linkages to tourism value chains. Statistics from Table 2 describes the economic benefits that Machakos County reaped from sports tourism development. Different event segments relay to build sports tourism multiplying effect in the local devolved economy.

The interconnected events segments are; sports tourist expenditure; enterprise expenditure; and final beneficiaries in local community. Each segment has a sequence of processes that contribute to the event act. For instance, contributions at the tourist expenditure level in Machakos events included payments for food, local transport, accommodation and entertainment among others. Contributions from the spectators involved several sequences of acts, from participating in the sporting activity, to interaction with hospitality and travel components on offer. The sequence may have other possibilities like visiting friends and relatives, touring of nearby attractions etc. The contribution bit is flexible, and allows for multiple modifications and deviations in the sequence of acts. At the enterprise level, taxes are channelled to local government authorities, funds are set aside for advertisements/ publicity, and there is also payment for professional services. Final beneficiaries within the local community engage in agribusiness, construction and service business as inter sectoral linkages with sports tourism. A successful event strives to minimize economic leakages from host destinations, and structures event segments in a manner that allows reasonable retention of profits at the sports destination in comparison to visitor source areas (Kim et al. 2015).

In an event cycle, there are obligations and contributions to direct the event scenario. The sports competition aside, the scene being enacted by the event organisers takes a socio economic dimension, with sports tourism fuelling economic gains for the devolved county government. The case for Machakos county shows that touristic

activities linked to sporting events run at the forefront of the county's economic enhancement. With the aim of sports tourism development, obligations to the event scene enacted necessitate that a tourism infrastructure be in place. Machakos has an added advantage of the planned smart city development by 2030, which presently provided backbone infrastructure like electricity, water and access roads, benefiting economic endeavours during sports tourism events. However, high visitor numbers are a potential threat to physical carrying capacity, to be supported by the developing infrastructure as noted by Kim et al. (2015). Traffic problems were noted at the destination, plus economic costs are incurred for infrastructure development.

The other challenge is pre determining the trajectory of events alignment to sports tourism development. This is indeed a fresh puzzle, given the occurrence of social conflicts from some previous sporting events in Machakos despite planning. Act sequences of a sporting event may not go as planned and cripple the attached socio economic objectives to the function. Those interviewed from the host community cited irresponsible social behaviour from a number of visitors, and felt that certain guests did not abide by expected code of conduct. Lack of a clear forecast of all possible directions that could arise from an event poses a risk of damaging the events reputation. Consequently locals may resent sports tourism development in the destination. Participants in such an event have to understand their obligations to the event in order to make it a triumph. Merging obligations and contributions to development of sports tourism through sporting events is a major hurdle, given the dynamics of an event either being controllable or turning out to be uncontrollable (Kim et al. 2015).

There is also the dilemma of an event's draft being multi faceted with opportunities for many economic actors and intentions to be acted upon during the course of the event. The view that sports tourism development takes a lead role to spur economic development from event could be subject to contestations, especially with reputation concerns from social conflicts. One possible argument is that the sporting event is in itself sufficient to take the leading role, without the mergers to tourism. Interestingly for the case of Machakos county, data analysis reveals a strong agreement on devolution's role for sports tourism development (see Figure 3), depicting sports tourism as a prioritised vital activity.

Essentially, given the nature of tourism's extensive linkages with other sectors of the economy, and tourism services lead contribution to the country's gross domestic product (GDP), strong support for sports tourism development is expected. Tourism sector annexes benefits through linkages with local suppliers, agribusiness and service business, which constitute economic activities in Machakos county. Descriptive statistics in section 4 categorise economic benefits for Machakos County as increased trade for local business, increased employment opportunities, and accelerated community growth. Linkages from sports tourism development promise economic benefits to local communities in Machakos, and thereby shape the county's developmental path. These facts have prompted sporting events organisers to welcome the idea of merging tourism related activities to the event. And as Kim and Petrick (2005) note there is a need to understand the balance between economic and social goals of sports tourism

Management has also to anticipate/ plan for continuity of the events. One event could be used to bring out the second, and so on in a long term plan. Forging such a relationship for consequent events is a task that requires thoughtful insights and knowledgeable planning from all stakeholders across the board. Remember, each event is usually a “one time event” and peripheral activities may not run on a business as usual mode. Each time a sporting event is held in Machakos, peripheral activities in local businesses have benefitted from increased sales. There is an increased trade for local businesses occasioned by the influx of a ready sports tourist market for available goods, ranging from leisure, to beauty and accommodation products. Event segments, and act sequences in an initial activity, may need modifications before replication to a subsequent activity. If the event is to be successful, a lot has to go into planning, and a competent team has to lead the process.

Finally, the key pull factor for most visitors taking part in the event is sports spectatorship.

Tourism related pull factors are often times suppressed in calling out for the event. As a result, sports tourism as an emerging product could be invisible in its contribution to the county’s socio economic development. The concentrated focus on spectatorship could be a hurdle in guaranteeing maximum yield in tourist expenditure at the destination. The human element, the nucleus and informational element as core to defining a sports tourism package have to be presented in a well-adjusted ratio relevant for a destination’s image as a sports tourism nucleus. Regions should consider cantering tourism components to a sporting event in order to maximize economic benefits (Costa and Chalip, 2005).

The end purpose of the events is to use sports for socio economic enhancement. Sports tourism appears to be the most appropriate link to enable this economic growth in Machakos County, with current impacts indicating a positive gain for the community along the social and economic dimensions. It is therefore prudent that both local and national governments should promote sports tourism in order to enhance the local benefits as noted by Kerr (2003).

6. CONCLUSION

Kenya has a potential for developing sports tourism in all its 47 counties. This move could be a strategic promoting regional and domestic travel. The fact that very few counties have leveraged on this potential indicates a need for centralised sports tourism policy development to guide county sports tourism policy development and implementation. Both short term and long term planning for sports tourism development should be adopted by counties. There is also a need for proper financing of counties in order to facilitate sports and recreational infrastructures throughout the country under the leadership of county governments.

Furthermore in order to harness full benefit of sports tourism there is a need for linking sports tourism with other tourism products. For the case of Machakos County it would be necessary for the county to promote its key attractions by offering discounts on

entry fees to its key attraction. Finally it is a challenge for tourism researchers to explore how matters of devolution have shaped sports tourism development in different countries and territories.

Furthermore, it should be noted that despite the generalised perceived value of these sporting events held in Machakos County it would be necessary to evaluate actual economic value of these sporting events. However this can only be facilitated by availability of economic data which currently is not available. Finally this being an exploratory study and first of its kind in Kenya, it challenges future researcher to explore possibilities for comparative studies in different counties.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to acknowledge the input of the reviewers in improving the quality of the manuscript. We also acknowledge the funding from the Institute for Progressive Policy Research and Consultancy (IPPRC).

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Please cite this article as: Njoroge, J.M., Atieno, L., Vieira Do Nascimento, D. (2017), Sports Tourism and Perceived Socio-Economic Impact in Kenya: The Case of Machakos County, Vol. 23, No. 2, pp. 195-217, <https://doi.org/10.20867/thm.23.2.9>



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