Colonial Influence on Local Relationships with Leisure and Environment in East Africa: Intersecting Two Literatures to Reflect on Domestic Ecotourism

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Abstract

In East Africa, settler-colonization during the Scramble for Africa period and the militarized conservation regimes that became a common feature of colonial governance in the region, characterized by conserved land secured via fences and patrols of armed rangers, fundamentally altered locals' access to and relationship with their land and natural environment. In parallel to the impacts on locals' relationship with nature, direct colonial governance impacted local expressions of leisure. Colonial authorities often enforced particular activities during times normally allocated as free time, forcing individuals sometimes to perform tasks or engage in activities contrary to local conceptions of leisure. This paper draws linkages between two discrete but related scholarly literatures focusing on African contexts: the lasting influences of a particular period and type of colonization on local peoples': (a) conceptions of leisure, and (b) relationships to their natural environment. East Africa is the primary regional focus, to contain the scope. Snowballing literature search and database keyword searches are used for literature review, in which African-authored scholarship is prioritized to address Euro-North American bias in academic research. Evidence in the literature describes how leisure and perceptions of nature were constrained and redefined during the settler-colonial period and their evolution in the postcolonial era inform how leisure and perceptions of nature are shaped in the present. However, the paper focuses only lasting impacts of a particular period and type of colonization, and thus the lasting impacts are likely to be deeper than those described in this analysis. Next, the paper draws on intersections of these literatures to examine a contemporary issue in East Africa: recent efforts to increase domestic ecotourism by encouraging locals to engage in nature-based recreation activities and leisure experiences. The paper contributes to the African ecotourism literature by intersecting colonization, sociology of leisure, and tourism literatures to identify contemporary historically-rooted opportunities and challenges in domestic ecotourism in East Africa, highlighting gaps in sociology of leisure and ecotourism literatures pertaining to prospective African tourists' perceptions of ecotourism activities.

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Fig. 1 "East Africa" or East African Community, as identified in the Treaty for East African Cooperation (adopted 7 July 2000), includes six countries in the Great Lakes region: Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda (East African Community, 2000). In March 2022, Democratic Republic of Congo was also admitted to the EAC and its admission processes are ongoing as of September 2022

Keywords Colonization · Leisure · Africa · Environment · Ecotourism

1 Introduction

European settler-colonization and direct rule of sovereign African nations and societies following the Berlin Conference of 1884, a period widely referred to as the "Scramble for Africa" (Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2016, p. 1802), was prefaced by decades, and in many cases centuries, of European economic, political, social, and natural resource exploitation of diverse African societies. While characteristics, temporal duration, and experiences of exploitation and colonization across the continent varied before, during, and after the Scramble for Africa, all societies touched by various forms of exploitation and subjugation have been profoundly impacted and often continue to be influenced by persisting indirect forms of colonialism, namely, economic, and cultural colonialization and neocolonialism entrenched via globalization (Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2016; Mowatt, 2017; Ssentongo, 2017).

Focusing on the period of direct rule and settler colonization brought on by the Scramble for Africa in East Africa (the subregional demarcation itself recalling the drawing of colonial borders as a part of the Scramble, clustering together highly diverse and often previously unrelated societies, or splitting previously unified groups) (Fig. 1), there is a robust literature describing problems introduced and

exacerbated by this period of colonization in the areas of governance and policy, education, and public health, among others. These colonialism-imposed challenges continue to impact people, communities, and societies across all East African countries and societies in the post-independence era (Brown, 2000; Ezedike, 2019; Garcia-Olp, 2018; Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2016; Wiredu, 1998).

This paper draws linkages between two key features of settler-colonial governance in East African societies, with the aim of drawing from this history new insights to overcome challenges in domestic ecotourism in East Africa. First, an important feature of the settler-colonial period in East Africa was the establishment and entrenchment of militarized conservation regimes that became a lasting component of colonial governance across the region, with conserved land secured by fences and patrols of armed and military-trained rangers. Colonial conservation regimes fundamentally altered locals' access to and relationship with their land and natural environment (Gissibl, 2016; Melubo, 2020; Wessels et al., 2021). A separate but similarly important feature of East African settler-colonialism effected leisure and free time, reshaping foundational components of societies. Colonial authorities often enforced certain activities during times normally allocated as free time, forcing individuals sometimes to perform tasks or engage in activities contrary to local conceptions of leisure and in spaces where such activities did not traditionally occur (Akyeampong & Ambler, 2002; Asakitikpi, 2018; Ezedike, 2019; Melubo, 2020; Mowatt, 2017; Okeke, 2019).

The primary objective of this paper is to explore two discrete but related scholarly literatures focusing on African contexts: the lasting influences of colonization on local peoples': (a) conceptions of leisure, and (b) relationships to their natural environment. First, we describe research methods and define terms, including situating this research within historical and academic context, including broader colonialization and postcolonial and decolonial literatures. We outline constraints of the research, including spatial ("East Africa"), temporal (late 19th to 20th century settler-colonization), and conceptual (settler-colonization versus neocolonialism) constraints. Next, we review these two literatures in turn, emphasizing African-authored scholarship. Next, we draw on intersections of these literatures to reflect on a contemporary issue in East Africa: recent efforts to increase domestic ecotourism by encouraging locals to engage in nature-based recreation activities and leisure experiences. We conclude with recommendations for research drawn from this evidence base. This paper contributes to the African ecotourism literature by intersecting colonization, leisure, and tourism literatures to examine contemporary issues in domestic ecotourism in East Africa, highlighting gaps in literature pertaining to prospective African tourists' perceptions of ecotourism activities. Additionally, the paper is an impetus for future research in African sociology of leisure examining class and socioeconomic differences in persistent influences of colonization in African societies, by developing initial insights on ways these class and socioeconomic differences manifest in the case of modern domestic ecotourism.

2 Methods

The methodological approach in this paper relies on two literature review techniques: snowballing literature search and database keyword searches (Lecy & Beatty, 2012). We employed snowballing literature search by identifying publications via review of references lists in other published works, since this method aligns with the research priorities established for this paper. We prioritized two elements in the literature review conducted: relevance of publications, and authorship. First, we reviewed titles and abstracts to ensure relevance of scholarly material to the research topic (colonial influence respectively on local conceptions of leisure and environment in East Africa). Next, we prioritized publications by African authors or authors of African descent for inclusion in the review to address Euro-North American bias in academic research (Lopez-Frias & Dattilo, 2021; Roberts, 2021; Wiredu, 1998), and to address the subject matter pertaining to the East African experience of colonization and subsequent changes in leisure experiences, recreation and tourism preferences, and perceptions of nature. Since we prioritized African authorship, snowballing literature review was effective in identifying relevant publications since North American institutional databases do not consistently include some African journals or highlighted keywords may be phrased differently (Mallett et al., 2012; Stewart et al., 2012).

Next, we conducted literature searches via Google Scholar, Web of Knowledge, and a university eLibrary system. Search terms included: "colonization and leisure in Africa," "colonization impacts on leisure in Africa," "African leisure," "colonization and environment in Africa," "colonialization and conservation in Africa," "colonization and domestic ecotourism in Africa."

Publications reviewed in this paper represent a selection of relevant results from these literature searches (of 122 reviewed and filtered, $n = 27$ selected for inclusion). In some cases, our prioritization of African authorship meant including publications from smaller or lesser-known African journals (e.g., Ezedike, 2019) and excluding or de-prioritizing similar articles published in higher impact-factor journals but featuring Euro-North American authorship. In several cases, we include foundational writings by Euro-North American authors (e.g., Gissibl, 2016; Infield, 1988; Newmark et al., 1993); however, we sought wherever possible to cite African scholarship alongside the Euro-North American reference (e.g., Masozera et al., 2013, Mazimhaka, 2007; Melubo, 2020; Tumusiime et al., 2011). Lastly, to limit the scope of this paper, in some cases we selected a few key papers from a larger literature or sub-literature. For example, the literature exploring park-adjacent community perceptions of conservation in East Africa is vast. Although this paper references the park-adjacent community perceptions literature (e.g., Masozera et al., 2013; Sabuhoro et al., 2017; Tumusiime et al., 2011), we also seek to address lasting influences of colonization beyond this park-adjacent subpopulation and, thus, the paper does not comprehensively include this literature.

Lastly, there are several key limitations to this study which are critical in framing the methodological approach, findings, and discussion. First, the scope of this

paper is limited temporally and geographically, and conceptually in its focus on lasting impacts of settler-colonization and direct rule in East Africa. However, inclusion in the analysis of modern neocolonialism, other forms of colonialism, and indirect or non-settler forms of colonialism is highlighted as an important area for future research; future research could assess variation in influences of colonization on leisure and relationship to nature across African countries and regions which experienced colonization differently (e.g., Zimbabwe vs. Ethiopia vs. Botswana vs. Ghana). We also note that we apply the term "East Africa" to a collection of countries and societies which themselves experienced settler-colonization differently. While colonial British conservation regimes had similar features in Tanzanian, Kenyan, and Uganda contexts, for example, the application of these conservation regimes varied (e.g., legal application of Game Laws enforcement) (Gissibl, 2016). Limiting the scope to East Africa also limited incorporation of relevant work by African scholars such as Sène-Harper and Séye (2019) in Senegal and other West African contexts, or Munro (2020) in Sierra Leone. We sought in the analysis to include these perspectives from other regions to provide insights on the East African context when relevant, but also note that future research can also address this limitation.

We also note that while prioritizing African scholarship in the literature review supports the research in consolidating local knowledge on local issues, this could be a limitation since we limited the sample size and reduced citation of well-cited scholars and journals.

3 Literature Review

3.1 Definitions

First, we distinguish between *recreation, leisure,* and *tourism.* Next, we set boundaries on *environment* and *colonization,* since both terms can refer to many different concepts, but also situate this paper within the broader historical and academic context of colonization. We also define *domestic ecotourism.* Finally, we define the theoretical grounding of the study and situate the article within postcolonial and decolonial theories, and relevant offshoots.

Leisure is a term widely used in modern society which carries different meaning in academic literatures. In this paper, leisure is a normative state of mind, experience, or process critical in pursuit of "the good life" that is associated with authenticity and meaning (Dattilo & Lopez-Frias, 2020, p. 9). Contemplation is one such state of mind or leisure experience that, according to Aristotle (2004), is a key element in pursuit of the good life, which is the aim. Leisure is "an ethical state of being characterized by authenticity, meaning, and liquidity" (Dattilo & Lopez-Frias, 2020, p. 1); however, since both modern society and scholarship often misunderstand the concept, we use the term *transformative leisure* in this analysis following Holba (2013) to identify the authentic, meaningful leisure state or experience. *Recreation* and *tourism*, by contrast, are activities associated with, but not necessarily resulting in, transformative leisure; recreation and tourism activities commonly

occur during free time, and can foster or prompt moments of transformative leisure (Colton, 1987; Holba, 2013). Recreation, according to Holba (2013) is an activity that "interrupts daily mundane tasks, including work at the office or at home" (p. 26). Tourism, according to Colton (1987), involves engagement in a recreation activity in which at least some travel is involved.

For all three terms (*leisure, recreation, tourism*) freedom and power over free time are central components (Lopez-Frias & Dattilo, 2020); as the next section describes, one of the principal mechanisms through which colonization influenced leisure and the associated activities of recreation and tourism in African societies has been through usurping free time by enforcing participation in certain recreation activities (Colton, 1987; Akyeampong and Ambler, 2002). Importantly, as Sharma (2018) describes, freedom has diverse meanings in African contexts, which are heterogeneous in both societal structure and dynamics. Akyeampong and Ambler (2002) similarly note that leisure carries different meanings to different individuals and groups in Africa. Leisure is a social and cultural construct, and its meanings can differ by race, ethnicity, religion, gender, class, and age, and fluctuate over time (Blackshaw, 2010; Roberts, 2021). Blackshaw (2010) describes this characteristic of leisure as "liquidity" (p. x-xi). Thus, people in one colonized society may not perceive conditions as limiting their free time and opportunities for transformative leisure; however, people in another colonized society may perceive the same conditions as restrictive; this could even vary by community within the same national context (Akyeampong & Ambler, 2002; Sharma, 2018). Thus, we acknowledge that interpretations of transformative leisure, as well as recreation or tourism activities, can vary across diverse African societies, yet are consistently rooted in concepts of freedom and choice (Blackshaw, 2010; Rawls, 1971; Roberts, 2021).

Next, in this paper *environment* refers to ecological systems, landscapes, and natural resources. As Gissibl (2016) describes, in literatures addressing colonization and environmental conservation, the term *environment* generally refers to ecology including "bodies and properties of animals, soils, natural resources, forests," and other plant life also categorized as *nature* (p. 10). However, dichotomization of humans and nature is a colonial, Euro-North American occurrence manifested in creation of national parks and reserves as conservation spaces to protect the environment from human activity (Cater, 2006; Crowe & Shryer, 1995; Gissibl, 2016; Keiter, 2013; Melubo, 2020; Sène-Harper & Séye, 2019). This paper explores how application of this dichotomization of East African contexts by European colonizers has had lasting influence on ways in which East Africans experience, interact with, and perceive the natural environment.

Next, before we define and place boundaries on the use of the term *colonization* for the purposes of this paper, it is important to situate contemporary scholarship pertaining to colonialism within its historical and academic context. Developed throughout the 20th century, there is a rich history of anti-colonial leadership and literature focused on both understanding and dismantling the lasting influences of colonization in the East African region and across Africa more broadly. West and Central African thinkers Sankara (Burkina Faso), Diop (1991) (Senegal), Matip (1959) (Cameroon), wrote and spoke extensively on the impacts of colonization in their respective societies and the importance of decolonial and anti-colonial efforts;

further, Sankara, for example, in addition to Biko (1987) (South Africa) extended early ideas of Pan-Africanism to promote the empowerment of all African societies in alliance (Amoah, 2019; Leshoele, 2019). These literatures and anti-colonial leadership have been a part of broader discourses beyond the African continent as well, with Fanon (1952, 1963) as a notable example (Martinque). The literature and leadership of these anti-colonial thinkers, also including Cabral (1979) (Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde), formed much of the basis of contemporary anti-colonial and post-colonial discourse and debates. Rodney (1973) wrote extensively on the persistent influences of European involvement in Africa, and his works regarding the lasting implications of colonialization and subsequent economic, political, and social involvement and hegemony form strong basis and context for this paper. In East Africa specifically, Wa Thiong'o (1992) wrote extensively on persistent colonial systems and undertaking the important exercise of decolonizing systems in contexts such as Kenya. Recently, Ssentongo (2017) in Uganda and others further explore these issues.

In this context of rich anti-colonial and decolonial literatures and discourses, and because influences of colonization and its many forms are so deep, this analysis limits use of the term *colonization* to this Scramble for Africa period up to major independence movements across the continent into the late 1990s. To contain the scope of the paper, we do not include implications of modern, economically-based (rather than settler-based) Euro-North American neocolonialism in the 21st century; though both contemporary neocolonialism and Scramble for Africa settler-colonization may, through "historically effected consciousness," continue to influence African leisure and Africans' lives in myriad ways (Holba, 2013, p. 39). Further assessing influences of indirect economic and neocolonialism on leisure and nature relationships across diverse African contexts is a critical area for future research.

In summary, *colonization* in this paper refers specifically to European settler-colonization of sovereign African nations and societies following the Berlin Conference of 1884, with the caveat that we recognize this as a constraint to the analysis (Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2016). Settler-colonization, often characterized by direct rule, enforced by British, Belgian, French, Dutch, Portuguese, German, and Italians on a diverse array of colonized governments, societies, cultures, and unceded lands, and colonizers demonstrated varying degrees of brutality and inhumanity. However, despite heterogeneity, this period of colonialism was characterized by slavery, resource exploitation, religious conversion, forced work and limited access to education, and limitations on Africans' basic liberties ubiquitously, and, according to Wiredu (1998), "was not only a political imposition, but also a cultural one. Gravely affected, or even perhaps infected, were our religions and systems of education" (p. 17).

Next, we unpack the term *domestic ecotourism* to identify its relationship to the intersections of literatures examined in this paper. *Domestic* contrasts with *international* tourism in the East African historical context in which tourism has focused on white, Euro-North American tourists (Stone & Nyaupane, 2019). Domestic tourism targets those in a socioeconomic position to use free time for recreation and touristic activities within their country (Morupisi & Mokgalo, 2017). In East African contexts in which many people are still engaged in subsistence agriculture and

cannot afford touristic activities, the domestic tourism market often refers to middle or high-income urbanites (Mutinda & Mayaka, 2012). That said, as Hazbun (2009), Hitchcott (2009), and Mkono (2013) describe, writings associated with research or practice often do not consider Africans to be tourists, but rather, merely consider them as hosts for tourists, presumed, in many cases, to be white and Euro-North American.

Ecotourism refers specifically to a nature-based, ecologically-focused tourism involving interaction between people and their natural environment – interactions which, as discussed in this paper, are subject in East Africa to connotations and stigmas associated with colonization and poverty (Melubo, 2020). Independent governments, the tourism private sector, and conservation and environmental Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) encourage domestic ecotourism by marketing purchase of such commodities as safaris and wildlife permits, hiking permits, and trail use by locals (Sabuhoro et al., 2017). However, in most East African countries, low domestic ecotourism participation persists with scholars generally attributing this to high prices relative to perceived value and access challenges (Mazimhaka, 2007; Sindiga, 1996).

This paper contributes to sociology of leisure literature in highlighting a key socioeconomic and class-based distinction between two populations referenced in the literatures examined in this paper: communities adjacent to protected areas or ecotourism sites and the domestic ecotourism target market. There is a robust literature examining local African perceptions of ecotourism and nature-based recreation activities for communities adjacent to, or otherwise directly affected by, protected areas, such as communities displaced by demarcation of a national park (e.g., Masozera et al., 2013; Sabuhoro et al., 2017). In contrast, individuals with higher incomes, those who have means and access to participate in ecotourism activities (termed in this paper the *African leisure class*) dominate the domestic African tourism market. For this group, neither access nor cost of such commodities as hiking or wildlife permits is an obstacle; yet, even members of the African leisure class often choose to spend their free and vacation time traveling internationally or to urban areas. Although the literature is growing, studies examining contemporary African tourists' perceptions of ecotourism and nature-based recreation activities are scarce and suggest the need for further research (Hazbun, 2009; Hitchcott, 2009; Mkono, 2013; Mkono, 2019). However, for application in sociological sub-context of tourism and leisure, this still raises questions about what motivates the domestic ecotourism target market in East Africa, particularly regarding local stigmas associated with nature-based recreation activities, and the extent to which history of European colonization shapes these local perceptions (Melubo, 2020; Sharma, 2018; Stone & Nyaupane, 2019). There is value in considering that the African leisure class may have dissimilar perceptions of leisure, environment, and ecotourism as members of impoverished communities adjacent to protected areas. Furthermore, travel motivations and preferences may differ between the African leisure class and tourists from Euro-North American countries, in part, due to the historical and colonial influences that have shaped those motivations differently (Cater, 2006; Mkono, 2013, 2019).

Finally, this paper draws theoretical and conceptual elements from decolonial discourse and theory acknowledging shifts in scholarly discourse away from

postcolonial theory (Coulthard, 2014; Gandhi, 1998; Rodney, 1973), while also recognizing some minor influences from recent developments in critical race theory as an offshoot of post-colonial theory (Loomba, 2007; McArthur, 2021; Schneider, 2004). For example, although the African and North American contexts and characteristics of settler-colonization are vastly different, and Coulthard (2014) focuses on colonial politics of recognition, we seek to highlight some linkages to the notion of settler colonialism as an ongoing process, not only a past legacy (Coulthard, 2014). In Coulthard's context of settler-colonialism and Indigenous issues in Canada, this is evident in ongoing displacement, and dispossession from both land and traditional cultural practices. While recognizing contextual differences, our analysis in Section 4 finds that the idea of settler-colonization as a persistent and active process rather than a historical legacy is relevant to ongoing issues in domestic ecotourism in East Africa. Next, we draw linkages to critical race theory, a literature and scholarly discourse identifying driving forces of social issues, focusing on complex relationships between race, class, and gender-based differences, the intersection of which is also relevant to domestic ecotourism in East Africa. The key element we use from critical race theory is the emphasis that historical events and processes, including colonization and slavery, have intergenerational effects that influence social, political, economic, and cultural dynamics in contemporary societies (Delgado & Stefancic, 2013) like what Holba (2013) identifies as the "historically effected consciousness" (p. 39). In summary, with an eye to critical race theory scholarship but primarily grounded in current decolonial discourse and theory, we examine colonial influence on current African conceptions of leisure and the environment.

3.2 Influence of Colonization on Leisure

There are well-developed literatures in both African and Euro-North American scholarship illustrating that European colonizers across numerous diverse African contexts restrict community and individual basic human rights and liberties (e.g., Brown, 2000; Ezedike, 2019; Garcia-Olp, 2018; Gissibl, 2016; Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2016; Ssentongo, 2017; Wiredu, 1998). Freedom of expression and peoples' abilities to choose how to spend free time are among the basic liberties restricted (Rawls, 1971; Sharma, 2018). Colonizers feared that times of contemplation, or transformative leisure occurring in moments of free time, might empower colonized Africans in ways that endangered colonial power (Rawls, 1971; Rowe, 2016; Sharma, 2018). As Akyeampong and Ambler (2002) describe, because free time and the ability to experience transformative leisure can provide a "sphere of reflection," it became "a site of activity and reflexivity in the context of colonial rule and capitalism that infused leisure with meanings that worried both capital and the colonial government" (p. 9). Thus, colonial governments sought to instrumentalize leisure for social control.

Given this historical process of control and instrumentalization of leisure, which, in many cases, was meant to prevent uprisings, African researchers (Akyeampong & Ambler, 2002; Asakitikpi, 2018; Mapadimeng, 2018; Zeleza, 2003) have begun to explore ways residents construct leisure for themselves, communities, and

societies. Colonial influences shape dimensions of society in lasting ways; for example, as Ezedike (2019) elucidates, colonial education in Africa imposed European values and ideas often inimical to Indigenous cultural values previously transmitted through traditional education. This colonial education system persists today. In addition to critical theorists (e.g., McArthur, 2021), Brown (2000) and Okeke (2019) also demonstrate how these legacies are long-lasting and intergenerational. Regarding the example of local conceptions of leisure, Akyeampong and Ambler (2002), Asakitikpi (2018), Sharma (2018), Zeleza (2003), and Mapadimeng (2018) illustrate specific effects of racial exclusion and colonization on leisure dynamics using historical and policy analysis, systematic literature review, and archival research.

On this point, although this paper seeks to develop insights in this area with an East African orientation and focus on African authorship, there is ongoing scholarly debate and increasing discourse in the *Journal of Leisure Research, Leisure Sciences, Annals of Leisure Research,* and *Leisure Studies*, surrounding coloniality in leisure in North American and other global contexts (e.g., Anderson et al., 2021; Gómez, 2021), and critical literature in the areas of race, white supremacy, and colonialism in leisure, power, and the Black outdoors experience with a North American lens (e.g.,Mowatt, 2021; Pinckney et al., 2019; Sène-Harper et al., 2022).

3.2.1 Implications of Colonization and Leisure Literature

From these analyses, a few central themes emerge regarding shifts in conceptions of leisure because of European colonization. First, colonization redefined leisure spaces "both conceptually and physically" (Sharma, 2018, p. 229). To the extent that pre-colonial leisure was conceived and consumed in certain physical locations and spaces where people gathered during their free time, these spaces changed during the colonial period, as did the dynamics and intentions of the activities and evolved in the post-independence era. For example, Sharma (2018) describes how ritual performance and theatre were, for many African societies, leisure experiences embedded in local spirituality and cosmology, and such performances were the locus of expression of traditional morality within community. However, ritual theatre was sidelined in many cases, uprooted by forced urbanization and labor, and by development of new colonial infrastructure. This required Africans to redraw and establish new social networks. In contrast to traditional community grounds of ritual theatre, many Africans established new social networks following colonial intervention in urban beer halls and on crowded city streets (Sharma, 2018). An additional example of redefinition of leisure by "material, time, and space" Asakitikpi (2018, p. 294) following colonial intervention was a shift to engaging in more small-group or individually focused activities during free time (e.g., recreation activities of colonizers and those imposed upon Africans by colonial administrators, such as football matches; see Akyeampong & Ambler, 2002), rather than communal activities traditional to precolonial societies (e.g., ritual theatre of masking; see Sharma, 2018). Sène-Harper and Séye (2019), Sène-Harper et al. (2022), and Mowatt (2021) also noted a colonially-imposed redefinition of leisure by material, time, and space dimensions in West African contexts and for Black, Afro descendent North Americans.

Next, colonialization influenced leisure by reshaping individual preferences. The reshaping of preferences occurred by imposing structures on education, incentivizing capitalistic economic systems and consumption patterns, and increasing urbanization (Akyeampong & Ambler, 2002; Asakitikpi, 2018; Mkono, 2013; Ssentongo, 2017; Stone & Nyaupane, 2019). Along with these changes in structure came differences in recreation and tourism preferences and access by income or class lines that impacted leisure experiences (Sharma, 2018). Imposed capitalistic structures resulted in conspicuous consumption and outward demonstration of class by higher-income Africans through certain types of tourism and recreation activities in which people engaged during their free time (e.g., flying to Mombasa or Dubai for vacation, importing expensive automobiles), reminiscent of members of an African leisure class who socially and physically distanced themselves from low-income activities like subsistence agriculture (Veblen, 1934, p. 35; also see MacCannell, 2013). As Sharma (2018) indicates, these socioeconomic and rural–urban divides remain today; "politically the situation has changed, socially the dividing lines remain" (p. 229).

Although via this literature review, we did not identify previous research describing an African leisure class *per se* resulting from this urbanization and widening economic inequality, lifestyle patterns of members of high-income urban African society, such as engaging in conspicuous consumption, link to Veblen's conceptual definition (1934) and MacCannell's (2013) new adaptation focusing on tourists. Banerjee and Duflo (2011) also support this contention regarding the increasing prevalence of conspicuous consumption.

Finally, in the more recent post-independence context, lifting of colonial restrictions resulted in a shift to maximize local agency and empowerment in use of free time, evident through community-oriented development in tourism, recreation, and transformative leisure. Asakitikpi (2018) describes a leisure transformation or revival, exemplified through shifts in the tourism sector whereby "locals have become actively involved in their own transformation, with the entrepreneurial sector leading the way" (p. 232). It has also resulted in new forms of recreation and artistic expression, as Asakitikpi (2018) describes blended forms of traditional and modern music and dance elements from East and West African cultures that have increasingly intermingled following the colonial period.

3.3 Effects of Colonization on Community Relationships with the Natural Environment

Diverse African societies have, in many cases, featured precolonial cultural practices to regulate use of natural resources, such as dictating who can or cannot harvest resources through hunting or other practices (e.g., reserving certain hunting rights for Big Men in Nyamwezi and Yao traditions in precolonial Tanzania) (Gissibl, 2016; Masozera et al., 2013). As with other livelihood activities, this approach was highly spiritually embedded; leaders conducted rituals and enforced religiously or spiritually guided requirements to use, regulate, and interact with the natural environment (Gissibl, 2016; Tumusiime et al., 2011). Human–environment relationships

were both spiritually embedded and horizontal, in the sense that, generally, East African societies did not position humans hierarchically above the natural environment (Gissibl, 2016; Kamugisha, 2017).

However, during Scramble for Africa colonization, land such as savannas and forests were set aside by colonizers as hunting grounds, watersheds, or forest product reserves (Salafsky & Wollenberg, 2000). European interests in hunting and obtaining ivory played a critical role in restricting uses of this land (Gissibl, 2016). Modelled on U.S.A. national parks, colonial administrators created protected areas across East Africa displacing members of rural communities from their traditional land, separating wildlife from local people, and challenging livelihoods of local community members (Johannesen & Skonhoft, 2005; Keiter, 2013; Sabuhoro et al., 2017). In East Africa, areas once supporting prosperous farmers transformed into wildlife reserves, often guarded by a militarized security force (Nelson, 2003). National parks of the Virunga Landscape of Rwanda, Uganda, and Democratic Republic of Congo, in addition to Uganda's Queen Elisabeth National Park, Kenya's Masai Mara and network of privately-owned conservancies, and Tanzania's Serengeti, were demarcated as hunting grounds for European colonizers and their visitors, and to protect what colonial administrators deemed "uninhabited" pristine landscapes, despite practices of people who had lived there for centuries harvesting natural resources (Gissibl, 2016, p. 5).

3.3.1 Implications of the Colonialization and Natural Environment Literature

A robust literature examines ways displacing communities to establish conservation areas devastated local people's livelihoods in East Africa. For example, restrictions on harvesting natural resources which met residents' basic needs resulted in impoverishing and marginalizing their communities, perpetuating poverty and food insecurity, increasing morbidity and mortality, and resulting in their loss of access to common property and services (Cernea & Schmidt-Soltau, 2006; Giles-Vernick, 1999; Giles-Vernick, 2005; Sabuhoro et al., 2017). Such negative effects of colonial restrictions fostered resentment among local populations in conservation areas, even in the post-independence era (Brechin et al., 2003; Colchester, 1997; Fortwangler, 2003; Frömming, 2009; Infield, 1988; Infield & Namara, 2001; Kamugisha, 2017; Masozera et al., 2013; Nelson, 2003; Newmark et al., 1993; Sirima & Backman, 2013; Ssentongo, 2017; Tumusiime et al., 2011, Wunder, 2000).

Thus, as local people's ties to their land and livelihoods were in many cases severed, local relationships to the natural environment, both inside and outside boundaries of protected areas changed (Adams & Hutton, 2007; Sène-Harper & Séye, 2019; Wessels et al., 2021). Stone and Nyaupane (2019) describe how African locals, even beyond those in communities directly adjacent to national parks, view protected areas as important spaces only for foreign tourists, government, or investors. Melubo (2020) indicates that this is a product of "exclusionary colonial ideologies which historically deny them access to protected areas" (p. 261).

Even in urban areas, the literature suggests that local urban African perceptions of green spaces are negatively affected by "past restricted access to natural resources, public or common rights being historically non-existent, structural and

cultural inequities and socioeconomic challenges" (Wessels et al., 2021, p. 8). Wessels et al. (2021) further describe how local peoples' relationships with the environment remain disconnected due to the contested nature of conservation and open space in addition to socioeconomic challenges. The widening inequality between rural and urban communities, which separates those who are engaged in nature-based livelihoods and those in professional occupations, echoes the expanding disparities associated with the conspicuous consumption preferences of the African leisure class described in the previous section. The African leisure class physically and socially remove themselves from the natural environment, while many rural farmers continue to engage with nature via subsistence and smallholder agriculture (which employs, for example, approximately 65% of Ugandans) (UBOS, 2017; Banerjee & Duflo, 2011; Shimeles & Ncube, 2015; Sindiga, 1996).

4 Intersecting Two Literatures: Domestic Ecotourism in East Africa

There is an intersection between the two literatures examining colonization's influence on leisure, and its influence on relationships to the natural environment that identifies a need for further research. Figure 2 highlights emerging themes from these literatures and their intersections. Both literatures separately provide evidence indicating that colonization has lasting influences on East African social consciousness vis-à-vis leisure and the environment. Based on findings of our literature review, we posit that it is at least partially through this sociological mechanism that theoretical elements of settler-colonialism as an ongoing process, rather than merely a historical legacy, become apparent (Coulthard, 2014; Rodney, 1973). Following
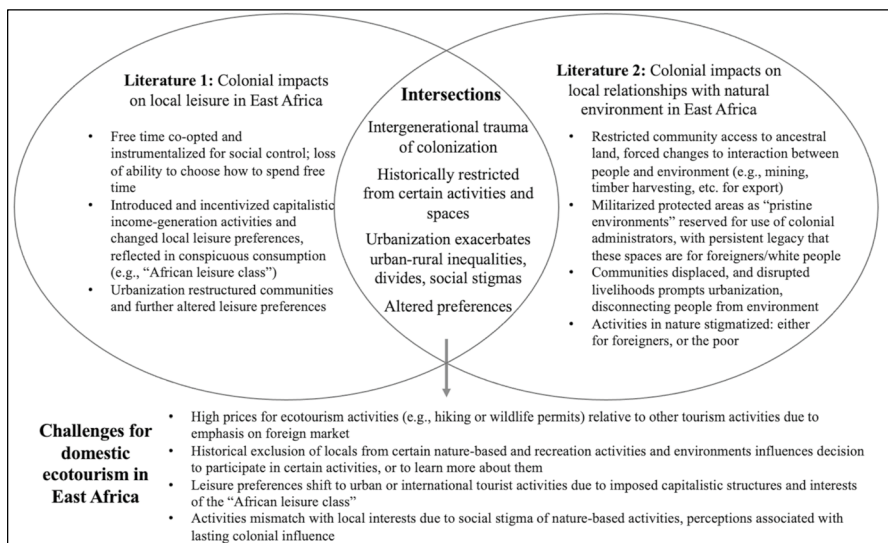

Fig. 2 Synthesizing emerging themes from the colonization-leisure and colonization-environment literatures, to examine domestic ecotourism in East Africa

Melubo (2020) and Mkono (2013), there is a need for research to determine potential linkages between these leisure preferences and stigmatization of activities in the natural environment as associated with poverty and class in East Africa due to colonial restrictions of natural spaces and severing of community relationships to the environment. Further research can develop the idea of the African leisure class resulting from changing preferences associated with colonization, characterized by conspicuous consumption.

Literature directly exploring motivations and perceptions of domestic ecotourism activities for East Africa is scarce in contrast to the well-developed literature pertaining to perceptions of people residing in low-income and impoverished communities experiencing ecotourism in areas adjacent to protected areas (e.g., Sabuhoro et al., 2017). Few studies examine perceptions of ecotourism and nature-based activities, and relationships with the natural environment more broadly, for higher-income Africans with financial means to participate in such activities –viewing and recognizing East Africans as tourists themselves, not merely as hosts (e.g., Mkono, 2013). There is merit in researchers examining ways people conceive of ecotourism differently in the contemporary East African context and explore potential colonially rooted social stigmas associated with ecotourism and nature-based activities in East African parks (Cater, 2006; Mkono, 2013, 2019). In the context of colonially-imposed disconnection from land and natural environment, and with the economic development trajectory of East Africa, East Africans may perceive that participation in ecotourism and nature-based recreation activities are reserved for *muzungu* (Kiswahili/Kinyarwanda/Luganda: white people/foreigners) (Melubo, 2020; Mkono, 2019). The interface and collision of settler-colonial influence and ongoing processes, race, identity, and power– including economic power and class – in East African domestic ecotourism prompts further questions when assessed from lenses of decolonial and critical race theories (Coulthard, 2014; Mowatt, 2021; Rodney, 1973; Sène-Harper et al., 2022). Can acknowledgement and recognition of this interface, when coupled with new research orientations in leisure and conservation focusing on race, colonization, and power, promote new understandings of the dynamics of domestic ecotourism as a sector in East African countries and for the East African Community as a whole (Mkono, 2013; Mowatt, 2021; Sène-Harper et al., 2022)? As Melubo (2020) and Asakitikpi (2018) describe, re-orienting research on domestic ecotourism in East Africa to focus on local interests, perceptions, conceptions of leisure and nature could lead to knowledge creation that helps return power over free time and relationships to East Africans. Sharma (2018) states:

> Africans have to decide what they seek through tourism. Again, is it a perpetuation of stereotypes created by the colonizer or is it an enhancing alternative vision of Africa and the African world view that is sought to be projected through leisure activities and experiences? Asking 'Whose leisure?' and 'Leisure for what?' could help in making suitable choices. (p. 234)

Figure 2 further illustrates implications of these literature intersections for the practice of domestic ecotourism. Asakitikpi's (2018) reflections also indicate that East African domestic ecotourism may benefit from a renewed focus on local issues and community-centered programs, which can occur when considering ways history

of colonization shapes local relationships to leisure and the environment, and, subsequently, local perceptions of certain domestic ecotourism activities (Mazimhaka, 2007; Melubo, 2020; Stone & Nyaupane, 2019). It is in this practical application and changes within the sector that the interaction of lasting influences of settler-colonialism and its ongoing and persistent processes, along with race and power dynamics, can be transformed in domestic ecotourism in East Africa.

A final theme emerges from intersection of these literatures that has implications for domestic ecotourism practitioners in East Africa. Domestic ecotourism in East Africa could be more inclusive by targeting East Africans who may not have financial means to engage in their natural environment in a way that encourages transformative leisure, while also dispelling continued exclusionary and restrictive practices from colonial periods that have discouraged local engagement with protected areas (Harrison, 2008; Mazimhaka, 2007; Melubo, 2020; Stone & Nyaupane, 2019). Again, this is a shift in view to recognize East Africans as tourists, not only hosts, in addition to enabling inclusive transformative leisure experiences for all East Africans. This paper describes the African leisure class as those with financial means to constitute a domestic ecotourism target market; yet, continued exclusionary and restrictive practices directly influence other East Africans in myriad ways. Again, this is an area of great opportunity for the domestic ecotourism sector to promote equity while transforming intersections of coloniality, race, and power in the sector, and to tap into local desires and preferences for leisure and connections to environment.

5 Conclusion

In summary, this literature review, employing snowballing and keyword searches, connects two discrete and related literatures: lasting implications of colonization on African (a) leisure and (b) relationships with natural environment. The literatures describe ways in which European colonization during the Scramble for Africa restricted Africans' freedoms and activities that they often attempted to perform during free time, limited Africans' access to nature and wildlife, disconnecting them and their communities from the natural environment, and incentivized capitalist income-generation activities in ways that socially separated high-income urbanites (African leisure class) from rural populations who continue to engage in environmentally-linked livelihoods practices. In this sense, we envisage settler-colonialism in East Africa to be a historical legacy but a persistent process which continues to shape peoples' lives and preferences (Coulthard, 2014).

These influences provide reflections for the African domestic ecotourism literature. For example, this paper provides a unique perspective regarding low participation in domestic ecotourism in East Africa, even for the African leisure class. There is a need for further research to explore potential colonization-rooted social stigmas associated with ecotourism and nature-based activities in East African parks, and ways people may conceive of ecotourism differently in contemporary East Africa (Cater, 2006; Mazimhaka, 2007; Mkono, 2013; Stone & Nyaupane,

2019). Additionally, there are other pervasive forms of colonization such as neo-colonialism, and economic, social, and political hegemony, and race and power structures which also interact to influence East Africans' conceptions of both leisure and nature. These are areas for future research, as are drawing connections and understanding spatial variation in the influence of varied colonial experiences on Africans' relationship to environment and leisure across African contexts and subregions. Researchers can further explore how community-oriented planning and programming make nature-based activities more relevant to and inclusive of domestic tourists in East Africa. Melubo (2020), for instance, suggests that community-oriented engagements emerge as particularly important when planning for domestic ecotourism in East African contexts. Practitioners in the ecotourism sector operating at the interface of settler-colonial influences and race, socio-economic class, and power dynamics, have an opportunity to transform the sector to project and promote African worldviews in leisure and environment spaces (Sharma, 2018). Finally, future research in this area could also enrich conversations within the sociology of leisure literatures about ways East Africans seek to structure their free time and engage with the natural environment (Mkono, 2013).

Land Acknowledgement This article was written partly in Uganda, and partly on the University Park campus of Pennsylvania State University in the United States. Uganda, which experienced various forms of British settler-colonization from 1894 to 1964, is home to over 40 local languages and several interconnected and historically and culturally rich kingdoms including but not limited to the Buganda, Bunyoro, Toro, Ankole and Bugosa. Pennsylvania State University is on the original homelands of the Erie, Haudenosaunee (Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Mohawk, and Tuscarora), Lenape (Delaware Nation, Delaware Tribe, Stockbridge-Munsee), Shawnee (Absentee, Eastern, and Oklahoma), Susquehannock, and Wahzhazhe (Osage) Nations, displaced by settler-colonization and the extension of the University as a land grant institution (see Pennsylvania State University's Land Acknowledgment http://equity. psu.edu/acknowledgement-of-land). As co-authors, we are committed to understanding our role and the role of our institution in shaping the history and modern social, political, and geographic landscapes where we reside and conduct research. We note that this paper, focused on the historical and contemporary implications of settler-colonization and its violence and displacement, was written in contexts and by co-authors that have been heavily influenced by that history, and are still engrained in systems that are shaped by various forms of colonialism.

Author Contribution and Positionality Co-author Katie P. Bernhard is United States-based and of mixed European descent, and is a former resident of Rwanda and Uganda. Her primary expertise pertaining to this paper is in the application of decolonial research methodologies. Co-author Dr. Edwin Sabuhoro is a United States-based Rwandan and a former Ugandan refugee. Dr. Sabuhoro's primary expertise pertaining to this paper is in ecotourism, nature-based activities, and community conservation in East Africa. Co-author Dr. John Dattilo is United States-based and of European descent. Dr. Dattilo's primary expertise pertaining to this paper is in leisure studies, inclusive leisure, and the sociology of leisure. All three co-authors hold affiliation with a Western, North American academic institution, Pennsylvania State University, and reflect on this academic, social, and physical positionality in research seeking to address the same Euro-North American bias in academic literatures to which we simultaneously contribute. Additionally, following Fox and McDermott (2018), we reflect on how our discussion of local perspectives in East Africa within the neocolonial logic of Western research could perpetuate and extend colonial logics that we discuss in this article.

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