

Cultural tourism: new opportunities for diversifying the tourism industry in Botswana

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How to cite:

Saarinen, J., Moswete, N. and Monare, M.J., 2014: Cultural tourism: new opportunities for diversifying the tourism industry in Botswana. In: Rogerson, C.M. and Szymańska, D. editors, *Bulletin of Geography. Socio-economic Series*, No. 26, Toruń: Nicolaus Copernicus University, pp. 7–18. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2478/bog-2014-0041>

Abstract. Botswana is known as a wilderness and safari-tourism destination, which attracts high-end overseas visitors to the country. Since the 1990s the country's tourism policy has been based on a so called 'High Value – Low Volume' (HVLV) strategy referring to the aim of attracting limited numbers of tourists with high expenditure patterns. However, while such tourism operations have contributed to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country and offered investment opportunities for international companies, the position of Botswana as a HVLV destination is increasingly criticised. It is seen as offering too narrow prospects for the growth of the industry and for the local participation and benefit sharing in tourism in future. Hence, there is a need for diversification of the product with deeper involvement of local people to tourism. Therefore, communities and Botswana's cultural and heritage attractions are increasingly seen as one of the future cornerstones of tourism development. This paper provides an overview of cultural tourism with specific reference to existing cultural and heritage attractions and the potential thereof for tourism in Botswana. The paper concludes that while the role of culture is still underutilised in tourism, the cultural tourism in Botswana has the potential to contribute to a more equitable distribution of tourism-based development and the related benefits for local communities.

Article details:

Received: 20 August 2014
Revised: 5 September 2014
Accepted: 10 September 2014

Key words:

tourism,
cultural tourism,
heritage,
local development,
Botswana.

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Contents:

1. Introduction	8
2. Geography and the rise of cultural tourism	8
3. Cultural tourism in Southern Africa and Botswana	10
4. Cultural villages as tools for rural and local development	12

4.1 Cultural villages.....	12
4.2 Cultural villages in Botswana.....	13
5. Conclusions	14
References.....	15

1. Introduction

Internationally, Botswana is known as a wilderness and safari-tourism destination (WTTC, 2007). Accordingly, the country's major comparative advantage in tourism has been its diverse abundant wildlife and natural heritage resources, which have attracted high-end overseas visitors to Botswana, specifically to the northern parts of the country. Since the 1990s the country's tourism policy has been based on a so called 'High Value – Low Volume' (HVLV) strategy referring to the aim of attracting limited numbers of tourists with high expenditure patterns (see GoB, 1990). According to the proposed new (draft) National Tourism Policy's (UNWTO, 2008) the core of the tourism product is still the wilderness experience ('to be touched by wilderness') as Botswana's nature-based tourism product has been relatively successful: the industry contributes about 9.5% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country (WTTC, 2007) and wildlife and safari tourism have brought many benefits in the form of employment, tax and royalty revenues. Tourism growth has also offered opportunity for investment and led to improvements in infrastructure and services (Mbaiwa, 2002; WTTC, 2007; Moswete, Dube, 2013).

However, the position of Botswana as HVLV destination is increasingly seen as offering too narrow opportunities to develop the industry in future. Hence, "there is a need to expand the positioning to broaden the range of middle-to-high tourism market segments and products" (UNWTO, 2008: 5). Indeed the past development of the tourism industry has excluded other forms of tourist activities at the expense of exclusive wildlife tourism. Therefore, in order to find additional growth and related socio-economic benefits for the nation the new tourism policy acknowledges the need for diversification of the tourism product (UNWTO, 2008). First, there is a 'spatial' need to spread tourist flows and related consumption also outside the existing main attractions, such as the Okavango Delta, the Moremi Game Reserve and the Chobe National Park, in

the northern part of the country, which are highly used and occasionally congested (see Jones, 2009; National Development Plan (NDP) 9, 2003; Mba- iwa, Sakuze, 2009). Secondly, there is a 'thematic' need to involve communities, other livelihood options (see Hunt et al., 2012) and especially local culture to the national and regional tourism products. Both aspects of diversification aim to contribute to the policy's goal and vision stating that in future larger numbers of the people of Botswana should participate, and benefit from the tourism industry. Therefore, while the existing tourism structures, attractions and patterns are still mainly based on the hegemonic role of nature, wilderness and wildlife, the revised policy aims to position Botswana's cultural and heritage attractions as one of the future cornerstones of tourism (UNWTO, 2008).

Due to limited research emphasis on cultural tourism in Botswana (see Mba- iwa, Sakuze, 2009; Moswete et al., 2009), this paper aims to provide a general overview of cultural heritage tourism with specific reference to existing cultural and heritage attractions and potentials there are for tourism in Botswana. In addition, the paper aims to focus on one specific form of cultural tourism: cultural vil- lages. Cultural villages have evolved in recent dec- ades in greater numbers in southern Africa (van Veuren, 2001, 2004; Saarinen, 2007). They can be characterized as commercial and/or heritage sites where a particular time, place and culture is re- constructed in a contemporary context (Cameron, 1997: 136). Finally, the paper provides recommen- dations for involving cultural and heritage aspects to the development of inclusive tourism industry in Botswana.

2. Geography and the rise of cultural tourism

Cultural tourism is seen as one of the fastest grow- ing sectors in the tourism industry (McKercher,

Du Cros, 2002; Smith, Richards, 2013). It has also emerged as a key issue in the geographical studies on tourism (see Squire, 1994; Mowforth, Munt, 1998; Saarinen, 1999; Gibson, 2008). Tourism is increasingly seen as a major element constituting the way in which we see other places and cultures, and the way in which “we and others” see and represent “us and them” and related identities (Del Casino, Hanna 2000; Gibson, 2010; Saarinen, 2014). All this has made the geographical study of tourism and culture an exciting and growing issue, and recently the role and participation of local communities in cultural or heritage tourism development and products has interested human geographers (Hall, Page, 2009; Saarinen, Niskala, 2009; Gibson, 2010).

According to the WTO (2005), cultural tourism accounted for 37% of global tourism, and the estimation is that cultural tourism grows at a rate of 15% per year. While the estimated high growth pace and share of cultural tourism can be critically debated, as there are no coherent statistical bases to evaluate the numbers, in many places the cultural tourism can present an ideal vehicle for local and regional development where local people can experience the direct economic benefits and employment of visiting tourists (see Smith, 2003). Thus recently, many southern African countries and regions have seen the promotion of cultural tourism as a good and inexpensive strategy that can be used to attract visitors and also investors through ‘showing’ indigenous cultures and local heritage (see Rogerson, Visser, 2004, 2011).

In general, cultural tourism can be regarded as the movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs (Richards, 1997: 25; Smith, 2003). During the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, culture was described as ‘a set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group. ‘Culture’ embraces art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs (UNESCO, 2002). Cultural tourism involves visiting museums, artistic activities, galleries, cultural heritage zones; it also includes the lifestyles formed by beliefs, languages, religious activities, gastronomy, nutrition habits, dressing of people, architectural buildings, handworks, artifacts and relat-

ed atmosphere (Craik, 1991; Mbiti, 1991; see WTO, 2005). Thus, in tourism, culture can be represented as physical and/or material; tangible or intangible as well as the practices of everyday life (McCarthy, 1992; Keitumetse, 2005; Smith, Richards, 2013).

It is important to note that culture is something that is not fixed or frozen, but it is a process of constant transformation as cultures interact with each other and are affected by economic, political and social factors (Sarup, 1996: 140). Therefore, culture is dynamic rather than static (Smith, 2009; Smith, Richards, 2013). This character empowers the tourism industry to utilize and commodify culture in its own purposes which can sometimes result in conflicts between local and non-local views, uses and values of specific cultural elements (see Craik, 1991; McCarthy, 1992; Boissevain, 2006).

In practice, cultural tourism can include a wide variety of different tourism activities, motivations and attractions. It refers to forms of tourism, which are mainly based on a desire to learn and know about others and their way of life: cultural tourism is focusing on places where one can experience arts, heritage and traditions, for example (Smith, 2003; see Kamamba, 2003). As stated by Starr (1987: 210): “some travelers relish the chance to learn of the vast differences between cultures, and delight in visiting exotic places. The cultural differences they expect to encounter are in fact, the very reason for the trip”. In a similar vein Bachleitner and Zins (1999) contend that cultural tourism aims to encourage an awareness of cultural history of an individual people (see Richards, 1997). It serves as a kind of ‘reminder’; this means that observers are led into the cultural past and end up seeing the present from another viewpoint. Thus, it is hoped that by experiencing culture, the tourist will become educated as well as entertained and will have a chance to learn about the community, its heritage, and a cultural landscape. In this respect, some researchers have argued that cultural tourists seek for a more ‘authentic’ and ‘deeper’ experience than any other type of tourists (Mckercher, Du Cros, 2002). Due to its supposed connections with a search for authenticity and meaning (MacCannell, 1976; Zeppel, Hall, 1991), it is usually seen as a more ‘serious’ form of tourism aiming to go beyond idle leisure and returns enriched with knowledge of other places and other people (McCarthy, 1992) even if this involves

gazing at or collecting the commodified essences of others (Wang, 1999, 2000).

Generally, cultural tourism has great potential to affect the lives of local people (Zeppel, Hall, 1991). Some of the benefits of cultural tourism are: provision of a vehicle for cultural exchange and understanding (e.g. music and art have long been called international languages) (McCarthy, 1992:10); stimulate conservation and heritage preservation efforts (McKercher, Du Cros, 2002; Zeppel, 2002); revitalize traditional building and craft industries; generate economic activity and local or regional development; and enhance community cohesiveness and pride in cultural identity (Richards, 1997; Smith, 2009; Sutherland, 2006). Consequently, in order to avoid negative consequences of tourism growth and sustain community development, the local people should be the focal point in the development (Choi and Sikaraya, 2005). The potential benefits of cultural tourism are that it can boost the economic status of the people (see Mbaiwa, 2005a, 2005b; Moswete, Dube, 2013). It can create further employment opportunities (Rogerson, 2006; WTTC, 2007; Moswete et al., 2009), enhance community cohesiveness (Zeppel, Hall, 1991), instill pride in cultural identity (Gurung, 1995; Keitumetse et al., 2007; Zeppel, 2002) and contribute to the development of infrastructure such as upgrading of roads (Moswete et al., 2009; Smith, Richards, 2013). Cultural tourism can also contribute to heritage preservation (McKercher, Du Cros, 2002); it is a vehicle for cultural exchange and it revitalizes traditional structures especially to the host communities (Moswete, Dube, 2013). It can provide a symbiotic relationship between the tourists and the host people leading to economic successes (Craik, 1991; Mbaiwa, Sakuze, 2009), and cultural preservation in destination areas (Sutherland, 2006; Keitumetse et al., 2007).

3. Cultural tourism in Southern Africa and Botswana

Most southern African countries have rich and diverse indigenous cultures (Cohen et al., 1996; Keitumetse et al., 2007; Ivanovic, Saayman, 2013a). This 'living heritage' of the African people and the elements of existing material heritage are evolving to

tourist attractions as about 38% of tourists go to South Africa, for example, to experience cultural offerings (see Lubbe, 2003; Rogerson, Visser, 2004). South African Tourism (SAT) has already identified the development of cultural tourism as one of the country's key growth areas (Ivanovic, 2008; Ivanovic, Saayman, 2013b). While cultural tourism elements are regarded as the key component of a meaningful South African experience for international visitors, cultural products are also given high ratings by domestic tourists, which has recently been the market segment that has been partly ignored.

Hence, culture can be seen as a potential touristic 'pull factor' to and in southern African context that influences the initial decision of visitors to travel to destinations in different parts of the world. As a result, cultural attractions are increasingly perceived as being icons of important streams of global culture (see Richards, 1997; Robinson, 2001a, 2001b). This global conception of culture has led to the designation of the World Heritage sites by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), for example, which can attract millions of tourists from different parts of the world. World Heritage sites are seen to possess special cultural or physical significances with outstanding cultural and/or natural heritage value in a global scale. Among 779 cultural and 31 mixed cultural and natural sites listed globally there are four cultural and one mixed heritage sites in South Africa and only one located in Botswana (Tsodilo Hills) and Namibia (/Ui-//aes i.e. Twyfelfontein)(UNESCO 2014).

In spite of a low visibility in the UNESCO's World Heritage site list, the cultural components in southern Africa include other kinds of heritage resources and traditions, such as oral history, music, or dance (see McCarthy, 1992; Sutherland, 2006; Smith, 2009). These issues are often highly visible in cultural tourism products, including cultural villages, in the region. Similarly, instead of globally known (and defined) cultural places; national, regional or local scale heritage sites are potential tourist attractions (Timothy, Boyd, 2003, 2006). However, research carried out by the Botswana National Museum to develop Botswana's heritage sites showed that, by 2008 only 12 heritage sites were documented for tourism (Mabuse, 2011). This indicates that cultural tourism in Botswana is still most probably in its infancy stage. Indeed, existing arche-

ological and historical attractions are not well promoted and hence do not play a notable role in the

present tourism product (Botswana Tourism Development Programme, BTDP, 2000).

Table 1. Examples of some of the existing and active cultural heritage sites in Botswana

Name of Attraction	Location	District/Region
Tsodilo Hills	Shakawe	Ngamiland
Toutswemogala Iron Age site	Near Palapye	Central
Matsieng's Foot Prints	Rasesa	Kgatleng
Moremi Gorge	Tswapong Hills	Central
Domboshaba Ruins	Near Masunga	North East
Logaga la ga Kobokwe	Molepolole	Kweneng
Thamaga pottery	Thamaga	Kweneng
Gcwihaba hills	Near Gumare	Ngamiland
Lentswe la Baratani	Otse	South East
Old Palapye Church Ruins	Malaka	Central

Source: Adapted from Ford et al. 2010

However, there are monuments, sites and customs that could be of interest to tourists (Table 1). Cultural resources and sites could be used to add value to the existing nature-based tourism product and contribute to increased length of stay, for example. Approximately 1660 historical sites that are

identified and recorded by the National Museum Monuments and Art Gallery (BTDP, 2000), with the help of local people, include both developed and potential cultural and heritage sites. Many of the rich sites of cultural heritage importance are not included to existing tourism products and routes (GoB, 2001).

Table 2. Examples of cultural attractions in and around Gaborone

Location	Name of site	Description
Gaborone	Gaborone's first mall	It is often referred to as the main mall's pedestrian-only business and commercial center. It boasts some of the town's oldest shops. It has one of its first hotels, the President hotel.
	Government enclave	It contains the National Assembly, the Office of the President. Bore statue of the three wise chiefs who went to the Second World War.
	Three chiefs monuments	The statue is found in the newly developed Central Business District. It is of the three chiefs Khama III, Sebele I and Bathoen I, who went to London in 1885 to ask for a British protectorate.
	The National Museum and Art Gallery	It was established in June 1967 and has been a vibrant focal point of artistic and cultural activity.-It has registered and documented over 100,000 artifacts, 40,000 insect specimens and 20,000 slides.
Mmankgodi	Bahurutshe cultural village	It is a recreated Hurutshe village offering accommodation in the form of traditional roundavels. It offers arts, crafts and traditional dancing and educational cultural tours.
Otse	Otse Hills	It is the country's highest hill with a peak of 1,491 meters The most prominent and sacred hill is the Baratani hill (Lover's hill), which carries a legend of two young lovers who were refused permission to marry and vanished.
Gabane	Pelegano village industry	It houses a number of different village ventures e.g. arts and craft, a pottery factory that produces uniquely designed earthenware pots
Manyana	Manyana rock paintings	The paintings are spread over 5 separate areas of the rock cliff face -the paintings are associated with the San and Khoisan and dated from between 1,100 and 1,700 AD
Kanye	Motse cultural village	It houses a cultural center: - a place where traditional arts and crafts are being revitalized.

Source: Based on Robinson, 2001a and Department of Tourism, 2009

In southern Botswana, there are various cultural attractions and sites, which could be explored, to diversify the tourism product and avoid only focus on safari/wildlife-based tourism (BTDP, 1999; NDP 9, 2003). Examples of such cultural attractions are presented in Table 2. The touristic potential of local cultural heritage, however, can be constrained by related taboos and traditions. In addition, despite Botswana traditions being involved in many cultural activities on a local scale, there is a dearth of written or widely known socio-cultural history and background information to be used in the development of cultural tourism (Botswana Tourism Organisation (BTO), 2011).

There are still untapped heritage attractions, which could contribute positively to the development of the tourism sector in Botswana. Even though Gaborone is the main arrival and departure center for international visitors, visitors do not stay longer as there is not much to do and see, instead, most international tourists visit Chobe region (Kasane) and Maun in the Ngamiland district and the Okavango Delta. These areas offer wildlife expeditions and wilderness experiences due to their rich natural capital and scenic beauty. However, even in relation to the northern nature-based tourism products cultural tourism could be offered to complement the already existing wildlife and wilderness tourism. Evidently, cultural tourism would be beneficial in areas where nature-based tourism is not popular or possible if sites were identified and explored for business. Recently, cultural villages for tourism have been created and utilised to develop heritage-based tourism.

4. Cultural villages as tools for rural and local development

4.1. Cultural villages

A cultural village is a potential way of facilitating cultural tourism (see Zeppel, Hall, 1991; van Veuren, 2004). Cultural villages are specific attractions symbolizing the way of living of local people, hence visitors can learn about the culture of the people and their past and present ways of living (Zeppel, 2002). In some respect, these villages

are referred to as 'living museums' (Timothy, Boyd, 2003) and they can manifest themselves materially and functionally in a number of ways. Typically cultural villages demonstrate traditional cultures through model homes, entertainment, stories, food, household activities, tools and clothing. Thus, cultural villages are constructed tourist spaces with elements referring to cultural and community-based tourism and educational as well as learning purposes (see McCarthy, 1992; van Veuren, 2001). Cultural villages aim to depict local or regional, often indigenous cultures and the related traditions and ways of living. In addition to displays and built structures the activities and attractions related to cultural villages often include guided tours, cultural shows, exhibitions and craft workshops (Saarinen, 2007), where local people can be employed as tour guides, entertainers, and demonstrators (see Jones, 2009).

Cultural villages and their local establishing processes in rural or other remote areas are very concrete manifestations of recent regional policy programmes and shifts in southern Africa (see Republic of Namibia, 1994; Government of South Africa, 1996; Goudie et al., 1999; Rogerson, Visser, 2004; Rogerson, 2006), that are related to tourism development aiming to use local culture in both economic growth and community empowerment (van Veuren, 2004: 139). The majority of cultural villages in southern Africa, especially in South Africa, Namibia, Botswana and Swaziland, were established in the 1990s representing the early aims of regional development policy frames.

Van Veuren (2001) has categorized cultural villages in South Africa into three different types based on their ownership and funding structure (van Veuren, 2004). These categories labelled as privately non-locally managed, privately locally managed and publicly managed can be applied to the wider region of southern Africa. Privately managed villages are mainly owned by non-local entrepreneurs who are outsiders to local communities and especially to the culture depicted at the village. The purpose of these cultural villages is simply to make profit: they are tourist products aiming to satisfy the needs of non-local visitors (Saarinen, 2007). The second type of private sector owned cultural villages comprised of local entrepreneurs, which represents a clear minority among the private cultural villages in general (van Veuren, 2001: 140). While their primary

aim is to make profit they may also demonstrate a strong commitment to cultural conservation and education, and to job creation in the local communities (van Veuren, 2004). These owners are usually insiders to the culture demonstrated in a village.

The third type of cultural villages is established by the public sector. They are primarily intended to preserve elements of local indigenous culture and heritage. In addition these kinds of villages and tourism products, in general, may serve other purposes, such as political and national interests (see Harrison, 1992; van Veuren, 2001). Although tourism can play an important role their financing usually relies heavily on public sector subsidies. According to van Veuren (2004: 145), their sustainability may often be seriously endangered because of this dependency and the associated bureaucratic practices in relation to tourism and local community relations.

4.2. Cultural villages in Botswana

Stronger emphasis on the potential for cultural heritage tourism development in Botswana (GoB, 2000) has resulted in an emergence of cultural villages in the country or ‘cultural lodges’ as they are sometimes called (Monare, 2013). However, there are no available records on the existing numbers of villages in Botswana. The Department of Tourism (DOT), for example, main focus on cultural villages for tourism is chiefly for purposes of providing licenses of operation, which is an industry-oriented method or business development approach aiming to encourage the establishment of individually or family owned cultural villages. As a result, most cultural villages for tourism around the country are individually owned. Altogether there are seven licensed cultural villages in Botswana (Fig. 1) (Mon-

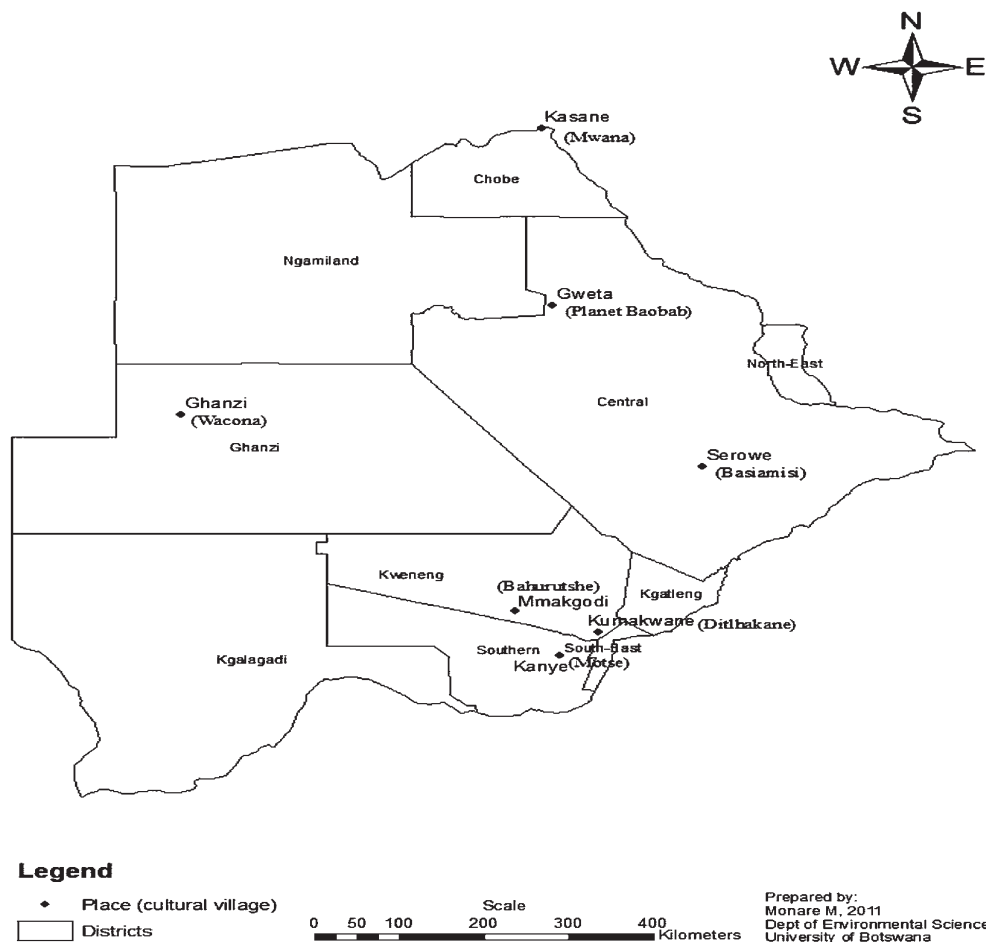


Fig. 1. Map of Botswana showing licensed cultural villages for tourism

Source: Monare, 2013

are, 2013), mostly located near the capital city of Gaborone or close to touristic routes to northern parts of the country.

In addition to the licensed cultural villages, however, there are other villages which do not fully operate in tourism markets or they are part of community-based natural resource Management framework (CBNRM) related 'Trusts' operations. In Botswana, Trusts are regarded as Community Based Organizations (CBOs). The Xaixai Cultural Village in the Okavango Delta region (see Mbaiwa, Sakuze, 2009) is a good example of the touristy, well-known sites in the country due to its location next to the Okavango Delta. The Xaixai residents through a tourism Trust named Tlhabologo formed the village. The visitors to the village are given a tour to the Xaixai area to see and experience the San, the indigenous group that is called as Basarwa in Botswana, and their traditional way of life such as hunting, gathering and dancing (Jones, 2009; Monare, 2013). The development of cultural tourism in the region, including the establishment of the Xaixai Cultural Village, aims to contribute to poverty alleviation problems in the area. The tourist activities offered in the area appear to be providing employment for a significant number of household members. For instance, about 42% has a family member employed as tour guides for tourists at the caves (Mbaiwa, Sakuze, 2009). Some members of the San have been able to raise their income through selling of craft items to tourists and visitors who come to their area.

Another well-known cultural village in Botswana is the Bahurutse Cultural Village located in Mmankgodi, which is a rural village located in the Kweneng District (see Fig. 1). Bahurutshe cultural village is a family owned and managed tourism-related enterprise that was established in 2005 and employs about 20 people (Monare, 2013). It was established to preserve and celebrate the culture of the Bahurutshe ethnic group and also as a tourism business. Examples of artifacts and cultural objects protected and preserved at the village include pestle and mortar, water and traditional beer calabashes, earthenware pots; wooden spoons etc. A variety of traditional activities offered at the site include amongst others; a traditional African wedding, traditional dancing, storytelling, traditional foods, local cuisine tasting, traditional games. The visitors

are also shown how traditional huts were constructed, painted and decorated using natural earth colours. Those visiting are also allowed to participate in the smoothening of the mud using clay, mixed with cow dung – a traditional way of decorating walls and floors of homes. In addition to accommodation and conferencing the tourist village offers cultural activities that include showcasing of Bahurutshe culture through grinding of sorghum and millet. Traditional doctors from Mmankgodi village are sometimes invited to stage traditional bone throwing and healing activities to entertain and teach visitors (Monare, 2013).

5. Conclusions

The southern African region and countries like Botswana have rich and diverse cultural heritage. However, cultural tourism activities are fairly new in the region and especially in Botswana they have not been incorporated to the main tourism product based on wildlife and wilderness experiences. This issue is also evident in limited research on cultural tourism. However, recently cultural and heritage related aspects have received some interest in research (see Keitumetse et al., 2007; Mbaiwa, Sakuze, 2009; Moswete et al., 2009; Mbaiwa, 2011).

Cultural heritage tourism is growing in importance and it has potential to contribute significantly to the growth of the tourism industry and economy of Botswana. Cultural tourism can also help in the restoration, preservation and conservation of both natural and cultural heritage resources. The benefits of cultural tourism development include employment creation, income generation and sense of belonging and development of pride of ethnic groups about their culture (Mbaiwa, 2005a, 2005b; Moswete et al., 2009). For this reason, the development of cultural tourism in Botswana could contribute to a more equitable distribution of tourism, development and the related benefits. Thus, cultural tourism could be used as a development tool for so called inclusive business models in the local communities (Saarinen, Rogerson, 2014). The idea of inclusive business development refers to profitable core business activity that also aims to expand tangible opportunities for the poor and other disadvan-

taged groups in developing countries rural contexts (see Business Innovation Facility, 2011; Saarinen et al., 2013). Indeed, with the two forms of tourism resource products (culture and nature) integrated, inclusive cultural tourism operations could contribute towards poverty eradication and become a major socio-economic development tool among historically disadvantaged communities (see Ivanovic, 2008; Scheyvens, 2011).

In addition, cultural tourism could reduce pressure on the existing wildlife resources in northern Botswana and, thus, contribute also to the sustainable development of the environment. The promotion of cultural tourism would add variety to the already available wildlife attractions and act as an incentive to extend the stay of tourists in the country. Diversification from nature-based tourism through cultural tourism would also help the creation of all year tourism packages, which will incorporate both wildlife and cultural tourism (BTDP, 2000; 2003; GoB, 2007; Moswete, Dube, 2013). Finally, we recommend that further research be conducted to uncover more cultural and heritage-related sites that could also be utilised in tourism that aims to operate responsibly, concerning the physical, socio-cultural and political environment. Further, it appears that training and tourism awareness building are needed for communities in order for them to venture into the culture-based tourism industry and fully benefit from the touristic use of their heritage and culture with a capacity to guide and control the utilisation if needed.

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