Rural tourism development and economic diversification for local communities in Botswana

The case of Lekhubu Island

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ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

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Contents

Abstract

Rural tourism development and economic diversification for local communities in Botswana: the case of Lekhubu Island

Monkgogi Lenao, Department of Geography, University of Oulu, 2014

Keywords: rural development, community-based rural tourism, economic diversification, power relations, Botswana

Community-based rural tourism is has received massive support as one of the ways through which the benefits of tourism can reach the local communities. It is generally believed that by involving the local communities in tourism through community-based initiatives, their livelihoods would be uplifted, both at individual and household levels. Furthermore, these community-based initiatives are said to carry the potential to diversify rural economies and therefore contribute to the process of rural development. In the southern African region, including Botswana, community-based natural resources management (CBNRM) has emerged as a popular approach to involve rural communities in tourism development and conservation. From the initial primary concern with wildlife, development of CBNRM in Botswana has begun to include other resources such as veldt products as well as culture and heritage. However, research on CBNRM development in Botswana has generally neglected these non-wildlife initiatives. Specific circumstances that determine their success or failure have not been given adequate attention, especially during the early stages of development.

This thesis draws attention to some important factors to consider when proposing community-based rural tourism as a tool for economic diversification among local communities in Botswana. Using the case of a non-wildlife-based initiative at Lekhubu Island, this thesis investigates; the community's levels of awareness and preparedness to participate in tourism development; the significance of power in the relationship between the state and the community in community-based tourism development process; the challenges facing this kind of community-based rural tourism development as well as implications for its use in rural development. Lekhubu Island is a rural heritage site in north central Botswana. The community of Mmatshumu village located to the south of this Island operates a culture and heritage tourism business at this Island. Activities include camping and guided walks while many others are still in the pipeline.

The study relied on a mix of qualitative methods for data collection. These included seven focus group discussions (FGDs) with members of Mmatshumu village community and seventeen long interviews with traditional and civic leaders, Trust members and employees as well as government officials who are members of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Several informal interviews were also conducted with villagers whenever an opportunity arose. In addition, the study utilized a number of secondary data sources both published and unpublished including official reports, government policy documents, dissertations, books and journal articles. The findings indicate that while members of Mmatshumu community participating in the FGDs were aware of the

potential benefits of community-based rural tourism, they were not aware of either the potential trade-offs they may have to make when tourism continues to grow or even the constraints that militate against future growth of their initiative. They also show that while one of the stated principles of CBNRM is to devolve power to the local communities, the actual relationship on the ground between the state and Mmatshumu community challenges this notion. In practice, ultimate decision making power remains with the government, while the little devolved to the community rests with the community trust. Members of the community participating in this study felt that they have very limited power in terms of influencing the process of community tourism taking place at Lekhubu Island. Finally, the Lekhubu tourism initiative faces several challenges; inter alia; low income generation and employment creation; lack of capacity in the community trust and the TAC as well as poor accessibility.

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List of original papers

Article I   Lenao, M. (2014a). Packaging culture and heritage for tourism to improve rural lives at Lekhubu Island in Botswana. *In* Dashper, K. (Ed.): in press. *Rural tourism: an international perspective*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, London.

Article II   Lenao*, M., J. E. Mbaiwa & J. Saarinen (2014). Community expectations from rural tourism development at Lekhubu Island, Botswana, *Tourism Review International*, 17: 4, 223–236

Article III   Lenao, M. (2014b). Community, the state and power relations in community-based tourism: local perspectives on Lekhubu Island tourism development, Botswana. Development Southern Africa (submitted manuscript)

Article IV   Lenao, M. (2013). Challenges facing community-based cultural tourism development at Lekhubu Island, Botswana: a comparative analysis, *Current Issues in Tourism* (in press) DOI: 10.1080/13683500.2013.827158

*The author was responsible for collecting and analyzing the data. The article was written in collaboration with Joseph E. Mbaiwa and Jarkko Saarinen

Preface

It has been a very long journey, punctuated by huddles, curves and slopes; moments of uncertainty and sheer excitement; periods of isolation and interactions as well as cultivation of friendships and associations. I have gone to places and met people. All the same, I have grown and learnt a few lessons along the way. Therefore, today as I sit and reminisce about the path I have traversed so far in my academic and research pursuits, I realize I am humbly indebted to an inexhaustible list of people. All these people have had various degrees of contribution and influence on the pace and direction of my journey. I will need to summarize this list within the limited space I have. Without mentioning names, I would like to thank my former lecturers and mentors from the University of Botswana. Individually and cumulatively they have taught, moulded and prepared me to face the challenges of my academic journey with astute resolve. My colleagues at work have been immensely supportive to me. I owe them a heartfelt thank you.

I was able to navigate through the process of putting this work together because my supervisors, Professors Jarkko Saarinen and Joseph E. Mbaiwa were there to guide me. Their skillful supervision and unbridled support helped me develop confidence and remain focused as the process unfolded. It would have been a nightmare if I was not leaning on the shoulders of these two academic giants. I profusely thank them.

I owe sincere gratitude to all respondents and participants of my study. Without their input this process would not have reached this point. Prof. C. Michael Hall and Dr. Monika Lüthje pre-examined this work and provided invaluable comments and advice. Their suggestions have improved the quality of this work immeasurably.

This work has received funding from the Academy of Finland through the RELATE Centre of Excellence project. For that I am very grateful. I am also indebted to everyone involved with the RELATE project for their support. The RELATE coordinator, Dr. Kaj Zimmerbauer deserves special recognition for his efforts in ensuring that I settled well in Oulu when I began what has become my longest stay in the Nordic region so far. I am indebted to my colleague Mensu Ize-Okhae for the occasional chats and bicycle rides down town Oulu during the summer of 2014. It would have been a very long and torturously quiet Oulu summer without him around. A special thanks to all Department of Geography staff at the University of Oulu. I was well received.

I should also thank my family and friends. My entire family has always been supportive during my studies. They have been my central pillar of strength through this undertaking. For that and more, I owe them a great deal of appreciation. I would also like to appreciate the support of all my friends, particularly Biki Basupi, Thabo Semong and Tshepang Tshube. These gentlemen have been a great source of encouragement for me throughout this process. They never missed a moment to remind me I could do it. Finally, my warmest gratitude goes to my love and my special friend, Letsema Otlhophilwe. When things did not seem to go well, she always knew what to say to keep me going. She is a star. I am immensely grateful and indebted to all this support as I complete my current journey and prepare to set off on a much wider terrain of academics and research. May the Lord's grace be extended to all of you in unlimited measure.

In Oulu, November 2014, Monkgogi Lenao

1 Introduction

The importance of tourism as a vehicle for driving economic agendas of many countries around the world has been widely documented (Milne & Alteljevic 2001; Sharpley 2001; Keyser 2009; Marzuki 2009; Samimi, Sadeghi & Sadeghi 2011; UNWTO 2013). Accordingly, tourism development has often been pursued as an alternative industry aimed at turning around the fortunes of destinations whose traditional industries had begun to show signs of either slowing down or dying out (Sharpley 2002; Briedenhann &Wickens 2004). In some instances, tourism development has been adopted as a tool to diversify the local economy (Gössling 2001). In essence, the emergence of tourism would add to the basket of sectors driving the economy while also providing the requisite landscape where other new (or pre-existing, but otherwise non-profitable) sectors would take off and blossom (WTTC 2012). Put differently, tourism has been introduced in many areas with the view to help ease over-dependence on a single traditional economic sector and facilitate emergence or regeneration of others through both forward and backward linkages (Manwa 2009). In some instances, tourism has emerged as a primary economic mainstay of certain destinations (Sharpley 2001; Hampton & Christensen 2007).

Tourism has also been recognized for its ability to bring development to rural areas (Sharpley & Sharpley 1997; Sharpley 2002). Some developing countries such as Botswana have identified tourism as an important economic growth engine with the potential to drive objectives of rural development (Government of Botswana 1990). Botswana's Revised National Policy for Rural Development of 2002 emphasizes the importance of using community-based tourism to open up opportunities for communities in rural remote parts of the country (Government of Botswana 2002). Viljoen & Tlabela (2006) assert that the pursuit of tourism in southern Africa's rural areas is often done with the view to increase opportunities for economies based on failing industries. Tourism is, therefore, being used to diversify rural economies. Community-based tourism (CBT) approach has been adopted in many eastern and southern African countries. Forming the foundation of advocacy for CBT development is Murphy's (1985) argument that if local communities are involved throughout the process of tourism development, its potential as a tool for economic diversification would be even better harnessed. In Botswana, the development of CBT has taken a community-based natural resources management (CBNRM) approach. This approach aims to involve communities in achieving the dual objectives of conservation and community benefit from tourism.

Central to the CBNRM paradigm is the principle of power decentralization and distribution of responsibilities to community members in the management of local resources (Sebele 2010; Blaikie 2006; Boggs 2000). Essentially, CBNRM is premised on the idea that if allowed to participate in the management of resources within and around their localities, and facilitating their benefit through tourism enterprises, local communities

would develop appreciation of the value of the resources and strive to use them sustainably (Manwa 2009; Twyman 2000). However, the challenges related to this participation have been noted in research (Tosun 2000, 2005). Among others, community participation is often moderated by power relations (Reed 1997) existing both within these communities and between these communities and other stakeholders such as government, business and NGOs (Campbell & Shackleton 2001). Furthermore, it has become increasingly important to understand the levels and nature of awareness that these communities usually have when CBT is introduced amongst them (Lepp 2004; Thakadu 2005). The nature and level of community awareness may be important in attempts to gauge the balance between a community's willingness to participate in tourism (and conservation) and a community that is due to participate in a meaningful way.

This thesis presents the results of a qualitative study carried out among members of Mmatshumu village in Botswana. Mmatshumu is a rural village located in northern central part of Botswana. Mmatshumu village community own and operate a small heritage tourism enterprise at Lekhubu Island, located about 45 kilometers outside the village. The community Trust responsible for running the enterprise on behalf of the community is called Gaing'O Community Trust (GCT). Through the course of thesis the phrase, local Trust and the acronym GCT may be used interchangeably to denote the same entity. The community enterprise under review may be referred to as Lekhubu tourism for ease of identification. Although this community-based initiative was started in 1997, it is yet to become profitable (Setlhogile *et al.* 2011). The level of tourism activities taking place at the site is still relatively low. Therefore, if the level of profitability were to be used to determine level of maturity of an attraction, Lekhubu tourism development would be classified as infant.

The research on which this thesis is based was interested in contributing knowledge towards an understanding of CBT development in Botswana. Importantly, the study sought to investigate the prospects of using culture and heritage resources as a basis for development of CBT. It investigates three of the stated objectives of mainstream CBT in Botswana, namely; community involvement, devolution of power to the communities and diversification of rural livelihoods. Lekhubu Island tourism initiative is used to exemplify the application of these objectives and the practical implications. In the final analysis, this thesis cautions that the circumstances of small culture and heritage CBT enterprises in Botswana may be different from those of their wildlife-based counterparts. Therefore, the manner in which CBNRM is developed on the bases of culture and heritage resources and the narrative used therein need to be reconsidered so that the peculiar circumstances of such initiatives are taken care of.

2 Aims, structure and disciplinary context

2.1 Purpose and objectives of the thesis

The purpose of this study is to examine the early stage circumstances and future prospects of community-based tourism projects in Botswana. The primary focus is to identify and describe the challenges and opportunities that arise when the community-based natural resources management (CBNRM) model is adopted for establishing culture and heritage-based projects. Furthermore, the study sought to demonstrate that while the CBNRM presents a convenient starting point for community-based tourism development, caution needs to be exercised when applying the same to some small culture and heritage-based rural projects. The study aims to create knowledge on the importance of considering context specific conditions that may militate against smooth development of community-based tourism initiatives. In general, the CBNRM framework attempts to combine the objectives of resources management and community benefit through tourism development (Nelson & Agrawal 2008; Chipfuva & Saarinen 2011). While assessment of CBNRM in the east and southern African regions have generally yielded a mixed bag of successes and failures (Blaikie 2006), some considerable revenue turn over (Mbaiwa 2004a) realized through this program continue to give impetus to its use as an economic diversification tool for rural economies in Botswana (Government of Botswana 2002).

The overall aim of this study is to investigate the relevance, applicability and prospects of culture and heritage-based CBNRM as a strategy for rural development, economic diversification and conservation with local community involvement. To this end, the thesis attempts to address the following specific objectives;

1. Assess the nature of awareness and preparedness of the Mmatshumu community concerning the development of community-based rural tourism in their area
2. Investigate the significance and implication of power between community and the state in community-based tourism and rural development process
3. Profile the challenges facing community-based culture and heritage tourism development in Botswana and their implications for its contribution to rural development

It is important to note that, in recent years, there has been increasing drive towards facilitating more local community participation and benefit from development of tourism in Botswana (Saarinen & Manwa 2008). In the same vein, emphasis has been placed on the need to integrate culture and heritage resources into the tourism development processes (Government of Botswana 2002). Therefore, addressing the above objectives using an individual case can help point out some issues that are notable for consideration at a national level. In dealing with these objectives this study sets a research agenda on the

challenges, opportunities, synergies and parallels between developing wildlife and non-wildlife based CBNRM for rural economic diversification in Botswana.

2.2 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is made of a synopsis and four research articles. The synopsis is a consolidation of the empirical findings of the four papers as well as reviewed literature on the subject matter. There are six main sections in this synopsis (Figure 1). The first section is the introduction. This introduction briefly presents the background and focus of the study. It proceeds to present the research aim and objectives as well as the overall structure of the thesis. The second section deals with the main concepts forming the theoretical underpinning of the research. The third section of the synopsis situates the research theme within the wider field of geographic studies. The research material and methods as well as a brief description of the study area (i.e. country and study site) are presented in the fourth section. In section five the main findings for each article are presented in relation to the overall research objectives. Finally, section six is a discussion of the findings and their implications within the wider theoretical approach and attendant literature. Concluding remarks and prospects for future research are presented at the end of this section.
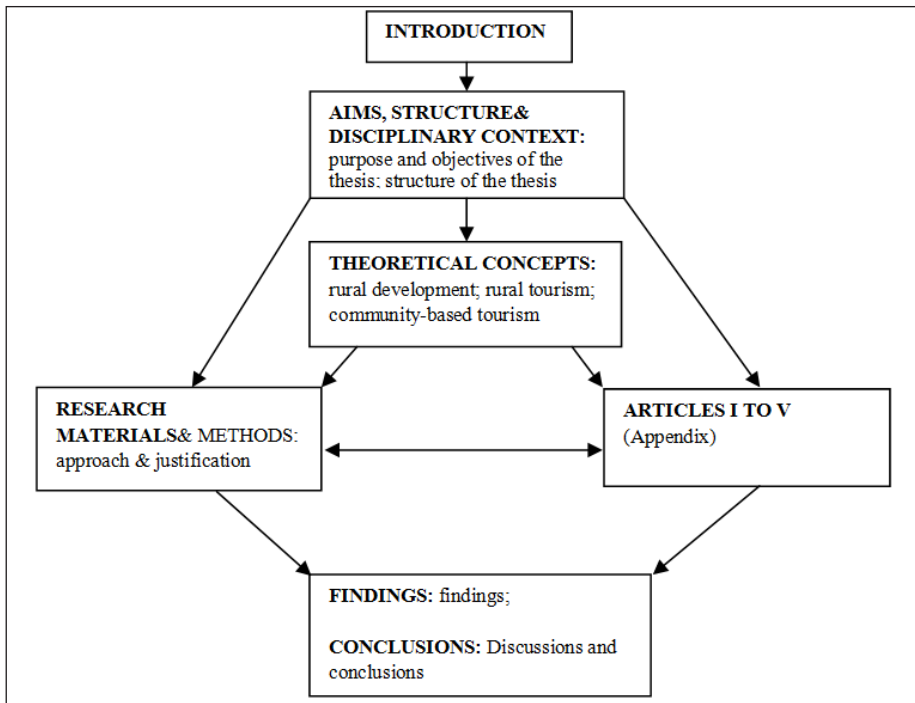

Figure 1. Structure of the thesis.

This thesis is based on four independent but interrelated research articles (Table 1). *Article I* (Lenao 2014a) deals with the nature and outcome of community mobilization process in the development of community-based rural tourism in Botswana. *Article II* (Lenao, Mbaiwa & Saarinen 2014), carries the discussion concerning outcome of mobilization further by discussing community expectations among the community of Mmatshumu village in the wake of rural tourism development in their area. *Article III* (Lenao 2014b) highlights the importance of power in the relationship between community and the state in the development process of Lekhubu Island project. Finally, *Article IV* (Lenao 2013) profiles the challenges militating against development of community-based

Table 1. Summary of articles.

Article	Title	Methods	Main findings	Reference
I	Packaging culture and heritage for tourism to improve rural lives at Lekhubu Island Botswana	Focus Group Discussions; In-depth interviews; key informant interviews; informal interviews & document analysis	- Mobilization succeeded in creating support for the project among community members. - Mobilization did not create adequate awareness among members of the community. - Use of *kgotla* system for consultation limited potential for widespread participation by community members. - Provision of biased information to the community rendered them poorly prepared for tourism development.	Lenao (2014a)
II	Community expectations from rural tourism development at Lekhubu Island, Botswana	Focus Group Discussions; In-depth interviews; key informant interviews; informal interviews & document analysis	- Community demonstrated very high expectations that the development of tourism in Lekhubu would bring positive impacts to their area. - In general, very little, if any trade-offs were expected by the community from development of tourism in Lekhubu.	Lenao, Mbaiwa & Saarinen (2014)
III	Community, the state and power relations in community-based tourism: local perspectives on Lekhubu Island tourism development, Botswana	Focus Group Discussions; In-depth interviews; key informant interviews; informal interviews & document analysis	- Access to information and policy dispensation form the basis for power. - The state yields the highest power in the development process of tourism at Lekhubu. - The community Trust has become the de facto repository of the limited power devolved to the community. - General community membership feel powerless, with their power only limited to voting the Trust into office.	Lenao (2014b)
IV	Challenges facing community-based cultural tourism development at Lekhubu Island, Botswana: a comparative analysis	Focus Group Discussions; In-depth interviews; key informant interviews; informal interviews & document analysis	- Lekhubu rural tourism project has limited capacity to generate income and job opportunities. - The community trust and the TAC lack the requisite capacity to turn around the fortunes of the project. - Lekhubu Island also suffers from the challenge of poor accessibility.	Lenao (2013)

culture and heritage tourism in Botswana emphasizing the importance of both general and place specific examples. Table 1 summarizes these articles.

2.3 Tourism geography and community-based tourism development in rural areas

Literature alludes to various challenges related to the understanding of tourism as both an 'industry' and a 'subject of study' (Shaw & Williams 1994; Butler 2004; Babu, Mishra & Parida 2008; Lew, Hall & Timothy 2008). As an industry, Hall (2005a) notes some apparent inadequacies found in existing attempts to define and/or conceptualize tourism such as development of Tourism Satellites Accounts (TSAs) (see also Aramberri, 2009). For instance, he observes that while the TSA idea is a noble initiative, it falls short in trying to capture the "interwoven" nature of tourism's processes of "production and consumption" (Hall 2005a: 129). Babu *et al.* (2008: 43) give this conceptual challenge a further credence by noting the various identities it has been given over time including "tourism industry", "travel industry", "hospitality industry", "visitor industry" as well as "travel and tourism industry". In addition, Williams underlines that rather than taking the form of a conventional industry (e.g. involved with production of a specific product and/or service), tourism "is really a collection of industries which experience varying levels of dependence upon visitors, a dependence that alters through both space and time" (1998: 6).

Williams (1998) and Saarinen (2001) observe that the multiplicity of disciplines involved in the study of tourism partly clouds the conceptual boundaries of tourism as a field of study. Importantly, Williams (1998) notes that tourism as a research subject has not achieved a unified theoretical underpinning by way of synthesizing the different perspectives through which it has been studied and analyzed (see also Manwa, Chipfuva & Mahachi 2011). Nonetheless, Coles & Hall (2006) advice that the apparent interest on tourism studies evident in multiple disciplines needs to be embraced in what they call intelligent collaboration. In essence, these authors acknowledge the potential scholarly benefits that may be realized through intellectual cross fertilization that come with inter-disciplinary study of tourism.

However, barring all these difficulties and challenges, the UNWTO prefers to define tourism as encompassing all travels that involves at least one night stay, but less than one year away from home. Beyond this, many other definitions have been proffered with a common characteristic reference to time, place, space and environment bound trips by humans (Mathieson & Wall 1982; Hudman & Jackson 1999), making it a relevant area of study for geographers. Furthermore, tourism development is often accompanied by impacts on the socio-cultural, economic and natural environments (Mathieson & Wall 1982). Therefore, given the historical interest of geography on issues relating to

space, place, environment and mobility, all of which are elements often emphasized in the definition of tourism, it may be argued that these constitute part of the critical interface between tourism studies and geography. As Lew *et al.* (2008: 1) observe, "the fact that tourism involves travel from one place to another, and occur in places that are often shaped intentionally by the tourism industry, also make it very geographical". It is, therefore, not surprising that to date geographers have contributed considerably to the area of tourism studies.

Geographers' interest in the study of tourism spurns a very lengthy period of time, dating as far back as the 1930s (Hall & Page 2006). The earliest known works in this area were undertaken in North America followed by Europe (Butler 2004). Those early geographical studies with a bearing on tourism have among others dealt with issues in resources and park planning, including the formulation of the idea of carrying capacity (Lucas 1985). While for some time the study of tourism was accorded marginal interest and seriousness among geographers (Saarinen 2001; Gibson 2008), there has been a proliferation of works on tourism by more and more geographers in the last few decades (Butler 2004; Gibson 2008). From the 1960s and 1970s, the study of tourism gradually emerged as a sub-field of geography. According to Hall (2013: 610), themes such as place, space, landscape and environment are important in making tourism a significant area of study by geographers. Most importantly, though, he argues that "…it is also significant with respect to its exceptionalism — the growth in international tourism mobility and its implications — as well as its mundanity, the fact that it is now such a part of the everyday, at least in consumer societies and destinations".

This thesis is situated within the sub-field of tourism geography owing to its focus on community-based tourism (CBT) in the form of community-based natural resources management (CBNRM). However, this is not to claim in any way a strict relevance to tourism geography (or geographies) at the exclusion of all other sub-disciplines of human geography. It is apt to appreciate that the different themes and concepts used in this thesis make it partly amenable to a wide range of other human geography sub-fields. For instance, political geographers have a lengthy history of interest in the concept power, having analyzed it from different angles and perspectives over time (Allen 2008). Power has also been studied by geographers using humanistic, regional and poststructuralist lenses (Johnston & Sidaway 2004). At the same time this thesis also lends itself, in part, to the sub-field of rural geography with its concern on rural development.

Furthermore, by having a special interest in cultural and heritage tourism, this thesis would be of interest to cultural geographers (Hudman & Jackson 1999) among others. This further brings into perspective the issue of interpretation which is both a way of attributing meaning to aspects of culture and heritage as well as conveying meanings about such aspects. Lew *et al.* (2008:21) assert that "how places are interpreted in…many different ways influences people's perceptions and experiences of places and environments. Interpretation serves as a key variable in creating satisfactory visitor experiences, though

many places are subject to different and conflicting interpretations that represent divergent views within a society. Interpretation is also related to the concept of *sense of place* and how people interpret place experiences" (see also Relf 2001; Tuan 1979).

That said, this thesis is mainly contextualized to tourism geography(ies) through its connections and overarching theme of CBNRM. CBNRM aims (in principle) to achieve the dual objectives of resources (e.g. natural or manmade) conservation and community benefit through tourism development, particularly in the rural areas (Mbaiwa & Stronza 2010). In principle, local communities are not only expected to benefit from tourism development, but also to participate in this development process and management of the resources on which it is based (Mbaiwa & Stronza 2011). This participation in resources management and tourism development, almost inevitably, predisposes the local communities to encounters (Gibson 2010) with 'other' actors involved in the processes.

On the one hand these encounters may take the form of 'host-guest' relations (Saarinen 2006; Saarinen & Manwa 2008) between the local communities (as hosts) and tourists (as guest). Tourism geography literature points to the fact that local community-tourist encounters are not usually neutral and balanced. They may be as imbued with issues of power relations as they may be either ethical or unethical (Gibson 2010; Saarinen & Niskala 2009), or they may bring to the fore the disparities between tourist demands and local community capacity and awareness levels (Müller & Petterson 2001). On the other hand they may take the form of multi-stakeholder relations (Moswete 2009) where local communities have to deal with government, NGOs, business and indeed tourists in both the resources management and tourism development process (van der Duim 2010).

In the end, there is a general consensus that tourism development would inevitably affect local communities in some way (Butler, Hall & Jenkins 1998). Subsequently, researchers agree that efforts should be made to ensure that it contributes positively to the lives of the local communities (Diagne 2004; Mitchell & Ashley 2010; Holden 2013) especially in the rural areas. Hall & Jenkins (1998: 21) assert that these "rural areas are economically, physically, socially and politically diverse, and suffer from various interpretations and a lack of integrated planning and policy making". On the other hand Telfer & Sharpley (2008: 111) insist that "the greater the development project is linked to the local economy through purchasing of products locally, hiring local people, using local services, involving area citizens in the planning process, and reinvesting in the area through infrastructure, the greater the benefit".

While Scheyvens (2002b) reminds us of the difficulties that come with involving local communities (see also Tosun 2000; 2005), the idea of integration between tourism and rural development has become so important to studies of tourism in geography that in 2007 a special edition of Tourism Geographies journal was dedicated to discussing it (see Saxena, Clark, Oliver & Ilbery 2007; Ilbery, Saxena & Kneafsey 2007; Clark & Chabrel 2007; Cawley, Marsat & Gillmor 2007). In explaining the fluidity of meaning attributable to the term integration, Saxena *et al.* (2007: 350-351) list a number of definitions including those of; spatial, human resource, institutional, innovative, economic, social, policy,

temporal and community integration. Essentially, while integration may be understood from different angles, the common thread that points to the need to account for interests of the local population seems constant. For their part, Saarinen and Lenao (2014) advise that to increase the chances of achieving success in integrating tourism into the rural development process in developing countries, it is necessary to use the existing structures such as CBNRM as a starting point. However, taking this path should be approached with caution given the inherent inadequacies of these existing local structures and institutions in terms of inclusiveness and accountability.

3 Tourism for rural development

3.1 Rural development through tourism

Rural Development is a concept derived from the broader term 'development'. Development has been defined as a drive towards attaining a complex myriad of welfare goals such as poverty alleviation, reduction of unemployment and minimizing inequalities (Long 1977). For his part, Stuart (1994) conceived of development as a process of change and growth in societies which usually entails improvements in people's lives so that they become better, happier and freer. Furthermore, development is seen as capturing changes in awareness, motivation and behavior of individuals as well as inter and intra group relations (Burkey 1993). Wilberg (1999) extents this to note that, development can be summed up as a function of people's needs, identification of such needs, and a search for solutions to such needs as well as sound judgment of impacts on the people and environment of actions taken.

Perhaps by far, one of the most comprehensive definitions of development may be found among different works by Michael Todaro (1984; 2000). According to Todaro (1984), we should understand development as that process whose primary focus is to improve various aspects of human life, with special reference to the three spheres namely; i) raising people's living levels, which means improving their incomes and consumption levels of among others, food, medical services and education; ii) creating conditions that support growth of people's self-esteem through ensuring social, political and economic systems and institutions that promote human dignity and respect; and iii) increasing people's freedom of choice by way of extending the range of their choice variables or variety of goods and services.

Recently, Todaro (2000: 15) has acknowledged evidence of a positive paradigm shift in the World Bank's conceptualization of development. He posits that, unlike during the 1980s where the World Bank thought of development as merely a function of economic growth, this institution has finally come to accept in their 1991 World Development Report that; "the challenge of development…is to improve the quality of life. Especially in the world's poor countries, a better quality of life generally calls for higher incomes- but it involves much more. It encompasses as ends in themselves better education, higher standards of health and nutrition, less poverty, a cleaner environment, more quality of opportunity, greater individual freedom and a richer cultural life" (Todaro 2000: 15). In essence, development mainly involves a process that brings about a positive change in human socio-cultural, economic, political and natural environments. In short, development generally implies positive and desirable change in the lives of the people.

This wide and overarching conceptualization of development was accepted and given prominence by about 147 state leaders from around the globe during the United Nations world summit in 2000 (Easterly 2009). During this gathering, these leaders unanimously

adopted the Millennium Declaration committing them to a set of developmental goals and objectives to be met by 2015 (Clemens, Kenny & Moss 2007). The seven objectives also known as Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) encapsulate a wide spectrum of ideals and targets deemed critical as milestones for broad-based development including poverty alleviation (Sahn & Stifel 2003). Worthy of note is the emphasis that has been given to use of tourism as one of the vehicles through which the poverty reduction goal could be achieved (Saarinen & Rogerson 2014). With a considerable fraction of the world's poor resident in rural areas, where other livelihood options are either inadequate or failing, tourism has been suggested as a tool to develop rural communities (Saarinen & Manwa 2008; United Nations 1997). This effectively makes tourism development a part of rural development.

Rural development is a multi-dimensional concept that primarily connotes a phenomenon of positive change taking place in the rural areas (Singh 1999). Poostchi (1986) imagined rural development as an endless process with the primary object of striking an overall balance in wellbeing of rural persons. To this end, it is acknowledged that the nature and success of this process is a function of conditions that obtain in a specific rural locality. Obviously, this process takes place within a certain political landscape with the ultimate goal of eradicating poverty through attacking existing power structures and rural areas' social transformation (Bengtsson 1979; cited in Burkey 1993). Put differently, "as a phenomenon rural development is the end result of interactions between various physical, technological, economic and socio-cultural and institutional factors" (Singh 1999: 20). According to Singh (1999), rural development may also be used to mean a strategy. In this case it implies a tool designed to drive positive change in rural areas. It is a designated mechanism designed to enable human occupants of rural spaces to realize improved conditions of life in all spheres such as socio-cultural, economic, political and physical. In the wake of this litany of definitions, rural development is herein understood as "a process leading to sustainable improvement in the quality of life of the rural people, especially the poor" (Singh 1999: 21). Emphasis on the poor is often necessitated by the acknowledgement that the poor usually require deliberate efforts aimed at addressing their unique needs. However, rural development should not only be understood with a narrow focus on the poor. It encompasses a wider spectrum of issues in the rural areas than just addressing the needs of the poor.

It has been argued that tourism may be used as a tool to drive development in various regions including rural ones (Saarinen & Rogerson 2014; Awang, Hassan & Zahari 2009; Simpson 2008; Sharpley 2002; Sharpley & Sharpley 1997; United Nations 1997; Lane 1994). Telfer & Sharpley (2008) note that, among the many benefits commonly associated with tourism are that; it is a remarkable growth industry; it is an effective means of wealth re-distribution; it has the capacity through backward linkages to promote development and growth of other sectors of the economy; it makes use of existing and free infrastructure in the form of natural and man-made resources and; it generally enjoys freedom from trade barriers in many places (see Telfer & Sharpley 2008). Therefore, given then different

perceived or real areas of convergence between tourism development and (rural) development objectives, tourism is usually a very attractive tool for rural development especially in those developing countries located in the Global South (Samimi, Sadeghi & Sadeghi 2011; Scheyvens 2002a).

According to the UNWTO (2013:16) "the impact of tourism as a driver of development has been felt in many countries. For example, in recent years tourism was a main factor in the graduation of Botswana, the Maldives and Cape Verde from their status of LDC". Inevitably, therefore, tourism development continues to garner massive support and advocacy from leading institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Travel and Tourism Council, World Tourism Organization, the European Union, and the European Commission (Hawkins 2007; WTTC 2012, 2014; Jansen 2013; UNWTO 2013). A number of these institutions and bodies periodically commission studies and consistently compile statistics that provide foolproof justification for the need to promote tourism development, especially in developing countries (see Aramberri 2009). The UNWTO notes that tourism accounts for more than half of all export services from the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) around the World. The UNWTO further recognizes the significant contribution of tourism to the economies of these developing countries relative to the amount of aid they receive. It is observed that, "in 2012, international tourists spent US$386 billion in emerging markets and developing countries, over five times the level of official development assistance which goes to these countries. It is one of their main sources of foreign exchange earnings" (UNWTO 2013: 16). Importantly, tourism has emerged as one of the few viable industries with the potential to prop-up and sustain economies of many small island states (UNWTO 2012; McElroy 2003)

The continued advocacy for tourism development recognizes the importance of developing those forms of tourism suited for the rural and peripheral areas of the developing countries with an inbuilt specific aim to help the poor (Mitchell & Ashley 2010). These peripheral areas are often fragile and home to the highest population of the poor (Holden 2013). As it may be noted, poverty in the developing world is predominantly 'rural' (Ashley & Maxwell 2001). Furthermore, these rural areas are often endowed with a variety of resources on which the rural communities rely for their subsistence (Akunaay, *et al.* 2003). Admittedly, therefore, development of tourism in the peripheral areas of the developing world has an obligation to address the core objectives of uplifting rural livelihoods and resources conservation (Twyman 2000; Thakadu 2005; Arntzen 2006; van der Duim 2010). This has often meant the development of various forms of 'new' tourism, which are commonly subsumed under the umbrella term 'alternative tourism' (Weaver 1995). Scheyvens (2002b:11) lists, among others "ecotourism, responsible tourism, green tourism, cultural tourism, soft tourism, ethnic tourism, alternative tourism and sustainable tourism". Alternative tourism forms are generally believed to be sensitive to the environment in its totality (e.g. socio-cultural, economic, political and physical) making them similar in orientation to sustainable tourism development (Saarinen 2007, 2009).

One of the types of tourism development generally assumed to meet the above requirements of sustainability is rural tourism (Sharpley 2002). Rural tourism has presented considerable definitional challenges to scholars, researchers and practitioners alike (Lane 1994; OECD 1994; Page & Getz 1997; Marsden 1999; Hall, Müller & Saarinen 2009). Subsequently, rural tourism has evolved to connote a complex array of heterogeneous product mix (i.e. involving different types of activities of varying degrees, strengths and intensities) taking place in rural areas (Lenao, Mbaiwa & Saarinen 2014; see also Oppermann 1996). In keeping with this multiplicity of conceptual definitions, rural tourism development in the developing world has taken different forms and shapes across various countries (Viljoen & Tlabela 2006). For instance, Liu (2006) observes that, the type of rural tourism taking place in the Kedah region of rural Malaysia represents a clear departure from the commonly accepted form of rural tourism elsewhere.

Liu identifies three cases, namely; resort-based development, rural tourism core planning and home-stay programs; all of which have to do with integration of either the locals or the local environment, which are widely accepted aspects of rural tourism development elsewhere. These different cases have achieved different levels of success in delivering benefits to the local communities. In the southern Anhui Province of China, Ying & Zhou (2007) report on local community approach where residents of Xidi village have established and own a corporation 'Xidi Tourism Services' through which they coordinate and consolidate the tourism affairs of their own village for the communal benefit of all villagers. It is noted that in the adjacent village of Hongcun, a similar 'community-based' approach has been adopted with the difference being that here there is an externally owned corporation that dominates the tourism affairs of the village. These scholars note differential benefit outcomes from the two versions of the community tourism model (Ying & Zhou 2007).

Amidst this plethora of forms and characteristics of rural tourism across different regions and localities of the world, Hall and Jenkins have attempted to outline some common objectives for which any form of rural tourism, regardless of shape and nature, should aim. They assert that, rural tourism has an obligation to; (1) sustain and create local incomes, employment and growth,(2) contribute to the cost of providing economic and social infrastructure,(3) encourage the development of other sectors (e.g. through local purchasing links), (4) contribute to local resident amenities and services, and (5) contribute to the conservation of environmental and cultural resources (Hall & Jenkins 1998: 28–29). While these objectives conceptually mirror those of rural development and, therefore, exemplify the relevance of tourism development as a tool to drive rural development, other researchers have cautioned of the complex relationship between tourism and development (Scheyvens 2002b) as well as between tourism and conservation (van der Duim, 2010).

Scheyvens (2002b) aptly characterizes the relationship between tourism and development as, at least, contentious. For instance, according to Mitchell & Ashley (2010), in many parts of Africa continued impressive rates of growth in tourism have

not always been accompanied by a commensurate positive impact on local livelihoods and poverty. Hence, Holden (2013) reiterates Mowforth & Munt's call from the 1990s that in order to fully comprehend the contribution of tourism to the development agenda, the tourism industry needs to be politicized. According to Holden (2013: 58), "the issue of how tourism is developed and how it is used to provide opportunities to the poor and enhance their social well-being is subsequently a political one as much as it is economic". Understandably Binns & Nel (2002: 244) found that while market led tourism development has brought a number of positives to the South African township of Still Bay, "it is, however, difficult to avoid reaching the conclusion that the poorest elements of the community in reality do not truly own or have much control over the development process". This is a telling conclusion given the often noted relationship between control over the development process and the realization of benefits. Against this backdrop, Ashley & Haysom (2006) argue that the drive towards making tourism benefit the poor will ultimately entail a different way of doing business. This is a call to change mainstream thinking and the business as usual mentality among key figures in the tourism industry and it definitely cannot be seen as a small task.

Mitchell & Ashley (2010) go a step further in problematizing the idea of using tourism to achieve the objective of poverty alleviation among the rural poor. They argue that, rather than being overly concerned about the type of tourism developing in an area, perhaps emphasis should be directed to appreciating the policy context as well as the size of tourism development. As they put it, "just because a tourism segment is based on culture or wildlife does not mean it is pro-poor. And just because it is built around business tourism or large scale leisure resorts does not mean it is not pro-poor". They claim that "in fact it is the combination of size and linkage strength which is important" (Mitchell & Ashley, 2010: 134). It is imperative to note here that, Mitchell & Ashley make reference to a specific (pro-poor) type of tourism development. However, this dissertation acknowledges that while the rural poor are important to the objectives of tourism development in the rural development process, rural tourism development does not necessarily have to be pro-poor, *per se*, in order to be successful. In other words, the process should always benefit the poor somehow, but it may also encompass objectives to benefit other members of the community who do not necessarily fit the definition of 'poor'.

When analyzing the objectives of the Finnish rural tourism strategy, Saarinen (2007) identifies a number of inherent conceptual and practical challenges. Among others, Saarinen (2007) comments on the challenge of setting up rural tourism objectives and making future projections on the bases of what obtains with international tourism. He posits that the tourism industry is generally polarized in nature, thus acknowledging that international tourism development and growth trends may not always be realized within specific local (rural) contexts. He further laments what he calls 'internationalization of visitor flows' wherein, tourist related economic development is focused on major 'tourists destinations, resorts and cities' with no deliberate efforts made to create and

concretize linkages with peripheral areas and communities a point he also acknowledges to exist in some developing countries (Saarinen 2007: 100). Moreover, Saarinen raises concern that sometimes instead of aligning the objectives of tourism development to meet the goals of rural and community development in planning, interest of the industry take precedence leading to what has been termed 'tourism first' scenario. In the wake of the numerous challenges related to the use of tourism as a tool to drive rural and community development, the need to properly integrate tourism development into the rural development process is brought to the fore (Saarinen 2007; Saarinen & Lenao 2014).

It is worth noting that while most of the literature from the western world alludes to the fact that rural tourism developed as a response to agricultural restructuring, declining rural industrialization and out migration (Iorio & Corsale 2010; Unwin 1997; Pompl & Lavery 1993; Wickens 1999), development of rural tourism in sub-Sahara Africa, including Botswana, has been fueled by a host of factors. These include, *inter alia*, the need to; enhance tourism's contribution to rural development, improved local employment creation and address rural poverty (Viljoen & Tlabela 2006; Briedenhann & Wickens 2004; Bourgouin 2002); address rural communities' increasing hostilies towards conservation through community involvement and benefit sharing (Mbaiwa & Stronza 2011; Mbaiwa 2008; Arntzen 2006; Rozemeijer *et al.* 2001) as well as increasing overall destination tourism earnings and spreading the benefits to the rural communities (Rid, Ezeuduji & Pröbstl-Haider 2014).

In addition, rural areas in the sub-Sahara have endued failing rural industries, a condition which has given impetus to the need to find new sectors through which such rural economies could be diversified (Viljoen & Tlabela 2006). However, while the factors that gave rise to the development of rural tourism in sub-Saharan Africa and the West may not be completely identical, some commonalities may be found regarding such issues as marginality, accessibility and the need to diversify rural economies in order to sustain livelihoods of rural populations (Viljoen & Tlabela 2006; Canoves, Villarino, Priestley & Blanco 2004; Mbaiwa 2004a, 2010; Page & Getz 1997). Therefore, the available literature from either contexts provide fruitful insights into the concept of rural tourism development in general.

3.2 Community-based tourism (CBT) and rural development

The community-based approach, to which Ying & Zhou (2007) make reference, has also been observed in many sub-Sahara African countries located mainly in the Eastern (Manyara & Jones 2007; Nelson & Agrawal; Salazar 2012) and Southern (Novelli & Gebhardt 2007; Balint & Mashinya 2008; Lapeyre 2010) regions of the sub-continent. It may be acknowledged that the tendency to adopt a 'communal approach' (Ying & Zhou 2007: 102) in development of rural tourism in the developing world is not accidental. There has been widespread recognition of the importance of community participation

(Mowforth & Munt 1998; Tosun 2000, 2005; Hiwasaki 2006) and involvement (Timothy 1999) in tourism development in order to ensure benefits. Rural societies of developing countries traditionally live a "communal" type of lifestyle.

Therefore, communality represents an important social structure that may not be ignored in attempts to involve these communities in tourism development within their locales. The locals ought to be involved as a 'community'. However, community, like rural tourism, presents both conceptual and practical challenges to deal with. Amongst a host of other definitions, community has been defined as "a mutually supportive, geographically specific, unit such as a village or tribe where people identify themselves as community members and where there is usually some form of communal decision-making" (Mann 2000: 18). This notion is, however, not without its own challenges. Salazar (2012) has noted that the concept of 'community' can present a highly contested debate when applied to tourism, rural development and involvement of local residents, owing to its vague meaning. For example, the concept has been criticized for its presumed assumption that communities are homogeneous entities with clear delineations and with in-built ability to reach consensus (Smit 1990).

However, it has been argued that communities can represent very complex and heterogeneous structures wrought with deep rooted issues of conflict, power and power relations (Reed 1997). Taylor (1995) also notes that communities in developing countries may have different lenses through which they view the boundaries of their own sense of community. Botswana's CBNRM Policy, for instance, states that;

"community is a group of people bound together by social and economic relations based on shared interests. For the purpose of this policy, a community may consist of a diverse group of people, living in one or more settlements, with varied socio-economic interests and capabilities sharing an interest in the management and sustainable use of natural resources in their common area." (Government of Botswana, 2007a: ii).

Similarly, Rozemeijer *et al.* (2001: 14) describe community-based tourism in Botswana as denoting;

"tourism initiatives that are owned by one or more defined communities, or run as joint venture partnerships with the private sector with equitable community participation, as a means of using the natural resources in a sustainable manner to improve their standard of living in an economically viable way." (Rozemeijer et al., 2001: 14).

Some obvious but key observations beg to be outlined about the above definitions. First, is the acknowledgement that Botswana's official CBNRM Policy was only published in 2007, while implementation of CBNRM projects dates back to the late 1980s and early 1990s. Therefore, while the wording of the CBNRM policy refers to 'shared interests',

existing initiatives were started and implemented on consideration of geography more than anything else. In other words, communities were defined primarily on the bases of geographical considerations. In fact, any alternative preferred alliances (e.g. on the bases of ethnicity) were rejected (see Mbaiwa 2005b). The same official stance remains to date. Second, the type of 'shared interests' emphasized in the CBNRM policy concern the conservation goal. Other interests such as social, economic or otherwise are relegated to secondary importance. Stone & Nyaupane (2013) have argued for prioritization of interests and relations in the formation CBNRM initiatives. It has been argued that definitions of community cannot afford to ignore several key issues characteristic of these 'communities' such as ethnicity, population size, interests, cultural differences, power, educational and financial resources endowment levels and so on, that ultimately have a considerable bearing on issues of control and benefit sharing modalities (Stone & Nyaupane 2013; Stone & Stone 2011).

All the above challenges are necessary to consider in the definition of community, for planning and implementation of community-based rural tourism initiatives. Such consideration would enhance the ability of these tourism initiatives to achieve their set objectives in accordance with the principles of rural development. While acknowledging the importance of the foregoing argument, this research elected to adopt the approach commonly used to define community in Botswana, wherein geography constitutes primary denominator. For purposes of this research, therefore, community constitutes all residents of Mmatshumu village irrespective of ethnicity or status. This decision is based on the fact that this is how the community was defined for purposes of setting up Lekhubu Island initiative and many other examples cited from Botswana. Therefore, this allows for analysis of the issues pertinent to the research objectives within the relevant established context. However, this use of community as 'something locational' does not preclude the acknowledgement of 'heterogeneity' that exists within communities on the bases of other criteria such as education level, ethnicity, resources endowment, gender and age (Mowforth & Munt 1998).

3.3 Community-based tourism, rural development and the ideal of diversification in Botswana

According to Rozemeijer *et al.* (2001), community-based tourism (CBT) has been identified as a means through which Botswana's rural communities could be involved in the dual objectives of natural resources management and tourism development. To this end, the community-based natural resources management (CBNRM) framework was adopted (Centre for Applied Research 2007). It has been observed that when Botswana adopted the CBNRM approach, the primary objective was to advance interests of wildlife conservation (Phuthego & Chanda 2004; Thakadu 2005). It is apt to point out here that, without a specific policy at its inception in the early 1990s, CBNRM in Botswana was facilitated

through existing natural resource related policies mainly the Wildlife Conservation Policy of 1986 (Government of Botswana 1986) and Tribal Land Act of 1968. Even the mandate of program coordination and implementation was given to the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (Arntzen 2006). The objective of tourism development to improve and diversify rural livelihoods was only conceived as a secondary outcome (Arntzen, Setlhogile & Barnes 2007). Inevitably, therefore, most of the earliest CBNRM initiatives in Botswana were wildlife-based and concentrated in the wildlife-rich regions of the north and northwest.

However, the recognition that these initiatives had a potential to contribute considerably to improvement of rural livelihoods and advancement of rural development ideals has encouraged a shift in focus to include other forms of resources (other than wildlife) as a basis for CBT development (Cassidy 2001; Zuze 2009). This facilitated a proliferation of such initiatives in other parts of the country (e.g. central, south-central and the western part) where rural poverty abounds (Moswete *et al.* 2009; Zuze 2009). As in many other developing countries, the development of rural tourism in Botswana has followed a community-based approach (Ying & Zhou 2007) in spite of the numerous documented challenges that come with it (see Salazar 2012; Stone & Nyaupane 2013).

Perhaps, it would be beneficial at this juncture to briefly explain the choice and use of CBT in this work. From the preceding paragraphs it is apparent that CBNRM development in Botswana shares similar planning roots with ecotourism because of its initial concern for protected area management and conservation (Honey 2008). In the same breadth, CBNRMs underlining principle and approach of 'community-based' conservation and development lends it neatly to the definition of CBT (Hamzah & Khalifah 2009; Hiwasaki 2006). In fact, different researchers have used either community-based ecotourism (Moswete 2009) or CBT (Sebele 2010; Stone & Stone 2011) as CBNRM equivalents in the past. While fully recognizing this explicit connection between these concepts (i.e. ecotourism and CBNRM), the author strenuously avoids using the term ecotourism as a synonym of CBNRM in this work, electing instead to use CBT.

This decision to stick with CBT was informed by the need for consistency and conceptual relevance. For instance, while all CBNRM initiatives in Botswana may not always be truly and practically 'Eco touristic', in principle they are all community-based (Zuze 2009) which makes them amenable to the CBT definition. In relative terms, community-based ecotourism would be equally appropriate for the purpose of this work. However, the use of CBT in discussions of CBNRM in Botswana has gained considerable currency (Rozemeijer *et al.* 2001; Government of Botswana 2007a). Both policy documents and research literature in Botswana have consistently utilized the concept of CBT to describe the nature and form of CBNRM that it has come to be almost normative. Ultimately, the use of CBT is preferred in this work for the foregoing reasons in addition to its inclusive definition exemplified by the following, "CBT is a community development tool that strengthens the ability of rural communities to manage tourism resources while ensuring the local community's participation. CBT can help

the local community in generating income, diversifying the local economy, preserving culture, conserving the environment and providing educational opportunities" (Hamzah & Khalifah 2009: 4; see also Hiwasaki 2006).

Different developmental paths (or models) in the development of community-based tourism ventures have been followed in Botswana. Some projects are formed out of a single village (Mbaiwa 2011). Others are defined by 'community' of multiple (two or more) villages lumped together to form an initiative (Stone & Rogerson 2011). Furthermore, some single or multiple-village communities operate initiatives on their own, without external business/investment partners (Mbaiwa 2005b; Phuthego & Chanda 2004). Some have entered into partnerships (joint ventures) with private investors (Mbaiwa 2011). In all circumstances, the government of Botswana is involved mainly through district Technical Advisory Committees (TACs).

According to Arntzen (2006: 7), "the district Technical Advisory Committees monitor CBNRM progress in their district and advise CBOs regarding tendering, administrative and financial matters. The TAC comprises local and central government personnel, and is a subcommittee of the District Development Committee that spearheads district development". In essence, TACs constitute a structure through which government maintains presence, visibility and involvement in the running of CBNRM initiatives across the country. According to Rozemeijer *et al.* (2001: 13), the benefits related to CBT development in Botswana include the following; (1) community-managed tourism generates income and employment and, as such, contributes to rural development- a benefit that especially applies in remote areas, (2) the benefits derived from the use of natural resources will prompt the community to use these valuable resources in a sustainable way and, (3) community-based tourism adds value to the national tourism product through diversification of tourism, increasing volume, and economies of scale.

While the first two benefits listed by Rozemeijer *et al.* (2001) are almost self-explanatory, the third benefit needs to be unpacked, especially regarding the conception and understanding of 'diversification'. The concept of economic diversification has been in existence for a very long time. It, particularly, has its roots in the disciplines of economics and finance where it has been defined primarily in terms of investment in stocks (see Lintner 1965). Essentially, as Jacquemin & Berry (1979) argue, the idea of diversifying in a firm does not just emerge without cause. Often when a growing firm is faced with constraints imposed by the growth rates of its industry it is automatically driven into diversifying so as to avoid the prevailing constraints. Berry emphasizes that, the tendency is for such firms to diversify into the areas they already have some certain level of market hold. According to Montgomery and Wernerfelt (1988), a primary disincentive for firms to diversify into areas furthest from their own current specialization is that of loss of marginal rents or gains. Essentially, diversification denotes an exercise where an investor, a business, an industry or an economy makes a deliberate decision to introduce additional products to their existing line of trade with the view to spread risks, reach out to and attract a wider or new market, boost economies of scale and increase profits.

In relation to tourism development, the use of 'diversification' can be multi-pronged. First, it may connote use of tourism as a sector to diversify the economy. Here tourism is conceived as a sector with a potential to provide incentives to invest outside the existing economic sector(s). In the case of Botswana, for instance, tourism development has received support for its potential to make a considerable contribution to the national GDP and thus ease the national economy's overreliance on the mining (e.g. mining) industry (Manwa *et al.* 2011). This is relevant considering the economy at a national level. However, it is similarly instructive at a local level where tourism development may be used to provide additional economic opportunities outside the existing industries such as agriculture (see Edgell 2006)

Second, diversification may be used to explain the need to invest in new tourism products to add to the existing or main tourism product. For instance, calls have been made to develop culture and heritage tourism product in Botswana with the view to create more opportunities outside the wildlife and wilderness products which constitute the country's primary product (Moswete & Mavondo 2003). Incidentally, it has been argued that this would bring an additional incentive of increasing the geographic spread of tourism activities across the country, thus easing pressure on the traditional wildlife-rich hotspots in the north. Additionally, this would open up opportunities to more Batswana to partake in and benefit from the tourism industry's development as well as ensuring a longer tourist stay and attendant increase in tourism spending within the country's economy (see Government of Botswana 1990, 2002).

Viljoen & Tlabela (2006) posit that for developing countries the strategy of using rural tourism to diversify underdeveloped areas arise out of the insufficiency of agricultural livelihoods and the attendant need to search for new sources of income and economic opportunity. However, it is always important to understand the context within which tourism in the rural areas is presented as a diversification strategy (Mitchell & Ashley 2010). In other words, it is important to know if tourism is introduced to diversify the national economy with no specific efforts to make it benefit the local communities within which it develops; or diversification of the tourism product is meant to expand the profitability of tourism industry with local communities tagged in for populist purposes; or whether tourism diversification aims to meaningfully engage the local communities for their own benefit ahead of the interests of the wider tourism industry and national economy. While the latter objective underlines the general essence of rural tourism, it does not always receive explicit emphasis and clarity in the narrative relating to tourism and rural development in Botswana. For example, from Rozemeijer *et al*.'s (2001) earlier quote, it appears as a presumed end product of processes that aim to address interests of the national economy and the overall tourism industry.

4 Study area, research materials and methods

4.1 Geographic description of study area and tourism development

Botswana is a landlocked country located in the center of Southern Africa (Figure 2).It is bordered by Namibia to the west and northwest, Zambia to the north, Zimbabwe to the northeast and the Republic of South Africa to the east and the south (Government of Botswana 2008; Nkwae & Dumba 2010). This 580 000 square kilometer country is estimated to be roughly the size of Kenya, France or Texas (Grobbelaar & Tsotetsi 2005; Government of Botswana 2006). It lies between longitudes 20 and 30 degrees east of Greenwich and between the latitudes 18 and 27 degrees south of the Equator (Government of Botswana 2006: 7) and is transacted by the Tropic of Capricorn almost half way between the north and south. Botswana's climate has been described as semi-arid (Herremans 1998) with variable rainfalls (Kalabamu 2010) ranging from highest average of about 650mm along the eastern belt to lowest average of about 250mm to the west (Keatimilwe & Mpotokwane 2006). Arntzen (2006: 4) observes that "the semi-arid conditions limit the economic viability of many economic activities other than wildlife, tourism and livestock production".

According to Keatimilwe & Mpotokwane (2006: 1) "the average daily maximum temperature ranges from 22 °C in July to 33 °C in January, with an average daily minimum of 5 °C in July and 19 °C in January. Extreme temperatures can reach 32 °C in July and 43 °C in January, resulting in very high evaporation rates". The soils range from loamy from the east to the northeast to sandy from the northwest down along the western area. The vegetation is characterized as bush savanna with some seasonal woody species. About 17% of Botswana's entire landmass has been designated as protected areas with an additional 22% constituting wildlife management areas (WMAs) (Government of Botswana 1991; Keatimilwe & Mpotokwane 2006; Atlhopheng & Mulale 2009).

At the time of independence from Britain in 1966, Botswana was considered the second poorest country in the world after Bangladesh. However, owing to the discovery of diamonds after independence, the country has experienced considerable economic growth to attain an upper-middle income country status (United Nations 2012). The latest population census put Botswana's total at just over 2 million people (Government of Botswana 2012). With an estimated Gross Domestic Product of about $8 680 and diamonds accounting for about 60% of the government tax revenue (United Nations 2012), concerns have been raised concerning the extent to which this remarkable economic prosperity has benefited the majority of the population.

The national economy's overreliance of the capital intensive mining sector has resulted in less than 5% of overall employment output (African Development Bank
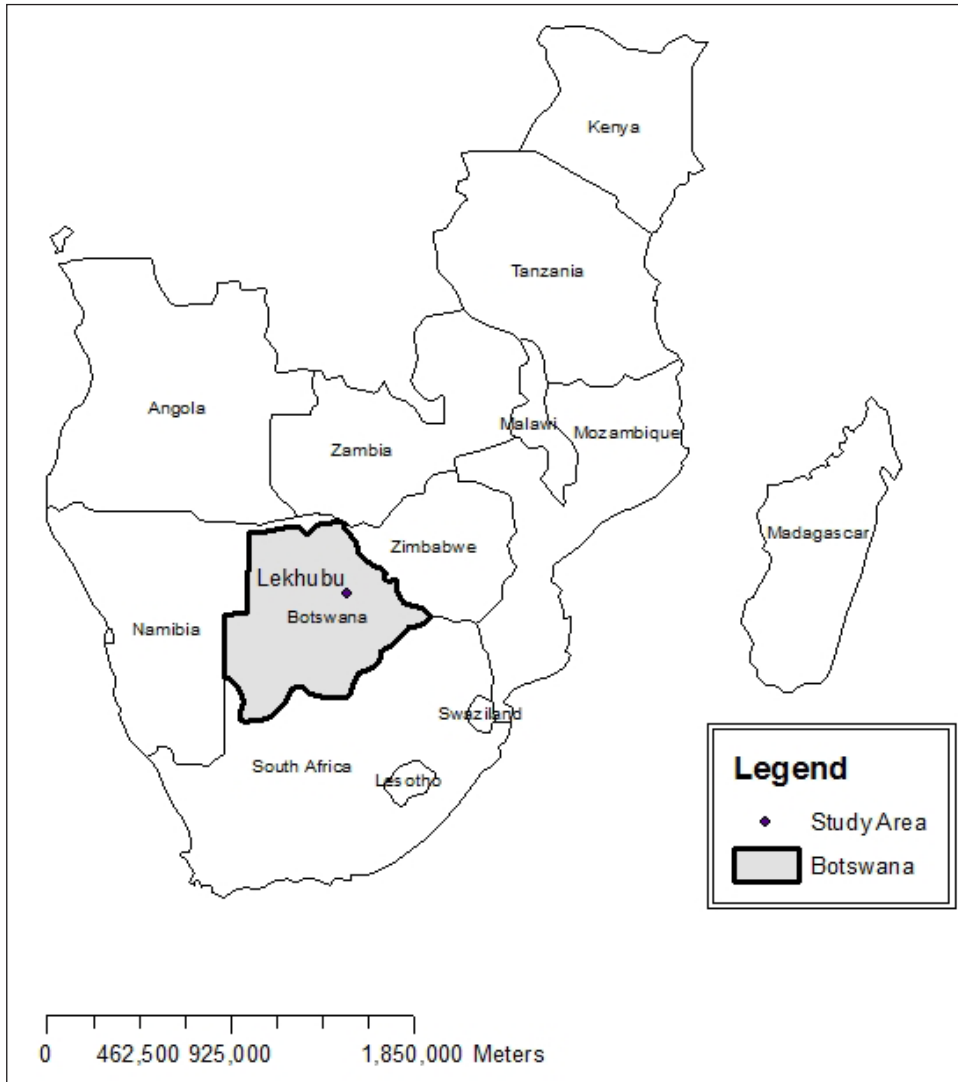
Figure 2. Location map showing Botswana in Southern Africa.

2009; Government of Botswana 2007b; BIDPA 2008) leaving a high fraction (17.5%) of the population unemployed, a considerable proportion of whom are youth (ILO and Government of Botswana 2011). Subsequently, Botswana's seemingly healthy economy is faced with a very high incidence of poverty, considered too high for an upper-middle income status economy (United Nations 2007). An estimated 30% of the country's population are poor (ILO and Government of Botswana 2011), while almost 23% lives on USD1.25/day (US Department of State 2012). Majority of this poor predominantly

reside in the rural areas and are highly dependent on natural resources found around them for their daily survival (Government of Botswana 2006; Ketshabile 2011). According to United Nations (2007: 8) "poverty rates are particularly high in the western part of the country, with rates of 46% in rural north-west and 53% in rural south-west".

Given that the causes of unemployment and poverty in Botswana are mainly structural, owing to the narrow economic base, diversification into more labor intensive sectors has become an imperative (Government of Botswana 2007b). Tourism has been identified as one such sector with a potential to act as an alternative growth engine and preferred because of its labor intensive nature (Government of Botswana 1990). However, while tourism has developed rapidly since the 1990s to become the second biggest contributor to the GDP at present, it has also experienced its own structural challenges (Mbaiwa 2005b; Moswete and Mavondo 2003; Moswete 2009) that have militated against its ability to deliver benefits to the rural communities, especially the poor. As a result, different strategies such as rural community-based tourism have been adopted in an attempt to increase and/or facilitate community involvement and benefit from the industry.

4.2 Mmatshumu village and Lekubu Island

The empirical research for this thesis was carried out in Mmatshumu, a small village of 1600 residents (Government of Botswana 2012) located within the western edge of the vast Makgadikgadi salt pans landscape (Figure 3). Mmatshumu village falls within the political administrative area of Boteti sub-district. Boteti sub-district sits at the north eastern end of the Central district, which is Botswana's largest of the 10 districts. Traditionally, the rural population of Mmatshumu has had very few other livelihood options besides agriculture, with pastoral farming a more prominent type compared to arable owing to the poor soils of the salt pans landscape (CAR & DEA 2010). Employment opportunities are generally limited (Setlhogile, Arntzen, Mabiza & Maano 2011).

Makgadikgadi salt pans landscape is a wetland system straddling the northern central and north eastern Botswana. The Makgadikgadi Framework Management Plan characterizes this system as comprised of Sua pan to the east and Ntwetwe pan to the west (CAR & DEA 2010). While the Boteti river, which is a part of the Okavango river drainage system flows into the western Ntwetwe Pan, the eastern Sua Pan receives drainage from the Nata, Mosetse, Lepashe, Mosupe and Semowane rivers. Lekhubu Island (Figure 3) is located about 45 kilometers north of Mmatshumu village within the inner Makgadikgadi pans landscape. This 60 hectare island is characterized by a rock outcrop standing on the Makgadikgadi pans landscape (Figure 4). The vegetation of Lekhubu Island is mainly baobab (*Adansonia Digitata*) and African star chestnut (*Sterculia Africana*) as well as some grass savanna with few acacia species. Access to Lekhubu requires a four wheel drive vehicle all year round. The shortest access route is the 45 kilometer stretch connecting the Island to Mmatshumu village in the south, while the longest one is 90
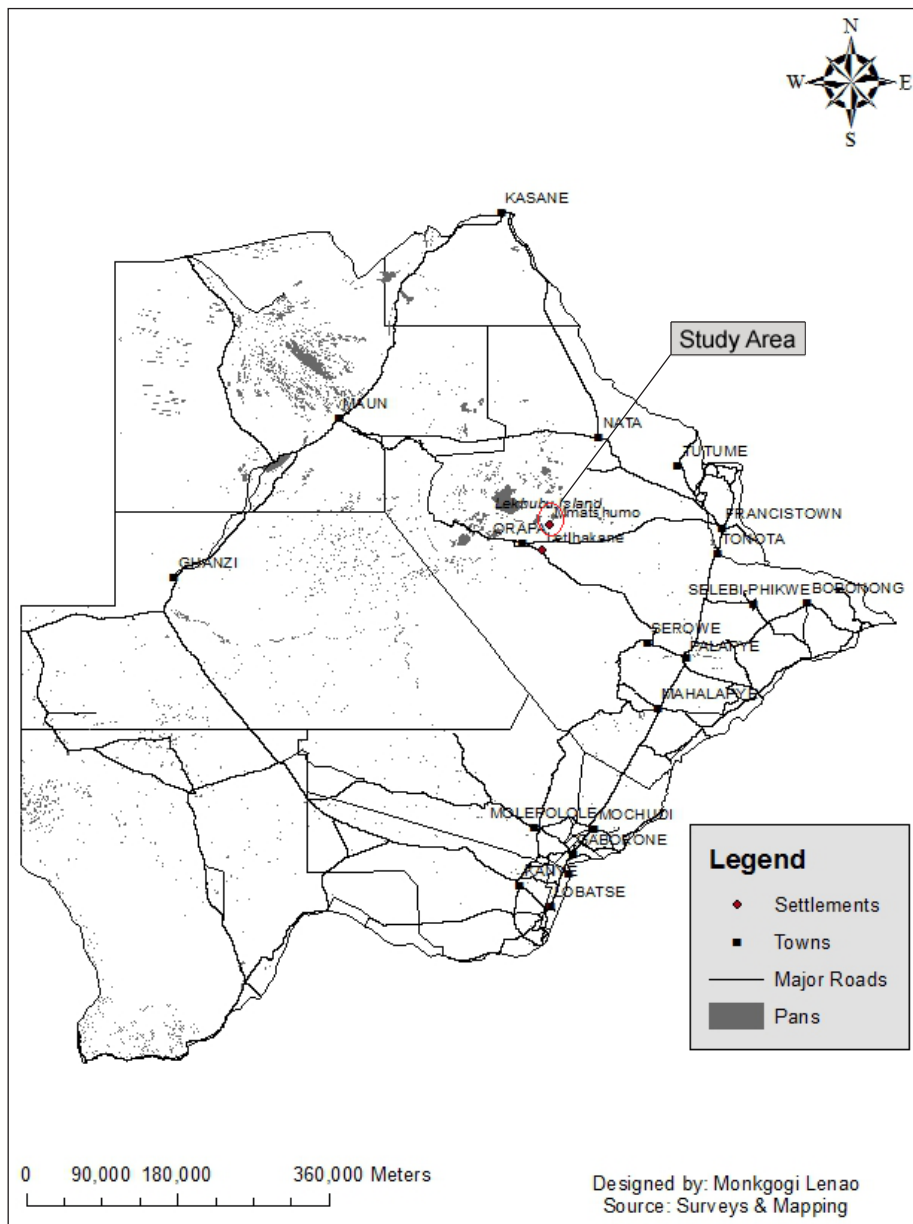
Figure 3. Location map of Botswana showing the study area, Lekhubu Island and Mmatshumu village.

Figure 4. Image showing a part of Lekhubu Island on the flat Makgadikgadi pans landscape during the dry season (photographed by the author in 2012).

kilometers long connecting the Island to the Nata-Francistown road to the north. Both routes include very long stretches through which the driver has to negotiate either sand or mud with the rainy season making the southern access route almost impassable even by the recommended 4 wheel drive vehicle.

The community of Mmatshumu village registered a Trust (Gaing'O Community Trust) in 1997 through which they operate a community-based tourism venture at Lekhubu Island. Lekhubu is one of the three community-based tourism ventures existing in the wider Makgadikgadi pans system. The other two are Nata Conservation Trust (NCT) involving communities of Nata, Manxotai, Sepako and Maposa villages (Stone & Nyaupane 2013) as well as Xhauxhwatubi Development Trust (XDT) operating in Phuduhudu village. Of the three Lekhubu is the only culture and heritage-base venture. NCT utilizes Nata Bird Sanctuary as its main photographic safari tourism product (Stone & Nyaupane 2013) while the XDT's main product has been hunting safari operated in a joint venture arrangement with a private investor (Setlhogile *et al.* 2011). In their assessment of the economic returns accruing to the three Setlhogile *et al.* (2011) found out that only the XDT which dealt in spot hunting made positive gross and net value added. This is consistent with much of the results from the Okavango Delta area showing that communities dealing in safari hunting, especially those in joint venture arrangements, usually make disproportionately larger amounts of economic returns in comparison to those engaged in photographic safari or culture and heritage-based tourism (Mbaiwa 2002, 2004a, 2004b, 2005b; Mbaiwa & Sakuze 2009)

The type of CBT development at Lekhubu Island can be termed cultural/heritage rural tourism (MacDonald & Jolliffe 2003). Among others, the community offers outdoor

camping (Setlhogile *et al.* 2011). At the time of this research new permanent ablution structures were under construction to replace the temporary ones that had been used from the start of the project. They also offer guided walks (Setlhogile *et al.* 2011) to the different heritage sites in and around the Island, including the shrine, the initiation site and the cave traditionally used for worshiping by the different communities. Sunrise and sunset walks are also offered. Moreover, Lekhubu also offers opportunities for cycling and off road motor or quad biking although these are only available to those visitors able to bring their own bikes (DEA & CAR 2010). It has also been proposed that in the future more activities such as guided walks to the migratory flamingo nesting place may be introduced emphasizing a consideration for nature-based tourism development.

Other than these, at the time of this research the Trust was in the process of putting up a reception building at the island. On completion, the reception building is envisaged to house a reception space, bar, craft shop, office and wash rooms. Lekhubu's main clientele include overland self-drive tourists mainly from neighboring Republic of South Africa as well as elsewhere in the world. Visitor reception, guided walks and interpretation at the Island are done by a group of five local guides (four males and a female) all of whom are from the local community. Of these, only one has received formal guiding training through the Department of Wildlife and National Parks. Unlike the other four, he is under the employ of the Department of National Museum and Monuments. The rest are employees of the GCT and have no formal training. They rely on experience gained on the job.

The study site was selected for a number of reasons. First, Lekhubu Island project was one of only three operational CBNRM projects in the Makgadikgadi pans area at the time of the research undertaking (i.e. the other two being Nata Conservation Trust (NCT) and Xhauxhwatubi Development Trust (XDT)). With several other locations within the Makgadikgadi landscape declared to have some considerable level of tourism potential (CAR & DEA 2010), and others already in the process of implementing CBNRM initiatives, Lekhubu Island project might well be a reasonable benchmark for other future initiatives in the area. Therefore, the lessons learnt from Lekhubu experience may be useful for future initiatives both within the Makgadikgadi area and elsewhere in the country where communities with limited prior contact with tourism may begin to implement CBNRM.

Second, Lekhubu is a non-wildlife-based CBNRM initiative. Furthermore, it sits awkwardly off the major tourist transit routes and away from the major wildlife tourist resorts in the country. This is not a completely unique situation as it mirrors other contexts in the country. The set of conditions, needs, challenges and opportunities existing for contexts similar to Lekhubu are critical for the successes and failures of CBNRM. Interestingly, however, very limited research attention has been spared for these contexts in the past with the result that very little is known on what issues determine the successes or failures of CBNRM in such areas. These reasons render the case of Lekhubu not only important for scientific reasons but also for policy related analysis.

4.3 Research materials and methods

In order to address the objectives of this thesis, the research adopted a qualitative research approach. A number of methods including seven focus group discussions (FGDs), and 17 long interviews categorized as in-depth interviews (5), key informant interviews (6), and interviews (6). Informal observations and discussions were also carried out ad hock in the village. The choice of qualitative methods (both ontologically and epistemologically) was informed by the nature of information required. This study was interested in gaining insights on issues such as relations, expectations and challenges. It was decided that these issues border heavily on perceptions and experiences and therefore would require giving the participants the chance to express or voice those views, perspectives, feelings and perceptions through discussions.

Ontologically, qualitative multiple methods approach used in the study assumes what Burrell & Morgan (2003) describe as a nominalism or subjectivism. In this research, the subjective views, opinions and perceptions of the respondents as well as other related information are used to describe and explain the interrelated subject phenomena of relations, expectations and challenges. However, this ontological stance is not adopted in its most extreme form where no social structure external to human beings is assumed to exist. Instead, this thesis leans heavily towards subtle realism (Snape & Spencer 2003). In other words, this acknowledges that at the very least, perceptions, opinions and views used by the subjects of the study to describe their reality are in turn formed and shaped within the constraints of the value structure within which they operate. For instance, the opinions and perceptions of state officials about their reality should be understood within the framework of the overall value system of the state for which they are representatives.

Closely related to the quest for subjective knowledge as posited in the preceding paragraph, the researcher does not seek to claim any absolute and objective detachment from the process of knowledge gathering. Instead, the researcher acknowledges that the knowledge sought is based on a relative social reality. It is accepted that the views, opinions and perceptions of rural tourism development have been constructed (Edly 2001) over time through interactions between the different stakeholders (members of the community, community leaders, trust board and management as well as government officials) involved in the development of the project. This process of knowledge construction continued during the interactions between the researcher and the respondents at the time of interviews and focus group discussions.

Qualitative research approaches have been successfully employed in tourism related studies dealing with public rights and rural interests in rural Spain (Paniagua & Moyano 2007); concepts and practices about integrated rural tourism in Ireland (Cawley & Gillmor 2007); factors for success in rural tourism development in Illinois (Wilson *et al.* 2001) as well as residents' attitudes towards tourism development in Uganda (Lepp 2007). One of the strengths of qualitative methods is their ability to appreciate the complexity of human attitudes and perceptions (Andriotis 2008). Therefore, the use of qualitative

methods was meant to capture the lived experiences of the local community (Truong, Hall & Garry 2014), officials and leaders about community-based tourism development at Lekhubu Island.

In addition, published and unpublished secondary material sources were used. These included books, journal articles, official reports and policy documents as well as a number of documents from Lekhubu office in Mmatshumu village. In all, seven FGDs (comprising a total of 81 participants) were carried out with members of Mmatshumu village community. All the focus groups were organized and conducted within the village. The researcher visited potential participants at their homesteads and extended the invitation to any individual fitting the set criterion at the time.

The key characteristic was that the individual should be 16 years or older at the time of the interview. In Botswana, 16 years represents the earliest legal age of majority when one qualifies to register for the compulsory National Identity Card (commonly referred to as *Omang*) which, in turn pre-qualifies them for a host of other government assisted programs and responsibilities. Some members who would not necessarily be at their own homesteads were reached out at places within the village where people commonly gather during the day. Such places included the local clinic, local *kgotla* (community gathering square serving as both a place for official village meetings and customary court), *ipelegeng* work stations (*ipelegeng* is a government poverty relief scheme involving intensive labor works such as bush and grass clearing and road maintenance), local alcohol brewing spots and so on. Others were just met while taking a walk around the village. In extending the invitation to potential participants the researcher would introduce himself and explain the purpose of the FGD gathering. A specific venue, time and date would also be communicated. Communicating all this information was important during the planning (Morgan 1988) because the different FGDs were comprised of participants with specific demographic profiles (i.e. age and gender) (Table 2).

The decision to use FGDs was informed by the type of information the study sought to collect. The study sought to understand the issues related to community-based tourism development at Lekhubu Island from the perspectives of the community that owns the same venture. The choice of gathering participants together in FGD settings was to enable a flexible and relaxed environment where rich information could be shared through interactions and exchanges with others. The researcher's experience of conducting research on various topics in Botswana using mixed methods over nine years also influenced this decision. The researcher has observed over time that communities in rural Botswana often find it easy to open up about their views and opinions in informal and small supportive group settings that FGDs provide. Different mixes of group composition were utilized to enhance the quality of information gathered. For instance, some groups were either mixed gender or mixed age or both while others where gender and age specific. Heterogeneity within groups was used to observe the shared opinions and views as well as differences. Homogeneous groups on the other hand were aimed

Table 2: Focus Group Discussion profiles.

Group	Composition	Age range	Males	Females	Total
FGDA1	Mixed gender- mixed age	17–69 yrs	8	8	16
FGDA2	Male only- youth	16–31 yrs	12	—	12
FGDA3	Female only- adult	39–57 yrs	—	12	12
FGDA4	Mixed gender- youth	17–32 yrs	8	4	12
FGDA5	Male only- adult	50–78 yrs	9	—	9
FGDA6	Male only- elderly	65–81 yrs	8	—	8
FGDB1	Female only- youth	16–35 yrs	—	12	12
Total					81

at ensuring a platform for participants to deliberate on issues freely in the presence of those sharing similar demographics.

All FGDs were conducted in *Setswana* which is both the native and national language spoken by a majority of the people in the area, although they were also at liberty to use English if they chose to. The idea was to allow the participants to be as free and relaxed as possible (Finn, Elliot-White & Walton 2000), as well as to tap on the researcher's awareness of a common trend in Botswana where many people tend to use English and Setswana quite fluidly and interchangeably. Each FGD comprised of between 8 and 16 participants (see Table 2) depending on the level of interest demonstrated by participants during the recruitment exercise. While there is no universal rule on the number of participants in a FGD (Finn *et al.* 2000) attempts were made to maintain the 'between 8 and 12 per group' norm for ease of management (Kitchin & Tate 2000; Finn *et al.* 2000). However, common courtesy prevailed in certain circumstances where a few more people turned up for a particular FGD session. No interested participant was turned back. In some instances informal discussions were arranged outside the FGDs especially where a member of the community would have turned up to participate in an FGD whose profile they did not fit and they would not have a chance to attend the relevant one.

During the FGDs the researcher used a guide comprising a list of themes to be discussed. This was important because, along with the desire to give participants freedom to articulate issues of concern to them, the researcher did not want to lose sight of the fact that the research at hand had objectives to address. As Bohnsack (2004) argues, this also ensured thematic comparability of information gathered at the end. The FGDs were also scheduled not to exceed three hours in length and that had been discussed and agreed on with the participants. In the end, the length of each FGD varied with the amount of time spent on each theme ordinarily determined by the level of interest and discussions taking place. While the facilitator made sure to keep the discussions focused on the theme at hand, participants were allowed to freely express their views on different issues related to the theme. Attempts were constantly made to encourage participants to

give each other a chance to contribute (Bohnsack 2004) and those who were reluctant to make contributions were also encouraged to do so. In most of the cases these attempts were successful. In order to keep the flow of the discussions (Bryman 2001), the facilitator used a digital voice recorder to capture the entire discussion verbatim. Short field notes were taken on the side (Bryman 2001), but they were mainly restricted to non-recordable cues and key statements or issues. These were captured in bullets to be used for, either follow up or understanding the verbatim transcript from the recorded material.

The research also utilized key informant interviews. A total of six key interviews were conducted. The key informants included; GCT manager, GCT board chairperson, GCT board secretary, GCT ordinary board member, GCT former board chairperson and Lekhubu field assistant. These individuals were selected as key informants on the basis that they were presumed to be involved in the daily operations of the project and, therefore, to possess rich knowledge of the conditions of the project. Furthermore, the researcher spent an entire weekend with Lekhubu Island resident guides at the site, during which period a series of informal interviews were conducted with them as a group and as individuals.

In addition, in-depth interviews were also arranged. The category consisted of tribal and civic/political leadership of Mmatshumu village. Here, five interviews were conducted with the incumbent village chief and area councilor, the retired village chief, village development committee (VDC) chairperson and secretary. In Botswana's CBNRM arrangement, community tribal and civic leadership are *de-facto* members of the community Trust board. They are non-elected members who sit in the board by virtue of the offices they hold in the community (Mompati & Prinsen 2000). They are expected to safeguard the interests of their constituents or subjects in the development process of CBNRM ventures. While they are not involved in the day to day operations of the projects, they sit in all the scheduled and other official Trust meetings. Therefore, it was important to get their perspective on the development process of the project.

In order to assess the capacity of the TAC and general involvement of its members in the running of Lekhubu project a total of six interviews with different members were conducted from offices including the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP), Department Forestry and Range Resources (DFRR), District Office Development (DOD), Social and Community Development S&CD), Physical Planning Division and Botswana Tourism Organization (BTO). Additionally, a former director of an NGO which participated at some point in the planning and initial mobilization process was also interviewed.

Like all types of research undertakings, this research involved a careful planning process (Morgan 1988) which entailed sending emails and making phone call contacts with potential interviewees. In the process, the researcher sent introductory letters, research permit and other useful documents to the potential interviewees. These items were sent as email attachments or fax depending on which option was convenient for the potential interviewee. In addition, the preliminary visits were made in person to their offices for

formal introduction, further explanation of the purpose of the study and setting of interview dates. This was done to establish the necessary rapport (Chirban 1996) before the actual interviews took place. Interviews were arranged to be conducted at the interviewees' respective offices to ensure their convenience and comfort during the interviews. In all instances, the researcher began each interview by repeating the self-introductions (as a researcher and PhD candidate) and explained the objectives of the study to the participants and interviewees. Interviewees' consent was also sought at all times.

This study adopted focused interview approach (Hopf 2004). In her description of focused interview, Hopf (2004) emphasizes the need to balance flexibility with semi-standardization. She further notes that "it is indeed one of the objectives of the focused interview to maximize the scope of the topics and to give interviewees an opportunity to invoke points of view that had not been anticipated" (Hopf 2004: 205). In this research, interview guides were used to ensure that all the essential themes relevant to the research objectives were covered during the interviews. Follow up questions were made to seek clarification whenever there was need. Effort was made to carry any arising follow up question from one interview to the next as a means of cross-checking the information, a point also recognized by Bryman (2001) as critical. A voice recorder was used to capture the interviews verbatim. This was deemed important to ensure that no views were missed from the interview. It also allowed the researcher to remain alert to what was being said (see Bryman 2001) as well as giving him time for a constant engagement with the interviewees throughout the interviews. In addition, the researcher maintained a small entry of short field notes during the interviews as a backup tool.

Each interview and focus group discussion recording was transcribed soon after it had ended. This enabled the researcher to literally go over the information when it was still relatively fresh in the mind. In this way, the researcher was able to note any new information that may have not been picked and followed up during the interview or FGD session with the view to either use it for probing in the subsequent FGD or follow it up with the specific interviewee in question. Such emerging questions were carried on as probing questions for subsequent FGDs and interviews. During the transcription period, the researcher also began to make initial comparisons of the transcripts in order to begin making sense of the material.

To analyze the material, a thematic approach described by Hoggart, Lees & Davies (2002) was adopted. The researcher prepared a template corresponding with the different themes in the guide. Information from the verbatim transcripts were copied and pasted onto the template. Each FGD or interview transcript was allocated a unique color code to maintain distinction of responses. This step was important in re-arranging and presenting the material in a logical manner that was easy to follow. In the end information recorded while discussing each theme were brought together to be processed. As Leininger (1985) observes, bringing together these fragments, pieces and sets of information in some sort of patterned way helps to make better sense of them than trying to understand each on their own. Aronson (1994) advises that, in thematic analysis, themes that emerge from

the stories of the informants should be carefully pieced together in order to form a comprehensive picture of their collective views. In this study, the researcher read, and re-read the re-arranged material from the template to gain a full appreciation. In addition to the initial careful arrangement of material into comprehensible thematic areas, the researcher further reduced the material into sub-themes that emerged from repeated reading of the wider themes.

With the help of relevant literature and theory, material were used in writing the different articles that eventually came together to, individually or collectively, address the specific research objectives. In writing up the articles, number codes and basic demographic descriptions were used when citing direct quotes from TAC members and FGD participants respectively. This was done to protect their identity. A similar approach was adopted in part when dealing with information from community leaders and the Trust members. However, there were instances where actual designations were used especially where direct citations in question were either deemed neutral or non-intrusive. While interviewees were assured anonymity with regards to none mentioning of names, it was also indicated to them that at instances official designations could be used in the write up in exceptional and carefully selected instances. This was particularly so with community leaders and Trust members.

5 Key findings

5.1 Community awareness and preparedness for the development of community-based rural tourism at Lekhubu Island

The primary pillar of rural tourism development is that the interests of the local communities should be placed at the centre of its planning process (Ying & Zhou 2007). Deliberate efforts should be made to ensure that local communities participate meaningfully in both the planning and implementation of tourism activities (Okazaki 2008; Hiwasaki 2006). With particular reference to the community-based approach, it is usually hoped that communities would be able to determine the nature and size of rural tourism development within their own locale (Campbell 1999). Therefore, given the inherent lack of awareness among rural communities with no prior experience with tourism development in Botswana, brokers are often central to the process of facilitating community participation. This study sought to understand; *how well the process of community mobilization and participation has managed to prepare Mmatshumu community for the development of Lekhubu Island tourism project*? This question was addressed through articles I and II.

On the one hand, the key findings here include that the process generally yielded the required buy-in (positive support) from the people of Mmatshumu village. This may be exemplified by the predominantly positive expectations among the community as outlined in article II. The local community expects the development of tourism at Lekhubu to, among others; expand and create job opportunities for the local youth; generate income to be used in starting up other businesses as well as investments in infrastructural development. On the other hand, it was found that the positive expectations expressed by the members of Mmatshumu community also point to some key weaknesses in the mobilization process undertaken. It is observed that throughout the entire process of mobilization and the initial stage of implementation at Lekhubu, the community has (and continues) to be exposed to information on the importance of tourism development and the potential benefits it holds for the community. Conversely, the community has been deprived of information concerning the potential trade-offs that they may have to make as tourism development takes root in their area.

Furthermore, the community lacked information on the context specific constraints that could militate against future growth of the project venture. Therefore, this thesis contents that the mobilization and consultation processes taking place in Mmatshumu are only realizing partial awareness creation among the local community. This makes for a situation where the community's willingness to participate in the development of tourism at Lekhubu may be driven by a biased sense of awareness. In essence, the predominantly positive expectations and apparent lack of awareness of potential trade-offs could be

interpreted as at least partial empowerment or disempowerment. The opinions type of expectations and opinions they hold are mainly based on selective or partial information. In the final analysis, it can be stated here that the level of awareness on rural community-based tourism among the Mmatshumu residents who participated in this research is low. Therefore, it cannot be said that they were ready and adequately prepared to participate in tourism development in their area.

5.2 The importance of power relations between community and the state in the development process of Lekhubu Island project and implications for the future

One of the areas deemed critical in the development of community-based rural tourism concerns stakeholder power in the overall development process. In the case of Lekhubu, this study examined *the significance and implication of power for relations between community and the state in community-based tourism and rural development process*. The results are carried in article III. While the idea of stakeholder collaboration attempts to ensure equitable participation by all involved stakeholders, this study found that the development process of Lekhubu tourism is already littered with inequalities that may be enlarged in the future. The results show that, contrary to the presumed ability of CBT to devolve power to the local community, in Mmatshumu members of the local community are more or less passive participants in the development process of Lekhubu tourism enterprise.

First, the highest influence on the development process of Lekhubu Island project comes from government through its TAC. This is underscored by the number of occasions where the TAC has overruled decisions and proposals made by the community Trust about Lekhubu project. A typical case in point is the idea of upgrading the major access road between Mmatshumu village and Lekhubu Island which the TAC remains resolute that it is unacceptable. The community Trust feels disempowered to pursue this issue and appears to have resigned the decision to the TAC. The TAC in turn is not doing anything aimed at addressing the condition of the access road. Another example concerns the reception house development at the Island. During the time of data collection, Mmatshumu local Trust (also known as Gaing'O Community Trust) was in the process of building a reception house at the site. The funds to build the reception building were sourced by the Trust from one government department which is supposed to be represented in the district TAC. While the reception building process ran out of funds nearing its completion, during the interviews with the TAC members it emerged that some members of the TAC were against the project. While it would be expected that the TAC participated in the planning process leading up to the construction of the building it turns out some key members of the TAC claim ignorance of the development and are adamant that the TAC cannot allow the community to use the building even if they were to source enough funding to complete it. The main bone of contention from those members is that the building

does not meet the minimum standards required for licensing. The question regarding how the building was initiated and started until it reached the stage where it was without intervention from those members of the TAC who opposed it yielded the response that not all TAC members regularly attend the meetings. This means some issues are passed in their absence only for them to surface later and veto them.

Although those TAC members interviewed did not explicitly state it, it was apparent from the discussions that there is a certain degree of power struggle within the TAC. In a subtle way, different members of the TAC do not see themselves as equals with others within the TAC. There is an underlying sense that some offices within the TAC feel or are considered more important than others in so far as CBNRM issues are concerned. Therefore, some officials tend to see Lekhubu tourism development as providing a suitable platform through which they can either find or consolidate their importance within the TAC. Unfortunately, the jostling within the TAC does not seem to serve Lekhubu tourism development in anyway, other than impeding potential development initiatives by the local Trust. Thus the apparent difficult relations that characterize the TAC in the area have direct consequences for Lekhubu tourism development.

Second, members of Mmatshumu community participating in the FGDs expressed feelings that they were not empowered enough to influence the decisions made by their local Trust (GCT). According to them the Trust generally makes decisions and implements them without the desired consultation. They feel that the Trust is more powerful than the general community when it comes to the decisions on the development of Lekhubu project. Essentially, community members felt that although the local Trust was less powerful that the TAC, it was in turn more powerful than the general membership of the community. In the end, results from the study demonstrate that those members of the community that participated in the study felt that they(as ordinary community members) had the least power to influence the nature and direction of Lekhubu tourism development. This situation can be summed up this way; (1) the decision-making power in the development of tourism in Lekhubu rests with the state through the TAC; (2) the TAC itself has internal challenges and differences that limits its ability to effectively deliver its mandate of assisting the community to develop its tourism initiative; (3) the local Trust is considered less powerful than the TAC and yet more powerful than the general community membership regarding development of Lekhubu tourism development.

5.3 Challenges facing community-based culture and heritage tourism development in Botswana and their implications for its contribution to rural development

The findings from article IV sum up the *challenges facing development of community-based rural tourism at Lekhubu Island*. A comparative approach was used as a way of illustrating the situation of Lekhubu in relation to other CBT projects in the Botswana. The challenges

identified included; poor income and employment creation; poor accessibility; lack of capacity among the local Trust board and staff members; lack of marketing as well as lack of involvement and capacity in the TAC (see Lenao 2013). While some of the challenges found here are similar to those found by other studies elsewhere in the country(see Moswete 2009; Mbaiwa 2011), others are unique. The findings indicate that the rate at which Lekhubu Island project has been able to generate income and create job opportunities has been much lower compared to its wildlife-based counterparts. This challenge of low income and job opportunity creation at Lekhubu is consistent with what is happening with other culture and heritage based tourism enterprises in Botswana (Mbaiwa 2011, 2004b; Mbaiwa & Sakuze 2009). In the case of Lekhubu project, there does not seem to be organized and concerted efforts to turn around its fortunes. The low financial and job creation output poses a concern given the communities high expectations based on the potential for growth in those areas. Furthermore, there is a more pressing need for the project to generate enough finance to ensure its own continued existence. The recent graduation of Botswana from Less Developed Countries (LDCs) category to middle income state means that not many international donor agencies are keen to offer development assistance to initiatives in Botswana anymore. This makes the future prospects of the project uncertain unless it is able to break out of its current cycle of dependency on donor aid funding.

Another challenge associated with community-based rural tourism projects in Botswana relates to lack of capacity. While previous studies have noted lack of capacity among the local communities(see Mbaiwa 2002; Mbaiwa 2011), the current study found, in addition to that, a lack of capacity within the Technical Advisory Committee which is tasked with overseeing the project as well as providing technical advice to the local community. This lack of capacity was expressed in a number of ways by different members of the TAC. Among some of the weaknesses noted were; 1) lack of specific training and experience on community-based rural tourism development, 2) lack of participation in activities related to the development of Lekhubu project, 3) lack of proper induction into the development process of Lekhubu project, 4) too much office work leaving officers with little time to commit to the development process of Lekhubu initiative as well as 5) apparent internal differences within the TAC with regards to distribution of roles and responsibilities among different offices making up the TAC. Given that there is currently no business partner or NGO involved in the development process of Lekhubu project, government through the TAC structure becomes a very critical stakeholder alongside the local community. Therefore, if both the government TAC structure and the local community lack capacity on what needs to be done and how it needs to be done, this threatens the future of the project.

Furthermore, Lekhubu tourism project faces a more challenging situation of inaccessibility. Unlike many other destinations in Botswana whose access is challenging and yet manageable, Lekhubu's poor access appears to be a condition beyond the capacity of both the community and the TAC to address. While both the community and the

TAC expressed appreciation of this constraint, there does not appear to be a solution, or at least an agreement between them on how the situation may be remedied. This is not helped by the fact that Lekhubu Island sits within the Makgadikgadi pans landscape which is one of the important wetland systems of Botswana. Therefore, while the community feels there may be ways of increasing accessibility by improving the condition of the road (Figure 4), for instance, members of the TAC believe that the wetlands treaty signed by the government would not allow this development to take place. Whether the TACs assertion is a well-informed one or not is beside the point in this matter. The point it is that, so long as there is no agreement on ways of improving access to Lekhubu and the situation is considered to be outside the control of both the community and government, then this challenge has a strong potential to impede any possible future growth of Lekhubu project. In a country where culture and heritage tourism has not yet adequately claimed its position in the national tourism product narrative, it is also important to consider the location and accessibility of a community based rural tourism project dealing in these resources.

Figure 4. A patch of muddy surface on the road to Lekhubu Island. The little pool of water on this patch makes it challenging for drivers even during the dry season. The rains make it slippery and almost impossible to negotiate by four wheel drive (photographed by the author in 2012).

6 Discussions and conclusions

6.1 Community awareness and preparedness for CBT and implications for the rural development process

For tourism to be meaningful in the process of rural development, local communities need to be involved in both the planning and implementation process (Murphy 1985). It is believed that, community involvement would insure local views are accounted for in the development process (Telfer & Sharpley 2008; Nyaupane, Morais & Dowler 2006), thus giving legitimacy to the same development (Blackstock 2005). The salient assumption here is that local communities are aware of their own needs and would be able to influence the nature and direction of tourism development in a manner that addresses those locally identified needs. However, Lepp (2004) offers a valuable account of the importance of awareness (or lack thereof) among communities with no prior contact with tourism. From Lepp's (2004) account, it is apparent that for a community with no prior contact with tourism and, even more so, without a tourism culture, their initial conception of tourism could be characterized by fear, anxiety or suspicion. This observation partially challenges the Doxey's (1976) popular irridex model which posits that during the initial stages of tourism development local residents are often excited and welcoming of such development.

In another study conducted in Namibia, Saarinen (2010) found that in accordance with Doxey's model communities of King Nehale Conservancy and Katutura location had positive attitudes towards tourism development in their respective localities. He concluded that the positive attitudes of local communities in King Nehale Conservancy and Katutura could largely be attributed to the low levels of tourism activity at those respective sites. In the case of Katutura and King Nehale, even though tourism has existed since the 1990s or even before, the scale of activities is still very low. From these two cases (Lepp 2004 & Saarinen 2010), it is apparent that the nature of local attitudes towards tourism development is usually shaped by real and/or perceived benefits from tourism. It is important therefore, to note that during the early stages of tourism development, perceived impacts may weigh a little more than real impacts in shaping local attitudes towards tourism development. Given the predominantly low levels of tourism awareness among rural communities in the developing world it is apt to argued that the outcomes of the process of mobilization carried out to sensitize them during the initial (planning and implementation) stages of tourism development plays a higher role in shaping their attitudes compared to actual benefits.

In Botswana the importance of creating tourism awareness and knowledge among rural communities has been recognized (United Nations World Tourism Organization 2008). The country's National Development Plans (NDP) 9 and 10 re-iterate the same point respectively (Government of Botswana 2003, 2009). It is believed that with a

commensurate level of understanding as other stakeholders, local communities would be in a position to participate meaningfully in tourism development (Novelli & Gebhardt 2007). The process of community mobilization is therefore a very critical aspect of community empowerment (Sofield 2003). It is supposed to provide the local community with the type of information that would enable them to develop realistic expectations about the potential of tourism development taking place in their locale. Admittedly, "while the communities want the benefits of tourism, it is acknowledged that some may lack a realistic understanding of what is involved, what true potential exists and the impacts of tourism on the community" (Government of Botswana 2003: 249). The challenge of mobilization here lies between allaying potential fears, anxiety and suspicion (Lepp 2004) and taking advantage of rural communities with a history of development deprivation by making blown out promises (Saarinen 2007; Saarinen & Lenao 2014).

Community mobilization usually aims to ensure that communities buy into the idea of using tourism as a tool for rural development. In the same vein, however, it is essential to ensure through the same process that their expectations are based on balanced information that emphasis both the potential positive and negative impacts of tourism. Typically, information that emphasis positive benefits to the community has a potential to turn a development deprived rural community into a tourism hungry community (Smith & Krannich 1998) who is simply concerned about reaping the potential positives of tourism development regardless of the real or potential costs incurred in the process. In essence, this makes for a poorly empowered community in the planning and implementation of tourism and rural development and challenges one of the core principles of CBT namely, community empowerment.

Thakadu (2005) draws a line between a community that is willing to participate in tourism development and the one which is prepared for such development. To understand this dichotomy, the principal tenets of Social Exchange Theory may be borrowed (McGehee & Andeck 2004). At the one extreme, a community which perceives predominantly positive potential impacts of tourism would most likely be willing to see more tourism development taking place within their locality (Saarinen 2010) and, perhaps be willing to be a part of such development. At yet another extreme, a community who perceives a higher level of potential losses from tourism development as exemplified by the Orang Aslis in the rural Malaysian district of Kedah (Liu 2006), may be simply unwilling to participate.

The key thing to note is that the overwhelming willingness to see tourism development and to participate in its related activities does not denote community preparedness. A community that is ready or prepared to participate in tourism development should demonstrate a considerable understanding of potential gains and losses. In the ideal world of Social Exchange Theory, the eventual attitudes or expectations held by the community (either positive or negative) should be based on the outcome of a balanced matrix of comparison between the potential positive and negative impacts of tourism (McGehee & Andereck 2004). Not on information deliberately skewed towards either negative or

positive impacts. Since negative impacts are not necessarily apparent during the early stages of tourism development, it is the duty of those responsible for the introduction of tourism among rural communities in the developing world to adequately sensitize those communities on all types of potential impacts. In the end, if a community decides to follow the path of using tourism as a development tool, they should also demonstrate readiness to live with the potential costs that come with that development (Edgell 2006).

To deliberately avoid emphasizing potential negative impacts is tantamount to blinding the community into accepting tourism development (Blackstock 2005). In the end, such communities may develop high expectations (Lenao, Mbaiwa & Saarinen 2014) or positive attitudes (Lepp 2007) towards tourism development, with little or no appreciation of negative impacts and, therefore, remain ill prepared to deal with those impacts in the future. When discussing perspectives of some home-stay owners from the rural Malaysian district of Kedah, Liu (2006) notes how some hosts seemed to be overwhelmed by the presence of tourists in their own backyards. For instance; "some hosts indicated that they were irritated by the inappropriate behavior of the visitors. At the same time they also indicated that they had expected that the visitors would respect and adapt to their way of life…". Further, "they were not made aware of the visitors' squeamishness about squatting over well-used, non-flush toilets but it was important to the operators to ensure that tourists experienced authentic Kampung lifestyles" (Liu 2006: 887). This is a typical case of a community that may have been willing to participate in tourism development owing to the lure of potential economic benefits while not fully aware of the potential trade-offs that would come with such participation.

Furthermore, the importance of full and unbiased information about tourism would enable the community to make locally relevant choices. A well informed community should be able to pursue self-development within reasonable constraints of their local circumstances. The paradigm of community self-development, which is well in tune with CBT's purported bottom-up approach, "requires that the residents of a rural community understand their community and the resources available, and make choices on the bases of what the resources can bear" (Lewis 2001:181). Neither this, nor the earlier point about preparedness to deal with potential negative impacts can be said to be true about the community of Mmatshumu whose apparent pre-occupation with potential incomes and employment generation from the community project leaves them susceptible to shocks from negative impacts (if their tourism were to continue expanding) or disappointments (in case the project never flourishes to a point where real positive incomes begin to be realized by many in the society). This rural community, like many others in the process of developing small culture and heritage tourism projects around the country still needs to appreciate the potential negative impacts of tourism development as well as the true extent of their own area's tourism potential.

In the end, it is imperative to reiterate that one of the stated objectives of CBNRM in Botswana is to facilitate community participation in the both conservation and tourism development. Therefore, if community mobilization only aims to achieve support for

tourism and conservation without necessarily creating balanced awareness of the entire process and its consequences, the potential for effective community participation is compromised.

6.2 Significance and implication of power between community and the state in community-based tourism and rural development process

According to Liu & Wall (2006: 159), "in the developing world, tourism is usually implemented through a top-down planning approach". Essentially, the government, business and sometimes NGOs usually take the lead in the tourism planning and implementation process. In instances where tourism is being pursued as a rural development strategy, this dispensation presents challenges as it may lead to the type of development that is at odds with the local communities' capacities (Liu 2006) and aspirations (Mbaiwa 2005b). However, it is widely accepted that tourism planning and implementation should be an all-inclusive process that infuses perspectives of different stakeholders and, more so, reflects interests and aspirations of local communities (Saarinen 2014; Hiwasaki 2006). As Edgell (2006: 87) puts it, "whatever the case, no tourism product should be developed or marketed without the involvement and support of the local residents. If they are not included in the beginning, do not expect them to help at a later date".

At the core of CBT is the desire to harness the tourism potential to bring about development to the rural areas and their inhabitants, thus ensuring acceptability of tourism development among those local communities (Inskeep 1994). It is assumed that CBT has the potential to facilitate community participation (at an equal level with other stakeholders) in tourism development process, thus promoting a bottom-up approach to the planning and implementation process (Mbaiwa & Stronza 2011). Therefore, CBT development has been advanced as an empowerment tool for rural communities. It is believed that CBT development have an in-built potential to facilitate transfer of power to the local communities, thus enabling them to shape their own future in the development of tourism within their locales. In addition to other necessary conditions, Matarrita-Cascante, Brennan & Luloff (2010) acknowledge the fact that a community that has ownership and control over resources is better placed to manage and respond to tourism driven conditions (a point which makes CBT's transfer of power narrative even more attractive).

However, the envisaged shift of power from its traditional holders to the local communities is not usually automatically achieved by simply setting up community-based ventures. For instance, while the common narrative on CBNRM is that of devolution of power to the communities (Mbaiwa & Stronza 2011),it is important to note that CBNRM actually grants communities 'user rights' as opposed to full control and ownership of the resources (Zuze 2009). The CBNRM policy makes this distinction clearly thus, "user rights are rights to use or access natural resources, not rights of ownership thereof" (Government

of Botswana 2007b: iii). Government retains ultimate control and ownership of such resources. The central principle of CBNRM may be better described as co-management (or sharing of management responsibilities with the communities) as opposed to actual devolution of power and control over such resources to the communities.

This is an important starting point in understanding the nature of power relations between local communities and the state in CBRNM development process. The fact that ultimate authority over tourism resources remains with the state means communities can only operate (or fail to operate) within the constraints of state guidelines and control. In fact, this leaves room for the state to impose decisions on communities. While discussing the parameters of community participation in community tourism product development the National Development Plan 9 emphatically states that "although a bottom-up approach plays a vital role in providing communities an opportunity to be integrally involved in the decision-making process, in certain cases, a top-down input is necessary, especially where decisiveness is necessary" (Government of Botswana 2003:249). This is a very instructive statement. It is a sober reminder that even though community involvement is recognized on paper, the state remains the ultimate decision-maker in the CBNRM process.

In practice, this top-down input has been widely adopted in the development and implementation of CBNRM projects dealing in wildlife resources in northern Botswana. For instance, communities in the Okavango Delta who adopted the state's preferred 15 year lease model had their projects take off relatively smoothly because they had the blessings of the state (Mbaiwa 2004a). In a contrasting case within the same Okavango Delta area, Mbaiwa (2005b) chronicles the power struggle that ensued between the state and the community of Khwai, who preferred a model of complete control and ownership over wildlife resources which is different from the 15 year lease-hold arrangement preferred by the state (Zuze 2009). Khwai residents could only have their Trust registered after they acceded to the government's demands. Ultimately, the process and nature of community tourism development in Khwai was out of touch with local wishes and aspirations. "This is because Khwai residents were forced to accept government conditions before they could be allowed to benefit from tourism development and participate in natural resource management in their local environment" (Mbaiwa 2005b:151).Essentially, community participation in the CBNRM process has meant locals accepting and abiding what the government tells them without room to alter it. This rings true to Hall & Jenkins (1995: 77) assertion that "…participation ought not to be assumed to affect planning outcomes. Alternatives may have already been defined before public participation began, while any changes which do occur may simply be changes at the margins".

Nelson and Agrawal have attempted to explain the circumstances giving rise to states' incentive for retaining power and control over some natural resources in sub-Saharan Africa. According to Nelson and Agrawal (2008), wildlife resources in Africa represent a valuable patronage resource. They argue that "valuable natural resources create incentives for central actors to retain control over them, even when these actors sometimes claim to decentralize control" (Nelson & Agrawal 2008: 558). In the case of Botswana, CBNRM is

primarily a wildlife conservation mechanism (Phuthego & Chanda 2004; Thakadu 2005), with community benefit being tacked in as an incentive for communities to embrace this conservation (Arntzen *et al.* 2007). This approach is aimed at addressing local communities' feeling of disenfranchisement and alienation from the wildlife resource with which they had lived for millennia prior to the introduction of fortress conservation by the state (Stone & Nyaupane 2013). Subsequently, and since the CBNRM was never meant to be a forum through which the state relinquish power over wildlife resources to the local communities, the state has every reason to be a part of the CBNRM development process through the Technical Advisory Committees (TAC).

The TAC, as the name suggests, is supposed to provide technical expertise to the communities and other stakeholders involved in the development of CBNRM. It is purported to safeguard the interest of the communities especially in cases where these communities deal with external investors as joint venture partners (JVP) (Zuze 2009). In truth, however, the TAC represents the government's interests and serves to ensure government power and control in the CBNRM development process. The TAC reserves the right to refuse decisions proposed or taken by the communities in CBNRM development. The Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) justifiably takes the lead in wildlife-based projects owing to its overall mandate as custodian of wildlife resources in the country. The primary concern in these types of projects is to ensure that the wildlife resource base is conserved; the local communities enjoy benefits through that conservation and in turn, feel a sense of ownership which incentivizes them to assist in the management and conservation of the wildlife. True to this stated objective, Mbaiwa & Stronza (2011) report on the development of positive attitudes among residents of the Okavango Delta towards wildlife conservation owing to economic benefits accruing to them from tourism development in the area. This dispensation mirrors Li's (2006) conclusion that even if the local communities do not have decision-making powers, so long as they benefit from the development of tourism in their area they would likely be happy. This describes a successful case of placating (Hall & Jenkins 1995) communities with incentives to support conservation and tourism development while systematically ensuring their continued powerlessness in the entire development process.

While the foregoing may be easily achieved through wildlife conservation and other initiatives based on high value resources, caution needs to be practiced when dealing with small culture and heritage based community ventures. Small, culture and heritage based community tourism projects in Botswana do not usually generate considerable amounts of profits during their initial formative years (see Mbaiwa & Sakuze 2009; Mbaiwa 2011; Lenao 2013). In fact, sometimes this state of affairs continues for a number of years, and it has a potential to cause frustrations among communities in the long run (Saarinen & Lenao 2014). Therefore, the lure of potential economic gains may not always be the best premise to encourage local communities to partake in co-management of heritage sites for instance. In other words, while the advancement of economic incentives has been used and successfully paid off in the case of wildlife CBNRM (see Mbaiwa & Stronza 2010,

2011), a different scheme to incentivize the local communities to assist in conservation of small heritage sites may have to be devised.

Unfortunately, the same strategy is being applied unaltered to the small culture and heritage based community initiatives. It should be noted that communities often attach certain values to their own culture and heritage resources. With these customary, ethnic or religious values, communities may not always need tourism to incentivize them for conservation. Therefore, in addition to equipping the community with balanced knowledge of the potential of their area as a tourism destination, they should also be given choices for alternative relations with the sites rather than as business enterprises. Blackstock (2005:41) challenges the type of CBT narrative giving rise to situations where "the community is co-opted into supporting tourism through an illusion of power sharing but they are not empowered to reject tourism as a development option". Ability to make choices (Kabeer 2005) is a critical aspect of self-determination and empowerment in the development process. Sadly, CBNRM was never conceived with the view to giving communities choices in the first place. It is either tourism development option or nothing for them.

Since usually, these cultures and heritage resources intrinsically belong to these communities, perhaps rather than resorting to common focus on potential economic benefits (Blackstock 2005), they should be allowed to determine their own preferred ways to continue co-existing with and looking after such resources. This is particularly critical where profitability may not be guaranteed. On the other hand, where profitable CBT development is determined to be highly likely, it is important to ensure local communities and aspirations are given prominence in the CBT development process. This is fundamental because those aspects of culture and heritage to be packaged for tourism are theirs. They should, therefore, be in a position to decide what is or is not acceptable for them. This study recorded a significant case of anxiety from one section of Mmatshumu community regarding the use of Lekhubu as a tourism attraction. In one of the focus groups conducted during this study, some elderly members of the community expressed some sense of disillusionment with the nature and type of developments taking place at Lekhubu Island. While they admit that they were consulted at some point, they felt they were being perpetually sidelined from the implementation process, which makes them wonder if the people visiting Lekhubu are not compromising their traditional, customary and religious values of Lekhubu (see Lenao 2014a).

Furthermore, it should be noted that the formation of community Trust is in and by itself one of the processes that help to limit power sharing with local communities in Botswana. Mmatshumu community members observed that their power in the tourism development process at Lekhubu Island was limited to voting the community Trust into office. Beyond that, they could only hope to receive annual reports from the same Trust. Hall & Jenkins (1995) emphasize that the power to vote alone is inadequate since usually the choices are already few and narrow. It turns out that local Trust in Mmatshumu does not have the requisite capacity to steer the community initiative to success. Owing to this lack of capacity the Trust relies heavily on the project manager and his staff to lead them.

Two things came out clear from the field work in Mmatshumu. First, besides the right to vote, members of the community do not feel they have the right and the power to hold the Trust accountable for developments taking place in Lekhubu. Second, the Trust also does not feel confident enough to challenge the decisions of the management team. This dispensation provides a good breeding ground for development of a clique of elites who enjoys a considerable level of power over the general community making it hard for ordinary community members to have a say in the distribution of benefits in the future.

According to Rozemeijer & van der Jagt, (2000) and Mbaiwa (2004a) community Trusts formed to run some profitable wildlife based enterprises on behalf of communities have sometimes evolved into powerful entities clearly out of tune with the local communities they represent. In these instances, the apparent power enjoyed by these Trusts and their subsequent lack of accountability to their own communities has been attributed to the vast amounts of monetary resources they suddenly found themselves handling and managing. This thesis argues that the development of eliticism among trust members is rooted in the failure to fully empower the local communities right from the start of the process.

6.3 Practical implications for the use of culture and heritage CBT in rural development

Botswana's Revised National Policy for Rural Development (Government of Botswana 2002) recognizes the potential of CBT to contribute to rural development and improved livelihoods. Among other things, the policy notes CBT's potential to stimulate growth in rural and disadvantaged regions of the country. Studying some of the available literature on culture and heritage tourism in Botswana (Lenao 2009; Mbaiwa 2004b, 2011; Mbaiwa & Sakuze 2009; Moswete 2009), there is a consistent reference to the existence of potential for growth in this area. Furthermore, the NDP10 states that "to expand cultural and heritage tourism, community based initiatives will be strongly supported so that local communities become more involved in the travel and tourism industry (Government of Botswana 2009: 202). However, culture and heritage based community tourism projects usually face a host of challenges that limit their capacity for growth and contribution to rural development, especially where economic returns are often used to measure success and failure.

Some of the standard challenges facing development of these tourism ventures are structural in nature. For instance, while Mbaiwa (2004b) point out the lack of institutional representing the interests of basket makers in the Okavango Delta, Moswete (2009) decries the apparent lack of appreciation of cultural richness in the Kgalagadi by government leading to low involvement by local communities. Lack of skills and knowledge among communities has also been noted as a major constraint to the development of profitable culture and heritage community-based tourism ventures (Mbaiwa 2011). In the case of Lekhubu, it is noted that in addition to the general lack of capacity among the local

community, there is a similar constraint on the part of government (see Lenao 2013). The TAC which is the government's advisory arm to CBT development is poorly equipped to effectively carry out its role. This lack of capacity among local communities and the government makes for an environment where prospects for promoting viability of the initiative are limited. This is especially true in light of the fact that the local community does not have an investment partner as preferred by government.

Joint venture partnership is the government's preferred model for CBNRM development (Lepper & Goebel 2010). According to Lepper & Goebel (2010: 729), "the essence of the joint venture agreement (JVA) is that the community supplies strictly the land, and the joint venture partner supplies the capital investment and the operating expertise. Thus the private sector bears most of the investment risk, while the communities are guaranteed predetermined financial benefits regardless of the profitability of the enterprise". Essentially, the joint venture arrangement ensures that the investment and innovation aspects of the business are handled by the venture partner with the hope that in the long run the same partner would be able to transfer some business skills, innovation and knowledge to the local community (Zuze 2009). In reality, such ventures mirror community-benefit tourism initiatives (CBTIs) with their pre-occupation with concerns about delivering improved livelihoods to the communities (Simpson 2008).The actual transfer of requisite skills and knowledge in the process of development (Blaikie 2006) is hoped to follow (see also Liu 2006). It can be argued that where this model is adopted, it also serves to temporarily take care of the apparent lack of entrepreneurial capacity among both the community and the TAC.

Therefore, in instances where a culture and heritage venture is not appealing enough to attract external investors and, in turn, has to rely solely on the innovative capacity of the local community and the TAC, this condition of lack of capacity becomes more pronounced. Scheyvens (2002b: 215–216) warns that, "too often it is assumed that the presence of wildlife or cultural features in a site of scenic beauty, combined with a community enthusiastic about developing a tourism venture, is sufficient to make the venture successful". This seems to be the case in Lekhubu where an enthusiastic community in need of capacity building does not get assistance because apparently the capacity to do so is lacking where it is supposed to come from (i.e. in the TAC). As a result the community does not know how to carry out basic but effective marketing of their enterprise and hope that somehow the TAC may assist to that end. The TAC on the other hand does not feel this falls within its mandate, but rather a responsibility of the Botswana Tourism Organization (BTO) which is also a member of the TAC. The BTO, in the contrary, understands its mandate as marketing the country as opposed to individual sites and businesses, thus leaving Lekhubu initiative operating without effective marketing.

According to Scheyvens (2002b: 2016),"there are unfortunately numerous cases of communities generating funding to build structures and employing people to service and manage a small tourism enterprise and then feeling bewildered and disappointed when the tourists do not 'just pour in'". Clearly, should the current state of affairs continue at

Lekhubu, this initiative may just be waiting to suffer a similar fate. Lack of capacity, poor coordination and information sharing between the community Trust and the TAC (as well as within the TAC) makes the future of Lekhubu project very uncertain. It also brings into perspective the fact that the advisory role the TAC is purported to play among small culture and heritage community based enterprises is questionable. Worthy of note is the fact that, one of the TAC members attributed the apparent lack of enthusiasm about Lekhubu project from the local TAC to the fact that with limited resources Lekhubu does not offer any limelight to officials who participate. In other words, some officials associate involvement in CBNRM with prestige and the prominent initiatives carry more prestige than smaller, almost invisible ones like Lekhubu. Therefore, the less prominent ones may not be very attractive to officials and are therefore likely to be orphaned.

Another critical consideration when setting up culture and heritage enterprises for rural community development and economic diversification is geographical location and ease of access. It is important to appreciate Botswana is a primarily wildlife-based tourism destination. Therefore, the country's marketing tends to emphasize on the wildlife and scenic appeal, while mentioning culture, heritage and the hospitability of the local people as add-on attractions. Inevitably, this positioning of culture and heritage resources as add-on attractions means enterprises based on them should target tourists primarily destined for the country's wildlife destinations. Therefore, a CBT enterprise dealing in culture and heritage stands a better chance of survival if it is located along the major tourism transit routes or in close proximity to the wildlife tourism hotspots. Caffyn & Lutz (1999) acknowledge that remote and isolated attractions often find it difficult to attract visitors (see also Liu 2006). According to McKercher & Ho (2006:474) "the challenge is exacerbated if the place represents a lower order attraction class. In such cases, convenience plays a key role, meaning that if significant time, money of emotional effort is involved, the tourist will select another activity."

Regrettably, these authors also acknowledge the important fact that cultural tourism products usually represent secondary attractions for tourists. Based on its spatial location, Lekhubu Island is not very far from the main tourist routes. However, its accessibility is a great barrier given the unfriendly nature of the terrain that connects the Island to the rest of the other attractions and/or tourist transit routes. The navigability of access roads to this Island when the surface of Makgadikgadi pans is wet is near impossible. In addition to increasing severity of low season, the wet season sometimes increases the length of time during which there are no visitations to the Island owing to high rain falls. Commenting on the situation of similar projects in Tanzania, Salazar (2012) notes that the potential for survival of many community cultural tourism projects is a function of access and proximity to the safari capital of Arusha. Those closest are more popular and more likely to succeed while those located much further are less likely to make it. Close proximity, accessibility and linkages with the safari tourism in the Okavango Delta are some of the conditions driving the relative success of the community cultural tourism development at Quihaba and NxaiXai in the Okavango area (Mbaiwa & Sakuze 2009).

In the final analysis, it is apparent that a community-based culture and heritage enterprise that is operated and sold as a stand-alone attraction has limited chance of success. Without the requisite capacity within both the community and the government to come up with some innovative and creative ideas to make it more appealing, the community may have to wait forever to realize the promised benefits. Poor access and lack of integration with other more established tourism destinations limits the prospects for growth even further. In the end, the economic diversification ideal being be pursued would be very difficult to achieve.

6.4 Concluding remarks and prospects for future research

In conclusion, it is imperative to note that tourism development has a potential to play a critical role as a tool for rural development. It may assist in diversifying economies and improving rural lives. Some studies carried out in northern Botswana bear testimony to this (see Mbaiwa 2004a, 2009; Mbaiwa & Stronza 2010). Such evidence has also been associated with development of pro-conservation attitudes among local communities in such areas (Mbaiwa & Stronza 2011). While acknowledging the successes realized through wildlife-based community tourism initiatives, this thesis argues for caution in cases where rural communities are encouraged to pursue community tourism based on culture and heritage resources. In other words, it should not be assumed that since wildlife-based community tourism ventures have registered some successes, their culture and heritage-based counterparts would automatically follow suit. It has to be accepted that some of the factors that may not be of serious concern to wildlife-based initiatives may have far reaching ramifications for culture and heritage ventures.

One of the recurring concerns about local community involvement in tourism development is that of lack of awareness. Therefore, the need to develop this awareness has been reiterated by the government and other stakeholders alike (Government of Botswana 2003, 2009; UNWTO 2008). It is important to note that community awareness should entail full understanding of both potential benefits and losses. Perhaps, more crucially, communities should be made aware of the limitations facing tourism development within their areas. Such balanced awareness should also be accompanied with giving the communities a chance to decide whether or not they would like to pursue tourism as a development strategy. This is important because as Hall (2005b, 248) reminds us, "…in some cases of maximizing economic development in the periphery, the best form of tourism may well be no tourism at all".

Therefore, this thesis seeks to underline that those responsible for introducing community-based tourism as a developmental tool to rural areas have the obligation to ensure that adequate and impartial mobilization is carried out. While the *kgotla* setting is usually convenient and thus preferred, it should be noted that some voices may not be heard through this setting owing to its prevailing protocols. This calls for variation of

tactics. In addition to the kgotla system, smaller groups, including one to one discussions should be considered. This will particularly be helpful if they are arranged to cater for different demographics (e.g. youth, adults, males, females, mixed and so on). It would encourage the all-inclusiveness that CBT seeks to achieve.

Since culture and heritage attractions in Botswana are generally considered as add-on attractions, the challenge of growth is amplified by poor accessibility and linkage to major tourist routes. Therefore, optimism about future growth in community ventures should be based on comprehensive information about potential of the attraction. It has been observed that a rural area that stands a chance to succeed in developing a profitable rural tourism business is one that is able to conduct an inventory of its potential tourism products, assess their marketability, develop local leadership and promote its destination (Edgell 2006). Unfortunately Saarinen & Lenao (2014: 368) warn that "…not all communities and their environments possess the sufficient attractiveness (or access) for tourism. Therefore, (they argue) possible ultimate conservation goals in CBNRM projects should not be 'wrapped' behind unrealistic promises of financial benefits from tourism growth". Yet, members of Mmatshumu community tend to exude so much optimism about growth of Lekhubu without, at least, pointing to any evidence that demonstrates the strengths of the venture. This, it is argued here, says more about their level of appreciation of the local conditions than anything else. Thus, this challenges the effectiveness and objectivity of awareness creation approaches employed.

It is important to appreciate that some of the small and isolated communities may not succeed at all in their attempts to develop as tourist destinations. This needs to be accepted by both the local communities and those stakeholders (e.g. government and NGOs) interested in spreading CBT to areas with no wildlife resources. For those communities considered to have some level of potential, like Mmatshumu, efforts should be directed at finding synergies with other destinations and attractions (e.g. through creating of tourism routes and trails) so as to boost their economies of scale. Such destinations should be packaged in such a way that their marketing is done in a holistic manner. The piece-meal approach to marketing small culture and heritage destinations like Lekhubu may not only prove to be expensive, but also less effective as these small communities do not have adequate resources and skills to undertake the exercise. At the end of it all, the only realistic way to ensure that CBT contributes to diversification of rural lives and economies is to ensure its ability to generate considerable income.

Moreover, community awareness should entail appreciation of potential trade-offs associated with tourism development. Edgell (2006, 88) reminds us that "developing an economy around tourism can bring many benefits to a community. However, that development will have costs and liabilities associated with almost any industry within a small community". This is particularly important in the case of culture and heritage tourism development because the same resources being packaged and put up for touristic consumption are an intrinsic part of the community's being. Essentially, this means the community itself is brought into the realm of attractions. As an object of tourist gaze

(see Urry 1990) a community may be negatively impacted upon by tourism development. Essentially, a rural community who have hitherto been somewhat enclavic and isolated from the mainstream development of tourism may eventually find itself having to deal with an influx of curious tourists who are not only satisfied with the traditional camping or the envisaged traditional song and dance, crafts and food, but instead want to experience more of the authentic rural village life.

This curiosity and the need among visitors to explore beyond what is intended or staged for touristic consumption may be construed as an intrusion into private and personal space by some members of the community. MacCannell (1973) makes a distinction between the front and back stage in cultural tourism settings. And he asserts that usually some aspects of community culture are retained in the backstage as a way of preserving them and keeping them away from outsiders, while on the other hand the same outsiders feel the need and desire to gain access to that backstage because they presume it to present some authentic experiences that describe 'otherness' (Scheyvens 2002b) of the destination communities visited. It is the need to balance this visitors´ curiosity and communities' need for a sense of privacy that may create uneasiness in the impending host-guests encounters.

During the early stages of tourism development, a community whose members have not been tourists themselves or been exposed to tourist culture (Liu 2006; Lepp 2007) may simply be driven by the allure of potential economic benefits and not foresee any chance for potential negative impacts from such development. As a participant in one of the focus group discussions in Mmatshumu village confidently asserted "there is no way we may be affected by the presence of these tourists because they bring money into the village" (Lenao 2014a). This thesis argues that a rural community whose members reason this way in the wake of culture and heritage tourism development in their area cannot be said to be fully aware and prepared for impending encounters with tourists. This type of reasoning demonstrates a certain level of future vulnerability in the community.

Liu (2006) reports of a case in which a rural community in Malaysia approached rural cultural tourism or home-stay development in their area with a normal day-to-day attitude oblivious to the impending negative experiences. However, as more visitors continued to flow in and more interactions ensued some villagers began to express misgivings about the strange cultures and practices of the visitors. She notes that "encounters with their guests have been undertaken in a simple way with humbleness and generosity, rather than as a commercial-oriented activity. Promoting culture as their main motive, operators have perhaps been overly enthusiastic in attempting to integrate tourists into their way of life" (Liu 2006: 889). Therefore, community awareness creation should emphasis these aspects so as to prepare the community and try to minimize potential shocks and eventualities. It is argued here that a community equipped with this kind of awareness may be able to device means of coping with unusual encounters in a way that both local and visitors are comfortable. However, in the case of Lekhubu members of the community participating in this study demonstrated a lack of awareness about these.

Appendixes

TELEPHONE: 3914955

TELEGRAMS: MEWT

TELEX:

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REFERENCE: **EWT 8/36/4 XVII (19)**

REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT,

WILDLIFE AND TOURISM

PRIVATE BAG BO 199,

GABORONE

BOTSWANA

ALL CORRESPONDENCE MUST BE ADDRESSED TO

THE PERMANENT SECRETARY

22 September 2011

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Gaborone
Botswana

Tel: (+267) 71847080
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APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH PERMIT: RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN BOTSWANA: THE CASE OF LEKHUBU ISLAND PROJECT

We are pleased to inform you that you are granted permission to conduct a research entitled: **"Rural Tourism Development and Economic Diversification for Local Communities in Botswana: The Case of Lekhubu Island Project."**

The research will be conducted at **Boteti Sub District: Mmatshumu, Lekhubu Island and Letlhakane.**

This permit is valid for a period effective from **21 September 2011 to 21 September 2013.**

This permit is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. Signing and submission of an Agreement between Government of Botswana and Independent Researchers (enclosed).

2. Progress should be reported periodically to the **Department of Tourism.**

3. The permit does not give authority to enter premises, private establishments or protected areas. Permission for such entry should be negotiated with those concerned.

4. You conduct the study according to particulars furnished in the approved application taking into account the above conditions.

5. You report at the **Boteti Sub District Commissioner's office before** proceeding to the research areas.

6. Failure to comply with any of the above conditions will result in the immediate cancellation of this permit.

7. The research team comprises of **Mr Monkgogi Lenao and Prof Joseph Mbaiwa.**

8. The applicant should ensure that the Government of Botswana is duly acknowledged.

9. Copies of videos/publications produced as a result of this project are directly deposited with the Office of the President, National Assembly, Ministry of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism, Department of Wildlife and National Parks, Department of National Museum and Monuments, National Archives, National Library Service, and the University of Botswana Library.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully

Mable B Bolele
For/Permanent Secretary

CC. Department of Tourism
District Commissioner, Boteti Sub District