

A History of Safari Companies in the Ngamiland, 1960-1990

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Abstract

This paper investigates the History of safari companies in Maun and surrounding areas in the period between 1960 and 1990. In the mid-twentieth century the government of colonial Botswana (Bechuanaland Protectorate) encouraged hunters from the West to come and hunt in Ngamiland in a desperate bid to help control the spread of Tsetse fly (Trypanosomosis) and also to boost the economy of the region which was dependent on precarious cattle production. This initiative led to the establishment of safari companies. In addition, some hunters came to Botswana and established hunting safari companies given the territory's rich and abundant fauna which was good for sport hunting. This was during the time when East Africa was experiencing overcrowding of sport hunters. Consequently, some professional hunters migrated to other parts of Africa. Earliest safari companies were established in Ngamiland and Chobe Districts making these two regions an increasingly popular safari destination for predominantly international clients. On investigating the History of these safari companies, this paper also examines the challenges faced by the companies, among which are the perceptions of local communities on the establishment of the companies in their area. Interestingly, the post-colonial government of Botswana did not pay much attention to safari tourism industry until 1990 when the industry was recognised as important for economic diversification drive. Archival records and oral interviews are made use of in the paper to substantiate the arguments and observations.

Introduction

The word safari originates from the word 'safar' which is an Arabic verb meaning to 'make a journey', and originally safari referred to a trade journey (Nolting 2007). The term was infused into Kiswahili language where it referred to an expedition. Later, it was adopted into the English language and became a global term to refer to sport hunting and recreation where Western elites including royalties came to Africa to spend time hunting wildlife species (Nolting 2007). They derived pleasure from safari hunting and returned home with trophies ranging from ivory, hides, horns, skins and others from their hunting excursions.

The literature indicates that East Africa was the traditional home of safari hunting up to the 1970s when hunting was banned in Tanzania in 1973 and Kenya in 1977 as a result of overcrowding by tourists and hunters in the region (Prins *et al* 2000). Consequently, countries such as Sudan, Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo) and the Central African Republic became new destinations for sport hunters. Some safari companies emerged in other parts of Africa such as Ethiopia, Zambia, Namibia, South Africa and Botswana (Prins *et al* 2000).

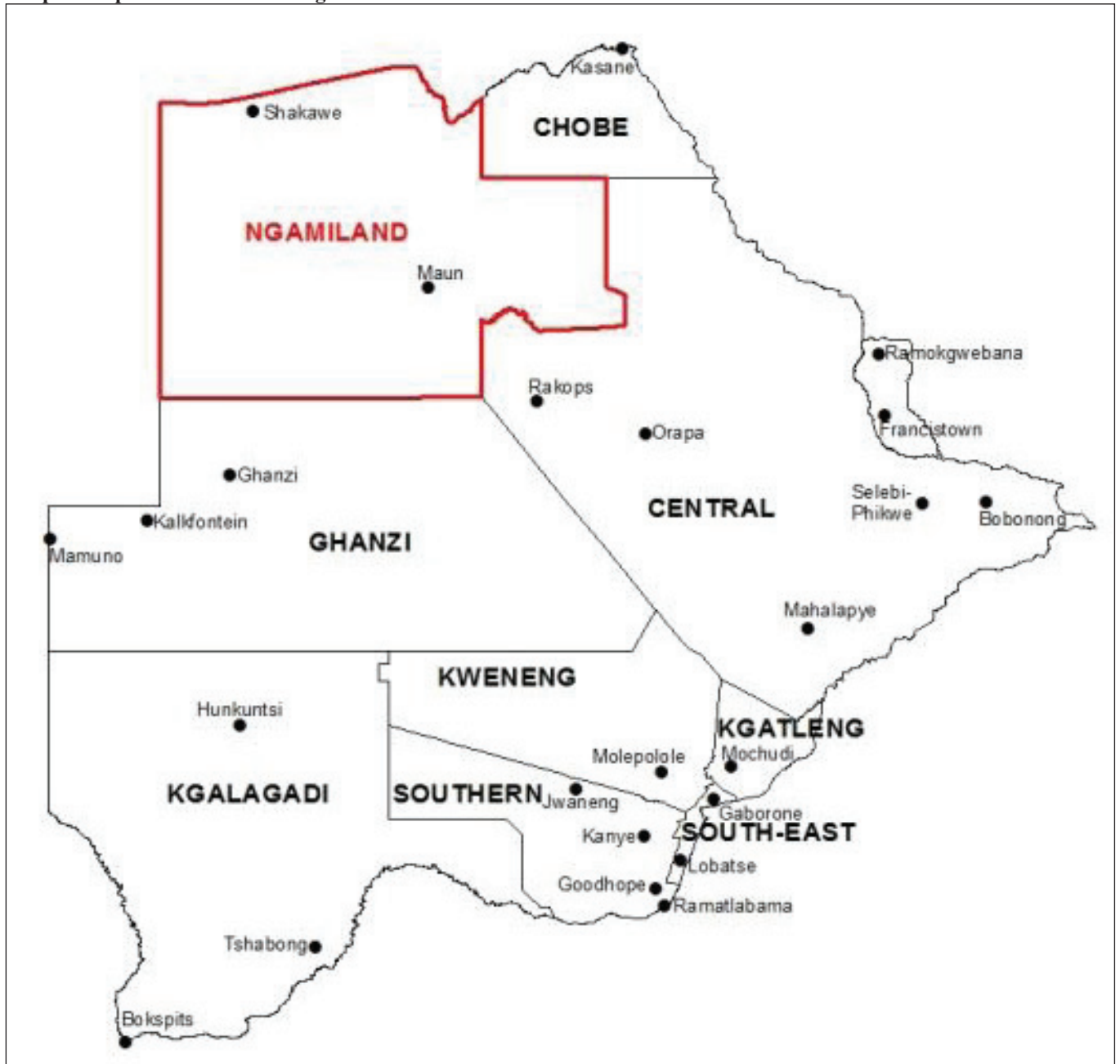
Therefore, the History of safari companies in Ngamiland is linked to companies originating from East Africa, for instance Ker Downey and Selby. This entity still operates in Maun to this day as Ker Downey Safaris. However, many safari companies were first established in Maun by hunters from South Africa, East Africa, America and Europe who jointly worked together for the success of safari companies. Some safari operators permanently relocated to Maun and became citizens of Botswana when their companies became successful (Nolting 2007). Three major hunting safari companies to be first established in Maun were Safari South, Vira Safaris, Bird Safaris which operated in Ngamiland and Hunters Africa which was based in Chobe (Map 1). Sport hunters who established these companies came from various parts of the world but their operations were based in South Africa due to the popularity of the area at the time. The hunting safari became the base of safari industry in Botswana in the early 1960s as sport hunters

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considered Botswana a good hunting destination given its abundant wildlife (Main 2001).

According to Harry Selby, a professional hunter and one of the earliest safari owners in Ngamiland, prior to the First World War a hunting safari in East Africa was known as 'foot safari' (Interview with Harry Selby 15 April 2014). The reason for this was that people on safari walked and carried their luggage because horses and donkeys, which were used for transport and carriages would not survive owing to diseases such as Trypanosomosis (sleeping sickness) which infested most of the safari hunting areas in East Africa. However, he explained that by the mid-twentieth century the hunting safari started to be conducted using motor vehicles in East Africa. Figure 1 below illustrates some of the trophies which were popular with the sport hunters.

Map 1: Map of Botswana with Ngamiland in the north-western corner



Source: map drawn by Modise Sedimo at University of Botswana

Figure 1: Trophies displayed by sport hunters in front of a truck and a boat, c. 1964-1965



Source: Harry Selby family archives

Overhunting and threat of extinction of some animal species seriously threatened the safari industry. Therefore, in the late 1960s and early 1970s photographic safari started as an offshoot of the hunting safari companies in Ngamiland (Main 2001). As a new form of safari, and unlike hunting safari, the photographic safari also ensured the sustainability of wildlife (Staples 2006). By the mid-1980s, photographic safari was firmly established as an industry to ensure sustainable utilisation of the wildlife. It also gave hunting safari serious competition.

This paper will be an addition to the historical literature which specifically deals with origin of safari companies especially in southern Africa, Ngamiland in particular. It appears that there is little historical literature which specifically deals with safari companies. The area Ngamiland has less coverage in the sources available to address specific objectives of this paper. However, authors such as Thomas Tlou in his book titled *A History of Ngamiland 1750-1906* has provided very useful information on safari hunting and trade in the early years of the 19th century. Furthermore Maitseo Bolaane in her the book titled *Chiefs Hunters and San in the Creation of the Moremi Game Reserve Okavango Delta: Multiracial Interactions and Initiatives, 1956-1979* discuss at length the relationship between tsetse fly, cattle industry and game policy. She addresses safari related issues such as controlled hunting in Ngamiland, and creation of game conservation areas. Her study provides very useful information about hunting safari companies in Ngamiland. Other useful literary sources are produced by Joseph Mbaiwa who advocates the contribution of tourism industry in the Okavango Delta, Northwest Botswana which is part of Ngamiland.

Introduction of Safari Companies in Ngamiland

Safari company operators referred to by local people as ‘white hunters’ came to Botswana in the 1960s and settled in Ngamiland attracted by the abundant wildlife found in the area. According to former sa-

fari tracker and gun bearer Moatlhodi Motlhabani and conservationist John Benn, some of these 'white hunters' established first hunting safari companies in Maun and the surrounding areas (Interview with M Motlhabani 9 June 2014 and J Benn 16 July 2014). For instance, Safari South was the first hunting safari company to be established in Maun in 1962 by Betony from Germany and Lionel Palmer from South Africa. Ker Downey and Selby was second to be established in 1963 which was a branch of the company in Kenya and River Safaris (now called Crocodile Camp Safaris) was established in 1964 in Maun for the first time (Dziewiecka 2012). As indicated above, in the late 1960s photographic safari came on board. This saw to the establishment of entities such as American African Safaris (now Okavango River Lodge in 1969, Island Safari and Xaxaba Camp in 1972 (Dziewiecka 2012).

Most of the early hunting safari companies in Ngamiland had temporary safari camps only. Clients were moved around in the Okavango Delta and as far as northern Kalahari (Interview with H Selby 15 April 2014). This is illustrated by Figure 2 showing tents which could be erected and taken down to be pitched elsewhere.

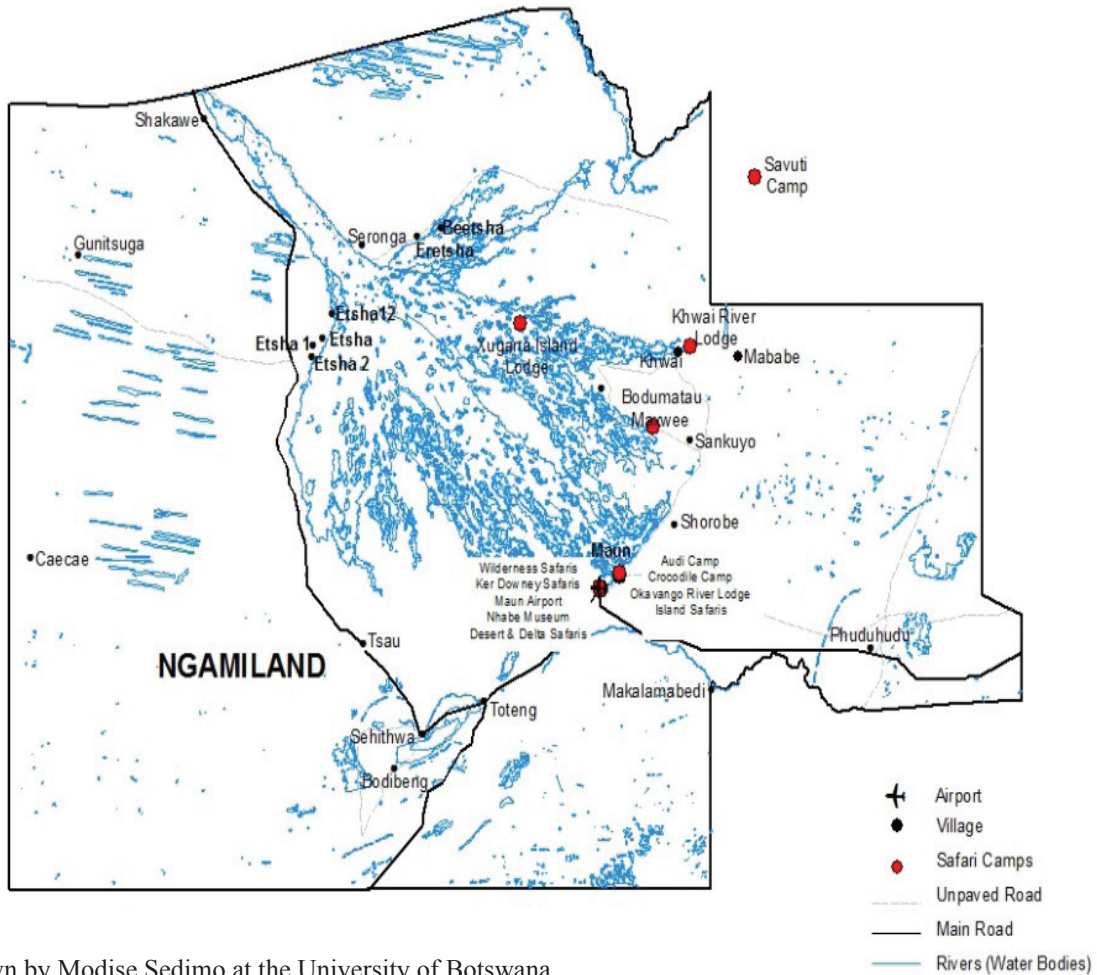
Figure 2: A typical of a temporary safari camp in Khwai, 1964



Source: Harry Selby family archives

Former safari tent man, guide, cook and waiter Kenson Kgaga says that by the late 1960s safari companies started to build permanent camps particularly for photographic safari (Interview with K Kgaga 21 July 2014). The Khwai River Lodge, located near Khwai village as indicated in the map below (Figure 3) became the first permanent camp for photographic safari to be built by Ker Downey and Selby in 1968. The camp was officially opened in 1968 by the first president of Botswana, Sir Seretse Khama (Figure 4). Ker Downey and Selby also established two other small photographic camps namely Xugana and Savuti in the Chobe District in 1970 (Interview with H Selby 15 June 2014).

Figure 3: Map of Ngamiland showing some of the camps established by safari companies in the district



Source: Drawn by Modise Sedimo at the University of Botswana

Figure 4: Khwai River Lodge and President Khama and his family at the Lodge (left), 1968



Source: Harry Selby family archives

The number of permanent safari camps built in Ngamiland and Okavango increased rapidly from the 1970s to the 1990s. For instance, in 1978 Ngamiland had 14 permanent safari camps which increased to 32 ten years later in 1988. By 1993 the number had gone up to 50 in 1993 for both hunting and photographic safaris (Scudder and Coley 1993). According to John Benn, who has a long history of association with safari hunting in Ngamiland, the allocation of concessions to safari owners was a key factor for the significant increase in safari camps. He believes that concessions gave safari owners access to leased land for building more permanent camps (Interview with Benn 16 July 2014). In the 1970s and 1980s concessions are said to have been cheap and this might have allowed safari operators to hold more than one concession (Republic of Botswana 1989).

The mushrooming of photographic safari camps may also be linked to the 1974 report of the African Wildlife Leadership Foundation (AWLF) which advised hunting safari companies to divert to photographic safari and tighten their marketing strategies in order to protect wildlife species from sport hunters (Scudder and Coley 1993). The above assertions might be the reason why most safari owners built more than one permanent camp in Ngamiland. Safari companies such as Desert and Delta, Ker Downey and Selby and Okavango Wilderness Safaris took heed and established photographic safari camps.

Gender is an aspect in safari industry that cannot be disregarded. When safari companies were established, only men worked for safari hunting camps. According to Harry Selby and former safari tracker Kebonyewetsho Puoetsile, this was typical of East Africa where the original company operators came from (Interview with H Selby 15 June 2014 and K Puoetsile 7 July 2014). However, it should be noted that even among the Batswana communities like most African communities, hunting has always been the domain of men. Hunting safari required people to stay in the bush for many days amidst setting conditions not attractive to women.

Nevertheless, with the introduction of photographic safari, the number of women coming for safari increased compared to those who came for hunting safari. As a result, men started complaining about having to perform certain tasks especially the role of a 'tent man' which today is referred to as 'housekeeping' where they took care of the tents and performed duties associated with domestic activity such as laundry (Interview with K Kgaga 21 July 2014). As a result, many women were introduced into the safari industry to perform housekeeping duties such as laundry, cooking and many others.

The Ownership of Safari Companies

The earliest safari companies established in Ngamiland were mostly owned by foreigners, particularly with a hunting history like professional hunters (Lindsey 2005). For instance, Lionel Palmer and Bill Siebert who established Safari South came from South Africa, Harry Selby came from Kenya, and Bobby Wilmot of Crocodile Camp Safaris was also from South Africa. Other professional hunters who came from as far as Germany were involved in the establishment and ownership of the earliest safari companies (Interview with H Selby 15 June 2014 and K Puoetsile 7 July 2014). There are various factors associated with foreign ownership of safari companies in Ngamiland and its surrounding areas. Some of the factors mentioned include inadequate funds and lack of professional skills needed to operate the safari industry by locals. Silitshena and McLeod point out that the 'establishment of tourism demands a great deal of capital and high level of management skills, and for this reason much of the early tourism industry established was owned by foreigners' (Silitshena and McLeod 1989:153). This observation is also echoed by Maitseo Bolaane who notes that when safari companies were established, Africans had no place in managing these companies because they lacked the skills and the capital needed to operate safari companies (Bolaane 2013). Whereas some Batswana have ventured into the tourism business in Ngamiland and other parts of the country, it is usually reported that the industry is still dominated by foreigners even today for similar reasons as those outlined above.

It is pointed out that when safari companies were established in Botswana in the 1960s they had no clear organisational structure (Lequieu 1997). Harry Selby, one of the earliest safari company owners explained that the management structure of safari companies differed from one company to the other during the early years of safari industry (Interview with H Selby 15 April 2014). Furthermore, safari companies were mainly run and directed by professional hunters, who most of the times were owners of the companies. Selby mentioned that ‘the professional hunter was truly the captain of the ship and the success of the entire safari’.

However, the way things were done changed in the 1970s. According to former professional hunter Doughie Wright, the establishment of permanent photographic camps needed permanent staff to operate both the camps and the office. Therefore, different office holders such as director, general manager, camp managers and many others were employed to perform different roles (Interview with D Wright 16 June 2014). Wright says that the employees were divided into two categories being senior staff and junior staff. The former was in the form of managers, accountant, professional hunters and other administrators. Professional hunters were part of the management because most of them owned the safari companies. Junior staff included cooks, storekeepers, waiters, tent-men, skimmers, trekkers, gun bearer and general labourers.

The Licensing of the Safari Companies

The Botswana Government’s National Development Plan 7 of 1991-1997 indicates that when safari companies were first established in Ngamiland the British colonial government in the territory lacked experience in effective methods of controlling hunting pressure. Therefore, proper controlling of hunting was made difficult by the lack of experience and insufficient funds for the colonial government (Republic of Botswana 1991). For this reason the colonial government met with safari operators to formulate guidelines for the safari industry. Bolaane notes that in 1963, Harry Selby was assigned the task of producing a report defining the distinction between the block system and the concessions system. This assignment was concerned with establishing a way to help choose the best strategy to control the safari industry. However, based on the findings of Selby’s report, the government opted for the long term concessions for the sake of preserving game species from exploitive hunting (Bolaane 2013).

While the safari operators anticipated five-year concessions the Batawana tribal authorities in Maun allowed only three-year concession (Republic of Botswana 1989). The renewal of a concession was dependent on the agreement between the concessioner and the concessionaire, and the agreement could be invalidated if the company or its employees breached the agreement (Botswana National Archives and Records Service (BNRS), S.199/4, 1961-1963). Quotas in the form of packaged licenses regulated safari hunting activities (Interview with H Selby 15 April 2014 and D Wright 16 June 2014).

The packaged license was valid for only one hunting season. It specified the kinds and maximum number of species to be hunted, the fee to be paid for the license and also the stipulated safari hunting time (BNRS, S.199/4, 1961-1963). Before issuing the license, the regional licensing officer required the applicant to appear before him in person and to produce army certificate or a permit granted to him in terms of the relevant legislation for inspection (Republic of Botswana 1979). Lequieu is of view that, the high quotas and minimal regulations enabled safari companies to flourish during the time in Ngamiland (Lequieu 1979).

After the 1988 pilot project which was carried out in Chobe and Ngamiland to examine the potential of using computers to handle hunting licenses records, computerised licensing was introduced for safari companies (Republic of Botswana 1989). This meant that the safari companies were granted concessions but they also needed a license or permit to engage in hunting and photographic activities.

Safari Companies' Clients

Botswana Tourism Master Plan of 2000 shows that Europe represents a potential large tourist generating market for African countries including Botswana (Republic of Botswana 2000). When safari companies were established in Ngamiland clients mainly came from the developed countries in Europe, and others such as United States of America, Canada, New Zealand and Australia because those societies had more time and money in the post-Second World War period (Fowkes 1990). However, in the 1980s some Africans also came for safari especially prosperous whites from the neighbouring South Africa. It was expensive to go on a safari so most clients were wealthy people who could afford to pay the expenses of a safari trip (Interview with Selby 15 April 2014 and Wright 16 June 2014).

Clients booked for their safari trips a year in advance to avoid inconveniences of the long distance communication which was not easy during the earlier days of safari companies (Interview with Selby 15 April 2014 and Wright 16 June 2014). The informants also stated that since the local media in Botswana had no global reach during those days some companies had advertising agents outside the country who helped advertise their services. The agents came to see the safari destinations and went back to inform other people about the beauty of nature they experienced in Ngamiland. If the potential clients were fascinated then the agents connected them with a safari company to arrange bookings for a safari (Interview with JS Bayei 19 June 2014, A Sezuka 2 June 2014, J O Monare 18 June 2014 and Selby 15 April 2014).

Nonetheless, it was not uncommon for some clients to book directly with the safari companies. Usually in this case a famous professional hunter negotiated with the clients on behalf of the company (Interview with Selby 15 April 2014, Wright 16 June 2014, and B Motsamai 18 June 2014). Bookings were done outside the country, particularly in Johannesburg, South Africa because of its popularity and advanced communication facilities. Most safari companies only had their logistics and operations bases in Maun while the main office was located abroad (www.safarilifeafrica.com). Upon arrival, clients were expected to pay for their safari license or permit at government offices even though they paid for bookings at respective safari companies (Republic of Botswana 2000).

Safari activities of the time depicted the characteristics of 'enclave tourism' whereby the arrival points for clients were the major urban centres functioning as administration centres. Maun as an administration centre of Ngamiland was also the arrival point for tourists (Mbaiwa 2002). Therefore, the safari started in Maun where clients met professional guides at a predetermined place and travelled together to the safari destination. Travelling was mostly done by road but it was possible for some companies to use light aircrafts from Maun to safari destinations as shown on Figure 4 below:

Figure 5: A photo of Selby, a professional hunter with clients arriving in Maun for safari, 1968



Source: Harry Selby family archives

The arrangement was that any safari activity either hunting or photographic was performed only in the presence of a licensed professional guide or hunter who ensured that laws were adhered to. Former professional hunter, Harry Selby, explained that in a hunting safari sometimes a game warden was available to ensure that hunters abide by hunting laws (Interview with Selby 15 April 2014). However, the clients hunted for themselves by shooting the animals they wanted. The same applied to photographic safari because the clients themselves snapshot the animals or activities they liked. Hence, for both hunting and photographic safari, professional hunters and guides were the safari experts who knew when and where to look for different animal species. They assessed the safari area to determine which would be the best area to go on a game drive or a hunting trip depending on animal sounds heard during the night as well as following animal tracks found (Republic of Botswana 1989).

It is said that before the introduction of permanent safari camps, at the end of each safari trip, the team went back to Maun to drop the clients and pick other clients. The team took at least two days in Maun before returning to the camps to allow staff to get their wages and see their families (Interview with Selby 15 April 2014 and Wright 16 June 2014). This is because permanent safari camps staff worked on shifts. Initially, the shift meant employees stayed for six months at a camp, but after some time they complained about six months being too long a period for one to stay in the bush without seeing families and friends. As a result, the six months period was reduced to three months in the 1980s, which is still practised to this day (Interview with Monare 18 June 2014, Bayei 19 June 2014 and Kgaga 21 July 2014).

For shift workers only the driver and the professional guide on duty dropped off the clients in Maun and picked new clients. Other staff members remained at the camps preparing to receive new clients or serving available clients and awaiting their leave period. This is because the staff had permanent accommodation compared to temporary camps where the team had to pitch the tents and remove them as they moved on (Interview with Motsamai 18 June 2014 and Kgaga 21 July 2014).

In order to avoid the struggle for land between the people and wildlife, seasons for safari activities were separated by the government. The hunting safari operated from April to September while photographic safari operated from October to March (Interview with Benn 16 July 2014). The conservationist Benn adds that the hunting safari took place in mopane (*colophospermum mopane*) sand veld which was dry land while photographic took place in the Okavango swamps. The reason for this was that the swamps were considered a suited environment for animal migration and reproduction. According to Benn, the idea was to ensure that animal migration and reproduction were not interfered with.

Recruitment and Training of Staff

During the early years of safari industry, staff was recruited based on their experience more than anything else. No educational qualifications were required for one to work in the safari company. Job seekers in the industry used their references and practical interviews to find employment in the safari companies (Interview with Selby 15 April 2014, Wright 16 June 2014 and Sezuka 2 June 2014). There were no formal job advertisements and job seekers kept on checking for vacant posts available. At the beginning of each safari season, job seekers visited safari companies and if employment opportunities arose they were employed. Whenever there was a vacant post, it was announced to the employees so that they could go and recruit people for employment (Interview with Selby 15 April 2014).

Most of the time workers recruited their family members, relatives and friends to improve their livelihoods (Interview with N Kayambo 17 June 2014). Sometimes some employees requested their employers to hire their relatives, spouses and even children when there was a post in their company (Interview with Kayambo 17 June 2014 and Sezuka 2 June 2014). In some instances, staff members could be promoted from junior to senior positions on the bases of their performance on the job and length of service. Also

staff on transfer from one camp to another was sometimes promoted as part of their transfer (Interview with C Samakabadi 27 May 2014).

Local employees needed some training on commercial hunting because they only had traditional subsistence hunting skills. When Ker Downey and Selby safari company first established itself in Botswana, the colonial government permitted it to bring six safari professionals from Kenya to train Botswana on safari activities. These professionals included skimmers, cooks and drivers (Interview with Selby 15 April 2014). The environmental historian Maitseo Bolaane also notes that the Kiswahili speaking people were brought to Ngamiland for their safari experience in East Africa (Bolaane 2013). This experience included how to build a safari camp, among other activities. The Kiswahili speakers brought by Ker Downey and Selby to Botswana were given three years residence permits and when these expired, they went back to Kenya. However some of them later returned to Ngamiland because they had already established relationships in Botswana (Interview with Selby 15 April 2014). Other safari companies such as Safari South trained their local employees on the job but later adopted the idea of bringing Kiswahili speakers to train their employees (Interview with Monare 18 June 2014 and Wright 16 June 2014).

The Challenges Faced by Safari Owners

Establishing a company in an area like Ngamiland was very expensive for safari operators because most recreational areas in Botswana were isolated in sparsely populated areas where basic facilities such as accommodation, food, fuel and water were not easily accessible (Lequieu 1997). Moreover, poor communication facilities presented serious challenges for the safari companies in finding clients hence dependence on agents which increased costs (Interview with Selby 15 April 2014). Therefore, companies arranged with clients to make bookings a year in advance. In addition, companies tried to utilise available means of communication such as letters, telegram and battery operated transceiver radio ('Rodger-Rodger') to facilitate communication between clients, officers and staff in Maun and the camps (Interview with Selby 15 April 2014 and Wright 16 June 2014).

As Basadi Morokotso explains in a newspaper article 'The things they do in Maun', travelling in Ngamiland was difficult due to the topography of the area, especially during the rainy seasons when rivers were flooding (Morokotso 15 February 2015). Such conditions presented serious challenges to safari operators in Maun and surrounding areas to transport material needed to operate their companies (Interview with Wright 16 June 2014). Four wheel-drive vehicles had to be used when available, but the going was never easy.

Wright, the former professional hunter and a businessman in Maun notes that safari operators also faced a challenge of insufficient supply of perishable food especially vegetables, because people in the area did not grow vegetables. Safari companies had no choice but to use preserved food such as canned products. The use of preserved food also came in handy because even if imported fresh food could be obtained, lack of electricity to run refrigerators at the camps presented serious storage problems. Local supply of products such as dairy and petrol even had to be imported owing to insufficient supply in the local market (Interview with Selby 15 April 2014 and Wright 16 June 2014).

Another challenge faced by safari companies in Ngamiland was the competition from other tourist destinations especially the long established and more experienced East African safari in terms of getting clients to Botswana (Interview with Selby 15 April 2014). Botswana was said to have been unpopular because tourist attraction areas are located in the remotest areas and its safari mainly depended only on wildlife for safari hunting and game viewing (Lequieu 1997). Silitshena and McLeod observed that East African safari was more famous and had various safari activities such as mountain climbing, water sports and many others which were not available in Botswana (Silitshena and McLeod 1989). For instance, in Kenya a client could enjoy the beach in the Indian Ocean coastal centres such as Mombasa among others.

Alternatively, a client could visit attractive snow-capped mountains such as Mount Kilimanjaro and see wild animals in the Game Park (Silitshena and McLeod 1989). Therefore, it was very expensive and challenging to run a safari company in Botswana.

Local Communities' Perceptions of Safari Companies

The establishment of safari companies in Ngamiland was perceived differently by the people in the area. The colonial government regarded the hunting safari industry as an important economic activity in the region. This was before the photographic safari which was introduced in the late 1960s after Independence. The authorities saw the hunting safari as a more viable economic activity because traditional cattle farming was continuously threatened by foot and mouth disease and the spread of Tsetse fly which could be tackled by hunting safari which reduced the number of animals that the Tsetse fly preyed on (Silitshena and McLeod 1989). Furthermore, the safari companies were appreciated for contributing to the economy by providing employment opportunities to 'unskilled' locals (Interview with D Peak 17 July 2014). Employment in a safari company provided employees with salaries. This helped them to improve their lives and take care of their family needs. It also provided hands-on training and experience which made them skillful and marketable in the job market. Safari companies also provided a market to local handicrafts especially baskets which were common in the area. For these contributions, safari companies were perceived positively by some people in the local communities and most certainly by government authorities.

Although safari companies were perceived as critical to the economy of some communities in the Ngamiland, most local people perceived safari companies negatively. Some of the former employees of safari companies complained that safari companies had discriminatory practices and were also exploitative. They claimed that safari companies under paid local employees regardless of the heavy work load. It was also alleged that in some companies managers even cut employees' tips if the managers felt that the clients offered too much tips (interview with (Interview with Monare 18 June 2014, P Shashe 2 June 2014 and Puoetsile 7 July 2014).

Some clients and safari owners were described as merciless because they refused to help employees to carry the meat they had given to them after a hunt. This forced the employees to throw away the meat which was one of their fringe benefits. The perception was that the hunters did not care about the needs of the employees but only used them to get what they wanted, (interview with Motlhabani 9 June 2014). Companies did whatever it took to make their clients at the expense of the employees. This developed a negative attitude to the local communities towards safari companies.

Among other issues, local communities observed that there was a distinction between European safari operators and their South African ('Boer/Afrikaner') counterparts. Former safari company employees in Ngamiland complained that the relationship between European safari operators and workers was much better. Some even alleged that they were treated like equals in the European owned companies while the Afrikaners or South Africans were more discriminatory (Interview with Monare 18 June 2014). It is obvious that the South Africans had brought with them the apartheid attitudes which were official government policy in their country before 1994. Sadly, it was said that those employees who felt that they were ill-treated were reluctant to lodge complaints with management to safeguard their jobs.

Poor working conditions for local employees such as long working hours without compensation, poor accommodation, low salaries and use of abusive language by employers towards employees as well as unfair dismissal of employees also existed (Mbaiwa 2002). Another form of racial discrimination emanated from failure by the safari companies to employ the local people into managerial positions (Mbaiwa 2002). When asked about the complaints of the local employees, one safari company owner alleged that the local communities felt that their territory was being taken away from them (Interview with Selby 15 April 2014). They perceived the safari industry as a threat to their natural resources, particularly game.

Mbaiwa notes that whenever a new industry is established in an area, local residents tend to endure a sense of loss because their surroundings get transformed to suit the requirements of newly established industries especially foreign dominated ones like safari companies in Ngamiland (Mbaiwa 2002).

Conclusion

It can be concluded that initially the safari industry in Ngamiland was mainly sport hunting, but as time went on photographic safari took over the dominance of the safari industry. This was a result of newly-developed policies to conserve natural resources globally. When these safari companies were established, they were hunting safaris which operated their activities on temporary camps. The companies were foreign-owned, mostly by professional hunters who had more experience on commercial hunting and also had enough finance to operate the safari business. Regardless of the challenges they experienced such as lack of infrastructure, poor supply of goods and many others, hunting safari companies flourished and extended their services to provide photographic or game viewing safaris activities during non-hunting season. Regulations that governed safari companies were formulated by the colonial government and professional hunters. The long term concession system was approved as the appropriate method of licensing. Companies held more than one concession which gave them an advantage of building photographic camps to operate both the hunting and photographic safaris on different seasons. The establishment of safari companies was welcomed with different views from the local communities. Some community members perceived safari companies positively while others perceived them negatively.

Nevertheless, the safari industry remains primal to the tourism-based economy of Ngamiland to this day, and some Batswana have joined it as owners to safari companies and lodges in the region.

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