

**THE VICTORIA FALLS HOTEL:
“AN OUT OF AFRICA EXPERIENCE”?**

BY

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Table of contents

	Abbreviations	ii
	List of Tables & Figures	iii
	Abstract	iv
	Acknowledgements	v
1.	Chapter 1: Introduction	1
	Background	1
	The Victoria Falls Hotel	4
	Methodology	7
2.	Chapter 2: Literature Review	10
	Rhodesian / Zimbabwean history	10
	General histories of tourism	15
	Publications on VFH	25
3.	Chapter 3: Rhodesia/ Zimbabwe Historical and Tourism Overview	30
	The Pre-colonial History	33
	Rhodesia: Colonial History	39
	UDI	45
	Zimbabwe: Post-colonial	46
4.	Chapter 4: Hotels of Hotels as Tourist Destinations	48
	Hotel History	48
	History of the VFH	56
5.	Chapter 5: Victoria Falls Hotel as an Iconic Colonial Hotel	72

Introduction	72
The VFH and Colonialism	73
The VHF and Tourism	80
The Butler model of tourism development	85
The VFH in iconic comparison	88
6. Chapter 6: Conclusion	95
Conservation of colonial heritage	99
Iconic, colonial hotels: similarities	101
The future and VFH	103
7. Sources	105

Abbreviations

BSAC	British South Africa Company
LMS	London Missionary Society
LEDC	Less Economically Developed Country
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UK	United Kingdom
USD	United States of America dollar USD
VF	Victoria Falls
VFH	Victoria Falls Hotel
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front

Tables and Figures and Diagrams

Diagram 1

9

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to give a historical overview of the Victoria Falls Hotel within the context of tourism. It looks particularly at how this iconic Hotel has stood the test of time by surviving both the colonial and post-colonial eras which Zimbabwe has endured. The different types of markets which the Hotel had attracted in history and the markets the Hotel attracts today is a fascinating factor which the research sets out to analyse. A comparison is made with other iconic twentieth century hotels which today, much like the VFH, continue to thrive as they did in their heyday. It looks at trends which the hotels have followed to stay relevant as well as other attributes that can be credited as factors that have contributed to the longevity of hotels such as the VHF. The Hotel's continued success in the future will be considered in the research in terms of how this colonial legacy will continue to sustain itself in a post-colonial and post- modern environment.

Keywords: Victoria Falls Hotel; Victoria Falls; Hotel industry; Tourism; British South Africa Company, Rhodesia, Zimbabwe.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

This study topic is concerned with the Victoria Falls Hotel (VFH) as an iconic tourist destination in a colonial and post-colonial tourist context. The colonial period is defined as the time when an area or region is colonised by an outside power or nation. This period commenced in 1888 and lasted to 1980 in Zimbabwe. This was a period when the country was controlled and exploited by white British settlers.¹ In contrast, the post-colonial period is defined as when a country gains independence from those who had formally colonised it. This era in Zimbabwe commenced in 1980 and continues to the present day.²

The title of this dissertation “out of Africa” has an intentional dual meaning – hence the question mark. The first meaning emphasises the “out”, meaning literally coming out or from Africa. This has connotations of the stereotypical ideas of what is perceived and what encompasses images of the African continent. These include aspects such as wild animals, luxurious safaris and vast open landscapes. When viewed in this perspective for this study, the “out of Africa” aspects which are related to VFH are the majestic Victoria Falls with its vast panoramic views and the range of wild animals both at the Hotel and also in the adjacent VF nature reserve. These images are further enhanced by the legacy conjured up by the renowned international film entitled “Out of Africa”. This 1985 epic romantic drama directed by Sydney Pollack and starring lead actors

¹ A. S. Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, pp. 2-4.

² A. S. Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, p. 4.

Robert Redford and Meryl Streep won seven Academy awards.³ One of these was for cinematography which portrayed and entrenched breathtaking pictures of a pristine African setting.⁴ The 1937 book of the same name, *Out of Africa* by Karen Blixen, also added to the popular consciousness of the African landscape. According to the *Guardian*, the book with its “lyrical and luminous picture... launched a million tourist trails”.⁵ In both cases this essentially romanticized the image of Africa as pristine, wild, majestic and untouched.

The other way in which the phrase “out of Africa” can be interpreted is when the emphasis is placed with the product being not of African origin. The “out” in the phrase out of Africa implies not of or from Africa. The VFH itself does not reveal essentially African ideals or culture. Rather, it is a colonial boutique Hotel steeped in colonial culture and ideals of a bygone era. When visiting the VFH tourists will be presented with the highest standard of luxury and service and the amenities of the nostalgic era of the high colonial period. It could be argued that tourists almost feel as if they are not in Africa. In other words, the title hints at the question of whether the VFH does belong to Africa? This duality of the phrase in the title “out of Africa” will be further expanded upon in chapter five.

³ P. Bauer, Out of Africa, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Out-of-Africa-film-by-Pollack> Access: 2/02/18

⁴ Anon, n.d., <
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/africa/kenya/articles/Out-of-Africa-The-film-that-made-us-fall-in-love-with-Kenya/>> Access 17/02/2018.

⁵ Out of Africa by Blixen, Karen Penguin Random House
<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.co.za/book/out-africa/9780241951439> Access: 2/02/18

Two concepts that are of pivotal importance in this study are: hotels and tourist destinations. Hotels can be defined as “commercial establishments providing lodging, meals and other guest services”.⁶ Hotels play an extremely important role in the tourism sector and have been of significance all throughout history. Inns and taverns for travellers and traders, which were prominent in the seventeenth century were no longer adequate and this led to the establishment of a hotel.⁷ The word hotel comes “from the French hôtel [and this establishment was larger than an inn]”⁸ and offered clients more services and luxury.

Tourist destinations or attractions are defined as places where tourists are attracted to visit because they possess unique attributes which are of interest and this leads to increased visitors to the area. A tourist destination or attraction is a “place which has characteristics that attract tourists that provide them with pleasure”.⁹ Tourist destinations come in many forms, they may be a hotel like the VFH, natural phenomena such as the VF and also possibly cultural aspects of a community such as the way they live and the food they eat.

⁶ Anon, n.d., <https://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/hotel.html> Access: 15/01/2018.

⁷ J. Levy-Bonvin, Hotels – A Brief History <https://www.hospitalitynet.org/opinion/4017990.html> Access: 15/01/2018.

⁸ Anon, n.d., < <http://www.buildinghistory.org/buildings/inns.shtml>> Access: 15/01/2018.

⁹ Anon, n.d., < <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/tourist+attraction>> Access 14/02/2018.

The Victoria Falls Hotel

For a Hotel like the (VFH) to become an iconic tourist destination it needs to have attributes and characteristics which cannot be found elsewhere and are legendary. “Large brands such as the VFH must deliver in terms of luxury and the services and products rendered [must] be considered iconic”.¹⁰

The establishment of the Hotel in the early twentieth century was because of the VF being “discovered” by David Livingstone a British explorer who was a medical doctor by profession and worked for the London Missionary Society, as he explored the African continent. Apparently “Livingstone was the first European to set eyes on the Victoria Falls, described as a majestic waterfall located in the western part of Zimbabwe”.¹¹ It is situated where the country currently shares its border and the actual waterfall with neighbouring country Zambia. Livingstone named the Falls after his Queen, the Queen of England at that time, Victoria. From the time of Livingstone’s arrival which he documented in November 1855, the area would continue to receive many visitors.¹² This marked some of the first documented forms of tourism in the country, also known as proto-tourism. Proto-tourism is the combination of the word proto and tourism: Proto indicating the first or earliest.¹³

¹⁰ N. Carson, n.d., < <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/tourist+attraction>> Access 02/03/2018.

¹¹ Anon, n.d., < <https://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/livingstone.htm>, 2000>. Access: 15/01/2018.

¹² Anon, n.d., <<https://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/livingstone.htm>, 2000.> Access: 15/01/2018.

¹³ Anon, n.d.,<https://www.thefreedictionary.com/proto> Access: 21/01/2018.

Thus, the genesis of the tourism lifecycle of VF can be traced back to this period in the latter half of the nineteenth century when Livingstone visited the area. From the early twentieth century, many visitors would come from the West, mainly from the United Kingdom (UK), to visit the VF and stay in the VFH. These visitors were generally people who could afford to travel, as travelling was extremely costly at the time and so included mainly members of royal families and the very wealthy. These visitors wanted to experience the majestic Falls as they had been portrayed by Livingstone in his travel records.

From its early inception, “tourism has remained one of the most important industries in Zimbabwe and it continues to be a major contributor to the annual gross domestic product today”.¹⁴ In the 1980s, tourism was ranked third in the country as an economic generator, following on after agriculture and mining. The “tourism growth was recorded [as increasing] from 20% to 40% [between] the years 1980 to 1999”.¹⁵ However, from the beginning of the 21st century the country experienced a dramatic decline due to serious social and political issues, as well as extreme economic crises, which in turn caused a decline in the mining and agricultural sectors. The country now relies on tourism more than ever before as it is the only industry that has shown any significant growth in the past ten years. According to tourism update, “[a]s of November 2017, there has been significant growth in tourism in Zimbabwe”.¹⁶

¹⁴ Anon, n.d., <https://knoema.com/atlas/Zimbabwe/topics/Tourism/Travel-and-Tourism-Total-Contribution-to-GDP/Contribution-of-travel-and-tourism-to-GDP-percent-of-GDP> Access: 22/01/2018.

¹⁵ Anon, n.d., <https://www.mtholyke.edu/~kniaz20a/classweb/eighthth.html> Access 21/01/2018.

¹⁶ Anon, n.d., <https://www.tourismupdate.co.za/article/179909/zimbabwe-is-back-with-record-tourist-numbers> Access: 02/02/2018.

It is evident that over the past century Zimbabwe has endured some of the most turbulent economic and political climates. During this time the country has endured precolonial, colonial and post-colonial eras each with its own distinct characteristics. The most notable instability the country experienced was in the post-colonial era. It is believed that to date, the “year 2000 marked the beginning of the tourism crisis in Zimbabwe”.¹⁷

This has led to dwindling numbers of tourists who visit the country over the years which has resulted in massively fluctuating economic impacts. The year 2000 is also the year when the land reform programme was introduced, a process which saw the displacement of most commercial farmers. As a result, “international tourist arrivals declined by 40 per cent and international tourism receipts by 38.1 per cent from 1999 figures. Again in 2004, tourism arrivals decreased by 17.8 per cent and receipts by 19.7 from 2003”.¹⁸ As a result of this crisis, the tourism industry therefore has had to look to other aspects of the tourism product. This includes actions such as tapping deeper into the experience economy so as to avoid the negative ripple effects of a turbulent economic and political environment. Destinations, such as the VFH, however have managed to survive and overcome these turbulent times and remain afloat. This is evidenced by the fact that they “continue to operate and are successful enterprises in the tourism industry - establishments such as the VFH have been open for 114 years”.¹⁹

¹⁷ Anon, n.d., <https://www.mtholyke.edu/~kniaz20a/classweb/eighthth.html> Access 21/01/2018.

¹⁸ H A. Manwa, “Is Zimbabwe Ready to Venture into The Cultural Tourism Market?” *Development Southern Africa* 24 (3), 2007, p465.

¹⁹ Anon, n.d., < <http://www.victoriafallshotel.com/>> Access: 03/03/2018.

This study seeks to analyse the position of the VFH within this changing historical context and considers how this colonial Hotel has remained and survived the Zimbabwean macro contextual environment. It also seeks to place this establishment into a comparative context by considering a few other iconic colonial hotels with similar foundations in other parts of the world.

It will compare how other iconic colonial hotels dating from the twentieth century and even before, such as the Meikles Hotel in Zimbabwe, the Giraffe Manor Hotel in Kenya, the Raffles Hotel in Singapore and the Grand Imperial Hotel in the USA, continue to function into the modern world. It will analyse how these establishments have maintained and continue to sustain their “old world” or “traditional” charm into the twenty-first century. Also, how these establishments are amongst the most sought-after tourist destinations in a world which is mostly decolonised. Colonial heritage is preserved in these institutions as well as commodified and sold as a product of nostalgia tourism.

Methodology

This study adopts a historical and analytical approach to the to the topic. It also uses the tried and tested Butler’s model of tourism development to evaluate the development of the VFH, as well as the other identified iconic Hotels.

The purpose of Butler's model of tourism development is to look at the way that tourist resorts or destinations grow and develop as well as experience decline and sometimes even rejuvenation. The model "attempts to show the cycle that all [destinations such as the VFH] go through from them being launched to them flourishing or being discontinued".²⁰

The tourist industry is dynamic and constantly changing. Therefore, the Butler model is a way of studying tourist resorts and seeing how they "change over time and in relation to the changing demands of the tourist industry".²¹ These changes include political and environmental changes which are faced by destinations worldwide. The Butler model of tourism development has five stages:

- development
- growth
- success
- stagnation
- decline/ rejuvenation.²²

An illustration of the Butler system is outlined in the diagram below:

Diagram 1: Butler's Model of tourism development

²⁰ Anon n.d., < <http://www.geocoops.com/butler-model.html>> Access: 05/03/2018.

²¹ Anon n.d., <<https://geographyfieldwork.com/ButlerModel.htm>> Access: 03/05/2018.

²² Anon n.d., <<https://geographyfieldwork.com/ButlerModel.htm>> Access: 03/05/2018.

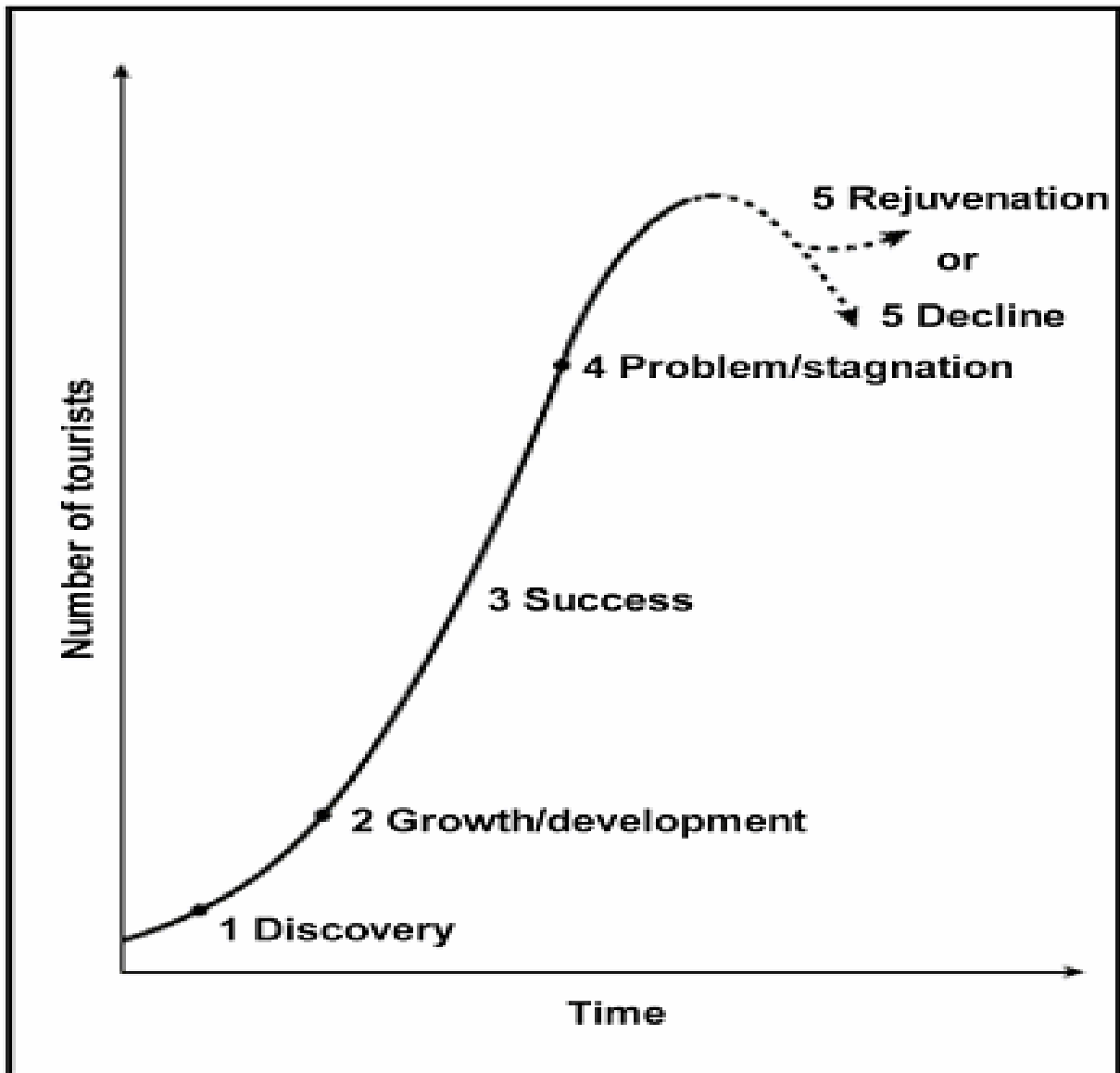


Diagram 1: Butler's Model of Tourist Resort Development (Barcelona Field Studies Centre 2018)

Application of Butler's model can be very informative for destinations. The model when applied to a tourism destination allows for comparisons to be made at different stages of the development. Lastly one of the most important aspects the Butler model takes into consideration is that of time which is imperative with particular reference to this study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

As indicated, this study will focus primarily on the VFH. To date literature which exists on colonial hotels in a global context is not extensive. There are a select number of authors who have written on the VFH in a commemorative fashion, but in comparison to some other African countries, there is very little literature on the hotel and tourism industry within Zimbabwe. This can partially be ascribed to a direct impact of Zimbabwe's tumultuous political and socio-economic environment.

In this literature overview three categories of literature will be considered. The first focuses on, Rhodesian/Zimbabwe history from the pre-colonial to the post-independence period. Secondly, works on the history of tourism in general as well as what has been written about hotels in the global context will be discussed. Then finally, the limited available material on Zimbabwean tourism and literature on the VFH will be reviewed.

Rhodesian/Zimbabwean history

Paying particular attention to the history of Zimbabwe, a number of notable literary works exist. They relay the country's historic past and give much attention to the colonial background which the country endured for a considerable amount of time. Colonisation is regarded as having played a very important if not determining role in shaping the country we know today as Zimbabwe. The selected books which concentrate on the Rhodesian/ Zimbabwe history include: Gann (1958), Tamarkin (1990),

Mlambo and Raftopoulos (2009), Maraire (2011), Schmidt (2013) and Mlambo (2014).²³

It is evident that one cannot look at the history of Zimbabwe without mention of the British South Africa Company (BSAC). “The BSAC played a pivotal role in the precolonial and a colonial era of Zimbabwe’s history”.²⁴ In Lewis Gann’s 1958 book titled, *The birth of a plural society: The development of northern Rhodesia under the British South Africa company 1894-1914*, the inception years of the BSAC are scrutinized. This book explores an era in Zimbabwean history when the land was occupied by the indigenous people of Zimbabwe, their first contact with Europeans such as the Portuguese and then the time when Livingstone travelled to the area followed by the arrival British settlers. The role that the BSAC played in “opening the country to European penetration”²⁵ is a key concern in Gann’s study.

The research by M. Tamarkin and published in 1990 under the title *The making of Zimbabwe* is a publication which extensively covers the history of Zimbabwe.²⁶ It focuses on the decolonisation process of regions within the country which started to take place from the mid-1970s. It covers the

²³ L. N. Gann, *The Birth of a Plural Society the Development of Northern Rhodesia Under the South Africa Company 1894-1914*, 1958; M. Tamarkin, *The Making of Zimbabwe: Decolonization in Regional and International Politics*, 1990; B. Raftopoulos, & A. S. Mlambo, *Becoming Zimbabwe: A History from Pre-Colonial Period to 2008*, 2008; N. Maraire, n.d., <https://www.blogs.stockton.edu/postcolonialstudies/history-of-colonialism-in-rhodesia/> Access:02/11/2017; A.S. Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, 2014: H.I. Schmidt, *Colonialism & Violence in Zimbabwe: A History of Suffering*, 2013.

²⁴ L. N. Gann, *The Birth of a Plural Society the Development of Northern Rhodesia Under the South Africa Company 1894-1914*, 1958, p. xvii.

²⁵ L. N. Gann, *The Birth of a Plural Society the Development of Northern Rhodesia Under the South Africa Company 1894-1914*, 1958, p. xvii.

²⁶ M. Tamarkin, *The Making of Zimbabwe: Decolonization in Regional and International Politics*, 1990.

colonial history of the country up to its end in 1980. It explains national policy which in turn resulted in the country's independence in 1980. One of the most notable events discussed by the author includes the Lancaster House Conference. Other factors discussed in the book are the sanctions, both economic and political, which the country faced during this period in history. This is highlighted as a critical development which shaped the country as we know it today. The book's main aim is to essentially illustrate the transition of the country's white Rhodesia to black Zimbabwe.²⁷

Another book which gives a broad overview of Zimbabwean history is one edited by Alois Mlambo and Brian Raftopoulos in 2009 with the title, *Becoming Zimbabwe: A history from the pre-colonial period to 2008*.²⁸ This is a book which also presents an overview of the Zimbabwean past. The authors focus specifically on nationality, citizenship, state rule and the "changing contours of the political environment".²⁹ The authors present an in-depth analysis of the consequences of colonialism. Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) is a theme which is also addressed in this book in terms of what this meant for the country as regards the political and economic environments, as well as the subsequent liberation struggle which resulted in the end of colonial rule in 1980. This book clearly illustrates the political milestones the country endured.³⁰

In research by Nozipo Maraire, who is a Zimbabwean historian, Zimbabwe's colonial history is specifically addressed. The article she

²⁷ M. Tamarkin, *The Making of Zimbabwe: Decolonization in Regional and International Politics*, 1990.

²⁸ B. Raftopoulos & A. S. Mlambo, *Becoming Zimbabwe*, p. ii.

²⁹ B. Raftopoulos & A. S. Mlambo, *Becoming Zimbabwe*, p. ii.

³⁰ B. Raftopoulos & A. S. Mlambo, *Becoming Zimbabwe*, p. ii.

published in 2011, entitled “History of colonialism in Rhodesia” documents the key role which was played by individuals such as Cecil John Rhodes and the BSAC in the colonisation process of Rhodesia. She shows how Rhodes and his BSAC ventured to the country in search of gold and followed on to obtain mineral rights in the area through a number of treaties signed with the local administration and British officials.³¹ Rhodesia under British colonial rule is also discussed, and some key characteristics are identified by the author. These include the extensive development of Rhodesia (e.g. railway systems) and racial segregation which led to extreme inequalities in wealth distribution in the country. She makes the point that “Rhodesia during colonization was developed by British settlers into a colony which was racially segregated. With the white settlers occupying the affluent upper class, while indigenous inhabitants were forced into the underprivileged peasant class”.³²

In 2013, a book entitled *Colonialism & violence in Zimbabwe: a history of suffering* by Heike Ingeborg Schmidt presented an account of the history of colonialism in Zimbabwe then known as Rhodesia.³³ It focuses particularly on the experiences of rural or native Zimbabweans. It also focuses on the conflict which took place between the indigenous people and the British colonialists. This publication basically gives an overview of indigenous and colonial relations which took place in the country during the precolonial and colonial eras. It explains how the country operated and

³¹ N. Maraire, n.d., <https://www.blogs.stockton.edu/postcolonialstudies/history-of-colonialism-in-rhodesia/> Access:02/11/2017.

³² N. Maraire, n.d., <https://www.blogs.stockton.edu/postcolonialstudies/hostory-of-colonialism-in-rhodesia/> Access: 11/02/2017.

³³ H.I. Schmidt, *Colonialism & Violence in Zimbabwe: A History of Suffering*, 2013.

shows how certain structures were established in this period to support segregation between races (whites and blacks).³⁴

In another 2014 book by Alois Mlambo titled *A history of Zimbabwe*, a concise history of Zimbabwe is investigated according to a chronological timeline.³⁵ The first phase considers pre-colonial Zimbabwe, that is before 1890, when the country was “occupied by indigenous black people beginning with the Stone Age hunter gatherers known as the San, from as far back as 200BC”.³⁶ The next phase considers the start of the colonial era from 1890, when the country officially became a British colony making “Zimbabwe part of 19th century expansionism”.³⁷ Mlambo also looks at the history of other notable milestones which the country experienced during the colonial dispensation. This includes the UDI which took effect in 1965 and the emergence of nationalist movements spearheaded by indigenous locals which are also presented as a pivotal element of the history of Zimbabwe which Mlambo presents. “The period after the country gained independence, in 1980 to 2000 is also covered leading up-to the crisis years from about 2000-2008”.³⁸ It also focuses on other key events which the country has experienced in the socio-political and economic realms.

A 2011 publication by Erik Gilbert and Jonathan Reynolds entitled, *Africa in world history: From pre-history to the present*, which is a general history book which serves as a historical overview of various African states, also

³⁴ H.I. Schmidt, *Colonialism & Violence in Zimbabwe: A History of Suffering*.

³⁵ A.S. Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, 2014

³⁶ A. S. Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, p.4.

³⁷ A. S. Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, p. 30.

³⁸ A. S. Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, p. 259.

provides references to Zimbabwe.³⁹ The authors highlight important events which occurred in African countries and show that these events have had a direct impact on the political, socio-cultural and economic realms of numerous African states. This, and other such publications, are important as they serve as a backdrop to the developments taking place within the tourism industry in Africa.

General histories of tourism

Research work that has focused on the history of tourism paying specific attention to Africa include: M. Anderson, John K Walton, Krishna B. Ghimire, B. Korte, D. Blackbourne & J. Retallack, C. Ashley, J. Towner and G. Wall, J. Henderson, P. Y.K. Wan, M. Sigala, C. Cooper, J. George, M. Westcott.⁴⁰ The publications of these authors will be briefly considered.

³⁹ E. Gilbert. E. & J.T. Reynolds, *Africa in World History*, 2004.

⁴⁰ M. Anderson, 'The Development of British Tourism in Egypt, 1815 to 1850', *Journal of Tourism History* 4(3) 259; J. K Walton, "Travel As A Force of Historical Change", *Journal of Tourism History* 3(2), p. 85; K. B. Ghimire (ed.), *The Native Tourist: Mass Tourism Within Developing Countries*, 2001; B. Korte et al, *The Making of Modern Tourism: The Cultural History of The British Experience 1600-2000*, p. ii; J. K. Walton, *Histories of Tourism: Representation Identity and Conflict*, p. 244; Anon, n.d., < <https://www.tothevictoriafalls.com/vfpages/devel/hotel.html>> Access 04/04/2018; J. K. Walton, *Histories of Tourism: Representation Identity and Conflict*, p. 244; D. Blackbourne & J. Retallack, *Localism, Landscape, and the Ambiguities of Place: German-Speaking Central Europe*, p. 4; C. Ashley, "Studying Hospitality: Insights from Social Sciences", *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, pp. 69-84; J. Towner and G. Wall, "History and Tourism", *Annals of Tourism Research* 18 (1), p. 73; J. Henderson, "Built Heritage and Colonial Cities", *Annals of Tourism Research* 29 (1), 2002, January 2002, pp. 254-257; P. Y.K. Wan, "Cultural Heritage and Tourism in The Developing World: A Regional Perspective", *Journal of Tourism History*, 2,(2), 2010, pp. 137-138; M. Sigala, "Cultural Heritage Management: A Global Perspective", *Journal of Tourism History*, 3(3), 2011, pp. 335-337; C. Cooper, *Essentials of Tourism*, p. 175; J. George, "Gazing Through the Sepia Lens: Critical Considerations of Tourism's Nostalgic Construction of the Small town", *Social Alternatives* 30 (2), p. 30; M. Westcott, *Introduction to Tourism and Hospitality*, p. v.

An article by Martin Anderson published in 2012 entitled, “The development of British tourism in Egypt, 1815 to 1850” recognises that tourism is one of the largest industries in the country as well as the continent. He points out that “One of the first locations which saw tourism expansion out of Europe is Egypt”.⁴¹ The article is a notable African tourism historical source showcasing the history of tourism development in Egypt from the above-mentioned period. Another theme which the article focuses on is imperialism and “British expansionism in Africa and how this had some direct links to tourism development”.⁴² However, the author does note that there are mechanisms and structures of tourism which emerged and were independent of imperial influence in the area and these should also be considered when studying the history of tourism development in other African states, such as Zimbabwe as these differ from state to state.⁴³

The 2009 article entitled “Prospects in Tourism History: Evolution, state of play and future developments” by John K. Walton is also one which gives an account of tourism’s history and its evolution in Africa.⁴⁴ The author focuses on the “monumental historical milestones which the continent experienced from as early as the eighteenth century to the tourism

⁴¹ M. Anderson, ‘The Development of British Tourism in Egypt, 1815 to 1850’, *Journal of Tourism History* 4(3) 259.

⁴² M. Anderson, ‘The Development of British Tourism in Egypt, 1815 to 1850’, *Journal of Tourism History* 4(3) 259.

⁴³ M. Anderson, ‘The Development of British Tourism in Egypt, 1815 to 1850’, *Journal of Tourism History* 4(3) 259.

⁴⁴ J. K Walton, “Travel as a Force of Historical Change”, *Journal of Tourism History* 3(2), p. 85.

industry as it is in the present day”.⁴⁵ He also notes that rapid tourism growth was faced in the continent during the 1980s and the tourism industry fast became among the most important industries in many African states as it was a major contributor to their economies.⁴⁶

Another book which addresses tourism history in Africa is one under the title, *The native tourist: Mass tourism within developing countries*.⁴⁷ This is a book edited by Krishna B. Ghimire and researched and published in 2013 for the United Nation's Research Institute for Social Development. It looks at tourism and tourism history in developing countries of the world and includes analysis of some developing countries in Africa. The author specifically focuses on domestic tourism and the dynamics within the domestic tourism industry.⁴⁸ She also notes that domestic tourism has begun to exceed international tourism in terms of growth rates. The book basically analyses statistics of domestic tourism over time, also analysing the impacts of tourism within developing countries in different eras and monitors their development and growth.⁴⁹

Other work which covers the history of tourism in the global context include a book by Barbara Korte et al, *The making of modern tourism: the*

⁴⁵ J.K, Walton, “Travel as a force of Historical Change”, *Journal of Tourism History* 3(2), p. 85.

⁴⁶ J.K, Walton, “Travel as a Force of Historical Change”, *Journal of Tourism History* 3(2), p. 85.

⁴⁷ K. B. Ghimire (ed.), *The Native Tourist: Mass Tourism Within Developing Countries*, 2001.

⁴⁸ K. B. Ghimire (ed.), *The Native Tourist: Mass Tourism Within Developing Countries*, 2001.

⁴⁹ K. B. Ghimire (ed.), *The Native Tourist: Mass Tourism Within Developing Countries*, 2001.

cultural history of the British experience 1600-2000 published in 2002.⁵⁰ This book analyses the history which the tourism industry has gone through from its beginning stages dating as far back as the sixteenth century until today. It heralds the tourism industry as being one of the “world’s largest single industries”.⁵¹ The book’s particular focus is on the cultural, intellectual, economic and social history of Britain. The book also shows how tourism development took place in Europe and argues that this can be used as an important reference when studying the development of tourism in Africa.⁵² For example, this is an important background when looking at the development of structures and establishments such as the VF area as a tourism destination.

In John K. Walton’s 2005 seminal book *Histories of tourism: Representation, identity and conflict*, he makes it clear that there has been very little academic writing which has specifically focused on the history of tourism. It states that “it is only recently that the history of tourism started to receive considerable attention in academia”.⁵³ A lot of the information which exists was on tourism and travel in the more developed countries such as the UK, Japan, Austria, Germany and Italy. Walton recognizes that there was a lot of travel which took place in the early nineteenth century due to numerous factors which were developing at the time, such as advancements in transport and transport networks, making it easier for people to travel.⁵⁴ However, travel was not limited to the West

⁵⁰ B. Korte et al, *The Making of Modern Tourism: The Cultural History of The British Experience 1600-2000*, p. ii.

⁵¹ B. Korte et al, *The Making of Modern Tourism: The Cultural History of The British Experience 1600-2000*, p. ii.

⁵² B. Korte et al, *The Making of Modern Tourism: The Cultural History of The British Experience 1600-2000*, p. ii.

⁵³ J. K. Walton, *Histories of Tourism: Representation Identity and Conflict*, p. 244.

⁵⁴ J. K. Walton, *Histories of Tourism: Representation Identity and Conflict*, p. 244.

as can be seen in the example of the VFH, “which was built to accommodate travelers who travelled to this part of Africa from the beginning of the 1900s”.⁵⁵ This travel was fueled by the development of railway systems showing that, similar to the West, travel in Africa also was made possible due to advancements in transport networks.⁵⁶

Another key general text on the history of tourism in the global context is an article entitled “Localism landscape and the ambiguities of space German speaking central Europe” which was published in 2009 by David Blackbourn and James Retallack.⁵⁷ This work presents a history of tourism encounters which took place in the initial stages of tourism development, specifically in Europe. The authors make the point that in the context of tourism the concept of “place” is very important and the fact that an area must have some sort of pull factor for the development of tourism services, such as hotels, is essential.⁵⁸

Work published in 2008 in the *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism* under the title “Studying hospitality: Insights from social sciences” by Conrad Lashley also focuses on the history of tourism.⁵⁹ With the general lack of academic works on the history of tourism in mind, this article focuses on the newer trends which have developed in the tourism

⁵⁵ Anon, n.d., < <https://www.tothevictoriafalls.com/vfpages/devel/hotel.html>> Access 04/04/2018.

⁵⁶ J. K. Walton, *Histories of Tourism: Representation Identity and Conflict*, p. 244.

⁵⁷ D. Blackbourn & J. Retallack, *Localism, Landscape, and the Ambiguities of Place: German-Speaking Central Europe*, p. 4.

⁵⁸ D. Blackbourn & J. Retallack, *Localism, Landscape, and the Ambiguities of Place: German-Speaking Central Europe*, p. 4.

⁵⁹ C. Ashley, “Studying Hospitality: Insights from Social Sciences”, *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, pp. 69-84.

industry such as the different perspectives of studying hospitality. He considers how social engagements of the people who were the pioneers of travel shaped the hospitality industry as we know it today. The roots of hospitality, tourism and tourism development, according to this article, are all rooted in social engagement.⁶⁰

Lastly, looking at the history of tourism in the global context is an article in the journal *Annals of Tourism Research* entitled “History and Tourism” published in 1991 by John Towner and Geoffrey Wall.⁶¹ The general purpose of this study was to analyse the contribution that history has given to the discipline of tourism and understanding the history of tourism. It also looks at the historical studies on tourism to date, using examples such as historical tourism literary works which were first published and covered the ancient and medieval worlds which suggested the “emergence of second homes for wealthy Roman citizens and leisure travel in the Roman times”.⁶² This is followed by the Grand Tour era basically covering seventeenth century travel in Europe. Other aspects of tourism history are also given attention such as the popularity of spas and seaside resorts which fostered travel and hospitality.⁶³

When studying tourism, it is important to also analyse the relationship which exists between tourism development and the culture and heritage

⁶⁰ C. Ashley, “Studying Hospitality: Insights from Social Sciences”, *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, pp. 69-84.

⁶¹ J. Towner and G. Wall, “History and Tourism”, *Annals of Tourism Research* 18 (1), p. 73.

⁶² J. Towner and G. Wall, ‘*History and Tourism*’, *Annals of Tourism Research* 18 (1), p. 73.

⁶³ J. Towner and G. Wall, “History and Tourism”, *Annals of Tourism Research* 18 (1), p. 73.

of a country. This is an important factor in the tourism industry and is analysed by a number of scholars. One article which focuses on this aspect was published by Joan Henderson in 2002 under the title “Built Heritage and Colonial Cities”.⁶⁴ The article focuses on the relationship which heritage has with tourism development and growth in former colonial cities. She also explores how colonial heritage is commoditised and made into a lucrative tourism product. Particular attention is paid to British colonial traits which are present in the Malacca, Penang, and Singapore heritage tourism sector. The legacy of colonial tourism is also examined using some African and Australian case studies.⁶⁵

Another article which focuses on this topic was published in 2001 by Joan Henderson. Entitled “Conserving Colonial Heritage: Raffles Hotel in Singapore”.⁶⁶ It uses the Raffles Hotel as a case study to examine how heritage tourism (and in this case colonial heritage) can be conserved. The author looks at policies which have been put in place to help with the conservation in the heritage tourism context.⁶⁷ Another key focus of the research are the difficulties which the heritage tourism industry is faced with when it comes to the conservation of heritage and heritage buildings. The author also focuses on issues which managers of colonial

⁶⁴ J. Henderson, “Built Heritage and Colonial Cities”, *Annals of Tourism Research* 29 (1), 2002, January 2002, pp. 254-257.

⁶⁵ J. Henderson, “Built Heritage and Colonial Cities”, *Annals of Tourism Research* 29 (1), 2002, January 2002, pp. 254-257.

⁶⁶ J. Henderson, “Conserving Colonial Heritage: Raffles Hotel in Singapore”, *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 7, (1), 2001, pp. 7-21.

⁶⁷ J. Henderson, “Conserving Colonial Heritage: Raffles Hotel in Singapore”, *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 7, (1), 2001, pp. 7-21.

establishments encounter, such as marketing decisions and strategies on how to manage such establishments.⁶⁸

In recent years, heritage tourism issues have received more attention in academia. An article which looks at some of these issues is “Cultural heritage and tourism in the developing world: a regional perspective” by Penny Yim King Wan published in 2010.⁶⁹ It is a compilation of global, regional challenges and practices related to cultural and heritage tourism especially in developing countries. It argues that common factors such as different economies, political structures and other environments which countries possess contribute to the challenges which the heritage industry faces.⁷⁰ It discusses issues which are faced by the heritage tourism sector in developing countries including obstacles such as financial constraints. It sheds light on issues which are controversial with heritage tourism, such as land ownership and the colonialist ideals which are what heritage sites and buildings especially in Africa reflect.⁷¹

Still looking at issues which affect the heritage tourism industry there is a 2011 article by Marianna Sigala, “Cultural heritage management: a global perspective”.⁷² Similar to the previously mentioned works, she also looks

⁶⁸ J. Henderson, “Conserving Colonial Heritage: Raffles Hotel in Singapore”, *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 7, (1), 2001, pp. 7-21

⁶⁹ P. Y.K. Wan, “Cultural Heritage and Tourism in The Developing World: A Regional Perspective”, *Journal of Tourism History*, 2, (2), 2010, pp. 137-138.

⁷⁰ P. Y.K. Wan, “Cultural Heritage and Tourism in The Developing World: A Regional Perspective”, *Journal of Tourism History*, 2, (2), 2010, pp. 137-138.

⁷¹ P. Y.K. Wan, “Cultural Heritage and Tourism in The Developing World: A Regional Perspective”, *Journal of Tourism History*, 2, (2), 2010, pp. 137-138.

⁷² M. Sigala, “Cultural Heritage management: a global perspective”, *Journal of Tourism History*, 3(3), 2011, pp. 335-337.

at the issues faced in the heritage tourism sector of the tourism industry, but more from a management point of view. Issues such as the over commodification of heritage for example, where it ends up being exploited in such a way that it loses its authenticity, are discussed.⁷³ Other issues such as legal factors which the heritage tourism sector faces are also addressed as well as social issues in the industry such as clashes between indigenous people and tourists.

Focusing on the history of hotels in the global context, works such as those by Christopher Cooper extensively analyses hotels. In his 2012 book *Essentials of tourism* there is a chapter in which the author presents the history of the accommodation industry and outlines when the overnight stay became a “commodified service”.⁷⁴ Cooper also argues that with the commodification of accommodation in the eighteenth century this became one of the first forms of business in tourism. This growth started in Europe and then trickled down to Africa. This book also shows how development in an area also always has had a close link to the hospitality industry. For example, the author makes the link between the development of good transport networks in Europe which led to the growth of the hospitality industry.⁷⁵

Another important work on the history of hotels is that by Jodie George. In an article entitled “Gazing through the sepia lens: Critical considerations of tourism’s nostalgic construction of the small town” published in 2011,

⁷³ M. Sigala, “Cultural Heritage management: a global perspective”, *Journal of Tourism History*, 3(3), 2011, pp. 335-337.

⁷⁴ C. Cooper, *Essentials of tourism*, p. 171.

⁷⁵ C. Cooper, *Essentials of tourism*, p. 175.

there is a section that focuses on the history of the concept of a “hotel”. It defines a hotel as essentially “a commercial establishment providing lodging, meals and other guest services”.⁷⁶ George illustrates how the “place” was commodified “turning the situated experience into a saleable product by framing landscapes as desirable archetypes through language”.⁷⁷ According to George “a small town may be strategically positioned as a “timeless” place, a contemporary haven embodying a “golden age” where the “past may be used to make sense of the present”.⁷⁸ An example is the VFH located in VF and providing the backdrop for the golden era product sold by the VFH.

Still with the theme of the history of hotels, there is a 2015 book by C. Field Lavander and M. Guterl entitled: *Hotel life: the story of a place where anything can happen*, which focuses on the hotel in terms of its physical state and the physical experience which the guests derive from visiting it.⁷⁹ However, it also considers the sociological and theoretical consequence of such a hotel visit. The authors emphasise that hotel life can be divided into four sections and they are: space, time, scale and affect. It looks specifically at how the modern hotel caters for all of the above-mentioned factors and the important role they play in the hotel industry.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Anon, n.d., <https://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/hotel.html> Access: 20/10/2018.

⁷⁷ J. George, “Gazing Through the Sepia Lens: Critical Considerations of Tourism’s Nostalgic Construction of the Small town”, *Social Alternatives*, 30 (2), p. 30.

⁷⁸ J. George, “Gazing Through the Sepia Lens: Critical Considerations of Tourism’s Nostalgic Construction of the Small town”, *Social Alternatives* 30 (2), p. 30.

⁷⁹ C. Field Lavander and M. Guterl, *Hotel Life: The Story of a Place Where Anything Can Happen*, 2015.

⁸⁰ C. Field Lavander and M. Guterl, *Hotel Life: The Story of a Place Where Anything Can Happen*, 2015.

In the book *Introduction to tourism and hospitality in BC 2015* Morgan Westcott explores the inception stages of the hotel and hospitality industry.⁸¹ He begins with the origins of leisure travel, which is held to have occurred in the fourteenth century and was mainly the domain of those who had the financial means to take part in such expensive activities. By the time Thomas Cook opened his first leisure travel agency, which catered almost exclusively to the extremely wealthy (usually men of good standing), travel was mainly limited to within Europe.⁸² As time went on and transport networks improved, people from Europe started to travel abroad and to Africa. Eventually in the 1900s places like the VFH would be established due to the need for accommodation for overseas visitors such as these when touring the area.⁸³

Publications on VFH

Turning to research and publications which focus on the history of tourism and hotels in the region of Zimbabwe, the earliest very general account of travel in the region is that by Thomas Baines in his book *Explorations in South-West Africa: Being an account of a journey from Walvis bay, of the western coast to lake Ngami and the Victoria Falls* published in 1864. It gives a primary account of his travels to VF in the nineteenth century. In it Baines captures some of the first recorded perceptions of the first European encounter to the VF.⁸⁴

⁸¹ M. Westcott, *Introduction to Tourism and Hospitality*, p. v.

⁸² M. Westcott, *Introduction to Tourism and Hospitality*, p. v.

⁸³ M. Westcott, *Introduction to Tourism and Hospitality*, p. v.

⁸⁴ T. Baines, *Explorations in South-West Africa: Being an Account of a Journey from Walvis Bay, of the Western Coast to Lake Ngami and The Victoria Falls*, p. i.

Another early notable book on the region is the one entitled *To the Victoria Falls of the Zambesi*.⁸⁵ This book gives the personal narrative of author Edward Mohr of his journey to the VF. He was a German traveller who travelled to Africa to hunt for wild animals. “His other purpose for travel had been to search for other undiscovered geographical phenomena similar to the VF for example”.⁸⁶ Mohr also gives a historical overview of the VF area again emphasising the views of the British when reporting of his encounters.⁸⁷ He is said to have dramatically proclaimed that “I threw down my pen. No human being can describe the infinite; and what I saw was part of infinity made visible and found in beauty”.⁸⁸

Also addressing the history of tourism in Zimbabwe is a book by Sampson Jerry & Anderson Jones published in 2015 entitled *History, culture and tourism in Zimbabwe*. This book analyses the history of tourism in Zimbabwe, while also taking into consideration [the culture of both the indigenous people and the former British colonialists”.⁸⁹ The authors also describe in detail the important tourist destinations which the country possesses. It serves as a source which documents the traditions and cultures of Zimbabwe and also highlights it as an extremely popular cultural heritage tourism destination.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ E. D. Mohr, *To the Victoria Falls of the Zambesi*, p. iv.

⁸⁶ E. D. Mohr, *To the Victoria Falls of the Zambesi*, p. iv.

⁸⁷ E. D. Mohr, *To the Victoria Falls of the Zambesi*, p. iv.

⁸⁸ Anon, n.d., < <https://tothevictoriafalls.com> > Access: 04/04/2018.

⁸⁹ J. Sampson & A Jones, *History, Culture and Tourism in Zimbabwe*, p. 1.

⁹⁰ J. Sampson & A Jones, *History, Culture and Tourism in Zimbabwe*, p. 1.

The last section takes a look at what has been written about VFH and aspects related directly to the Hotel. This includes works by J. Creewel, P. Roberts, Reese Okoyong Kwon, Sheranne Fairley and E. Lightsey.⁹¹

In 2004 the VFH commemorated its centenary and a book entitled *One Hundred Years 1904-2004: History of The Victoria Falls Hotel* was written by John Creewel.⁹² Creewel refers to the VFH “as a truly special place in the world” and states that the Hotel is a “jewel” because of “consistent attention to quality and standards over a century of operation”.⁹³ Other aspects which Creewel focuses on include how and why the Hotel is a success, referring specifically to, it’s “close proximity to one of the seven wonders of the world”. He argues that it is a major attraction to tourists from all over the world.⁹⁴ Early descriptions such as these would have enticed readers of the late nineteenth century to travel to Africa. This is indicated as the reason for the development of tourist/ traveller accommodation as the VFH.

Another more recent book on the VFH is *Corridors through Time: a history of the Victoria Falls Hotel* written by Peter Roberts in 2015.⁹⁵ This gives a historical account of the VFH and how the Hotel has matured over time. It

⁹¹ J. Creewel, *One Hundred Years 1904- 2004: History of The Victoria Falls Hotel*; P. Roberts, *Corridors Through Time: A History of The Victoria Falls Hotel*; Reese Okoyong Kwon, *The Victoria Falls Hotel*, Ploughshares, 38 (4), pp. 85-100, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/491931/summary> Access 28/ 05/18; S. Fairley, “In Search of Relived Social Experience: Group-based Nostalgia Sport Tourism”, *Journal of Sport Management* ,17 (3), pp. 284-304; E. Lightsey, 'Nostalgia Charm and Tourism' *Georgia Trend*, 26 July 2004, pp 64-69

⁹² J. Creewel, *One Hundred Years 1904- 2004: History of The Victoria Falls Hotel*.

⁹³ J. Creewel, *One Hundred Years 1904- 2004: History of The Victoria Falls Hotel*, p. 8.

⁹⁴ Anon, n.d., <http://www.victoriafallshotel.com/about/history>, Access: 19/01/2018.

⁹⁵ P. Roberts, *Corridors Through Time: A History of The Victoria Falls Hotel*, 2015.

takes note of renovations, refurbishments as well additions which the Hotel underwent over the past century.⁹⁶

In 2012 Reese Okoyong Kwon published her personal experiences of the VFH as one of the few such accounts which exist on the VFH.⁹⁷ It gives a brief historical overview of the Hotel. The article mainly focuses on the experiences which Kwon had while visiting the VFH. Aspects such as the scenic views which the Hotel boasts as well as the luxury offered by the Hotel are mentioned. Dynamics between the indigenous people and the colonialists are a subject which is also touched on by the author.⁹⁸ This article is useful in that it relates on the experiences of the VFH through the lens of the visitor.

Another publication related to tourist experience is that written by Sheranne Fairley in 2003, entitled “In search of relived social experience: Group based nostalgia sport-tourism”.⁹⁹ It takes an in-depth analysis of “nostalgia” which is one of the key themes which needs to be addressed when studying the VFH, as well as “experience” which is also another major theme. The yearning a person gets to visit an area or destination and what experiential benefit they derive from this travel is also explored.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ P. Roberts, *Corridors Through Time: A History of The Victoria Falls Hotel*, p.7.

⁹⁷ Reese Okoyong Kwon <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/491931/summary> Access 28/05/18

⁹⁸ Reese Okoyong Kwon <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/491931/summary> Access 28/05/18.

⁹⁹ S. Fairley, “In Search of Relived Social Experience: Group-based Nostalgia Sport Tourism”, *Journal of Sport Management*, 17 (3), pp. 284-304.

¹⁰⁰ S. Fairley, “In Search of Relived Social Experience: Group-based Nostalgia Sport Tourism”, *Journal of Sport Management*, 17 (3), pp. 284-304.

Lastly, in an article published in 2004 entitled “Nostalgia charm and tourism” by Ed Lightsey, he also writes about the tourists’ experiences. His work “highlights the existence of nostalgia in the tourism industry and how this is boosting the tourism industry today”.¹⁰¹ The term “older is better” is used in the article in terms of olden day antiques but this can also be the case for the VFH in saying that the old order is best and is what is attracting tourism even today many years after colonialism was abolished.¹⁰² The very product of colonial ambition is today one of the most successful hotel establishment in the country.

The previously discussed sources, including the background history of Africa and the Rhodesian/Zimbabwean region’s history, will inform this study. The development of the hotel industry will also be of relevance as will the specific studies on the Hotel itself.

¹⁰¹ E. Lightsey, *Nostalgia Charm and Tourism*, p. 67.

¹⁰² E. Lightsey, *Nostalgia Charm and Tourism*, p. 67.

Chapter 3

The History of Rhodesia/ Zimbabwe

This chapter will briefly outline the history of the region from the time when the territory is referred to as a plateau with undefined borders, sharing the territory with indigenous inhabitants of the region. The economic, political and social interactions which took place in the pre-colonial era will be discussed. As evidenced in the literature review, in this period the “Zimbabwean plateau was a vibrant and ever evolving place with intact social and political dynamics”.¹⁰³ Another important aspect of the history of the region which will be discussed is the colonial era which, it can be said, “opened up the country economically and played a pivotal role in defining the borders which the plateau shared with other countries such as Zambia and South Africa”.¹⁰⁴ The third phase of this region is the post-colonial period, when the area became independent after 1980.

Zimbabwe has had a very chequered past as a country. Before the date 1888 the country was inhabited only by indigenous people. “These people consisted mainly of the Shona and Ndebele tribes, along with San hunter-gatherers”.¹⁰⁵ Since then the country has endured colonial and postcolonial autocratic rule after the “free and fair election” held in 1980. The colonial era lasted between 1888 to 1980, also including the period

¹⁰³ I. Pikirayi, *The Zimbabwe Culture: Origins and Decline of the Southern Zambezi States*, p.1.

¹⁰⁴ A. S. Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, p. x.

¹⁰⁵ I. Pikirayi, *The Zimbabwe Culture: Origins and Decline of the Southern Zambezi States*, p.1

from “1965 to 1980 when the colonial white settlers signed into effect the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI)”.¹⁰⁶ This resulted in the white settlers who had moved to the country and occupied several parts of the country with the most fertile land, becoming independent from the British government.

In 1980, after a 15 year long civil war between the colonists and native Zimbabweans, the country gained independence and then became known as the Republic of Zimbabwe.¹⁰⁷ Zimbabwe would come to be known as the bread basket of Africa. Sihlobo believes that “[t]he timeline in which Zimbabwe held the bread basket of Africa status is unclear”.¹⁰⁸ There have been scholars that claim the “bread basket” status of Zimbabwe has been over exaggerated.¹⁰⁹ There are however those that argue that it is evident that the country was in a good political and economic standing after independence in 1980 and well into the 1990s.¹¹⁰

There is generally consensus that the 2000s were a time of decline in the country, a decline in both its political and economic standing which was a direct result of “the land redistribution programme (officially known as the Land Reform Programme) which the country underwent in 2001”.¹¹¹ It is

¹⁰⁶ Anon, n.d, < <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/fact-sheets/fs263.aspx>> Access 07/05/2018.

¹⁰⁷ A. S. Mlambo, A History of Zimbabwe, p. xv

¹⁰⁸ W. Sihlobo, 2017, Analysis: Was Zimbabwe ever the breadbasket of Africa?, <https://www.africa.check.org/2017/11/28/analysis-zimbabwe-ever-breadbasket-africa/> Access 08/07/ 2018.

¹⁰⁹ W. Sihlobo, 2017, Analysis: Was Zimbabwe ever the breadbasket of Africa?, <https://www.africa.check.org/2017/11/28/analysis-zimbabwe-ever-breadbasket-africa/> Access 08/07/ 2018.

¹¹⁰ I. Scoones et al, *Zimbabwe’s Land Reform: A summary of findings*, p.2.

¹¹¹ I. Scoones et al, *Zimbabwe’s Land Reform: A summary of findings*, p.2.

reported that the “country contributed to only 2% in maize production between 2001 and 2016 at this point the country’s maize consumption outpaced production”.¹¹² This led to the country now having to import maize which was not ideal in a declining economy. Wheat and other grain commodities followed the same trend”.¹¹³ During the declining years and the political instability which the country endured during the early 2000’s entities such as the VFH, the focus of this study, were affected in many ways. This shall be discussed in further detail in the following chapters.

The year 2017 marked another notable occurrence in Zimbabwe. A military coup took place in “on November 17th which resulted in the overthrowing of the current president of the country at the time (Robert Mugabe). The coup was led by military force of Zimbabwe”.¹¹⁴ This coup again placed Zimbabwe in a political predicament in terms of its multi-national profile. It also had, and still has, serious economic ramifications for the country and generally also impacted negatively on the tourism sector. At some levels these circumstances were also to create opportunities and obstacles for entities such as the VFH.

¹¹² W. Sihlobo, 2017, Analysis: Was Zimbabwe ever the breadbasket of Africa?, <https://www.africa.check.org/2017/11/28/analysis-zimbabwe-ever-breadbasket-africa/> Access 08/07/ 2018.

¹¹³ W. Sihlobo, n.d, <https://www.africa.check.org/2017/11/28/analysis-zimbabwe-ever-breadbasket-africa/> Access 08/07/ 2018

¹¹⁴ A.J. van Rensburg, 15 November 2018 <https://m.news24.com/Analysits/its-a-coup-regardless-of-whpolitical-at-zim-military-says-analysts-20171115>. Access: 18/01/2018

The Pre-colonial History

According to the historic timeline developed by Prof Alois Mlambo “there is archaeological evidence that shows that there were Stone Age cultures which go back as far as 100 000 years”.¹¹⁵ Research has shown that “the San hunter-gatherer communities inhabited the land, and this is evidenced by the numerous rock paintings an example being those exhibited at the Matobo Hills as well as the Chinoyi caves”.¹¹⁶ These San hunter-gatherer communities are believed to have been the first inhabitants of Zimbabwe.

Next to inhabit the land were the Iron Age Bantu-speaking people. Mlambo makes note of this, due to the evidence of pottery remains which were left behind and discovered by archaeologists. This group came to the region from the north of the African continent. Pre-colonial Zimbabwean literary history points out that there were notable economic advancements which were taking place.¹¹⁷ These advancements included trade for example with people and cultures which were outside the Zimbabwean Plateau. With growing trade and cultural exchange in the plateau, this ultimately led to the division among inhabitants of that land.¹¹⁸ The emergence of states within the Zimbabwean plateau became a prominent occurrence which would dominate the pre-colonial history of the country.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ A. S. Mlambo, *A history of Zimbabwe*, p.11.

¹¹⁶ A. S. Mlambo, *A history of Zimbabwe*, p.11; I. Pikirayi, *The Zimbabwe Culture: Origins and Decline of the Southern Zambezi States*, p.1.

¹¹⁷ A. S. Mlambo, *A history of Zimbabwe*, p.12.

¹¹⁸ I. Pikirayi, *The Zimbabwe Culture: Origins and Decline of the Southern Zambezi States*, p.1.

¹¹⁹ A. S. Mlambo, *A history of Zimbabwe*, p.12.

It should be noted that the region endured internal strife even before the arrival of the colonists. There has been a lot of research which has been done on this era. According to archaeological scholar Pikirayi, “Zimbabwe culture is an archaeological term used to subsume the five-different prehistoric and historic political formations on the Zimbabwe plateau and the adjacent lowlands”.¹²⁰ These political formations formed the empires or early states which utilised the land before the land was colonised by the Europeans.¹²¹

In pre-colonial times, as far back as 1700s the indigenous people (Bantu-speaking also known as Iron age peoples) who inhabited the country were of multiple ethnic backgrounds. These included the following eight identifiable peoples: Shangani/Tsonga, Venda, Tonga, Kalanga, Ndebele, Karanga, Zezuru, Korekore, Manyika and the Ndau”.¹²² Today these groups have been classified into two distinct groups that dominate Zimbabwe: that are the Shona and Ndebele. This is largely because the abovementioned ethnic backgrounds possess similar language and cultural beliefs, hence the classification into the two categories of Shona and Ndebele.

¹²⁰ I. Pikirayi, *The Zimbabwe Culture: Origins and Decline of the Southern Zambezi States*, p.1.

¹²¹ I. Pikirayi, *The Zimbabwe Culture: Origins and Decline of the Southern Zambezi States*, p.6.

¹²² I. Pikirayi, *The Zimbabwe Culture: Origins and Decline of the Southern Zambezi States*, p.6.

During the period between:

1040 – 1270 the most prominent state was the Mapungubwe which was in the southern-most part of Zimbabwe where the country today shares its border with South Africa. It had strong political and economic stems.¹²³

The Mapungubwe state was an extremely successful state. Some of the remains from this state are held and curated by the Department of Arts at the University of Pretoria. The most popular of the remains found at Mapungubwe is the “Golden Rhinoceros”.¹²⁴ Mlambo explains that the “Mapungubwe state began to decline in the twelfth century. This decline was driven by the changes in coastal trade centres, and thus trade routes”.¹²⁵ According to Pikirayi, the “decline in annual rainfall is another factor which also led to the decline of the state”.¹²⁶ The decline of the Mapungubwe state gave rise to the more inland states within Zimbabwe such as the Great Zimbabwe state.¹²⁷

The Great Zimbabwe state was the next state to form after the decline of the Mapungubwe state. “The most iconic symbol of this state is the Great Zimbabwe Ruins which today can be found near the City of Masvingo in

¹²³ I. Pikirayi, *The Zimbabwe Culture: Origins and Decline of the Southern Zambezi States*, p.6.

¹²⁴ I. Pikirayi, *The Zimbabwe Culture: Origins and Decline of the Southern Zambezi States*, p.6.

¹²⁵ A. S. Mlambo, 2014. *A history of Zimbabwe*, p. 16.

¹²⁶ I. Pikirayi, *The Zimbabwe Culture: Origins and Decline of the Southern Zambezi States*, p.6; T. O'Connor & G. Kiker, 'Collapse of the Mapungubwe Society: Vulnerability of Pastoralism to Increasing Aridity', *Climatic Change* 66 (1), p. 49

¹²⁷ A. S. Mlambo, 2014. *A history of Zimbabwe*, p. 16.

Zimbabwe”.¹²⁸ The Great Zimbabwe was listed on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation World Heritage List in 1986. Owing to the size of the ruins the Great Zimbabwe ruins are “the largest stone structure south of the Pyramids of Giza of Egypt.”¹²⁹ The Great Zimbabwe state was prominent in Zimbabwe from 1250 AD to 1450 AD¹³⁰ and was well known for its trade of gold and iron. Research shows that “Great Zimbabwe was the largest pre-colonial state in southern Africa and was the capital for the ancestors of the Shona people who are still present in the country”.¹³¹ “The name Zimbabwe is derived from another name given to the Great Zimbabwe ruins ‘dzimba dzemabwe’ meaning house of stones”.¹³² “The history of this state has been highly contested by historians and archaeologist and other researchers.”¹³³ However, the prevailing opinion is that the ruins were created by a highly sophisticated ancient civilisation which occupied the area from the year 1280 AD”.¹³⁴

After the decline of the Great Zimbabwe state approximately at the end of the fifteenth century, there was the emergence and rise of the Mutapa state.¹³⁵ Researchers have stated that this state was in north-eastern Zimbabwe. Also, to be noted is the fact that this state was founded by an

¹²⁸Anon, n.d., <<https://www.zomembassydc.gov.zw/index.pho/2015-12-15-10-06-42/2014-12-16-09-53-10>> Access: 06/08/2018.

¹²⁹ Anon, n.d., < <https://www.symbonia.com/world-heritage-sites-zimbabwe.html> > Access: 04/08/2018.

¹³⁰ Anon, n.d., < <https://www.symbonia.com/world-heritage-sites-zimbabwe.html> > Access: 04/08/2018.

¹³¹ Anon, n.d., < <https://www.symbonia.com/world-heritage-sites-zimbabwe.html> > Access: 04/08/2018.

¹³² P. Tumwebaze, ‘Tembea: The Great Zimbabwe’, *The New Times* 2000, p.1

¹³³ Anon, n.d., <<https://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/great-zimbabwe-zimbabwe-case-study>> Access: 20/07/2018.

¹³⁴ Anon, n.d., <<https://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/great-zimbabwe-zimbabwe-case-study>> Access: 20/07/2018.

¹³⁵ I. Pikirayi, *The Zimbabwe Culture: Origins and Decline of the Southern Zambezi States*, p.8.

immigrant group to Zimbabwe who conquered the local indigenous groups which already existed in Zimbabwe”.¹³⁶ Unlike the Great Zimbabwe which was limited to the south-eastern part of the Zimbabwean plateau, “the Mutapa spanned most of the Zimbabwe plateau and has been documented as the largest political state in pre-colonial times.¹³⁷ It is the Mutapa state which saw the arrival of the first Europeans to the Zimbabwe plateau the Portuguese in the fifteenth century”.¹³⁸

The Mutapa state was known for having very strong political and economic systems and this state was the most prominent state in the Zimbabwean plateau for approximately 380 years. The Mutapa state went into decline in the seventeenth century “due to infighting and reforms within the state which took place in 1663”. According to Mlambo, the “presence of the Portuguese [said to have been a contributing factor] which led to the demise of the Mutapa state”.¹³⁹ This was apparently due to “their interference in the political and social structures of the Mutapa state. The Portuguese are also accused of pitting prominent members of the Mutapa state against each other and this ultimately led to the weakening of the state”.¹⁴⁰

From the period of 1663 to 1704 the Torwa/Rozvi state established itself as a successful economic state to rival the Mutapa state. The Torwa/Rozvi state was established during a time when a vast number of “foreigners”,

¹³⁶ I. Pikirayi, *The Zimbabwe Culture: Origins and Decline of the Southern Zambezi States*, p.8.

¹³⁷ A. S. Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, 2014 p. 22.

¹³⁸ A. S. Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, 2014 p. 22.

¹³⁹ A. S. Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, 2014 p. 22.

¹⁴⁰ A. S. Mlambo *A History of Zimbabwe*, 2014, p. 23.

or people who did not originate from the area, came into the Zimbabwe Plateau. Conflict in the region led to alliances between people being destroyed and “by the 1494 a dynasty called the Vatorwa, meaning “outsiders,” broke away from the Torwa/Rozvi state and established itself and continued as the most prominent state until its decline in early 1680”.¹⁴¹ For almost 400 years on the Zimbabwe plateau,” this state was the most prominent state and its demise came in the 1850s due to the arrival of the Mfecane groups from the south of the Limpopo”.¹⁴²

The next state which became prominent after the Vatorwa state, was the Ndebele state. “The arrival of the Mfecane groups, which is a Shona term meaning ‘crusher’ given to the group of people who migrated from the more southern parts of the continent into the Zimbabwean plateau”.¹⁴³ This migrant group consisted of a fragment of Zulu people who followed Mzilikazi who had broken away from King Shaka’s Zulu clan in the first half of the nineteenth century. This group of migrants travelled north into present day Zimbabwe:

As they made their northern trek they managed to raid and conquer and integrate with some Sotho and Pedi settlements along the way to the Zimbabwe plateau. As a result of this integration between these Zulu, Sotho and Pedi, this group of people acquired their name the Ndebele tribe. By 1850 Ndebele rule had successfully

¹⁴¹ A.S. Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, 2014, p. 22.

¹⁴² I. Pikirayi, *The Zimbabwe Culture: Origins and Decline of the Southern Zambezi States*, p.28.

¹⁴³ I. Pikirayi, *The Zimbabwe Culture: Origins and decline of southern Zambezi states*, 2001 p. 30.

taken over the reins from the Varozvi/Torwa Empire”.¹⁴⁴

The Ndebele state did not, however, occupy the whole Zimbabwean Plateau as had some of the preceding states. They were the most prominent tribe and settled in the south-west of the country, today known as Matebeleland. The Ndebele state “went into decline [at the time that the] British entered the Zimbabwean Plateau and colonised the region this was in approximately 1888 when the processes of colonisation commenced”.¹⁴⁵ In the context of this study, this long pre-colonial history indicates how steeped the region is in an African past that reaches back centuries. The colonial era, in which the VFH was built and which it can be argued it still symbolically represents, only dates back a century and a half.

Rhodesia: Colonial History

The year 1880 marked the beginning of European imperialism in the Zimbabwe Plateau region. The arrival of Europeans, specifically the British, began to play a significant role in changing the pre-colonial political, social and economic dynamics. The year 1890 marked the start of the colonial era of the country when the region officially became a British colony.

Cecil John Rhodes and his BSAC were key players in the colonisation process of the country and is described as such:

Rhodes’s motivation for the colonisation of not only

¹⁴⁴ I. Pikirayi, *The Zimbabwe Culture: Origins and decline of southern Zambezi states*, 2001 p. 30.

¹⁴⁵ A. S. Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, 2014 p.34.

Zimbabwe, but many other British colonies, was due to the fact that he believed in the superiority of British Rule and he believed that it was what was best for humankind. Rhodes yearned to extend British territories over the world as much as possible.¹⁴⁶

This desire is often referred to as his “Cape-to-Cairo dream”.

With particular reference to the colonisation of Zimbabwe, it is well known that Rhodes used deception in his negotiations with the Ndebele King Lobengula, which led him to sign a treaty which handed over all reigns of sovereign power to the “Queen’s representative” in southern Africa. Rhodes is said to have sent his business partner Charles Rudd, who was accompanied by other British counterparts to present Lobengula with a treaty to sign. This treaty or document is known as the “Rudd Concession” and it contained terms which were unfavourable to Lobengula and his people, the Ndebele. Lobengula was assured by the British that the treaty was harmless. As English was not his first language, his command of the language being extremely weak, and he was therefore really unaware of the contents of document he was signing.¹⁴⁷

Many accounts of the process of the signing of this treaty detail the procedure in different ways, but one opinion which researchers agree on is the fact that the process which the British obtained this treaty was deceitful and unfair. Not only did the treaty give the British mineral rights for the whole of Zimbabwe, but it was well known that Lobengula was not the ruler of the whole country and in actual fact a very small part of the

¹⁴⁶ A. S. Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, 2014 p.36.

¹⁴⁷ A.S. Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, 2014 p. 38

country located in the south and south-west of modern-day Zimbabwe.¹⁴⁸ He therefore did not have the jurisdiction nor power to make such an agreement anyway. The process has been described as follows:

Drafted by Rochford Maguire it would have been a stretch that Lobengula could have understood the document even with some knowledge of the English language.

The document was 'couched' in turgid language of the ins and outs of Court language and which was in any case misrepresented.¹⁴⁹

Lobengula was under the impression that he was allowing for no more than 10 men to enter the territory. He was promised guns and money in return for his signing of the treaty. It is after this treaty was signed by Lobengula that Zimbabwe became an official British Colony.¹⁵⁰ Zimbabwe would remain a colony until its independence in 1980, ninety-two years later. Following the signing of the treaty the BSAC commenced in their quest to mine for gold and other minerals in the region. The population of British settlers increased dramatically in Zimbabwe. The area was being administered by Cecil John Rhodes, and "by 1892 there was approximately 1500 Europeans in the region".¹⁵¹

It was not an easy task for Rhodes and the BSAC to gain full control of the country as they faced "a lot of resistance from the indigenous people

¹⁴⁸ A. S. Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, 2014 p. 39.

¹⁴⁹ A. S. Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, 2014 p. 39.

¹⁵⁰ A. S. Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, 2014 p. 39.

¹⁵¹ Anon, 2001/n.d.,

<https://www.worldhistory.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistoriesResponsive.asp?historyid=ad28#c600> Access 08/08/2018.

of Zimbabwe, both the Shona and the Ndebele clans”¹⁵² that occupied the land. The British settlers were faced with resistance which led to wars such as the first “chimurenga” in 1896. These wars were open conflict between the British colonialists and the indigenous people of the region. The indigenous people “staged an uprising in the hope of dislodging colonialism”. There was another major attempt or uprising by the indigenous people which was also unsuccessful. This uprising took place in the 1960s.¹⁵³

The migration of the Europeans into the region was made possible due to the advancements in the transport systems which were in the process of development in the country. As mentioned, the BSAC had the vision of constructing a railway line which would span the entire African continent from South to North. “The BSAC had managed to construct a railway line from Cape Town to Bulawayo in 1896 and by 1904 the railway had reached the Victoria falls”.¹⁵⁴ In 1895 the country gained the name “Rhodesia” named after its colonial founder, Cecil John Rhodes.¹⁵⁵

The development of Rhodesia helped clearly define the borders of Zimbabwe as we know it today. The colonial developers of Rhodesia clearly marked the territories and boundaries of Northern and Southern Rhodesia today known as Zambia and Zimbabwe respectively in 1911.

¹⁵² Anon, n.d., <
<https://www.tothevictoriafalls.com/vfpages/rhodesias/matabele.html>> Access:
21/02/2018.

¹⁵³ A. S. Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, p. 201.

¹⁵⁴ Anon, n.d, <https://www.tothevictoriafalls.com/vfpages/devel/capetocairo.html>
Access: 20/07/2018.

¹⁵⁵ A. S. Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, p. 201.

“Southern Rhodesia became a self-governing British colony in 1923”.¹⁵⁶ Initially the BSAC’s purpose in the country was to obtain mineral rights because they believed that the country possibly possessed gold deposits such as those which the BSAC had exploited in the neighbouring country South Africa. However, it has been documented that Rhodesia did not possess as much gold as had been expected, but it was the country’s fertile farmland that impressed the BSAC. The company only had mineral rights over the plateau, which meant they were not able to take the farmland for themselves. Therefore, history tells us that:

they waged war on the against the Ndebele and Shona natives who occupied the impressive farmlands. As in the rest of Africa the colonialists used machine guns and artillery, and this was a major contributor in subduing their native opponents whose [weapons were not as sophisticated].¹⁵⁷

The Ndebele and Shona Empires were defeated by the British colonialists and this allowed for the white settlers to take advantage of the high-quality land and take it for themselves for farming.¹⁵⁸ As a result, the indigenous people of the region “were forced into the parts of the plateau which were not as fertile land”.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ A. Mckenna, 2009., <https://www.britannica.com/place/Rhodesia>, Access: 10/08/2018.

¹⁵⁷ Anon, n.d., < <https://www.tothevictoriafalls.com/vfpages/rhodesias/matabele.html>> Access: 10/07/2018.

¹⁵⁸ Anon, n.d., <https://www.britishempire.co.uk/maproom/northernrhodiesia.htm>, Access 24/08/2018.

¹⁵⁹ H. I. Schmit, *Colonialism and Violence in Zimbabwe*, p. i.

The pioneer of the colonisation of Rhodesia, Cecil John Rhodes died in 1902 near Cape Town. “After a long period of poor health which had not enabled him to travel to Bulawayo to witness the BSAC officially open the railway”.¹⁶⁰ At the time of Rhodes’s death the railway had reached Bulawayo and was being further developed towards the VF area. Two years after his death in 1904, the railway had reached VF, and “this also marked the opening of the VFH”.¹⁶¹

The country remained under British colonial administration until 1922 when the white minority settlers decided to self-govern themselves and the country. This transition became official when Rhodesia became a self-governing British colony after a referendum was held and the settlers opted to self-govern.¹⁶²

At this point in the early phase of the twentieth century, as a result of the determination of the BSAC, the country possessed a very well-developed transport network. This included railway lines which covered most of the country with stations at major towns which had been established in the country such as Salisbury (today known as Harare), Fort Victoria (today known as Masvingo), as well as in the cities of Bulawayo and VF.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Anon, n.d., <<https://www.tothevictoriafalls.com/vfpages/devel/railway.html>> Access 24/08/2018.

¹⁶¹ Anon, n.d., <<https://www.tothevictoriafalls.com/vfpages/tourism/tourism.html>> Access 28/08/2018.

¹⁶² Anon, n.d., <<https://www.tothevictoriafalls.com/vfpages/tourism/tourism.html>> Access 28/08/2018.

¹⁶³ Anon, n.d., <<https://www.tothevictoriafalls.com/vfpages/tourism/tourism.html>> Access 28/08/2018.

The next couple of decades in Rhodesian history, from the 1930s through to the 1960s, was characterised by the economic development of the country. Many legal acts were passed which pertained to land ownership and this led to more of the natives being restricted from owning land. This essentially led to the rise of local nationalist movements which were against the British white minority rule and administration in the country. The native's position in terms of the land issue is also another driver of the resultant war which took place and is known as the "second Chimurenga" and lasted for several years.¹⁶⁴

UDI

The Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) was another key milestone in the history of Zimbabwe. "In 1964 the white minority government elected Ian Smith, who like, Rhodes, was an ardent advocate of white rule".¹⁶⁵ In 1965 Smith unilaterally declared Rhodesia independent from the British government and subsequently removed Rhodesia from the Commonwealth. This declaration made by Smith and his government became known as UDI. With regards to what has been written by researchers on the UDI, it is evident that research agrees that this declaration had massive repercussions for the Rhodesian economy both in international and local contexts.¹⁶⁶

The declaration of independence did not please the international community and this led to heavy sanctions being imposed on the country. As the white minority rule seemed to weaken, "[due to factors such as

¹⁶⁴ A. S. Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, p. 201.

¹⁶⁵ Anon, April 2018, n.d., <https://www.britanica.com/biography/Ian-Smith>, Access 24/08/2018.

¹⁶⁶ A. S. Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, p. 201.

economic sanctions imposed by the international community], the rise of nationalist movement groups was propelled”¹⁶⁷ in Rhodesia at this time. According to Mlambo, by 1972 “a full-on Guerrilla war against the white minority was well under way and attempts were made by Smith to try and take control of the strife in Rhodesia”.¹⁶⁸ These coercive attempts failed, and the country was caught in devastating “bush war” until the end of 1979.¹⁶⁹ Eventually the British government intervened and facilitated peace talks with all political parties in Rhodesia which was to lead to an election which took place in 1980. The 1980 Rhodesian election was:

monitored by the British government [and this election resulted in Rhodesia’s first free and fair election]. The election was won by the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and its leader Robert Mugabe therefore became the first Prime Minister of Zimbabwe.¹⁷⁰

Zimbabwe: Post-colonial

At this point in 1980, a completely new era commenced for the country. Firstly, the name was changed from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe. The new leader of the now independent country Zimbabwe was determined to drive the country away from its identification and possession of Western British

¹⁶⁷ Anon, n.d., < <https://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/rhodesian-prime-minister-ian-smith-issues-unilateral-declaration-independence>> Access: 20/02/2018.

¹⁶⁸ A. S. Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, p. 201.

¹⁶⁹ A.S. Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe*, 2014, p. xvi.

¹⁷⁰ Anon, 27 February 1980., <http://www.rhodesianstudycircle.org.uk/1980-independence-election-z/> Access 22/09/2018.

values.¹⁷¹ This should have posed as a huge problem for the VFH, which is saturated in colonial ideals. However, this does not seem to be the case as the Hotel is thriving to this present day. This shall be discussed in more detail in the upcoming chapters.

As mentioned earlier, the economic development of Rhodesia was well underway after the signing of the Rudd Concession with a railway line reaching VF in a matter of years since the implementation of the treaty. It can be assumed, as was the case elsewhere, that the development of the country's transport networks encouraged development of hotels such as the VFH and the Meikles hotels which are among the first hotels to be built in the country. Another major pull, especially for the VFH, was the natural wonder, the VF, which are in close proximity.

The development of the VFH and its operation is closely linked to the history of Rhodesia as a country. Soon after the colonisation of the area plans to build the colonial establishment were well underway. The internal strife which the country went through had a direct impact on the development and operation of the Hotel. Other factors, such as wars happening in other parts of the world not necessarily on the Zimbabwean plateau, also influenced the VFH in numerous ways. This will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters.

¹⁷¹ Anon, 27 February 1980., <http://www.rhodesianstudycircle.org.uk/1980-independence-election-z/> Access 22/09/2018.

Chapter 4

History of Hotels as tourist destinations

Hotel History

In this chapter the history of hotels in the world will be examined. It will then also present a detailed history of the VFH. It would be pointless to look at the history of the hotels of the world without properly examining the history of travel itself. Travel has been the biggest driving force for the growth of the accommodation and hospitality industry. In ancient times travel was very expensive and transport systems were not as advanced as they are today, so travelling was extremely difficult, and at times it was virtually impossible.

The need to travel away from one's place of residence to another place can be traced as far back as "the Samaritans in about 4000BCE when trade was developed and accounted for most travel".¹⁷² Stronger trade relationships in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries saw the need for people to travel further away and require a place to stay over or live while they were away from home.¹⁷³ There were not many travellers at this point in comparison to the number of people who travel today, "as those who could afford to travel were usually the extremely wealthy, government officials or people travelling for military reasons".¹⁷⁴ There was a need for people who travelled to have a place to live when they were travelling, and other people began to provide these travellers with places to stay. Some

¹⁷² C. Cooper, *Essentials of tourism*, p. 7.

¹⁷³ C. Cooper, *Essentials of tourism*, p. 7.

¹⁷⁴ Anon, n.d., < <https://opentextbc.ca/introtourism/chapter/chapter-1-history-and-overview/> > Access 29/029/2018.

of the earliest forms of accommodation facilities include inns. A very popular example of inns being used in these earlier times in history by travellers are through illustrations repeatedly referred to in the Bible.¹⁷⁵ Many times, references are made to people who would travel and stay in an inn.

This history of the accommodation industry, which can be dated back to ancient times, when communities provided places for strangers to live also included providing these strangers or travellers/ (tourists as we know them today) with food and drink and other facilities which they required for example for their horses. It is this dimension that links this very closely to so-called “hospitality”. This is very basically defined as follows: “Hospitality which is the friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests”.¹⁷⁶ It is therefore integral to the genesis of the various forms of business that would evolve in the tourism domain in the centuries ahead.

The history of hotels is also directly linked to the history of different civilisations and what they had to offer the early traveller.¹⁷⁷ For example, the Greeks developed thermal baths (the first spas); the Romans built mansions to provide accommodation for travellers, such as government officials at that time.¹⁷⁸ However, it was only in the “nineteenth century that the concept of a “hotel” as we know it today was developed. Hotels have

¹⁷⁵ Anon, n.d., < <https://biblehub.net/search.php?q=inn>> Access: 02/12/2018.

¹⁷⁶ Anon, n.d., <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/hospitality> Access 22/09/2018.

¹⁷⁷ C. Cooper, *Essentials of tourism*, 2012 p. 173.

¹⁷⁸ C. Cooper, *Essentials of tourism*, 2012, p. 173.

played an important role in society from “the time the idea of a hotel was created until today”.¹⁷⁹

At this point in the early nineteenth century, an increasing number of people were travelling for numerous reasons (including trade pilgrimage and sightseeing) and a lot more people could afford to travel. One of the main reasons why travel was easier in the nineteenth century was as a result of the industrial revolution and all the technology and other manufacturing developments this brought with it.¹⁸⁰ Railway lines and roads were being constructed and this led to places being far more accessible than they had been before. Hotels had an opportunity to thrive in this new environment and so the nineteenth century was a time when many hotels were being developed particularly in the West in areas such as England, as well as the East in places such as Japan.¹⁸¹

The basic modern-day definition of a hotel is:

a commercial establishment providing lodging, meals and other guest services. To qualify as a hotel an establishment must have a minimum of six letting bedrooms and at least three of the six rooms must have attached private bathroom facilities.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁹ C. Cooper, *Essentials of tourism*, 2012, p. 173.

¹⁸⁰ C. Cooper, *Essentials of tourism*, 2012, p. 7.

¹⁸¹ Anon, n.d., <<https://opentextbc.ca/introtourism/chapter/chapter-1-history-and-overview/>> Access: 19/11/2018.

¹⁸²Business Dictionary, n.d., <<https://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/hotel.html>> Access: 20/09/2018

Hotels can be differentiated and classified into a range of different categories. They include:

1. Hotels can be classified according to the prices they charge for accommodation. For example, budget hotels/economy hotels;
2. Suite hotels - more suited for business travel, extended stays or family vacations;
3. Boutique hotels which are hotels which are very luxurious, and they possess a certain style and unique character;
4. Luxury hotels - these include hotels which are luxurious and are considered first class hotels. These hotels include large brands such as the Fairmont, Four Seasons and Inter-Continental hotel groups;
5. Meeting planning hotels - these hotels are ones which have facilities for meetings and conferences. An example is the Kingdom and Elephant Hills hotels in Victoria Falls;
6. Resorts - these are hotels which are located at or near a tourist attraction, like a beach for example.
7. Corporate hotels - hotels which are specially created to cater for people who travel for work purposes. They have facilities such as high- speed internet and conference rooms;
8. Extended stay hotels - these are hotels which offer discounts on the room rates for tourists who want to stay longer at the hotel longer than just a few days;
9. Spa hotels - these are hotels which are located near or possess a spa on their premises which can be world class;
10. Airport hotels, these hotels are near an airport and are usually short stay.¹⁸³

¹⁸³ Anon, n.d., < <https://setupmyhotel.com/train-my-hotel-staff/front-office-training/76-classification-of-hotels.html>> Access 10/10/2018.

The classification of hotels can be further broken down using other factors which the tourism hotel industry may choose, such as the star rating system. As these are wide-ranging and differ from region to region, some of these many categories have not been mentioned or discussed in the list above.

The two oldest operating guesthouses or hotels in the world are in Asia. The generic definition of a guesthouse is that they are typically “very small, also known as bed and breakfasts. It is usually a small building behind a main house and it is used to accommodate guests”.¹⁸⁴ The oldest known guesthouse (today considered a hotel) is the Nishiyama Onsen Keiunkan in Japan which has been open and operating since 705 AD. This guesthouse, now hotel, is still owned by the same family which founded the hotel in the eighth century. A common trait which guesthouses have is the fact that they are family run establishments. It must be noted that this establishment did not call itself a hotel at the time, but rather a guesthouse.¹⁸⁵

Successful establishments such as this hotel which have stood the test of time and are still successfully operating serve as a useful source of information for best practice and sustainability. The question as to how they have successfully operated a business of this nature for such a lengthy period is important to examine. One major advantage which guesthouses have is that because of their size, being much smaller than

¹⁸⁴ Dictionary.com, n.d., <https://dictionary.com/browse/guesthouse> Access 20/10/2018/.

¹⁸⁵ C. Cooper, *Essentials of tourism*, 2012, p. 176.

large hotel establishments, they are able to “provide a genuine feel and flavour of the destination”¹⁸⁶ to the tourists in a way that a five-star hotel establishment may not be able to do.

Interestingly, the second oldest accommodation establishment is also in Asia. This is “Hoshi Ryokan” and it began operation as an inn in 718AD”.¹⁸⁷ “It took about another millennium till another accommodation establishment was developed and actually called itself in the specific term hotel”.¹⁸⁸ Research notes that “this was the Grand Hotel in London” which was only opened in in January 1774.¹⁸⁹ From then on many hotels were developed to accommodate the ever-increasing large numbers of travellers.

There are many hotels which were established in the West around this time in history. This is mainly due to people becoming wealthier due to changing working patterns brought on by the industrial revolution and as a result of improved infrastructure as mentioned earlier. It was at this time that travellers became more interested in traveling to new destinations for vacations purposes, such as coastal resorts in the UK. Another shift in the trends of hospitality and accommodation came after the Second World War and they distinctly began to follow “the American style of hospitality

¹⁸⁶ C. Cooper, *Essentials of tourism*, 2012, p. 176.

¹⁸⁷ Anon, n.d., < <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-oldest-hotels-in-the-world.html>> Access 21/ 08/2018.

¹⁸⁸ Anon, n.d., < <https://www.customer-alliance.com/en/articles/hotel-industry/>> Access 18/09/2018.

¹⁸⁹ S.C. Hoeller, 12 July 2014, < <https://www.thrillist.com/travel/nation/17-of-the-oldest-hotels-in-the-world-nishiyama-onsen-keiunkan-tops-our-list>> Access: 20/11/2018.

and accommodation standards”.¹⁹⁰ Large and popular branded hotel giants in the hospitality were developed at this point, including examples such as the Hyatt (established in 1957), Hilton established in 1919) and Holiday Inn hotels (established in 1952).¹⁹¹

It is evident in research done on the history of hotels and the hospitality industry, that much of what has been written, documents the evolution of hotels in the Western world. When it comes to Africa, literature on the development and history of hotels is written about to a much lesser extent, if at all. Information which does exist documenting the history of hotels in Africa is very recent, in comparison to information gathered on the history of hotels in the West as well as the East. Both of the latter developments date back much further than Africa, into earlier times.

Travel for leisure in Africa can also be traced back to around 1500 BCE, when people travelled to Egypt for pleasure and sightseeing. This can be used as an indication that there were hotels, or establishments such as hotels, which functioned in the same manner although at this point they may not have called themselves a “hotel”. They did however still provide travellers food, drink and accommodation.¹⁹²

Although very little to no information has been researched on the accommodation industry in Africa at this time, it is safe to assume that

¹⁹⁰ C. Cooper, *Essentials of tourism* 2012, p.173.

¹⁹¹ P. Hyland, 4 January 2010., < <https://www.tourism-review.com/top-10-world-largest-hotel-groups-news1988>> Access 22/11/2018.

¹⁹² D. Harrison *Tourism in Africa: The Social and Cultural Framework*, p. 37.

facilities were available for travellers to live in and get food as more and more people travelled to Africa. The oldest known hotel in Africa is the Saint Georges Hotel in Algeria.¹⁹³ This is in fact a colonial hotel such as the VFH. Apparently, the Saint Georges Hotel was built in “honour of the English Patron Saint George”.¹⁹⁴ This Hotel is a five-star hotel which showcases Algeria’s rich history immersed in colonial French attributes and elements as Algeria was colonised by France. After the country gained independence from France in 1954 the Hotel changed its name to Arabic.¹⁹⁵

Africa as a continent is characterised by 54 states which all have varying “resources, culture historical legacies, and economic, social and political structures, which presents large variations in the scale of tourism development in Africa”.¹⁹⁶ Tourism in Africa is well advanced especially in the “dominant” areas which are the most developed in terms of tourism development. These include countries such as South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya. They can be considered to be “developed” in tourism infrastructure and offering in comparison to countries such as Cameroon, Nigeria and Zambia.¹⁹⁷ It is important to note that in all of these cases, the “tourism in dominant areas was developed by colonialists for themselves”.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹³ Anon, n.d., < <http://www.nogarlicnoonions.com/hotel-saint-george-el-djazair-a-vivid-idea-of-algerias-history/>> Access: 22/11/2018.

¹⁹⁴ Anon, n.d., < <http://www.nogarlicnoonions.com/hotel-saint-george-el-djazair-a-vivid-idea-of-algerias-history/>> Access: 22/11/2018.

¹⁹⁵ Anon, n.d., < <http://www.nogarlicnoonions.com/hotel-saint-george-el-djazair-a-vivid-idea-of-algerias-history/>> Access: 22/11/2018.

¹⁹⁶ P. U.C. Dieke *The Nature and Scope of the Political Economy of Tourism and Development in Africa*, pp.1-3.

¹⁹⁷ P. U.C. Dieke *The Nature and Scope of The Political Economy of Tourism and Development in Africa*, pp.1-3.

¹⁹⁸ D. Harrison *Tourism in Africa: the social and cultural framework*, p. 37.

The reason for this colonial influence is multifarious, but the fact remains that most African societies which were colonised did not possess the financial means to establish hotels for themselves. There is a strong link between tourism in Africa and colonialism. This forms one of the main arguments for this study.

Further south within the continent in South Africa, colonialism was also a major driver for the development of tourism and the hospitality industry. Travel to the area can be traced back to the arrival of the first Europeans to go to South Africa which was under the administration of the Dutch East India Company from 1652. The arrival of the Europeans continued and led to the need for accommodation facilities to accommodate these early European travellers.¹⁹⁹ A hotel which today is still in operation which was established back in 1692 is the Lanzerac Hotel. “The 325-year old Lanzerac hotel and spa is in a Wine Estate in Stellenbosch and is synonymous with old-world charm and rich Cape heritage”.²⁰⁰ The above-mentioned hotels all qualify as landmark hotels. “Landmark hotels” can be defined as establishments which are very old and bare historical or architectural significance. They are also referred to as “iconic”.

History of the VFH

We cannot talk of the history of the VFH without mentioning the actual natural waterfall scenery of the Victoria Falls as it is integral to the very

¹⁹⁹ R. Ross, *A Concise History of South Africa*, 1996, pp. 21-23.

²⁰⁰ Culture trip, n.d., <https://theculturetrip.com/africa/south-africa/articles/10-historic-hotels-in-south-africa-to-stay-in/#> Access 21/09/2018

existence of the hotel. The VF is Zimbabwe's most prized natural possession as a country. They are a range of water fall which the country shares with the neighbouring country Zambia. The local Kololo people called the falls "Mosi-oa-Tunya" which means the "smoke that thunders".²⁰¹ The VF are one of the "most spectacular natural water falls in the world".²⁰² They are also one of the seven wonders of the world and they are rated as the largest water fall in the world.²⁰³ This makes them a very popular tourist draw card to the VF area.

The VF have been in existence for millions of years; however, it was not until the explorer David Livingstone set eyes on the falls in 1855 that they became known to the rest of the world. Livingstone was responsible for publishing his "discovery" of them to the rest of the world making known their existence far and wide. It is important to take note that Livingstone did not actually "discover" the VF, he simply popularized and made the Falls known to the rest of the world, and in particular the Western world.²⁰⁴ This is obviously because there were indigenous people who were living in the area which surrounds the Falls on the northern banks of the Zambezi river before Livingstone came across the Falls on his expedition. A better way to look at it is to say that David Livingstone was the first

²⁰¹ Anon, n.d., < <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/intelligent-travel/2013/07/30/victoria-falls-the-smoke-that-thunders/>> Access 29/10/2018.

²⁰² Victoria Falls, n.d., <https://www.places.co.za/html/victoria-falls.html> Access: 21/09/2018

²⁰³ Anon, n.d., < <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/intelligent-travel/2013/07/30/victoria-falls-the-smoke-that-thunders/>> Access 29/10/2018

²⁰⁴ Anon, n.d., < <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/intelligent-travel/2013/07/30/victoria-falls-the-smoke-that-thunders/>> Access 29/10/2018

European to see the VF. As indicated, he did the typical colonial thing and named the Falls after the reigning Queen of England.²⁰⁵

It is obvious that the VFH being built at the VF and offering a scenic view of the bridge which separates Zimbabwe and Zambia would serve as a major contributor to the success of the VFH as a tourist destination. The development of the Hotel however came almost 50 years after the Europeans had become aware of the existence of the waterfall.²⁰⁶ Initially development of accommodation facilities was not for accommodating tourists. The reason for the building of the accommodation was to house the engineers and staff who were constructing a railway line from Bulawayo to Victoria Falls including the bridge across to neighbouring Zambia.²⁰⁷

The building of the VFH in the VF area was the beginning of hospitality in this region. It was due to this development of a hotel that led to the establishment of the town which is today known as Victoria Falls. According to the author of the centenary book on the VFH, the construction of the VFH was “most importantly the reality story of the beginning of the Zimbabwean tourism/hospitality sector. Since the Victoria Falls are in fact the country’s premier tourist attraction”.²⁰⁸ The foundation of the hospitality industry of Zimbabwe is thus embedded in the history and development of the VFH.

²⁰⁵ Anon, n.d., < <http://www.siyabona.com/victoria-falls-history.html>> Access: 22/11/2018.

²⁰⁶ Anon, n.d., <https://www.tothevictoriafalls> Access: 28/11/2018.

²⁰⁷ Anon, n.d., <https://www.tothevictoriafalls> Access: 28/11/2018.

²⁰⁸ J. Creewel, *The Victoria Falls hotel: 100 years 1904-2004*, 2004, p. 1.

As mentioned, the BSAC headed by Cecil John Rhodes and his partners had the vision of constructing a transport network which spanned from the Cape (Cape Town the most southern place in the continent) to Cairo the farthest north on the continent.²⁰⁹ As development of a railway line was underway, reaching Bulawayo in 1897 from the Cape, plans were underway to carry on developing the railway line further towards the VF area, through to Zambia which is a neighbouring country to Zimbabwe. When the railway line reached the VF area it became apparent that the BSAC wanted to build a bridge running from Zimbabwe and Zambia over the Zambezi river. Apparently, Cecil John Rhodes was said to have ambitiously indicated a desire for the “spray of the VF” to spray on the train carriages as they moved across the bridge. He however died before the project reached completion.²¹⁰

The construction of the railway was a very demanding and challenging project and would require many months of work by engineers and other workmen. In addition, materials which were to be used for the construction of the bridge over the Zambezi river were imported from England. Thus, the workforce on the railway line required more permanent accommodation facilities as they needed time to do the work and they often needed to wait for the supplies to arrive from overseas. This was the reason for building the accommodation in the form of the VFH.

²⁰⁹ Anon, n.d., <<https://www.tothevictoriafalls.com/vfpages/tourism/tourism.html>> Access: 29/10/2018.

²¹⁰ The History of Victoria Falls, n.d., <https://www.rhinoafrica.com/en/victoria-falls/history> Access: 18/10/2018

In 1904 the building of the Hotel was completed, but at this point it had only “12 rooms single rooms and 4 double rooms as well as a dining room, a bar and a few administration offices”.²¹¹ The first Hotel structure was a single building made from wood and corrugated iron. When the Hotel was first opened on the 8th of June in 1904 it cost 12 shillings and 6 pence per day for tourists to stay.²¹² The hotel was able to accommodate at most 20 people at this time.²¹³ It is interesting to note that from its very inception, the VFH was popularly known as the “Grande Dame” of VF,²¹⁴ thus reflecting on its elegance from its genesis.

The chosen logo for the hotel was a lion of southern Africa and the sphinx of Egypt facing each other, between them is a man looking into the distance (presumably Rhodes himself).²¹⁵ This obviously “symbolised the Cape to Cairo vision of Cecil John Rhodes and his British South Africa Company”.²¹⁶ The railway company actually owned the Hotel however, and they leased the operation and management of it to the partnership of

²¹¹ Safari diaries, n.d., <http://callofafrica.co.za/victoria-falls-hotel-history/> Access: 18/10/2018

²¹² Anon, n.d., <
<https://www.tothevictoriafalls.com/vfpages/tourism/secondhotel.html>> Access: 20/11/2018.

²¹³ Anon, n.d., <
<https://www.tothevictoriafalls.com/vfpages/tourism/secondhotel.html>> Access: 20/11/2018.

²¹⁴ The Victoria Falls Hotel, Our Rich History, n.d., <
<https://www.victoriafallshotel.com>> Access: 02/11/2017.

²¹⁵ Anon, n.d., <
<https://www.tothevictoriafalls.com/vfpages/tourism/secondhotel.html>> Access: 20/11/2018.

²¹⁶ J. Creewel, *The Victoria Falls Hotel: 100 years 1904-2004*, 2004, p. 9.

Mr G Estran and Mr W Scott-Rodger, who were already running the Grand Hotel in Bulawayo”.²¹⁷

The tourist potential of the VFH was apparent from as early as 1905. In a report compiled by the BSAC, the company which administered the VFH, it was stated that “in the VF we possess a very valuable property which is likely to promote materially the prosperity of the country”.²¹⁸ This was a very prophetic statement as the century ahead would prove. As mentioned, many visitors came from the West but mainly from the UK. These visitors were only people who could afford to travel as travelling was still extremely expensive during this era. Guests included members of the royal family and extremely wealthy people. These visitors who came to VF wanted to experience the majestic VF as they had been portrayed by Livingstone in his travel records. The first royal visitors to the VFH on September 16th, 1904 were “Her Royal Highness Christian of Schleswig Holstein, fifth child and third daughter of Queen Victoria and Princess Victoria”.²¹⁹

Due to increased accessibility in the area (after the completion of the railway line) the Hotel continued to receive many visitors, and this then led to the plans to expand the Hotel. By the year 1913 there was an excursion train which travelled from the Cape to VF five times a year. The decision was then taken to rebuild the Hotel this time using brick.²²⁰

²¹⁷ Corridors Through Time: A History of The Victoria Falls Hotel, n.d., <
<http://www.zambeziobookcompany.com/zbc/ctt-more/henry-holland.html>> Access:
18/10/2018.

²¹⁸ J. Creewel, *The Victoria Falls Hotel: 100 years 1904-2004*, 2004.

²¹⁹ P. Roberts, *Corridors Through Time: A History of The Victoria Falls Hotel*, 2015.

²²⁰ J. Creewel, *The Victoria Falls Hotel,; 100 years 1904-2004*, 2004.

After the location of the additional buildings was finalised, the new buildings were constructed from 1914. It was recorded that:

Final completion of the Hotel was in mid-1917 and the whole operation costing £40,000. Furthermore, significant extensions were added to the Hotel in 1926 adding to the Hotel 50 more bedrooms forming the main footprint of the VFH we know today.²²¹

The new hotel building consisted of “24 bedrooms, two suites and five public rooms, which were the lounge, the writing room, the drawing and music room, the smoking room and the dining room”.²²² At its inception stage, the Hotel was then being run by its first manager who was Pierre Gavuzzi.²²³

In an advertisement of the Hotel it was described as a “modern facility” which provided “luxurious accommodation” to tourists. It also indicated that it consisted of a:

magnificent bluff gorge. It has electric light, cold storage, hot and cold water baths the very definition of modern luxury

²²¹ Development of the Victoria Falls, The Victoria Falls Hotel Rebuilt <https://www.tothevictoriafalls.com>, Access: 2017-11-17

²²² Anon, n.d., <http://callofafrica.co.za/victoria-falls-hotel-history/> Access: 18/10/2018.

²²³ J. Creewel, *The Victoria Falls Hotel: 100 years 1904-2004*, p. 24.

in the early twentieth century.²²⁴

In later years the Hotel maintained the structure which it was originally built in. This was also “with massive redecoration and refurbishment was completed to “combine the charm of the old with the convenience of the new”.²²⁵ The Hotel enjoyed “visitor numbers of approximately 3000 people per year”.²²⁶ The early 1920s saw the introduction of air travel. Travelling to the Falls was often referred to as being a very difficult journey and so any shorter method to make the journey was a welcome relief. This saw the visitor numbers to the VF and VFH increase dramatically. Another reason for this increase was the construction of a dirt road between Bulawayo and VF.²²⁷

Many of the people who came to the VFH were elderly visitors. They often complained about the heat and distance they had to walk to the VF from the VFH. To cater for this, the Hotel introduced a trolley service in 1920. “The trolley system seated about eight passengers. It required two or three men to push it along on a double track”.²²⁸ These trolleys were controversially pushed by the local staff who worked at the VFH. These

²²⁴ J. Creewel, *The Victoria Falls Hotel: 100 years 1904-2004*, p. 22.

²²⁵ VictoriaFalls24, Victoria Falls Hotel Refurbishment: Stable Wing Completed [https://google .co.za/amp/s/victoriafalls2424.com/blog/2013/07/18/Victoria-falls-hotel-refurbishment-stable-wing-completed/amp/](https://google.co.za/amp/s/victoriafalls2424.com/blog/2013/07/18/Victoria-falls-hotel-refurbishment-stable-wing-completed/amp/) 2013, Access: 2018-01-16

²²⁶ Anon, n.d., < <http://callof africa.co.za/victoria-falls-hotel-history/>> Access 20/08/2018

²²⁷ Anon, n.d., < <https://www.tothevictoriafalls.com/vfpages/tourism/secondhotel.html>> Access: 22/10/2018.

²²⁸ Anon, n.d., < <https://www.tothevictoriafalls.com/vfppages/tourism/secondhote.html>> Access: 24/09/2018.

were typically the lower level workers who were African. The trolley service was commissioned and run by the Hotel and continued to run from the early 1920s to the mid-1950s. The use of humans to propel the trolleys from the Hotel to the VF did not please some of the visitors to the VFH. Many complaints trickled in to the Hotel manager along with some instances when the trolley derailed. This became a cost to the hotel “when a guest at the hotel was injured after his trolley derailed and he sued the Hotel and the hotel had to pay UKP 2000”.²²⁹ During the first half of the 1950s (Post Second World War), Hotel guests also started to write back to the Hotel manager indicating that they were uncomfortable with the use of humans to propel a trolley service. It was at this point that the manager at the time decided to stop the trolley service.

Today the trolley is in the front yard of the Hotel and serves as a display of the rich - yet controversial - history of the VFH. The plaque next to the trolley reads as follows:

The Victoria Falls Hotel trolley service, which operated from the Hotel to the Bridge and the Boat House, was introduced in 1920. Before this date the Hotel guests were conveyed to various points of interest by means of rickshaws. During their life the trolleys were used by some 2 million guests, and were replaced by motor coaches in December 1957, after 37 years of romantic, yet reliable service.²³⁰

²²⁹ Anon, n.d., <

<https://www.tothevictoriafalls.com/vfppages/tourism/secondhote.html>.> Access: 24/09/2018.

²³⁰ Corridors Through Time: A History of The Victoria Falls Hotel, n.d., <
<http://www.zambeziobookcompany.com/zbc/ctt-more/victoria-falls-trolley.html>>
Access: 20/08/2018

Another development which took place in the late 1920s was the addition of an Edwardian style swimming pool at the Hotel which added to the luxury which the VFH already provided. To provide for privacy when guests were swimming, various walls were erected by the pool and they are still there today. Then in 1929 the Hotel had a court wing added where the administration offices are located today.²³¹

The period following this era of expansion was rather different in the 1930s. The whole world was experiencing the most severe economic depression known as the “Great Depression”. As was the case elsewhere, the VFH was directly impacted by the effects of the Great Depression. Due to the fact that people had less disposable income to spend on luxuries such as travel, the VFH suffered in terms of visitor numbers. Creewel points out that “global tourism growth slowed significantly”. In an effort to combat this regional travel to the VF was encouraged by “the Railway Company with the offer of inclusive travel and accommodation fares, with passengers staying at the Hotel”.²³² Another phenomenon which affected the Hotel was World War II (1939 to 1945). During this time, the VFH was used to accommodate Allied soldiers and airmen who were receiving training in Rhodesia. There are still secret underground rooms at the Hotel on the premises today which are now used as wine

²³¹ Safari Diaries, n.d., <http://callof africa.co.za/victoria-falls-hotel-history/> Access 20/08/2018

²³² To the Victoria Falls: Development of the Victoria Falls Growth of the Victoria Falls Town, n.d., <
<http://www.tothevictoriafalls.com/vfpages/rhodesias/rhodesia.html>> Access:
20/08/2018

cellars for example, which were used back in the War days as places for soldiers to hide.²³³

The time following the end of the Second World War was a time of rapid and extensive tourism development in the world. The Hotel enjoyed the benefits of this by hosting many tourists who travelled to the area. As a result of this boom, in 1950 the “second floor was added to the court wing, which included a conference room. Many conferences were held here for government, railways and private businesses”.²³⁴

The 1960s were an era where a lot was happening within Rhodesia in terms of the political arena of the country and this in turn would also have an effect on the VFH in both negative and positive ways. In 1961 a section of the lounge was modified to make a new cocktail bar. This was air-conditioned (the first in the country) and the bar was called the “Rainbow Room”. The 1960s also saw the addition of a bank, a hairdressing salon and a curio shop in the foyer”.²³⁵

Important to note is that this is the time when the white minority government was in the process of declaring Rhodesia an independent state from the British government. Negotiations took place from as early as the 1960s, but it was only in 1965 that the settlers in Rhodesia declared its independence from the UK. The UDI came with a whole set of setbacks

²³³ J. Creewel, *The Victoria Falls Hotel: 100 years 1904-2004*, p. 22

²³⁴ Anon, n.d., <http://callofafrica.co.za/victoria-falls-hotel-history/> Access 20/08/2018.

²³⁵ Anon, n.d., <http://callofafrica.co.za/victoria-falls-hotel-history/> Access 20/08/2018.

not only for Rhodesia as a country, but also for the VFH. First and foremost, it impacted on the oft mentioned UK tourist market. Secondly, the tough economic sanctions placed on Rhodesia by not only the British government but also by the United Nations, were a major setback to the country's tourism development.

As a result, a decline in tourism growth was recorded in 1961. However, the introduction of a luxury liner and air travel soon alleviated the decline which the VF and the VFH had been experiencing in terms of visitor numbers. By the middle of the year 1967 visitor numbers were recorded to be "approximately 22 000 tourist arrivals".²³⁶

The year 1970 was also a very important one in terms of the history of the VFH. At this point the Rhodesia Railway Company leased operation of the Hotel to Rhodesia Breweries. They would operate the Hotel until 1980 when the country would gain independence from white minority rule.²³⁷ During the 1970s it is important to note that the Rhodesian bush war had intensified and from 1972 this had led to many tourists who wanted to come to the VF being deterred due to the volatile conditions which were taking place in the country. The VFH made considerable losses on potential visitors who were discouraged to travel to VF at this time.²³⁸

In 1980, when Rhodesia celebrated independence subsequently changing its name to Zimbabwe, it should be noted that business at the

²³⁶Anon, n.d., <http://callofafrica.co.za/victoria-falls-hotel-history/> Access 20/08/2018.

²³⁷ Anon, n.d., <http://callofafrica.co.za/victoria-falls-hotel-history/> Access 20/08/2018.

²³⁸Anon, n.d., <http://callofafrica.co.za/victoria-falls-hotel-history/> Access 20/08/2018.

VFH was recorded to be persistently very low.²³⁹ The National Railway Company, now renamed, National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) leased out operation of the VFH to the Southern Sun hotel group. Business picked up for the VFH from the late 1980s onwards when the country had settled and was recording some fairly positive figures after the independence in 1980.²⁴⁰

The year 1996 was the first time ever that the VFH closed its doors to tourists.²⁴¹ The closure was to allow for refurbishments which needed to be made on the property. The Hotel was closed for 10 weeks, the front was demolished and rebuilt in the same Edwardian style which it had been built in 1904. “It was during the 1996 refurbishments that the famous restaurant the ‘Jungle Junction’ was introduced”.²⁴² In addition, the swimming pool was enlarged, and a fountain was also added. The VFH could boast:

All bedrooms now have multi-channel satellite television
and access to broadband WIFI connectivity – both
essential services for modern travellers.²⁴³

²³⁹ Anon, n.d., < <http://callofafrica.co.za/victoria-falls-hotel-history/>> Access: 21/08/2018.

²⁴⁰ Anon, n.d., < <http://callofafrica.co.za/victoria-falls-hotel-history/>> Access: 21/08/2018.

²⁴¹ Anon, n.d., < <http://callofafrica.co.za/victoria-falls-hotel-history/>> Access: 21/08/2018.

²⁴² Anon, n.d., < <http://callofafrica.co.za/victoria-falls-hotel-history/>> Access: 21/08/2018.

²⁴³ Anon, n.d., < <http://callofafrica.co.za/victoria-falls-hotel-history/>> Access: 21/08/2018.

The well-known Stables wing of the Hotel was also built at this point of refurbishment at the Hotel which again opened in 1997. The Stables wing contains some of the most beautiful rooms that the hotel has to offer. The west wing comprises 44 rooms of which two are spectacular honeymoon suites which cost USD \$700 to stay in. It should be noted that to maintain the Edwardian theme which the Hotel possesses the Stables wing was built in the same style.²⁴⁴

The years 1998 and 1999 also saw the refurbishment of the Hotel rooms in the main hotel. They were restored to their original Edwardian grandeur while also being modernised for the modern tourist. This was to add uniformity and adhere to the Edwardian style which the Hotel promotes and sells.²⁴⁵

At this point, in the late 1990s the Meikles Hotel bought a “50% stake in the VFH. They operate and manage the Hotel in joint capacity with Southern Sun, now known as Africa Sun”.²⁴⁶ In 1999 the VFH became part of the “Leading Hotels of the World” which is an exclusive “only by invitation club” which comprises the best hotels in the world.²⁴⁷ It still ranks as amongst one of the “oldest hotels in Africa”.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁴ Anon, n.d., < <http://callofafrica.co.za/victoria-falls-hotel-history/>> Access: 21/08/2018.

²⁴⁵ Anon, n.d., <https://www.victoriafalls.com>> Access: 28/10/2018.

²⁴⁶ Safari Diaries, n.d., < <http://callofafrica.co.za/victoria-falls-hotel-history/>> Access: 21/08/2018

²⁴⁷ Our Rich History, n.d., < <http://www.victoriafallshotel.com/about/history>> Access 22/09/2018

²⁴⁸ Safari Diaries, n.d., < <http://callofafrica.co.za/victoria-falls-hotel-history/>> Access: 21/08/2018

As shown in the historical background, the year 2000 marked an extremely turbulent economic and political environment for Zimbabwe and this had devastating effects on the VFH. A decline in tourism and another era of heavy sanctions led to plummeting visitor numbers.²⁴⁹ The country has been in decline for several years now, with some years where it seemed like the light at the end of the tunnel was visible but others not. The year 2008 marked the lowest point in terms of the economic and political spheres of the country. Hyperinflation plagued the country and the VFH was not exempt from the effects of this. Business was low at the VFH as well as many other business establishments in the country.²⁵⁰

In 2009 the dollarization of Zimbabwe, as it is commonly known, occurred. This was when the country was forced to adopt the use of the United States of America dollar (USD) as a currency. This actually came as a welcome relief for establishments such as the VFH. Visitor numbers at this point increased due to what appeared to be a normal functioning economy and a coalition government.²⁵¹

Fast forward to November 2017, and the country underwent a coup which led to the President at the time, Robert Mugabe who had been in office for 37 years, being overthrown. Interestingly, within 3 months of the coup

²⁴⁹ Safari Diaries, n.d., < <http://callofafrica.co.za/victoria-falls-hotel-history/>> Access: 21/08/2018.

²⁵⁰ Safari Diaries, n.d., < <http://callofafrica.co.za/victoria-falls-hotel-history/>> Access: 21/08/2018.

²⁵¹ Our Rich History, n.d., < <http://www.victoriafallshotel.com/about/history>> Access 22/09/2018

it was recorded that the country's tourism numbers went up by 17%.²⁵²
The longevity of the VFH as an iconic colonial Hotel and its operation in an independent Zimbabwe will be further examined in the following chapter.

²⁵² A.J. van Rensburg, 15 November 2018 <https://m.news24.com/Analysits/its-a-coup-regardless-of-whpolitical-at-zim-military-says-analysts-20171115>. Access: 18/01/2018

Chapter 5

The Victoria Falls Hotel as an iconic colonial Hotel

Introduction

In this chapter the VFH will be analysed as an iconic boutique hotel, as well as a colonial establishment. The chapter will also make comparisons of iconic boutique, historic or colonial hotels and analyse aspects of similarity as well as differences which contribute to the success or detriment of hotels. Lastly, the duality of the phrase “out of Africa” will be contemplated.

The term iconic means “relating to or the nature of an icon”.²⁵³ When it comes to defining a hotel as having an iconic status, it is when the hotel possesses grandeur and the unique characteristics which allow for the term iconic to be used to describe it. Hudson claims that in the hospitality and tourism industry:

History can be an extremely important element of the value that consumers put on an older hotel. This is evidenced by demonstrating that an iconic hotel such as the VFH with a distinct historical identity is able to maintain a price premium over newer hotels with comparable

²⁵³ Anon, n.d., < <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/iconic>> Access: 22/09/2018

operating characteristics.²⁵⁴

The definition of a “boutique hotel” is a hotel which has the following characteristics: the hotel must have a strong identifiable personality and be unique. A boutique hotel is generally seen as one that is rich in culture”.²⁵⁵ Boutique hotels are also said to be “rich in flavour”. In addition, they possess a “strong sense of place and have a way of reminding tourists where they are”.²⁵⁶ The VFH is a boutique hotel as it has rich colonial cultural aspects as its main product. It is also unique and has a particular identity. The VFH can be considered a boutique hotel because of its grandeur as well as its extremely luxurious characteristics as well as its historical and colonial inspired theme. The contemporary decoration of the VFH is another characteristic which allows for it to be considered a boutique hotel.

The VFH is an iconic colonial establishment which has stood the ultimate test of time. Being 114 years in an industry which is constantly changing and evolving and extremely trend sensitive, the simple fact that the VFH has managed to stay relevant and operating successfully a colonial hotel is a true marvel.

The VFH and Colonialism

“The ‘high colonial’ era fell between the 1880s and 1910, and many of the world’s most famous colonial-era hotels were constructed during this

²⁵⁴ B. Hudson, 15 May 2015., < <http://www.bu.edu/bhr/2015/05/29/the-pricing-effects-of-heritage-at-an-iconic-hotel-3/>> Access 02/09/2018

²⁵⁵ K. T. Harrison, 29 November 2018, <https://www.tripsavvy.com/what-is-a-boutique-hotel-definition-and-examples-4172980> Access 02/12/2018.

²⁵⁶ K. T. Harrison, 29 November 2018, <https://www.tripsavvy.com/what-is-a-boutique-hotel-definition-and-examples-4172980> Access 02/12/2018.

period to allow travellers from the West to experience similar levels of comfort found at home”.²⁵⁷ Colonial heritage and its preservation is a rather contentious issue which many African countries are faced with due to the commonality of colonialism within the continent. Establishments such as the VFH are representations of colonial occupation and unequal power relations, also serving as tangible sources of historical identity for the nation. At the same time, they are also seen as a “tourism resource”²⁵⁸ which the country may use to promote tourism and generate other income in related industries.

Given their rich history, colonial era hotels possess controversial attributes (such as oppression for example) and therefore they were very unpopular for a period when the wave of decolonisation hit Africa. In terms of the VFH, the disdain for this establishment can be seen from 1980 when Zimbabwe was freshly independent until around 1989. As mentioned earlier, the Hotel faced dwindling numbers during this almost decade long period. “It was only in late 1989 when the hotel turned a corner in terms of visitor numbers” and witnessed some growth in the years following.²⁵⁹ The reason for this unpopularity can be attributed to the fact that the fight for independence and nationalism was still very fresh in people’s minds following the country’s independence. Transgressions and violations of the colonial era were also still fresh in people’s minds and this could have also been a direct result of less colonial tourism being promoted at this time.

²⁵⁷ Anon, n.d., <https://thetinytravellerstopten.com/2013/03/15/top-ten-colonial-era-hotels/> Access 21/10/2018.

²⁵⁸ J. C. Henderson, Built Heritage and Colonial Cities, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29 (1) 2002, p. 254.

²⁵⁹ L. Machipisa, 14 March 2001., < <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/1220218.stm>> Access: 23/10/2018.

Interestingly, the 1990s saw the rise in popularity of colonial hotels. Not only for the VFH, which recorded considerably higher visitor numbers than the preceding years, but for colonial establishments worldwide. It is believed that “Enough time had passed to see these building as important monuments of history, rather than a reminder of unhappier times”.²⁶⁰ It is also at this time that “policies that promoted colonial heritage and its conservation were put in place in many countries”²⁶¹ which has been colonised and gained independence.

Colonial hotels play an important part in a country’s socio-cultural sphere. It is also relevant to note in this context that our history tells the tale of how we came to be, and it “plays an important role in shaping our identities”.²⁶² The realities of colonialism in a country such as Zimbabwe, although at times extremely difficult for people who were adversely affected by it to remember, have a direct relation to the type of people, culture and values which are present within the country today, however many years after decolonisation. “Colonisation in Africa is generally regarded as having a profound impact on the societies, economies and cultures of peoples native to the African continent”.²⁶³ When it comes to colonialism in Africa there are generally two schools of thought:

²⁶⁰ Anon, n.d., <https://thetinytravellerstopten.com/2013/03/15/top-ten-colonial-era-hotels/> Access 21/10/2018.

²⁶¹ Cock & Fig, 2000. From colonial to community based conservation: Environmental justice and the national parks of South Africa, *Society in Transition*, 31:1, 22-35.

²⁶² R. Buckley, “Material Culture of Post-Colonial Wildlife Tourism, *Annals of Tourism Research* 41, 2013, pp. 215–243.

²⁶³ Zimbabwe online, n.d., < <http://www.zimonline.co.za/pre-colonial>> Access: 25/09/2018.

The one school of thought represents the proponents of colonialism which highlight the positives which colonialism brought to the continent. They believe that stability within the continent is one aspect which came along with colonialism, especially in Africa. “The nineteenth century was plagued by the activities of the Swahili-Arab and Nyamweze traders such as Tipu Tip and Msiri in central and southern Africa, the rise and fall off any African states and all this caused a great deal of instability and insecurity within the continent”.²⁶⁴ This was said to change after colonialism.

When Zimbabwe was colonised by the British there had been much political strife as discussed in chapter three. It has been argued that the “arrival of the British alleviated the unstable relations amongst the indigenous societies within the country”.²⁶⁵ One can argue that the development of the VFH was made possible through colonialism and this in turn allowed for the inception of the tourism industry. This is an industry which the country would continue to reap benefits from for many years after colonisation ended and continues to do so up to the present day.

The second school of thought is one which is vehemently against colonialism and highlights the negative aspects it brought with it. An example is, because of its oppressive attributes such as discrimination and segregation that led to the separation of people using their race as a differentiating tool, colonialism “generated a sense of anger, frustration

²⁶⁴A. A .Boahen, 2011/n.d., < <https://assoped.blogspot.com/2011/04/colonial-heritage-in-africa.html>> Access: 21/10/2018.

²⁶⁵ Anon, n.d., < <https://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/impact-colonialism>> Access: 25/10/2018.

and humiliation amongst the native people of the country which in many African cases was most of the population”.²⁶⁶

Therefore, in the case of the VFH and many other similar colonial hotels, promoting them through tourism becomes extremely difficult. This is the case in many countries which are less advanced in terms of tourism development. Countries such as Nigeria, Angola and Zambia to be specific. Some countries fail to exploit the link between colonialism and tourism and in turn suffer in terms of tourism development. According to Harrison, “this association of tourism and colonialism has led some Africans to oppose the tourism industry”.²⁶⁷ Those opposing the industry also point to other negative factors such as colonialism’s “distorted portrayal of African societies”.²⁶⁸ This is a main contributing factor which deters newly independent countries from promoting colonial heritage.

Taken from another vantage point, colonial establishments such as the VFH, serve as important educational institutions. They can bring to light what happened during the colonial era which is an important and a considerable part of the history of many colonies. They attract a diverse crowd of visitors, which consists of mainly tourists in the 60+ age range, although there are many tourists who are much younger who are also attracted to the Hotel. The fact that the Hotel offers a nostalgic product which represents a “golden era while showcasing architecture and culture

²⁶⁶ A. A. Boahen, 2011/n.d., <<https://assoped.blogspot.com/2011/04/colonial-heritage-in-africa.html>> Access: 21/10/2018.

²⁶⁷ D. Harrison, *Tourism in Africa: The Social and Cultural Framework*, p. 37.

²⁶⁸ D. Harrison, *Tourism in Africa: The Social and Cultural Framework*, p. 37.

of the old world in a postcolonial new era”²⁶⁹ explains its popular appeal to older tourists.

Establishments such as the VFH allow for more insight into the reasons why colonialism occurred. Some of the main reasons which led to colonialism can be encapsulated in the four headings: Gold, God, Glory and Goals

GOLD: the search for gold in the nineteenth century. Many colonists who travelled and colonised other countries did so to secure and enrich themselves with raw materials which their country may not have possessed. “Gold in particular was a popular and rare commodity which countries such as the UK needed”.²⁷⁰ The colonisation of Zimbabwe was made possible through this quest for gold as discussed earlier in this study.

GOD: Colonisation also took place through humanitarian missionaries that took it upon themselves to spread Christianity. David Livingstone was a missionary on his expedition of the continent of Africa. Other than spreading Christianity, missionaries also offered indigenous people “education and medical care, they were considered humanitarians because they travelled to areas to help improve humankind”.²⁷¹ However, their greed for resources in most instances led to colonialism and the oppression of the indigenous which was the case when the British came to Zimbabwe. Missionaries were often the vanguard of colonialism.

²⁶⁹ Anon, n.d., < <http://www.zimonline.co.za/pre-colonial>> Access: 21/10/2018.

²⁷⁰ Anon, n.d., <https://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/impact-colonialism> Access: 22/10/2018.

²⁷¹ Anon, n.d., < <https://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/impact-colonialism> Access: 24/10/2018.

GLORY: Colonialism often led to global popularity. One country would claim territories, and this gained them worldwide admiration. “A small country like England became one of the most powerful empires in the world by taking over large areas of land and dominating international trade”.²⁷²

GOALS: Many countries which were colonised for their strategic importance as this was an imperative goal in the colonial project. At times the position of a country was of great benefit to the colonising country. A good example of when a country was colonised by another country in order to secure a strategic standing is, the settlement of the Dutch at the Cape. “As long as the Dutch controlled the Cape, they controlled the sea route to the East”.²⁷³ This settlement ultimately led to the Dutch colonisation of the rest of the Republic of South Africa as we know it today. This was then followed by further colonial penetration into the interior.²⁷⁴

There is an important link between colonialism and tourism in history and this link is still present today. Strong links were established in colonial times between colonial developments and tourism. Using the VFH as an example, it is evident that the Hotel was built by the colonialists for a practical reason as well as their leisure and enjoyment. The fact that the architecture of the Hotel was built to resemble British culture and architecture is an indication that the developers of the VFH intended to attract mainly tourists from UK. “Colonial powers imposed administrative practices, laws, culture and economic relations upon native populations

²⁷² Anon, n.d., < <https://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/impact-colonialism>> Access: 24/10/2018.

²⁷³ Anon, n.d., <https://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/impact-colonialism> Access:22/10/2018.

²⁷⁴ R. Ross, *A concise history of South Africa*, 1996, pp. 21-26.

that were designed to benefit the colonising nation”.²⁷⁵ The same can be said for the structure of the Hotel.

The VFH and Tourism

Colonialism in Zimbabwe led to tourism in an area where there had not been any sort of tourism or hospitality before. It would be irresponsible to suggest that there was no travel before colonialism. Travel was occurring on the Zimbabwe plateau for reasons such as trade and resettlement of communities for centuries. Travel for leisure however, can be traced to the years following the colonisation of the country. This was “when large groups from the Cape as well as from Europe would travel to the country to see the VF and stay at the luxurious VFH.”²⁷⁶ It led to the continued success of the tourism industry in the country for many years as it remained to be a British colony for nine decades after the initial colonisation in 1890. This continued after the country gained independence - almost 100 years later - in 1980.

The link between the tourism industry and colonization is still apparent in the present-day post-colonial Zimbabwe. This is evidenced by the fact that the VFH is operating successfully in the country, many years after decolonisation. “The VFH as well as the VF in 2018 experienced the highest occupancy rates since the year 1999”.²⁷⁷ There are several effects

²⁷⁵ Anon, n.d., <http://www.zimonline.co.za/pre-colonial> Access 21/10/2018.

²⁷⁶ Anon, n.d., < <http://www.victoriafallshotel.com/>> Access: 22/09/2018.

²⁷⁷ C. Bower, June 2018., <http://www.tourismupdate.co.za/article/181647/Victoria-Falls-occupancy-highest-since-turn-of-the-century/8> Access 24/10/2018.

which the country experiences because of the link between colonialism and tourism which can be either positive or negative.

With specific reference of the VFH and Zimbabwe, some of these implications which are caused by colonialism and its continued promotion through tourism and tourism marketing, is the fact that colonial legacies are promoted. British legacies, which are depicted in colonial establishments such as the VFH, may give tourists a distorted view of the local people and their values. This is a negative implication that is produced by the presence of colonial establishments in a country.

Another implication in the case of the VFH is a more positive one. This is presented through colonialism and tourism due to the continued contribution the VFH makes to the tourism industry. The reason why this iconic colonial Hotel is still present and operating in Zimbabwe, one of the most decolonised African states on the continent, is due to the fact that the Hotel attracts a very large percentage of the overall tourists who visit the country. The VFH is one of the most sought-after luxury hotel establishment in the country. “As of November 2017, hotel room stays in the VF area have increased by 20%”.²⁷⁸

Zimbabwe as country relies very heavily on the tourism industry. In the past, tourism was ranked third in terms of it's over all contribution to the country's GDP. However more recently, since “recording increases of up

²⁷⁸ K. Granat, 11 September 2018 ., <
<http://www.tourismupdate.co.za/article/183815/Victoria-Falls-international-arrivals-continue-to-soar/8>> Access 22/10/2018.

to 50% in tourist arrivals to the VF area in the year 2018”²⁷⁹ the importance of the industry has increased. This boom in visitor numbers can be attributed to many factors, such as a change in the political atmosphere (which has been discussed in the previous chapter), a new mantra such as the “Zimbabwe is open for business” campaign and intense marketing and public relations by the private sector.²⁸⁰

Traditionally, Zimbabwean tourism has always leaned heavily on its wildlife and natural beauty as a main pull factor. However, the VFH and all its grandeur has been a major pull factor to tourists for as long as the Hotel has been in existence. In the colonial era, the beauty and elegance of the Hotel was its main enticing feature for tourists to stay. In the post-independence era, the colonial historical richness which the Hotel possesses has become a part of the modern tourism product being offered and is very popular with international tourists “who make up to almost 65% of the total of tourists who stay at the Hotel”.²⁸¹ Ironically, in the post-colonial era, the colonial experience which the tourist derives from visiting the Hotel, is a major attraction.

Another way that the VFH has managed to successfully manoeuvre the link between tourism and colonialism is through adaptation. There are

²⁷⁹ K. Granat, 11 September 2018 ., <
<http://www.tourismupdate.co.za/article/183815/Victoria-Falls-international-arrivals-continue-to-soar/8> Access 24/10/2018.

²⁸⁰ K. Granat, 11 September 2018 ., <
<http://www.tourismupdate.co.za/article/183815/Victoria-Falls-international-arrivals-continue-to-soar/8>> Access 24/10/2018.

²⁸¹ K. Granat, 11 September 2018 ., <
<http://www.tourismupdate.co.za/article/183815/Victoria-Falls-international-arrivals-continue-to-soar/8>> Access 24/10/2018.

many aspects which the Hotel possesses which are offensive and problematic. An example of this is the aforementioned trolley which transported the Hotel guests to the VF in earlier times. As discussed, the objections from guests led to the decommissioning of the trolley services at the VFH.

After the decommissioning of the trolley service it would have made sense if these trolleys were destroyed assuming they caused negative feelings amongst the guests. They also would probably cause feelings of discomfort for some of the indigenous people. However, instead of destroying them, as mentioned, one of the trolleys was preserved and an educational plaque put on it to indicate to tourists a former part of the history of the hotel. This adaptation and innovative way that the Hotel has managed by turning a controversial aspect of colonial history into an informative/ educational display of some sort (like in a museum,) giving it educational and historical significance. This is an example of how the Hotel has managed to adapt with times, reinvented aspects of its past and continues to operate successfully in an independent post-colonial Zimbabwe.

The VFH, as one of the world's best classic five-star hotels, has the prime position of being located facing the VF and this is also a major contributing factor to the tourism success of the establishment. The Hotel remains incredibly popular as a tourist destination, 114 years after it first opened its doors, among a Western, Eastern market as well as among local Zimbabweans. Boutique hotels such as the VFH possess "unique cultural and historical significance that allows for them to never go out of

fashion”.²⁸² Their continued adaptation to modernisation, for example in the case of the VFH by upgrading rooms every so often, allows for new tourism customer-bases to be attracted. The development of the Stables wing at the VFH discussed in the preceding chapter is a perfect example of this adaptation strategy which is a key factor to the success of the Hotel.

Other adaptations include “the Edwardian style executive and honeymoon suites built in the courtyard of the VFH” which have allowed for the Hotel to tap into the honeymoon market. It also caters to a younger age group of 18-35 market, by incorporating aspects such as WIFI and satellite TV into all their rooms.²⁸³ This age group in the customer profile for the hotel industry has been found to require more modern aspects which a colonial establishment may not possess. The VFH has managed to keep up with this type of customer by continuously adapting their facilities. The “latest addition has been the e-lounge which has computers and access to international electronic newspapers and magazines available for guests to use at any time”.²⁸⁴

Another major draw card to the colonial Hotel is its luxury aspect. Luxury is a major pull factor for more affluent visitors who normally have more disposable income to spend on luxury experiences which are offered at the VFH. The Hotel has managed to stay competitive in Zimbabwe

²⁸² L. Aruna Dhir, 26 April 2016., < <https://www.hospitalitynet.org/opinion/4075541.html>> Access: 23/09/2018.

²⁸³ Anon, n.d., < <http://www.victoriafallshotel.com/>> Access: 20/10/2018.

²⁸⁴ Anon, n.d., <https://www.victoriafallshotel.com/facilities/e-lounge-> Access: 21/10/2018.

notwithstanding the changing trends which the tourism industry has endured. This includes wildlife and safari tourism, and the changing nature of the way tourists want to experience “the experience economy”, and other accommodation trends such as the popularity of Airbnb.

The Butler model of tourism development & the VFH

Butler’s model of tourism development may be applied to the VFH. The model was proposed in 1980 and implies that there are stages in the lifecycle of a destination or for purposes of this research a hotel as a tourist destination (See Table 1 in Chapter 1).

The first stage in the Butler model of tourism exploration is the development stage. At this stage Butler notes that “there are very little tourists who come to the establishment their visit is based on cultural or natural attractions”.²⁸⁵ In reference to the VFH, the exploration stage was from the period that the Hotel was established in 1904 to about 1913 when plans to expand the Hotel were underway.

The involvement stage, according to Butler, follows the exploration stage and it is at this stage that “local residents become involved in tourism and a season where visitors are popular is established at the destination [a peak season]”.²⁸⁶ Another characteristic of the involvement stage is the improvement of facilities and infrastructure for tourists. The VFH may have been going through the involvement stage when the trolley services were

²⁸⁵ Anon, n.d., <https://www.numtnerd.net/tourism-the-butler-model.html> Access: 12/10/2018.

²⁸⁶ Anon, n.d., <https://wwwwww.geograpgyfieldwork.com/ButlerModel.htm> Access: 14/10/2018.

introduced at the VFH. The use of the trolley service saw the employment of the indigenous African community who lived in the vicinity around the VFH. This can be said to be a way in which the locals became involved in tourism and benefited from it. The development of better forms of travel, other than the railway and the dust motor roadway, which was replaced by air travel in the 1930s to the VF and the VFH, is also indication that the VFH as a tourism destination was in the involvement stage.

The next stage in the Butler model which is the third stage is the development stage. Butler notes that “at this stage high numbers of tourists are experienced by the destination”.²⁸⁷ Another characteristic of this stage on the Butler model for tourism development is the provision of secondary tourism attractions and heavy marketing of the destination. The VFH went through this stage of the model when advertisements of the VFH and the VF were published in the British South Africa Company’s yearly report.

The fourth stage which Butler identified is the consolidation stage. He notes that “At this stage on the tourism development model, the destination’s growth slows down, [however, very high visitor numbers are experienced by the destination]”.²⁸⁸ Tourism becomes the main draw card which attracts tourists to the area replacing the original economic factor which the area was developed for. With reference to the VFH, the

²⁸⁷ Anon, n.d., <https://www.numtnerd.net/tourism-the-butler-model.html> Access: 12/10/2018.

²⁸⁸ Anon, n.d., <https://www.geographyfieldwork.com/ButlerModel.htm> 17/10/2018.

consolidation stage was the period when the Hotel recorded a record number of over 3000 visitors annually.

The fifth stage of the Butlers model of tourism development is the stagnation or problem stage. At this stage, Butler indicates that “the destination will have a well-established destination image and it may be considered old fashioned”.²⁸⁹ It is at this stage that visitor numbers may start to fall in comparison to preceding years. The VFH went through the stagnation period from the 1960s. Other factors which led to visitor numbers being lower are the fact the Rhodesian political environment was not very stable during this period right up until 1980. The 1960s came with the UDI which saw the country facing many sanctions from the West as well as the UN. This deterred, or discouraged, tourists to the region.

The sixth and final stage in Butler’s model for tourism development is the decline vs rejuvenation stage. This stage is characterised by two options: either the general decline of a destination, or a period of renewal and revival. “When in decline a destination fails to be competitive in the industry [and is surpassed by newer establishments]”.²⁹⁰ However Butler also notes that a destination may also take another route at this stage and this is rejuvenation. Rejuvenation is when the destination, establishes more sustainable strategies in order to stay competitive and possibly attract other types of customers in the industry. In the period between 1980 and 1989 the VFH went through the decline/rejuvenation stage. The Hotel went through a slump and then it was in the early 1990s that the

²⁸⁹ Anon, n.d., <https://www.geographyfieldwork.com/ButlerModel.htm> 17/10/2018.

²⁹⁰ Anon,n.d., <https://www.numtnerd.net/tourism-the-butler-model.html> Access: 12/10/2018.

Hotel managed to rejuvenate itself. Higher visitor numbers were recorded in the early 1990s and this was an indication that the Hotel had successfully manoeuvred the sixth stage of Butler's model of tourism development.

According to Butler "destinations go through the six stages many times if they manage to successfully rejuvenate themselves".²⁹¹ The VFH is presently going through another growth stage as of 2017. After many years in decline the country has been successful in marketing itself as a tourism destination. As mentioned in previous chapters the Hotel operates in a very unstable Zimbabwean political and economic environment. Changes in these two environments have a tremendous effect on the success or detriment of the VFH.

The VFH in iconic comparison

The last section of this chapter presents a very brief comparative analysis between VFH and a selection of other iconic hotels. Comparisons can be made between iconic historical hotels to gain further insight into the operational dynamics which these similar establishments may face. This will also provide the reasons why they manage to stay relevant, as well as successful in changing times. Comparisons will be made with other iconic hotels within Zimbabwe, Africa, Asia and the USA.

²⁹¹ Anon, n.d., <https://www.geographyfieldwork.com/Butler/Model.htm> Access: 16/10/2018.

The Meikles Hotel (Zimbabwe)

The Meikles Hotel in Zimbabwe is similar to the VFH in the sense that it was built in the early twentieth century by the British colonialists.²⁹² The Hotel “officially opened its doors in 1915. It was the brainchild of Thomas Meikles who envisioned a commitment to the “highest possible standard of service and product”, something that has become enshrined in the Meikles culture”.²⁹³ The Meikles is one of the most popularly sought-after hotels in Zimbabwe today along with the VFH. On its webpage the Hotel is described as: “The Meikles hotel is a 103-year-old iconic colonial hotel which is part of the Leading Hotels of the World.”²⁹⁴ It therefore openly emphasizes its colonial heritage as a draw card to lure guests.

Much like the VFH, the Meikles Hotel is said to have “evolved through the colonial Rhodesian era through to post-colonial Zimbabwe”. The Hotel was built overlooking the city’s epi-centre and where the first British settlers raised the Union Jack. In 1980, after independence, the new Zimbabwean flag replaced the Union Jack”.²⁹⁵ Adaption and “moving with the times”, so to say, has been a contributing factor which has led to this iconic colonial Hotel remaining successful over the years.

The Meikles, unlike the VFH, has changed drastically in appearance from its original Edwardian construction architecture. The 1970s saw some major restructuring for the Meikles Hotel and it closed for about two years

²⁹² Anon, n.d., <https://www.meikles.com/about/history> Access 15/10/2018.

²⁹³ Anon, n.d., <https://www.meikles.com/about/history> Access 15/10/2018.

²⁹⁴ Anon, n.d., <http://www.meikles.com/about/history> Access 17/10/2018.

²⁹⁵ Anon., <http://www.meikles.com/about/history> Access 15/10/2018.

to allow for these renovations. “The Hotel officially reopened in November 1976”.²⁹⁶

The Hotel has retained some original aspects of development such as the commitment to high standards of luxury. This has been a contributing factor to the success of the Hotel. High standards and the maintenance of them at the Meikles, like in the case of the VFH where luxury and good service is of the utmost importance, plays a key role in the longevity of both of these hotels. Many updates have been done on the Meikles premises, such as the “remodelling and refurbishments” in 2013. “Special attention was given to the findings of international research that investigated evolving trends, habits and expectations of typical five-star hotel clientele”.²⁹⁷ This shows adaptation by management to stay relevant in the global hospitality industry.

The Meikles Hotel and the VFH are both members of the “Leading Hotels of the World” club. As indicated, they both comply with the requirement of “The leading hotels of the World Ltd” which is a collection of “authentic and uncommon luxury Hotels of the World”, which was established in 1928. Members of the club are said to “embody the very essence of their destinations”.²⁹⁸ It is important that the two colonial hotels are a part of the Leading Hotels of the World because this, I believe, keeps them up to date with worldwide standards. There are annual inspections which the Leading Hotels of the World Ltd carries out to ensure that all Hotels adhere to the rules and standards expected of them. This also allows them to

²⁹⁶ Anon., <https://www.meikles.com/about/history> Access 15/10/2018.

²⁹⁷ Anon., <https://www.meikles.com/about/history> Access 15/10/2018.

²⁹⁸ Anon, n.d., <<https://www.lhw.com/Corporate/about-us>> Access 18/10/2018.

remain competitive and continue as formidable forces in the trend sensitive tourism industry.

The Giraffe Manor Hotel (Kenya)

Iconic hotels such as the VFH in Africa also include hotels such as the Giraffe Manor Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya. This Hotel, although built almost 30 years after the VFH, can be considered an iconic colonial establishment. It was built by “Sir David Duncan of the Mackintosh family, famous for ‘Mackintosh toffee’ in 1932”.²⁹⁹ It is like the VFH in that it too was built using colonial inspirations in terms of the architecture of the Hotel. Much like the VFH, it was operated by the developers until a time in the 1960s when the developers leased it out to be operated by a third party. Today the Hotel is considered one of the most iconic buildings in Kenya.

Described as follows: “the Giraffe Manor has extraordinary appeal, that harks back to the 1930s when European visitors first flocked to East Africa to enjoy safaris”.³⁰⁰ Unlike the VFH, the Giraffe Manor Hotel has changed its appearance over the years in an attempt to attract a wider market share of the Kenyan tourism market.

The Giraffe Manor has reinvented itself many times with its most recent being in 2009 when it was sold to the current owners and operators. “Tanya and Mikey Carr-Hartley established the Safari collection which encompasses the Giraffe Manor Hotel as one of its luxury

²⁹⁹ J. Wambugi Jan 26 2017, <https://theculturetrip.com/africa/kenya/articles/a-brief-history-of-nairobis-giraffe-manor/> Access: 21/10/2018.

³⁰⁰ J. Wambugi Jan 26 2017, <https://theculturetrip.com/africa/kenya/articles/a-brief-history-of-nairobis-giraffe-manor/> Access: 21/10/2018

accommodations”.³⁰¹ This reinvention or adaption of the Hotel is an example of how a hotel, much like the VHF, has adapted and this can be considered a reason contributing to the longevity of the hotels in both Kenya and Zimbabwe.

The Raffles Hotel (Singapore)

Another very spectacular and iconic colonial hotel is the Raffles Hotel in Singapore. The Hotel officially opened its doors to tourists towards the end of the seventeenth century in 1887. “The hotel was named after the father of modern Singapore, Sir Stamford Raffles”.³⁰²

Like the VFH, the Raffles Singapore Hotel had very humble beginnings. Offering 10 rooms leased from the owner to the “Sarkies Brothers, founders of other legendary hotels in Asia, like The Strand in Yangon”, welcomed the first guests to Raffles Singapore.³⁰³ Today the Hotel is currently under renovation and closed as a plan to re-open in mid-2019 is in place.

Very different from the VFHs approach, the Raffles Hotel is extremely innovative when it comes to reinventing itself as a brand. Today the Hotel is one of the most established in terms of technological advancements in

³⁰¹ J. Wambugi Jan 26 2017, <https://theculturetrip.com/africa/kenya/articles/a-brief-history-of-nairobis-giraffe-manor/> Access: 21/10/2018

³⁰² M. Stilinovic, n.d., < <https://www.forbes.com/sites/millystilinovic/2016/11/21/10-surprising-facts-about-raffles-singapore/#69f2d5cc3c47>> Access 22/10/2018

³⁰³ M. Stilinovic, 21 November 2016., < <https://www.forbes.com/sites/millystilinovic/2016/11/21/10-surprising-facts-about-raffles-singapore/#69f2d5cc3c47>> Access 21/11/2018

the hospitality industry. This form of adaptation contrasts with the route taken by the VFH, which retains most of its twentieth century attributes. The Raffles Hotel is constantly adapting its facilities and this allows for the Hotel to gain a sizeable market share of the tourism and hospitality industry.³⁰⁴

The Raffles Hotel has endured many uncertainties which an establishment like one of its grandeur is expected to have undergone. Due to the many years which it has been in existence, like the VFH, it has also had to manoeuvre through wars like World War II. “These times proved very difficult for the operation of the Hotel as there was full blown war in Singapore at times, for example during the years 1941-1942”.³⁰⁵ However, the Hotel managed to stay afloat through all uncertainties presented through history. Some 131 years later, the Raffles Hotel remains a giant in the hospitality industry and one of the most well-known colonial establishments in the world today.

Grand Imperial Hotel (USA)

The Grand Imperial Hotel is an iconic hotel located in Silverton, Colorado in the USA, also known as the “Crown Jewel of Silverton” which was commissioned in 1882”.³⁰⁶ Similarities which the Grand Imperial Hotel and the VFH share are that from their inception they were the top luxury establishments in their area and which they remain today. Also referred to as the “Grand Lady”, the Hotel is about 136 years old. It has preserved its

³⁰⁴ M. Stilinovic, n.d., < <https://www.forbes.com/sites/millystilinovic/2016/11/21/10-surprising-facts-about-raffles-singapore/#69f2d5cc3c47>> Access 22/10/2018

³⁰⁵ Anon, n.d., < <https://www.raffles.com/singapore/about-hotel/hotel-timeline/>> Access: 22/11/2018

³⁰⁶ Anon,n.d., <https://wwwgrandimperialhotel.com> Access: 26/10/2018.

Victorian era heritage of the nineteenth century. Like VFH, the Victorian architectural style which the Hotel boasted when it was developed is the same style which has been restored and preserved and is presently the face of the Hotel. There have apparently been “massive restorations which have taken place at the Hotel to return the hotel to its original and authentic Victorian era grandeur”.³⁰⁷

Similar to the VFH, the Hotel has maintained its Victorian era decoration and atmosphere. This has allowed for the Grand Imperial Hotel to offer the unique nineteenth century culture which tourists may struggle to find at other more modernised hotel establishment. The provision of an authentic product being offered at the Grand Imperial Hotel allows for the Hotel to be able to cater to a certain niche market of customers. This niche includes people like historians and other educational travel groups as well as the elite or discerning tourist. The continued success of the Hotel can be attributed to this simple factor that they provide a unique accommodation facility which is not common, especially in an American tourism and hospitality industry which is characterised by constant, if not excessive, innovation.

It is evident that the VFH is not alone in this league. Iconic hotels along with the iconic historically colonial establishments which have been considered in this chapter have prevailed and have substantial standing in the tourism industry despite their context. They are likely to continue to do so in future because of their authentic contribution to the industry.

³⁰⁷ Anon,n.d., <https://wwwgrandimperialhotel.com> Access: 26/10/2018.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

It is evident that the product being offered to tourists by destinations such as the VFH in VF are invaluable to the tourism industry as well as to the countries which these establishments are located in. The significance of colonial hotels and what role they play in the tourism industry is important as clearly explored in the preceding chapters of this study. The role of preserving the rich and diverse heritage that colonial Hotels represent in countries that were previously colonies is fascinating and should be promoted. LEDCs which are made up of countries who were the most affected by colonialism may use colonial heritage tourism to increase the GDP of the country.

Iconic, colonial hotels like the VFH offer nostalgia to consumers which is then commoditized by the tourism industry. This is known as “nostalgia tourism and is growing in the tourism industry”.³⁰⁸ The definition of nostalgia is a “sentimental or bittersweet yearning for an experience product or service from the past”.³⁰⁹ The VFH as a historical colonial Hotel provides this “so called” nostalgic feeling and experience for the tourists who visit the Hotel. As mentioned earlier, a large number of the customers which the VFH welcomes are from the West. These tourists usually desire

³⁰⁸ S.M. Baker & P. F. Kennedy, *Death by Nostalgia: A diagnosis context of specific cases: Advances in consumer research* 21 1994, p.169

³⁰⁹ S.M. Baker & P. F. Kennedy, *Death by Nostalgia: A diagnosis context of specific cases: Advances in consumer research* 21 1994, p.169

to experience their identity through exploration of their so-called ancestral endeavours and so explore their ancestral identity through nostalgic travel in an establishment such as the VFH. Newman believes that “Establishments which offer nostalgia tourism are becoming more and more popular not only in colonial tourism, but this is a worldwide wave which has engulfed the macro-environment of all business establishment”.³¹⁰

The economic environment is constantly changing, not only the Zimbabwean economic environment, but the global economy. It is more common that tourists are “seeking out experiences in the tourism industry rather than actual products. This has been a result of changing consumer profiles over time”.³¹¹ The services rendered by colonial hotels, such as the VFH, are allowing for the tourist to have a unique experience (nostalgia tourism) and cater for these changing consumer profiles and needs. According to Pine and Gilmore the definition of “experiences is distinct economic offerings, [they also note that experiences] as different from services as services are from goods”.³¹² The VFH is at the forefront of successfully exploiting the benefits of offering tourists an experience-based tourism product which is encompassed in the experience economy. This is a pivotal contributor to the success of the Hotel and one which allows for the continued growth and relevance in the Zimbabwean tourism industry for many years to come.

³¹⁰ D. Newman 25 November 2015., < <https://www.forbes.com/sites/danielnewman/2015/11/24/what-is-the-experience-economy-should-your-business-care/>> Access: 02/12/2018

³¹¹ Business Day, 12 March 2015., < <http://www.fastmoving.co.za/news/supplier-news-17/consumer-profiles-changing-expert-1403>> Access 02/12/2018.

³¹² B. J. Pine II & J. H. Gilmore, Welcome to the experience economy, *Harvard Business Report*, 1998, p. 97.

Holidays or destinations which sell experiences have been said to be more enjoyable for the tourist. Pine and Gilmore are of the opinion that “The concept of selling experiences is spreading”³¹³ far beyond just colonial establishments such as the VFH and the other iconic, colonial hotels considered in this study. Other tourism destinations are adopting this concept in order to further enhance the products and services they render to the modern tourist. Establishments such as the VFH have a head-start in the tourism industry when it comes to the experience economy. This explains why they are still operational in an era which is predominantly decolonised.

Thus, as experience economy is now an increasingly important part of the tourism industry, establishments which are already leaders in the industry, like the VFH, are very useful in an LEDC like Zimbabwe. They contribute tremendously to the economy of the country and take the lead in the trend being set.

In terms of longevity, colonial establishments, specifically the VFH and Hotels which have been discussed in chapter five, have proven that they have the capability of operating successfully for a considerable number of years. These establishments must undergo many refurbishments, restorations and upgrades to stay competitive in the tourism industry which is influenced by trends. All the iconic colonial Hotels which have been discussed in this study, including the VFH, have redesigned

³¹³ B. J. Pine II & J. H. Gilmore, Welcome to the experience economy, *Harvard Business Report*, 1998, p. 97.

themselves at some point showing that this a fundamental instrument to ensure the that the hotel is successful for many years.

Focusing on the VFH, one of the contributing reasons the Hotel has managed to stay competitive against other newer more modernized establishments which have been developed in the area is through its ability to market itself in a way that no other hotel in the area can. The VFH is the only five-star colonial Hotel at VF. This fact alone means the Hotel monopolises the industry allowing for it to snatch most, if not all, the nostalgia tourism customers.

Adaptations which the VFH made from its colonial foundation are important as they have contributed to the successful operation of the Hotel in post-colonial Zimbabwe. To become accepted as a monument which is valued by the local community of the country has been a continual process which the Hotel has had to achieve, emphasize and maintain. This journey has not been an easy one for the VFH. As already stipulated in this study, through overcoming numerous obstacles, the VFH has moved on. The Hotel has gone through times of decline where the future of the Hotel became blurry. For example, “the period from 1980 to 1989 when the hotels was quite unpopular”³¹⁴ in the country and sales were low and the problem years “2007-2009 of hyperinflation in Zimbabwe”³¹⁵ which led to decreased business activity in the country.

³¹⁴ Anon, n.d., <http://www.victoriafallshotel.com/> Access: 02/10/2018

³¹⁵ Anon, n.d., <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-story-of-hyperinflation-in-zimbabwe.html> Access 02/12/2018.

Other adaptations made at the VFH include the taking down of some of the pictures which used to hang on the walls of the corridors of the Hotel. These pictures showed Africans, or the indigenous people of Zimbabwe being treated in a way that does not adhere to human rights standards of today. These pictures were taken down from the walls and preserved as historical material sources as well as catalogued.³¹⁶

Conservation of colonial heritage

The term conservation has been a part of society for many years. Conservation is defined as “the act of conserving; prevention of injury, decay, waste, or loss; preservation”.³¹⁷ Conservation has been taking place in Africa for centuries. From as early as the seventeenth century when the Cape was colonised, conservation has played a significant role in the southern African society. “Traditionally, people [living in the southern African region] have always lived in harmony with nature and the philosophies of sustainability and conservation were inherent in their society”.³¹⁸ Fast-forward to the present-day, it is evident conservation is playing a far larger role in society. The concept of sustainability is a part of many strategies which business establishments adopt in order to successfully conserve the limited resources which are the products and services sold to customers or tourists. “The use of resources in such a way that allows for future generations to be able to successfully use and

³¹⁶ Anon, n.d., <http://www.victoriafallshotel.com/> Access: 02/10/2018

³¹⁷ Anon, n.d., <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/conservation> Access: 01/12/2018.

³¹⁸ Anon, n.d., <
https://www.environment.gov.za/projectsprogrammes/peopleparks/southafrican_conservationhistory> Access: 01/12/2018.

exploit resources is known as sustainability”.³¹⁹ There is thus a definite link between conservation and sustainability at various levels.

Establishments such as the VFH are a rare commodity in the tourism industry and need to be conserved. Therefore, much caution should be used in the management of the conservation of the colonial hotels. The principles of sustainability are very important at this establishment and also at many of the Hotels which are similar. “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.³²⁰ The richness in culture and national heritage which is present at colonial Hotels is a useful source of historical education as well as material history and at times it is the only tangible link which people have with their heritage. This a good reason that these establishments have been conserved for future generations to be able to reach their maximum potential and benefit from such establishments as much as the present and past generations have benefited.

Conservation of colonial heritage through the promotion of colonial tourism is a sustainability strategy which serves the region well in terms of profits made from conservation and heritage tourism. It is believed that in earlier times, as early as the hunter gatherer communities, the indigenous native people of southern Africa depended on natural resources for their survival. This was prior to European colonisation when

³¹⁹ Anon, n.d., < <http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/pages/what-is-sustainable-development.html>> 02/12/2018.

³²⁰ Anon, n.d., < <http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/pages/what-is-sustainable-development.html>> 02/12/2018.

the access to natural resources were controlled and limited to how the indigenous people were able to use them”.³²¹ Conservation and sustainability did not come about as a result of colonisation but, were already being practiced in Africa before the continent was engulfed by colonialism. The future of colonial establishments is directly related to the conservation strategies the countries and management teams adopt. The VFH is a perfect example of how colonial heritage is being successfully conserved and commoditised as a tourism product.

Iconic, colonial Hotels: similarities

There are numerous similarities which these iconic colonial hotels share, and these are also some of the factors that led to their continued success in the tourism industry, as well as their longevity.

The first characteristic, and probably the most important, is the fact that they offer the tourist nostalgia tourism. They give the tourist an opportunity to experience the “has-been era” which was the high colonial era. Recent studies have shown that “holiday experiences which sell a more meaningful tourism product are more popular”.³²² Colonial hotels are a vital part of the tourism industry and they cannot be remade if they are destroyed or lost therefore it is important that these establishments continue to provide the uniqueness they are renowned for.

³²¹ Anon, n.d.,

https://www.environment.gov.za/projectsprogrammes/peopleparks/southafrican_conservationhistory

Access: 01/12/2018.

³²² D. W. Russell, “Nostalgic Tourism”, *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 25:2, 2008, p. 109.

The second is the fact that they form part of the historical map of those countries where colonisation occurred. Colonialism plays an important role in shaping the identity and many of the cultural and economic structures of a country. Therefore, “a colonial hotel provides a tangible structure directly linked to historical identity and culture,”³²³ which plays an important part in telling the story of a nation. Colonial hotels are very closely linked to the tourism industry in previously colonised countries. This is shown in the link between tourism and colonialism. This link is evident in Zimbabwe in the case of the VFH as the colonial Hotel is a major tourist attraction and a big contributor to the tourism sector of the country.

Colonial hotels are very old establishments which have been in existence for many years. All the colonial hotels discussed in this study are over a hundred years old. The reason for this is the fact that the “high colonial era was the period between the sixteenth century to the early twentieth century when most of Africa had been colonised”.³²⁴ A lot of time has passed since this era and this has allowed for colonial establishments to age.

Another common factor that colonial establishments share is the fact that they are faced with constantly having to change and adapt themselves to be better in the tourism industry. This need for change and adaptation is characterised by refurbishments, restorations as well as at times closures

³²³ G. Pwiti and W. Ndoro, “The Legacy of Colonialism: Perceptions of the Cultural Heritage in Southern Africa, with Special Reference to Zimbabwe”, *African Archaeological Review*. Vol. 16, No. 3, 1999, p. 144

³²⁴ Kofi Takyi Asante, National movements in colonial Africa, *The History of African Development*, p. 1.

which lead to rejuvenation and re-launch. This constant upgrading is done in an attempt by colonial hotels to remain relevant in the tourism industry and operate successfully.

Lastly, colonial hotels are limited to countries which have faced colonialism. This makes them unique in that they are not easily found everywhere. However, in some countries which have been colonised one may find no tangible aspects such as a hotel which links back to colonialism. An example can be found in the DRC which was a colonised state in Africa. However, the “local government and people do not see the need for reminders of their colonial past and therefore, colonial tourism is not promoted and buildings with colonial connotations have either been destroyed or neglected and unrestored”.³²⁵ This has then excluded them from this potential lucrative tourism market.

The future and the VFH

The VFH and other colonial Hotels are constantly planning for the future. This is mainly because establishments of this nature are undergoing constant change because of the sensitivity of the service they render. These services have been in existence for many years. They need to reinvent the Hotel every so often as a necessary task. We note that the “latest refurbishment that the VFH went through were those done on the hotel in 2013”.³²⁶ One of the main reasons restoration and refurbishment is important for an establishment such as the VFH is due to the fact that

³²⁵ D. Harrison, *Tourism in Africa: The social and cultural framework*, 2000, p. 43.

³²⁶ Anon, n.d., <

https://www.classicafrica.com/luxuryafricansafaris/properties/the_victoria_falls_hotel
> Access: 2/12/2018.

the tourist is charged quite a high price and the “price charged has to reflect the quality of the facilities”.³²⁷

Going forward, the Hotel must carry on with constant upgrading and refurbishment to ensure that that it continues to have a good claim on a large share in the Zimbabwean tourism market sector. The VFH is the only boutique five-star colonial hotel in the whole Matabeleland area of the country. An increase market share is a desirable position for any business establishment, not just the VFH, as this means that the Hotel is able to benefit financially from the large number of visitors who choose to use the Hotel when they visit the VF area.

At a colonial hotel like the VFH, while it is of the utmost importance that the culture and ambience of its colonial past are not lost, there has to be a balance when it comes to modernising the establishment. “Today’s tourist is a more time conscious and sophisticated individual”³²⁸ and therefore, he or she has needs which have to be met by the Hotel. The fact the Hotel promotes and sells “an olden day era” time does not mean that aspects such as customer service and guest relations must also be done in a manner which is dated or ignored. The administration and management of colonial hotels must be innovative and follow the strategies which are taken on by newer and more modern hotels. By adopting this approach, colonial hotels, such as the VFH, can compete in the tourism environment and maintain a competitive edge.

³²⁷ Anon, n.d., <https://ideas.com/5-ways-find-right-pricing-strategy-hotel/> Access: 02/12/2018.

³²⁸ Business Day, 12 March 2015., < <http://www.fastmoving.co.za/news/supplier-news-17/consumer-profiles-changing-expert-1403>> Access 02/12/2018.

In this study a clear analysis on the operation of colonial hotels has been outlined, with particular reference to the VFH. It is evident that colonial hotels have a solid position in the tourism industry in the future and will continue to thrive for a very long time.

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