

BETWEEN CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE: PLURALISM IN PLANNING TOURISM PRODUCTS FOR RESCUING "THE LOST (OGOJA) PROVINCE", NORTH- CENTRAL CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Between cultural and natural heritage: pluralism in planning tourism products for rescuing "the lost (Ogoja) province", north-central Cross River State, Nigeria

The planning of tourism products in the north-central Cross River State (corresponding to 'old Ogoja province') is examined in this study. Explained in the article are: justification of the need for undertaking community-based tourism development strategy as a means of reducing inter-regional disparity in development aroused by historical discrimination against the region through eras of Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, colonialism, and successive post-independent governments; creation of special development funds aimed at addressing challenges posed by personalization of government thereby creating governance deficits; and descriptions of the tourism potentials/resources of the north-central Cross River State. Rather than adopting the advice of tourism experts in the 1960s that African countries ought to prefer to design cultural-heritage tourism products aiming towards attracting some 145 million tourists from the United States of America (USA) who might be satiated with natural heritage tourism products offered back home. Here, it is argued here that considering myriad socio-economic-political dynamics thereafter – including anti-African/Nigerian political measures such as barring US citizens from visiting Nigeria or parts of it- there is no need concentrating on such restricted tourism products. This is justified by the fact that with nearly 170 million population –most of whom are expecting to move from poverty towards the middle class among other prosperous economic statuses and who do not need to immediately access foreign natural heritage tourism, there is need for north-central Cross River State –a region possessing diverse tourism resources to plan tourism products that seek to integrate natural heritage with the cultural varieties in order to properly capture both local and foreign tourists. Foreign tourists here covers a larger spectrum beyond US visitors including visitors from large and increasing number of member states of the United Nations.

Key words

Tourism, products, north-central, Cross River State, natural, cultural, heritage

1. Introduction

The 1960s was a decade of vigorous tourism discourse with regards to Africa: 1967 was declared by the United Nations as the International Year of Tourism with the latter's sub-title "Passport to Peace" based on the optimism that tourism promised to foster increasing understanding among people who get involved in travel to places other than their usual residences and workplaces to enjoy tourism products. Following in the footsteps of the UN, the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation (DHF), established to honour the untimely demises of the second Secretary-General of the UN in a controversial air-crash in 1961, managed two four-week workshops in 1969 and 1970 respectively, aiming to bring African civil servants mandated to drive national tourism sectors up to the speed with the responsibilities of the sector. Over four decades (precisely 43 years –counting from 1970) after these vigorous tourism promotional activities, the nearly ubiquitous poverty of African economies –partly the result of neoliberal globalization (Ingwe Ikeji Ojong 2010) might be indicative of tourism sector failure to make appreciable contribution to the growth of African countries' economies. Tourism failure in Nigeria might be traced to the country's misfortune of descending into the "resource curse" or "petro-capitalism". The latter describes the quagmire of nearly half a century culture of over-reliance on petroleum oil for generating over 90 per cent of its national revenue that is shared by its three tiers of government (Wigley 2012, 120; Ingwe 2013a). The peace that was expected to result from tourism and travel generally and specifically the planning/management of the sector as a means of realizing the expected peace at both national and (sub)national levels seem to have remained a mirage.

The foregoing failure of tourism to foster peace and social order conducive for attaining sustainable development has been the case with the pioneering tourism development in Nigeria in the Cross River State, one of the country's 36 states has attempted to move ahead of the national government to take tourism to a higher level. Academic research and activism interests in the exclusion of northern and central parts of Cross River State - one of Nigeria's 36 federal states – from the tourism sector of the sub-national region has increased recently. Although, the entire sub-national region was described in the 1980s as one of Nigeria's "economically backward regions" due to its lack of significant natural resources (one of the several minerals such as coal, tin and Columbite, or petroleum oil, among others) that were responsible for the development of some towns and regions in Nigeria (Omuta and Onokheroraye 1986), this point was an unnecessary exaggeration that downplayed the fact that some of the more advanced parts of the country were not those that were well endowed with natural resources but gained from political forces such as being sites of politicians' work and/or residences or serve as points of commerce and other factors. The latter two points explain the persistence of Calabar as a recurring area for investment of public development resources as a means of initially creating infrastructure for assisting transatlantic slave trade (TST), British colonial rule, post-slave trade commerce involving Europeans, and post-independent governments (Ingwe 2013 a,c,d).

Calabar urban region, and to a lesser extent the rest of the rapidly urbanizing Southern Cross River State has been an area that has gained successively through the various socio-economic eras (Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, colonial rule, post-independent indigenous government). In addition to Calabar region's gain from the successive investment by leaders of the foregoing historical epochs, Nigeria's Fourth Republic (i.e. the fourth return of the country's government to civil democracy after

prolonged military dictatorship that started in 1966 and ended with shaming of the series of dictatorships out of government. This end of dictatorship arrived in May 1999 after the Sani Abacha dictatorship and its predecessor IB Babangida, were indicted (or observed and believed to be enmeshed in) of perpetrating scandalous atrocities (public treasury looting, cultural fundamentalism, dishonesty with regards to unnecessary elongation of the programme for transiting from the dictatorship to democracy, among others).

The Fourth Republic governorship of Mr. Donald Duke in Cross River State (1999-2007) was the period of resuscitation of the region's tourism sector which had always been dormant except for elitist tourist site creation and administration for the exclusive enjoyment of the elite at the Obudu Ranch Plateau. The latter's founding and development is credited to Europeans in around the late 1940s. Later, the Obudu Cattle Ranch, as it was then tagged, fell into the mis-management of the second Republic politicians and dictators who returned in 1985 and stayed until the late 1990s (Ingwe 2004). Cross River State tourism sector resuscitation involved a new prioritization of the economic focal points of the sub-national region such that tourism for the first time was officially recognized as an important one

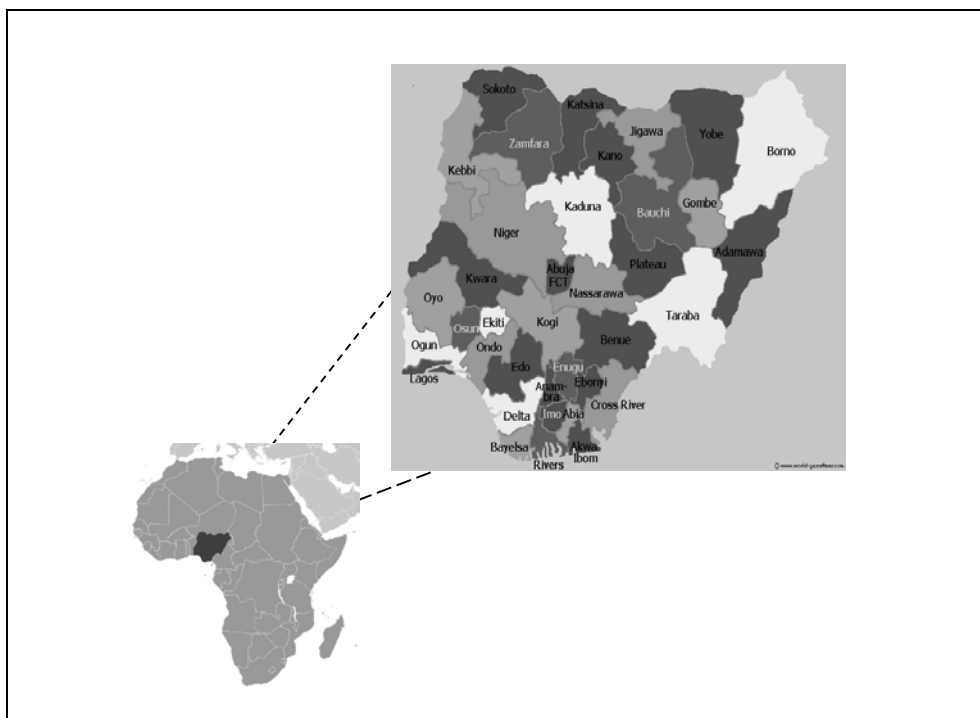


Fig. 1: Nigeria's 36 states and Federal Capital Territory projected from Africa.
Source: (1) <http://www.worldofcultures.org/1024/africa/AfricaMaps/nigeria.gif>; (2) <http://www.world-gazetteer.com>; Ingwe, 2014.

whose contribution to the sub-national gross domestic product was considered capable of improving its socio-economic conditions. Another important point here concerns the sustenance of the civilian democratic administration beyond four years as was the case in the second Republic when the Republic was abruptly aborted at

the point of transitioning from the first four-year term to another (when the political life of the second term was killed by dictators led by the duo of Generals Muhammadu Buhari and Tunde Idiagbon) in 1983. Also significant is the fact that after the eight-year Duke Administration (1999-2007), the official recognition of tourism as a budding sector of the sub-national economy has been sustained by the succeeding Imoke administration (2007-2016). In the context of marginalization of the old Ogoja province from the overall tourism development programme of the Cross River State, the mission of rescuing the excluded region has to stick to the tourism development programme but adopting alternative strategies that may not depend on the State government that has demonstrated unwillingness to take the Ogoja region upwards in the development ladder. The question that requires answer at this point is: Between cultural heritage and natural heritage; what tourism products should the "lost Ogoja province" prefer to develop in their self-rescue effort?

The marginalization of old Ogoja province has been a challenge that presents multiple dimensions. The old Ogoja province is the only one of Nigeria's less than 20 old provinces that has been excluded from series of political redistricting or transformation of the provinces' status into federal states endowed with qualifications to receive statutorily allocated development funds from the federal tier of government in what otherwise been described as the politics of state creation (Ojo and Adebayo 2008). However, here the emphasis is on the marginalization of the old Ogoja province within the region's current enclosure in Cross River State, one of Nigeria's present 36 states in terms of the tourism development agenda governed by the latter since Nigeria's Fourth Republic (1999-2013).

1.1 Purpose, objectives and organisation

The purpose of this study is to contribute towards the ongoing tourism and (sub)national regional sustainable development programme in Cross River State, Nigeria, recently initiated against the backdrop of the marginalization of the old Ogoja province. This project is managed by one of Africa's leading sustainable development think-tanks, the Centre for Research and Action on Developing Locales, Regions and the Environment (CRADLE). While some publications spun-off from this research programme relevant to this study are appropriately cited here and in the references (Ingwe 2013a,c,d), others either accessible elsewhere or exist in the organization's files. The objective of this present article is to elucidate on the possibilities of fashioning out of appropriate tourism products that the old Ogoja province could concentrate on –under the proposed community-based tourism programme being planned- as means of attracting tourists to its sites for revenue generation. To achieve the aforementioned objective, the remainder of the article is organized in sections to achieve other specific objectives as follows: the suitability of pluralism as a theoretical framework for explaining and understanding tourism development in an excluded part of a sub-national region is demonstrated; This is followed on by a description of the way old Ogoja province was excluded from the ongoing Cross River State tourism development programme is undertaken to provide a background for understanding the context for the proposal for community-based tourism development for the region is undergone. Afterwards, why the community-based tourism programme for the old Ogoja province becomes necessary is clarified. A link is established between socio-economic and political characteristics and trends in international tourism/politics to programming design of Ogoja tourism-initiative. The potentials for cultural and natural heritage tourism in the north-central Cross River State are highlighted. Finally, the article is concluded by drawing some vital conclusions and offering some recommendations.

2. Linking pluralism theoretical framework tourism development in an excluded sub-national region

Recognized as a theory, pluralism is concerned with causation that involves diverse influences and/or factors that determine the occurrence of phenomena. The term has been applied in connotation with the following situations:

1. Perception of behavior. Some radical views in politics and philosophy have argued that Marxist materialist monism, a belief that myriad factors led to considerable opposition to this approach as well as the law-determined interpretation of the society's development. Pluralism has also been applied in an extended way to refer to a doctrine pertaining to the diversity of cultural, ideological, radical, national, class, gender, among other characteristics of phenomena;
2. Pluralism has also been used connotation with contradiction of the class theory as well as to challenge state-centrism deriving from pressure by the involvement of diverse factors within the political environment at different levels (nationally, sub-nationally and/or internationally). Pluralism theory –encompassing all the aforementioned perspectives- has been applied as an alternative to the Marxist class perspective for analyzing domestic politics and international political systems. In addition to providing a theoretical framework (or doctrine) for opposing Marxism, pluralism theory presents a useful alternative for understanding the multiplicity of factors that actually exist in society thereby presenting it with dynamism of varying degrees depending on the strength of the person(s) employing it.

Some people have suggested that division of society into social classes and the flourishing of modern electoral democracy, which was recognized by several revolutionaries before the "cold war" confirms the relevance of the term (pluralism) in moving society forward. The "cold war" era represents a period that pluralism was frequently employed by opposing schools of thought to absolutise their own "truths" (Ingwe 2005).

Political scientist, Lincoln Allison, writes that pluralism has been employed in philosophical theories and systems of thought that appreciate various influences i.e. involving more than one ultimate principle contrasted to those exhibiting "monist" characteristics. The United States of America is a place where pluralism was employed for legitimizing and/or rationalizing the nation's constitution by various ethno-cultural groups (African Americans, Jewish Americans, Indian Americans, among other constituents) rather than resorting to occasional delusive optimism that such ethnic diversity would disappear through some evasive action. The term has also been employed to literally refer to belief in the coexistence of more than one entity, belief system, perspectives among other multiplicities. Pluralism's contemporary meaning refers to the formation of modern society by diverse cultural among other groups that constitutes the society's major political essence. Differing from the nearly historical dominance of society by the elites (ruling class), pluralism of groups facilitates horizontal distinction of society. This is viewed by some as more advantageous and important compared to the hierarchical type form of society. The elites are known to either ignore and/or manipulate various constituents of society such as communities, villages, trade unions, Churches, Religious groups and so forth (Scott and Marshall 2005).

2.1 Pluralism and positivist orthodoxy in some academic disciplines and works

Some sociologists rebelled against what they perceived to be prolonged hegemony of positivist orthodoxy (describing application of only one approach to social research) in the 1970s. The single approach referred to by the rebels of social research was founded on a unified philosophy and methodology of social sciences that enthroned a sort of academic dictatorship in research within Sociology. The works so indicted as representing hegemonic positivist orthodoxy or enforcing methodological exclusiveness in Sociology included those of two eminent sociologists. Prominent among them was Talcott Parsons, a person recognized as a reputable sociologist and credited with developing theories of functionalism. Also indicted was the author of 'abstracted empiricism', Paul Lazarsfeld. Paul Feyerabend's works entitled "Against Method" expressed the concerns of these rebels about Talcott Parson's ideas on functionalism (The Social System; Towards a General Theory of Action – a collaboration with Edward Shills 1951; Societies: Evolutionary and Comparative Perspectives 1966; The System of Modern Societies 1971). Paul F. Lazarsfeld's works including: The People's Choice: How the Voter makes up His Mind in the Presidential Campaign - with Bernard Berelson and Hazel Gaudet 1988); –being a revised edition of the original edition of 1944); Personal Influence: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communication - with Elihu Katz 1955). The foregoing reflected Lazarsfeld's interests in promoting survey research and theories of the middle range: These made critics' association of him with "abstracted empiricism" somewhat unjustified.

As a means of changing the positivist orthodoxy situation considered by the rebels as undesirable, the latter researchers promoted an approach they claimed allows many styles and methods of sociology to be applied in research. What some describe as epistemological anarchy (i.e. application of various research methods and theories) in sociological research was advocated as a means of redeeming the discipline from the stranglehold of tyrannical positivist orthodoxy that the discipline was hitherto held. Major academic research outcomes of this rebellion include: phenomenological and structuralist sociologies. Marxism, which was not spared the indictment, was divided into neo-Marxist factions while philosophical relativism was also founded. In order to categorise and describe them, the terms epistemological pluralism or epistemological anomie were coined to denote the diversity of theories of knowledge or paradigms that started competing with those were viewed as presenting symptoms of the positivist orthodoxy in sociological studies. Justification of the creation of this academic sociological pluralism included the argument that if natural scientists frequently engage in altering their research methods when they consider such as necessary -instead of needlessly sticking to existing ones as if they had become slaves to their work-tools (theories and methods) that had become ineffective; sociologists ought to emulate such adventures.

However, the rebellious claim about hegemony within sociology in form of positivist orthodoxy was debunked by assertions that the desired methodological pluralism was already in existence prior to the rebellion of the 1970s. As a way of buttressing this rejoinder, critics drew attention to previous literature that documented the use of diverse philosophical and/or methodological alternatives. A few of them include: Marxism, idealism, symbolic interactionism, among others (Scott and Marshall 2005). Pluralism theory is relevant to the planning of tourism products in north-central Cross River State for many reasons. As would be elaborated later, a major relevance of the pluralism theory here concerns the view espoused by experts of tourism in the 1960s concerning the kind of tourism products that African countries should place premium

on: cultural heritage. Although that advice aiming to attract tourists from the USA who were considered as people who had enjoyed much of natural heritage tourism products (beaches, among others) abundant in their country, was rather restrictive of the global tourism market –comprising a large number of countries in the membership of the United Nations and counting as well as domestic market of the destination. Therefore, pluralism is relevant for appreciating diversity in tourism products planning and marketing.

2.2. Methods and data

The investigation of tourism products design for an area under Nigeria's sub-national regions (36 states and federal capital, Abuja) and the inequality that ensues due to personalization of state government –a problem that was acknowledged at the African regional level in the 1990s – is a recent issue that is yet to receive adequate academic research attention. For such novel research projects, description has been presented as a research method- that is preferable, appropriate and deserves to be employed for implementing studies aimed at investigating issues. This decision to adopt description and the operationalisation of the description method was justified because it is a method that fits such situations whereby new research issues, and directions are to be undertaken. Moreover, for similar or the same reasons, description facilitates the generation of clues that are capable of highlighting research areas that provides hints at identifying or highlighting plausible hypotheses that could be used for exploration in future studies that are beyond the particular level(s) of the study being implemented at that moment. The preference for descriptive methods in this is justified by the way it demands less of quantification but emphasizes qualitative analyses focusing on highlighting aspects of phenomena that are yet to gain much research attention (Ogunniyi 1992). Data were obtained from various sources: secondary sources provided data on the tourism potentials by various geographic clusters and by type as well as specialized tourism resources/destinations in the study region (Ingwe 2013d).

3. Exclusion (through delay of) northern-central Cross River State from tourism development

The Duke administration (1999-2007) is to blame for the exclusion of northern and central districts from the Cross River State's tourism programme. The north-central Cross River State roughly corresponds to the region that has been christened Nigeria's "lost Province (Ogoja)". Lost because it is the only one of Nigeria's old provinces whose political fortunes never changed due to systematic exclusion in multiple dimensions: dictatorship, political, socio-economically, among others (Manton 2008). Details of how the Duke administration accomplished the exclusion of the old Ogoja province from the sub-national regional tourism programme has been elaborated recently. It involved the employment of Machiavellian tactics to emasculate politicians of the old Ogoja region from the political (and by extension economic) sphere or scheme locally and nationally. This was followed on by moving the site of tourism infrastructural development investment from the Obudu Ranch (initially a Ranch but now a Resort) to the Southern Cross River State, where the TINAPA Resort was rapidly built within a short time in an opaque operation.

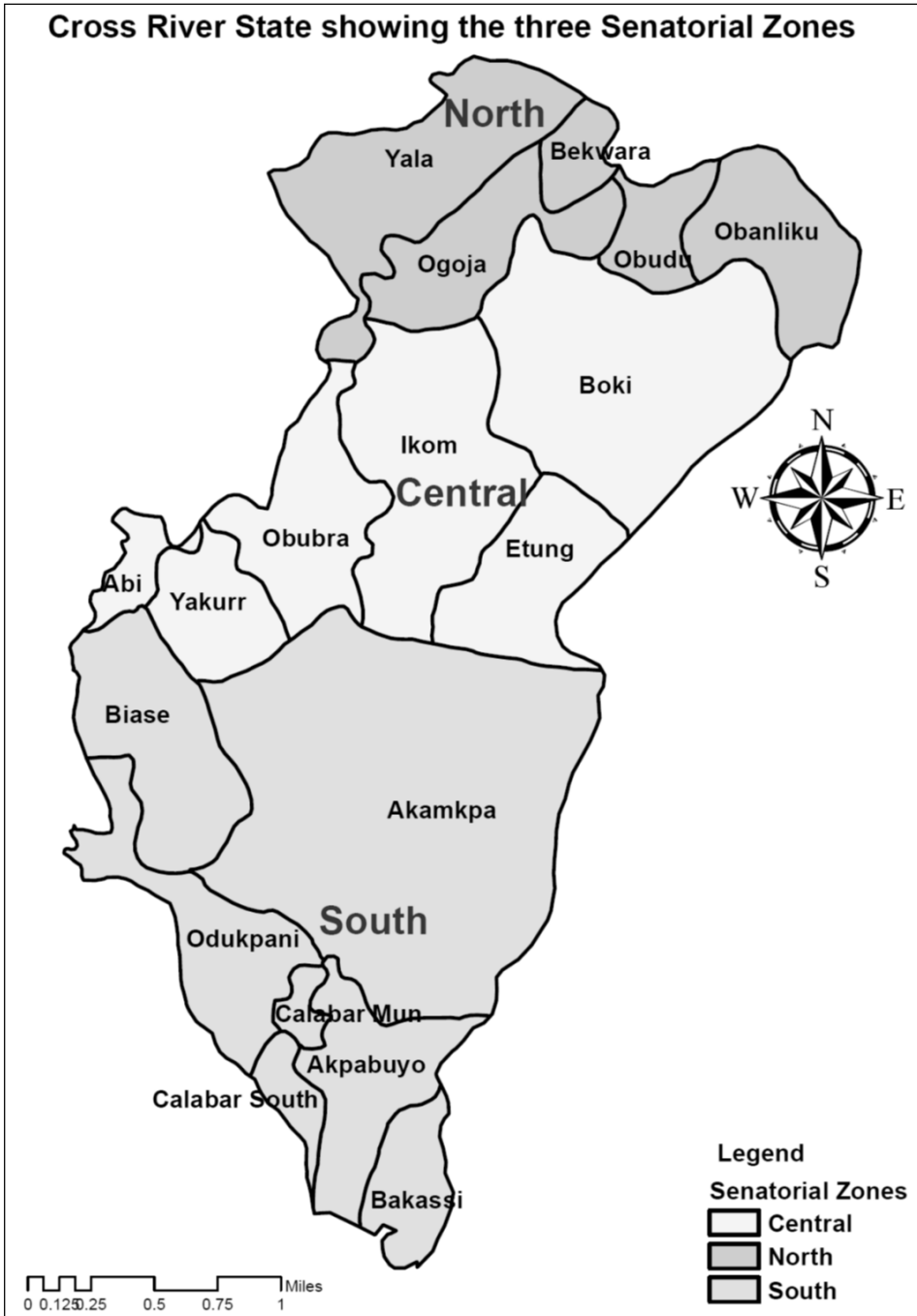


Fig. 2: Cross River State; three geo-political zones (Northern, Central and Southern) Senatorial Districts and Local Government Areas
Source: CrossRiverWatch, 2013 (March/April): 01/04.

Activists including Chief Obono Obla question the Duke administration's building of the so called Africa's pioneering leisure with business resort in a manner that was so personal to Mr. Donald Duke and his wife: Onari that and widely deplored by other indigenes of the Cross River State. It remains unknown whether the building of TINAPA was funded by public or private funds. While, the project was initially reported by Duke during his second four-year term to be funded through part of the funds statutorily allocated to the state's Local Government Areas (LGAs) from Abuja and published issuance of bonds to borrow money from the public as popular journals attests to, Duke claimed that TINAPA was the product of private investment on the eve of his eight-year administration coinciding with the commissioning of the project in April 2007. Very significant to this article is that over NG=N=45 billion had been spent on developing the tourism infrastructure by April 2007 (CrossRiverWatch 2013; Ingwe 2013a). The exclusion of northern and central parts of Cross River State also involved the Duke administration's downplaying of the fact that being more of historical monuments and/or natural resources comprising "27 stone circles" spread across the central-north, and cultural performing arts in the north, tourism potentials of these regions were/are those requiring less cost to provide infrastructure compared to applying NG=N=45 billion for building the more expensive infrastructure for the TINAPA (Ingwe 2013).

4. Why Community-based tourism development in north-central Cross River State?

In some Third World countries blighted by personalization of government –describing abuse of political power in form of applying it for selfish gains and without considering the welfare and developmental needs of people who frequently constitute cultural groups urgently requiring government attention), special autonomous development funds have been created that is free of destination government (political interference) from non-government donor sources and applied towards ameliorating the socio-economic and political plight of such victimized groups. This strategy initiated in the 1990s by creative individuals in the secretariat of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation (DHF), the Swedish philanthropic organization established by Swedes and their international friends to honour the untimely death in a fatal plane crash in 1961 of the former United Nations Secretary-General original bearer of the name that is now commemorated by that of the Foundation at Ndola, Zambia prompted some international governmental organizations and donor agencies to adopt this strategy for outreaching people facing socio-economic dire-straits around the world. Although never known in the development community hitherto, it became an extra-sovereign government mechanism that proved to alleviate the socio-economic conditions of cultural groups held to ransom by rival cultural groups dominating the affairs of the state at times that the victimized population's conditions transit from that of acceptable to unacceptable compared to those of others within one state's territory. This strategy attempted to address frequent challenges in Africa whereby persons heading governments grab and personalize public funds and allocate same in arbitrary and discretionary ways based on their whims and caprices (Hyden 2012, 94). While the exclusion of the old Ogoja province in northern-central Cross River State from the ongoing tourism programme and previous historical exclusion from various development programmes deserves to be viewed as a kind of discrimination that should be redressed through such an autonomous extra-government development fund, neither the Ogoja province nor another part of Nigeria –apart from Ogoniland in Rivers state – is known to have gained from the fund mentioned above. The proposal for establishing a community-based tourism development programme in

northern and central Cross River State responds to the ongoing marginalization of this north-central Cross River State from the sub-national region's budding tourism sector. This proposal has been justified by the argument that thoroughly disenfranchised with historical exclusion of the old Ogoja region from the socio-economic-political schemes of the Cross River State including the knowledge that almost all public establishments in the state were located in the Southern part as at the early 1990s. Thus, representatives and leadership of the Ogoja had in their proposal for the creation of a separate (Ogoja) state –for the region and submitted to the dictatorship of Ibrahim B. Babangida in 1992 (recently re-submitted to President Goodluck Jonathan and the House of Representatives) of the National Assembly/Parliament identified tourism as one of the potentials their region possessed and wished to develop as a means of attaining economic viability. Significantly, the proposal for Ogoja state to be made viable through tourism sector development predates the Duke administration's resuscitation of the tourism sector in the early 2000s and might have most likely have been inspired by the Ogoja state creation request and its economic viability justification. Put differently, the mishaps and misfortunes of not having had the Ogoja state created by the Babangida dictatorship and the hijacking of the tourism development vision contained in the 1992 Ogoja state request could be enough grounds to kill the tourism sector development dream of the Ogoja. That is, with the resources being in tact as divine gifts to the people and with Ogoja's vast human resources transferable into capital, the 1992 tourism vision must be realized. The strategy for realizing this tourism dream at this moment is achievable through community effort since the ongoing government has applied a combination of neoliberalising violence to wrongly invest the state public funds into the TINAPA, Marina resort, among other tourism resorts in southern Cross River State thereby excluding the northern and central parts of Cross River State.

Having suffered decades and centuries of marginalization under various forces and processes of socio-economic and environmental dynamics, it is considered high-time to employ the strategy of tourism recognized as one of the most vibrant economic sectors that generates revenue to regions that have prepared themselves; creates the most number of jobs; and markets for other goods; to come to the rescue of the "lost (Ogoja) province". Granted that wishes are not horses else beggars would ride them, there is need for approaching the subject with appropriate precautionary measures. In so doing, expected questions deserve posing and answering in this present project of generating information required for supporting and strengthening the Ogoja tourism sector development programme and conceptualizing the appropriate tourism products and services for the Ogoja region's interests, challenges, potentials. How does the proposal for tourism development in the "lost (Ogoja) province" bode with international trends, thinking, practices? What requires thinking, consideration and doing to realize the dream of developing Ogoja's tourism sector – which must be a community-driven variety – and as a means of catalyzing equalization of the stark historical disparity in socio-economic-physical development in Cross River State?

4.1 Potentials for cultural and natural heritage tourism in the north-central Cross River State

Some work has recently been done in terms of identifying cultural and natural heritage tourism potentials in this region

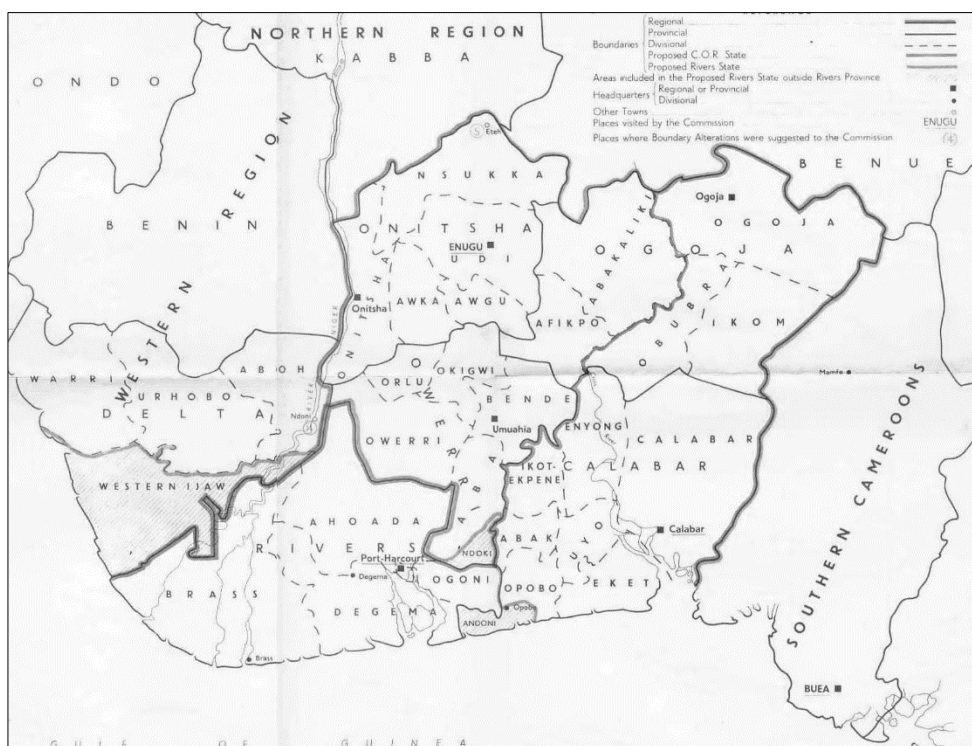


Fig. 3: Old Ogoja Province as part of former Eastern Nigeria.

5. Natural and Cultural heritage in northern and central Cross River State

5.1. Natural and Cultural heritage in central Cross River State

The 27 'stone circles' (monoliths) describing phallic artistic carvings of various complex designs and impressions on stones dotting this landscape and viewed as the most enthralling tourism attractions of this cultural region form the major tourism potentials of this region that is described by the Cross River State Government as the central cluster. These stone circles essentially represent cultural investments by natives of the region in the past because the people who created them lived several decades ago. Only a few of the 27 stone circles located at Alok and Nkarasi have reportedly been developed and presented to the tourism seeking public while those monoliths located outside these communities have been neglected. Associated with the monoliths is enormous cultural knowledge in the custody of the natives who lived the past decades, depicted on the stones knowledge covering various cultural points ranging from fertility, to records of facial tattoos, cultural values, mores, beliefs, among others. Other spoken-word knowledge forms associated with (and complementing) the tangible knowledge forms include vocal incantations, songs and dance routines. An example of the latter is the 'Ekpe' masquerade that attracts considerable interests from the natives and tourists. The size of investment to provide hospitality services within the locations of these monoliths is by far lower than the huge amounts of public funds (meant for the benefit of the entire Cross River State) invested by the state government on entirely and newly built environments (TINAPA Resort, Marina Resort, among others) for the enjoyment of a minority in Southern part of the State.

Natural heritage in Agbokim Waterfalls is located in Etung LGA, about 17 kilometres from Ikom town the capital of the Ikom Local Government Area, this natural heritage (also a component of the central tourism cluster) better deserved investment of public funds for many reasons. The waterfalls possess electricity generation potentials which were assessed some three to four decades ago to be promising but are yet to be developed. The waterfalls (which comprise seven streams that discharge from various heights to beds of lower elevation) add to the kaleidoscope of scenic tourism features or recreational attractions within the central cluster. Sadly, development of the tourism potentials of Agbokim waterfalls, like those of their Kwa Falls counterparts have been hampered by gross inadequacy of modern hospitality services/facilities such as staffed guest houses and hotels to serve the needs of tourists. The Okwango Division of the Cross River National Park, in Boki L. G. A., also located within the Central tourism cluster, is one of two components of this eco-tourism area. The other Division of the Cross River National Park (Oban) is located in the Southern cluster. Okwango component, like its counterpart (Oban Park) hosts a bio-diverse species of rare flora and fauna that attract a steady stream of tourists. However, the management of the Cross River National Park is the responsibility of the National Park Service, an agency of the Federal Government of Nigeria and outside the remit of the Cross River State Government.

5.2. Natural and ethno-cultural heritage in northern Cross River State

The Obudu Cattle Ranch had achieved international fame in the post-independence era due to the fact that it offers a temperate micro-climate within a largely tropical environment. Apart from being profusely described elsewhere in the literature (e.g. Ingwe 2004), its elaboration -beyond these introductory notes- here will not be undertaken because it has for long been hijacked by the elites who have always used it as their exclusive enjoyment thereby putting it outside the remit of what we describe as community-based tourism in the region. While not precluding the Obudu Ranch from a community-based tourism category by some political campaign that raises the injustice of its seizure by the elite, such requires further planning beyond the scope of this present study/article. The multiplicity of cultural expressions in the northern part of the state includes performing arts in form of dances, various other arts or forms of them and crafts.

One feature of the distinctiveness of each cultural group in Nigeria – and anywhere is its need to do its dances and songs in the ethnic group's language(s). Specialists of the Humanities and Arts, who describe dances as distinct 'languages' provide evidence that is useful here. Therefore, with as many as 44 different ethno-linguistic groups spread across Cross River State, this represents ubiquitous and diverse/variable expressions of dances on the landscape. This has been confirmed by records (videos of songs and dances in the sub-national region) from events such as the annual Calabar Christmas Festivals and similar ones. These exhibitions and recordings represent diversity of cultural expressions (songs, drums, sounds and the dances accompanying them) from various ethno-linguistic groups spread across the State. With only 18 local government areas, the 44 different ethno-linguistic groups could have translated into an average of about 2.5 languages per local government area except that some of the latter are more endowed with languages than others. Additionally, the variability and ubiquity of languages and their accompanying cultural expressions have been documented. The variability of cultural expressions in the state is analogous to the multiplicity of ethno-linguistic groups (or languages) in the State. With 44 different identified and documented indigenous languages - apart from the official languages (English, French and Chinese Mandarin) spoken by the various Cross

River State cultural groups (representing 10% of Nigeria's total 440 non-English languages) in the region in the mid-2000s, Cross River State is by that virtue, Nigeria's most culturally diverse in terms of ethno-linguistic cultures compared to the country's other 35 states and Federal Capital Territory, FCT (Nigeria 2006, 41-53). The foregoing could be extended. With the old Ogoja province accounting for 29 (65.9%) of the total 44 indigenous languages in the state, the bulk of languages and associated cultural expressions belong to this "lost province". Generally, it could be said that there is no part of the Cross River State that could be found without its indigenous languages and by extension its unique dance(s) or dance 'language(s)'. This cultural diversity reaches its zenith in Ukpe clan of Obudu LGA. In the latter anthropological theatre (Ubang clan) that has so far received poor attention from the governments, males and females, from their births learn and speak a language that differs from that spoken by the opposite gender in the same household ("Community where husbands, wives speak different languages").

Although known to be a rare experience worldwide by tourists who have been immensely enthralled by a people whose females and male members of one household speak different non-English languages, this virtue (or vice) of ubiquity and variability of the State's cultural endowment in the region is yet to be harnessed into tourism potentials that are capable of catalyzing revenue generation. Lack -or inadequacy- of infrastructure for promoting the diverse cultural expression through facilitation of performing arts (music, dance, among other aspects of cultural expressions) in this region is at its most serious level in northern Cross River State. The latter represents challenges that hamper the transformation of the foregoing cultural expressions into tourism potentials due to the diversity of potential cultural expressions that have been kept under-developed. Therefore, there is need to consider as urgent and imperative the establishment of performing arts complex(es) in northern Cross River State as compensation for historical negligence of the diverse cultural resources of the region as a beginning of the move towards reversing regional inequality against the sub-national region.

6. Linking socio-economic and political characteristics and trends in international tourism/politics to programming design of Ogoja tourism-initiative

6.1 What thinking prevailed in the 1960s

As part of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation's African tourism sector development – initiative in the 1960s (i.e. as far back as about half a century ago), it was advised that considering that about 145 million international tourists from the United States of America provided a sizable market that African countries were expected to plan towards attracting, special tourism products ought to remember those tourism products on offer in the USA. Thus, Pojislav Popovic, a United Nations tourism expert, thought that short-staying US tourists- especially those who would travel by charter flights to African countries would place premium on visiting the most catchy and most interesting tourism attractions such as places of cultural significance, cultural high-points, peoples life-styles of cultural significance, among others, and maybe game reserves. This thinking argued that since US tourism sector had numerous beaches, and elitist tourism sites aplenty there was no need for African tourism planners to emphasize such products in their tourism planning baskets (Wigley 2012, 124).

6.2 How we ought to view tourism products planning for north-central Cross River State presently in the second decade of 21st Century and beyond

The foregoing points were very well made. However, it is acknowledged here that modern tourism planning for the Ogoja region in particular and elsewhere must consider the foregoing argument and of course other pertinent factors. Planning tourism by considering the attraction of tourists from one country (be it the USA or any other one country) comes with the risk of what has become rather frequent in the foreign economic-diplomatic relations political baggage of the USA among other advanced countries of the global North: banning their nationals from visiting specific countries. This was a prolonged case with the US government which barred its citizens from visiting Nigeria in the dark days of dictatorship –especially the Sani Abacha regime (1993-1997) earlier described. The US Government also repeated the same policy later citing terror at the advent of the 11 September 2001 attack on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon. More recently, it declared Nigeria a terrorist country during the youth militancy in the Niger Delta (1999-2009). This period coincided with the formal inauguration of Cross River State's tourism sector development programme. Although, the latter undertook a campaign to communicate the peaceful environment of the state –which is one of the Niger Delta region- this may not have been sufficient to persuade the US Government to excuse the Cross River State from the blanket ban of the Delta from receiving its citizens (US – Government-Department of State 2012). These represents enormous waste of scarce investments should a place that has been marginalized with a sub-national region in Nigeria (say, Ogoja) plan/design its tourism sector to expect tourist from a particular country that turns out later to place a travel ban on such a destination. An extension of this point is the market conceptualization factor: that of unnecessarily emphasizing on attracting tourists from one particular country out an increasing number of nation-states in the membership of the United Nations – currently at 193 (International Relations 2013).

Third is the forecasting of national economic prosperity vis a vis factually increasing economic prosperity at specific national levels – a factor believed to be associated with life-style shifts including increasing undertaking by individual citizens /residents of tourism-seeking travel locally and internationally. This is where the unnecessary emphasis on attracting tourists from one particular country runs the risk of failing to achieve the objective of generating revenue from such a source. This risk might have become near realization in the advent of the 2008 global financial crisis that degenerated into an economic crisis beginning from the USA to other states connected to the US economy (Brand and Sekler 2009).

As the experience of the Cross River State sub-national tourism sector has been one of pioneering tourism initiative of the Nigerian nation of 36 states competition for the mass tourism market is still at infancy. This is so because most of the states –like the federal government- remain entrapped in a petro-capitalist (mono-cultural economy) characterised by over-reliance on the export of petroleum oil –since the discovery of commercial deposits of this hydro-carbon in the late 1950s and more recently export of natural gas whose occurrence in association with the oil but has been wastefully flared/burnt during under-developed refining processes by oil-producing companies in connivance with government. This shows that with a population of nearly 170 million and rising rapidly, the Ogoja tourism programme could find a sizable domestic market within Nigeria for tourism products that combine what international and local tourists from Nigeria seek to patronize. This combine with claims of a growing economy should persuade academics to reasonably conclude that there exist in the rest of Nigeria and beyond sizable markets for tourism products of integrated nature for the Ogoja tourism destination. A final point on this subhead is that while designing

tourism packages exclusively for American tourists on chartered flights for about a few weeks stay in Africa/Cross River State, there is a greater need for attracting tourists from a larger combination of countries wishing to enjoy vacations of longer than a week say a month or more aiming to take in the kaleidoscope of the cultural and natural heritage abound in the north-central region.

7. Conclusion

This study has examined various aspects of tourism development in Cross River State. After examining the take-off of tourism sector development in the state in the late 1990s and early 2000s to discover the exclusion of the north-central parts of the region from the sector, it was recommended that the excluded old Ogoja province might benefit from a community-based tourism development programme which of course requires planning including tourism products on which premium must be placed in order to accomplish the goals of generating income for the people and communities that have been exposed to prolonged socio-economic exclusion. After examining the characteristics of the tourism resources of the north-central Cross River State and views that were expressed about the planning of tourism products in Africa in the 1960s as well as some socio-economic dynamics of later years up to the present, it is argued that there is a great need for integrating cultural heritage to cultural heritage as a means of attracting tourists from outside Nigeria and the budding (expanding) tourism market growing within the country that might yearn for the natural heritage tourism products that American tourism might downplay. Put differently, it is argued that there is no need planning tourism products aiming to attract tourists from one country (USA) when other tourists from several other countries have various tastes. Therefore, tourism products planning for the north-central Cross River State requires ideas and justifications drawn from evidence and creativity including considering socio-demographic, economic projections of tourism needs of the local population in Nigeria, Africa, before hinging any part of it on the global North countries where experience has shown presents precariousness of one form or the other. There is need for further research focusing on interrogating the effects of political bans of citizens of either a single country (e.g. USA) or group of countries within a specific supra-national region (say North America or the European Union) on outcomes of international tourist arrivals at particular (sub)national destinations preferably in Cross River State or elsewhere in Nigeria or Africa.

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BETWEEN CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE: PLURALISM IN PLANNING TOURISM PRODUCTS FOR RESCUING “THE LOST (OGOJA) PROVINCE”, NORTH-CENTRAL CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

Summary

Tourism sector development in Cross River State is a national leader because it has been ahead of its peers. It pioneered this economic diversification ahead of the rest of 35 sub-national regions (officially described as “states” and a “Federal Capital Territory” (in Abuja) into which Nigeria’s territory has been subdivided and organized to facilitate administration. Ruefully, Cross River State tourism development has been operating based on conceptual frames that betray confusion in economic managers’ capability to distinguish -and by extension- prioritize clearly among the existing arrays of tourism resources of two broad types/categories: naturally existing and culturally creatable counterparts possible in the sub-national region. Despite being a region that hosts Nigeria’s most popular and favourite tourism destination (Obudu Cattle Ranch Resort created by European Colonialists prior to Nigeria’s independence and featuring an autonomous tourism-hospitality industry thereafter up to the 1980s), enormous cultural heritage sites that provide potentials for conversion into viable tourism destination, among other excellent mixtures of naturally occurring tourism resources –in addition to culturally creatable tourism, most of the Northern-Central Cross River State (“Old Ogoja”) –apart from the (inter)national elite enclave that the “Colonial Obudu Ranch Resort has always been from its advent, have consigned and contrived by successive Nigeria’s sub-national administrations to socio-economic retrogression. The socio-economic exclusion of Ogoja from tourism industry has been most acute in the Fourth Republic, specifically and in the rest of Nigeria’s post-independent era, generally.

Therefore, the socio-economic exclusion of the Ogoja region in tourism development specifically and in the rest of other social, political, economic and environmental schemes of things, have culminated in the derisive description of it as the “lost Ogoja region/province”. The latter nomenclatura aims to capture the historical i.e. prolonged socio-economic deprivation and pauperization of its people resulting from the formulation and implementation of public policies and administration that marginalize it in Nigeria’s post-independent period. The latter contrasts diametrically with the good performance of Ogoja (and its famous Obudu Cattle Ranch Resort) during the British Colonial period when it was one of the fewer (than present) “(O)ld Provinces that made up Nigeria. The marginalisation of Ogoja as has been undertaken by governments of Nigeria’s Federation (FGN) and Cross River State over the post-independence era (since 1960) has been discussed and documented as strictly socio-political topics. How the marginalization of Ogoja region has been operationalised in the tourism sector strictly has never been systematically done. Yet it represents one excellent way of demonstrating how some governments have recently employed tourism sector financing as a means of implementing discriminatory policies that enable some rulers (or leaders) to express their fundamentalism (hatred for) other cultural groups constituting sub-national regions.

Nigeria’s Fourth Republic –describing a period marking the fourth attempt by Nigerians to apply democratic government in managing their social and economic affairs without interruptions by soldiers (and previously colonialists) counting from (1999 to the present) represents the most outstanding period of distortion or fundamentalist of tourism developments policy, tourism programmes/projects design and management in the history of Cross River State. Two disadvantages posed by

Cross River State Government's emphasis on infrastructure-centred tourism development during the Fourth Republic are identifiable. First, has been the socioeconomic exclusion of Ogoja from tourism infrastructure development. Second, emphasis on financing tourism infrastructure development through tax collected from Ogoja -and elsewhere in the state- among other credit-finances, the Duke administration and its successor (Liyel Imoke) systematically contrived situations whereby resulting loan and their repayment) would increase and deepen poverty and related socio-economic over-burdens borne by the Ogoja people already excluded from infrastructural development. Therefore, community tourism programmes/projects involving creating and managing cost-effective tourism development products, programmes and projects represent part of alternative strategies of socio-economic capable of providing socio-economic resilience for Ogoja. The latter is capable of reviving Ogoja region's economy, society, and environment in an endogenous, locally conceptualized and managed ways through participation by the native population of the Old Ogoja region.

Pluralism (a theoretical framework that has been valuable for understanding issues in the nexus of urbanization, among other challenges on the African continent and in Nigeria), presents a viable body of knowledge and though fragments for framing the required theorizing and conceptualizing of the region's socio-economic revival. The latter includes harnessing various tourism resources as well as devising different creative industrial management approaches. With 29 (i.e. 65.9%) of 44 indigenous languages -excluding English- in Cross River State, Ogoja's natural-physical and cultural tourism resource potentials are enormous. Two of the 29 languages –in Ubang community, Obudu area- qualifies to be described as world's last anthropological intrigue yet to fully savoured and explained: they feature women/girls, living together with men/boys in the same households speaking separate languages. Among its unharnessed, poorly mapped cultural tourism resources are: the Ikom-Ogboja 'stone circle" arrays, their nsibidi inscriptions, numerous dance routines and languages corresponding to the 29 individual languages (e.g. Ekpe), folklores. Physical tourism resources include: legendary and sublime temperate-in-Tropical climate Obudu Ranch Resort, Agbokim waterfalls, Obubra Lake, among others that require mapping, harnessing, and transformation into revenue-generating avenues.

