

## **Sukur: Recent academic publications relating to Tourism and Cultural Heritage.**

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### **Introduction**

What is a tourist, the “*idiot du voyage*” described by Urbain (2002)?<sup>1</sup> A tourist is a sightseer, a stranger visiting for educational, scientific or cultural reasons, including such things as a sunny beach, satisfaction of a religious duty, viewing high art or identification of a rare bird. Tourists do not travel as a condition of employment nor for commercial or occupational reasons, but as a matter of choice. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century most tourists were probably either Westerners of the leisured middle class or pilgrims; nowadays tourism has expanded to a wider public and almost all the world, developing with globalization into a massive (if fragile) industry.

Sadly, the authors have not been able to visit Sukur since 2008; from 2009 this has been on account of the threat from Boko Haram, although Sukur was itself not directly attacked until 2014. Since 2018 this threat has been reduced — though this can change from moment to moment — and Nigerian and occasional foreign visitors have visited the World Heritage cultural landscape, but none for visits of more than a day or two so far as we know. We cannot offer advice to potential visitors, except to encourage them, well prior to departure, to contact<sup>2</sup> one or both of the Adamawa State Tourist office and the National Commission on Museums and Monuments (NCMM), the Federal agency located in Abuja responsible for the Sukur World Heritage cultural landscape. The NCMM has National Museums in both Yola and Maiduguri. Foreign tourists planning to visit Sukur should remember that, besides the risk to themselves, their presence may stimulate terrorist reaction against the host community.

UNESCO World Heritage sites and landscapes are by definition attractive to tourists and Sukur, with its views over the Mandara mountains and the plains below is no exception. Its people practice an ancient though ever renewed form of terrace farming combined with animal husbandry and they engage in photogenic festivals and crafts. They have built remarkable public works such as the famous paved ways and the residence of the Hidi (chief). From an unknown date until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Sukur was a center of iron production and hosted an iron market that attracted buyers from as far away as the plains around Lake Chad. And yet it has received and receives very few tourists. While before 2009 Nigeria’s lack of tourism infrastructure was a major contributing factor, subsequently the Boko Haram Islamist insurgency has been primarily responsible for discouraging visitors. However, the addition of the Sukur Cultural Landscape to the UNESCO World Heritage list in 1999 attracted considerable interest among Nigerian academics who have published several papers that discuss various aspects of tourism and cultural heritage in relationship to the site and its people.<sup>3</sup> It seems right that we should take note of these on a new page of the [sukur.info](http://sukur.info) website.

<sup>1</sup> Of the authors considered below, only Tagowa (2010) offers a definition of tourism and provides a useful account of Nigeria’s developing policies regarding it.

<sup>2</sup> Non-Nigerians should of course consult their own foreign services and embassies or equivalent in Nigeria.

<sup>3</sup> We welcome the availability of online journals that provide authors, especially those from countries with a limited academic publishing infrastructure, with the opportunity to bring their work to the notice of

## The publications

Below we consider the publications, presented in chronological order together with their abstracts. Note that sources *freely* available online are indicated in the references by an asterisk\* and wherever possible URLs.

Okpoko, P.U. and E. Okonkwo. 2005. Heritage management and tourism in the Obudu Cattle Ranch and Sukur Kingdom, Nigeria. *CRM: the Journal of Heritage Stewardship* 2: 79-89. (<http://crmjournal.cr.nps.gov/Print.cfm?articleIDN=2405>).

*No abstract.*

Dauda, J.Y. 2007. 'Museums, cultural heritage and community-based development: the Sukur experience', paper presented at the *West African Museum Programme 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary international symposium on cultural heritage, community-based development and regional integration*. Dakar, Senegal, November 2007.

*Abstract:* This paper highlights the development of Sukur Plateau, associated Monuments and Cultural Landscapes-Hidi Palace, Iron-smelting furnaces, Shrines, Graveyards, festival grounds, stone-paved walkways, Terrace farmland, flora and fauna, through a synergy between Museums and the Community, into a great tourist destination. Sukur (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) is a living site, whose inhabitants still depend largely on nature for their survival.

Tagowa, W.N. 2010. Rural tourism as a factor of sustainable development: a case study of Sukur World Heritage site in Adamawa State, Northeastern Nigeria. In *The Sustainable World*, C.A. Brebbia (ed.), pp. 675-88. WIT Transactions on Ecology and the Environment 142. (doi:10.2495/SW100611)

*Abstract:* Tourism as one of the world's fastest growing industries has the potential to enhance sustainable development by its propensity to promote accelerated growth, income increase, improved transportation and conservation of ecosystems, among other variables. Tourism attractions abound in Africa and Nigeria has more than its fair share of tourism potentials. Most tourism attractions in Nigeria are located in the rural areas. Rural tourism can therefore be utilized as a tool for sustainable development. This paper reviews the development of tourism in Nigeria in general and specifically undertakes a case study of Sukur World Heritage site in Adamawa State, Northeastern Nigeria, as an example of rural tourism for sustainable development. The paper highlights Sukur development plan and advances strategies for utilization of the site for sustainable development. Such strategies surround the central objective of community participation and environmental protection and preservation, while taking cognizance of the risks involved in the development of a tourism site of the like of Sukur Cultural Landscape.

\*Adeleke, B. O. 2009. Community participation in conservation: a pathway to tourism development in protected areas. *Journal of Research in National Development* 7 (1): 6 pp. ([www.transcampus.org](http://www.transcampus.org))

*Abstract:* Nigeria is blessed with great tourist potentials due to the variety of culture, tradition, religion, beliefs festivals and ceremonies, wildlife and other natural and man-made attractions. Community participation is imperative to sustainable development of tourism in the protected areas. This study examines participation of community residents in conservation of cultural

national and international audiences. On the other hand, we receive endless emails inviting us to contribute articles to such journals, leading us to wonder whether and how these publications, most of which claim to be peer-reviewed, are really capable of supplying the reader with original ideas and new and trustworthy data. Some are known to be phishing products designed to extract money from academics seeking promotion or other forms of academic advancement.

resources at Sukur Kingdom through traditional methods and in wildlife resources at Yankari National Park through modern methods. A relationship exists among community cultural resource management, conservation and tourism. Good community natural resource management ensures that tourism and conservation complement each other. Attempts to address natural resource management in Africa must seek to satisfy these three concepts and encourage the sensitive blending of traditional method, modern method with sustainable tourism practice.

Okpoko, P.U. and E. Okonkwo. 2011. Pottery tradition and heritage management in Sukur kingdom, Nigeria. *West African Journal of Archaeology* 40 (1-2): 14 pages. Accessed 23 Feb. 2014. ([journals.ui.edu.ng/index.php/waja/article/view/49/44](http://journals.ui.edu.ng/index.php/waja/article/view/49/44))

*Abstract:* This paper examines indigenous creativity, technology and craftsmanship a reflected in the processes of manufacture, classification and uses of pots in Sukur and their heritage management practices. Pottery tradition in Sukur Kingdom rests in the hands of a few women (wives of blacksmiths). The craft runs side by side with smithing and there is the fear that of smithing becomes extinct in the kingdom, her pottery tradition will only be remembered in stories, songs and myths like most African phenomena. This explains why there is need to document this tradition. It must be noted that the people of Sukur had low interaction and cultural other contacts with other people and this might have given rise to the sustainability of their tradition. Sukur is even now isolated from modern development and could not be reached through any form of modern transportation.

Finanga, Y. and Husain, M.A. 2013. Socio-economic impact of Sukur World Heritage site, Madagali, Adamawa state, Nigeria. *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Research*, 3 (4): 7-14. ISSN 2250-0006.

*Abstract.* Tourism has a major impact on local communities in tourist destination. It can be a significant source of income and employment for local people. It can also pose threat to an area's social fabrics and its natural and cultural heritage, upon which it ultimately depends, but if it is well planned and managed it can be a force for their conservation. Sukur World Heritage Site is the first World Heritage Site (WHS) in Nigeria and the first Cultural Landscape in Africa designated with that status by UNESCO in 1999. However the site is still under-developed and the development of the site is very slow and haphazardly pursuit. Hence the aim of the study is to assess the Physical and Socio-economic Impacts of Tourism in the Sukur Area. The study basically adapted the descriptive research design. Data were obtained by participant's observation, questionnaire and interviews as well as by retrospective means. The most strongly perceived positive impact is income and cultural identity while, the most strongly perceived negative impact is the general increase in the prices of goods and services. Though, the negative impacts have increased more than the positive impacts improved. The study revealed that the support for tourism is strong among the local residents of Sukur area. Since the perception of the residents is receptive towards tourism development in the area, comprehensive planning of development of the site is highly recommended.

\*Finanga, Y.A., Ilesanmi, F.A. and B.D. Yerima. 2013. Tourism supporting infrastructure need in Sukur World Heritage. *International Journal of Environment, Ecology, Family and Urban Studies* 3 (4): 1-8. ISSN 2250-0065.

*Abstract.* Tourism supporting infrastructure need in Sukur World Heritage Site is aimed at evaluating the tourism supporting facilities needed in Sukur World Heritage Site. In view of this, the current population of the area was obtained and the existing FUS [facilities, utilities and services] in area were identified. Then the standard required FUS for the population was analyzed both for the current and projected (6 years) population of the area, and the shortfall was ascertained. Also, 24 questionnaires (representing an average of two months' statistically registered visitors) were administered to tourists on their preferences and ratings of tourism supporting FUS in the site within a period of three months. Although, facilities, utilities and services in the area (combining all the settlements) may have exceeded the planning standard

used, visitors who rated those facilities, utilities and services generally rated them as inadequate. It is therefore obvious that one of the goals of tourism development which is developing an infrastructure and providing recreation facilities for both tourists and residents has not been achieved in this destination. Therefore, the need to provide these inadequate and lacking tourism supporting infrastructures in the area was recommended.

Onukwube, K.C. 2013. "Disaster risk management strategy of Sukur Cultural Heritage site, Adamawa state, Nigeria". Proceedings of UNESCO Chair on Cultural Heritage and Risk Management, International Training Course on Disaster Risk. Management of Cultural Heritage. 7-21 Sept. 2013.

**Abstract:** Sukur is a remarkably intact physical expression of a society and its spiritual and material culture. The 23rd Session of the World Heritage Committee in Marakesh Morocco inscribed the property -Sukur Cultural Landscape- on the World Heritage List based on criteria (iii), (v) and (vi) with the Id. N°938. The Site which has amazing historical, spiritual, cultural and economic values is characterized by these artifacts (stone Architecture, Iron Smelting technology, Landscape and physical relief); and attributes (Hidi's Palace, Stone walls, Paved walk ways, Stream, Domesticated landscape with sacred trees, agricultural terracing, and other spiritual features, vernacular structures, traditional grave yards, stone wells) respectively. Unfortunately, these are threatened by the combined risks of ecological degradation (erosion and mudslides) and arson due to potential intra and inter-conflicts and activities of terrorist militia in northeast Nigeria. If any or some of these happen, recovery of the site will be difficult in the short-term and long-term. The costs and logistical challenges of recovering the site may appear too complicated and very high for government to undertake. Communities may be forced to migrate and abandon the location having been displaced by the ensuing conflict. The heritage may be lost completely to the world as artifacts, tangible and intangible features of the site may become irrecoverable. While these risks exist potentially, a well articulated disaster mitigation plan with required financial resources is absent. This case study proposes a disaster mitigation plan with budget. If the recommendations are followed, it will ensure a regenerated Sukur with beautiful vegetative cover and inhabitants who are fulfilled as they sustainably manage and protect their heritage.

Dodo, Y.A., Ahmad, M.H., Dodo, M., Bashir, F.M. and S.A. Shika. 2014. Lessons from Sukur vernacular architecture: a building material perspective. In *Green Technologies and Sustainable Development in Construction (Advanced Materials Research 935)*, Wu, X., Jibril, J.D., Aminu, D.Y., Wu, J. and H. Xie (eds.), pp. 207-10.

**Abstract:** This study presents the lessons from the vernaculars Architecture of sukur kingdom with a focus on the use of building materials as a sustainable means for solving problems facing present-day architecture in issue of sustainability, in particular the critical housing situation in the developing countries. Through a case study of the ancient vernacular Architecture of sukur the result shows that stakeholders in the construction industry could reflect on how this building materials and the techniques in operation in their region by translating it in a modern way to address those striking deign problems through solving them from the masters' builders.

\*Biodun, A.A. 2015. Selling concept: strategy for improving the marketability of Nigerian World Heritage sites. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 4 (3): 149-155. E-ISSN 2281-3993.

**Abstract:** The Nigerian World Heritage Sites are experiencing a low turn-out of tourists, visitors, researchers and Nigerian dignitaries. The sites are hardly known outside their area of existence. Their international recognition and importance bears no significance to many. This paper therefore examines the root causes of Nigerians' lukewarm attitude to these sites. Through systematic and purposive sampling techniques, 150 respondents in 10 villages of 5 selected Local Government Areas were sampled. A structured interview schedule was used in the collection of data administered through the heritage Site manager and his staffers. For clarification of responses, unstructured interview and physical condition and linguistic observation were used to support the interview schedule. The result of the analysis showed a positive correlation between

awareness level and people visiting the sites. The awareness for the existence and new status of these two sites were low or none existence. Among the five competing marketing philosophies, the application of selling concept comprising of advertisement, promotion, personal selling and public relation was found to be more appropriate in creating awareness. The paper concluded by recommending other marketing principles that can ensure the maximum use of these two sites thereby fulfilling the real purpose of their new status and bringing in foreign exchange.

- \*Okonkwo, E. 2015. Religious activities and their tourism potential in Sukur kingdom, Nigeria. *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*, 3 (1), Article 3. (11 pp.) <https://arrow.dit.ie/ijrtp/vol3/iss1/3/>

*Abstract:* Religious tourism is a form of tourism whereby people of the same faith travel individually or in groups for religious purposes. This form of tourism comprises many facets of the travel industry ranging from pilgrimages, missionary travel, leisure (fellowship), vacations, faith-based cruising, crusades, conventions and rallies, retreats, monastery visits and guest-stays, Christian and faith-based camps, and visits to religious tourist attractions. In Sukur Kingdom, most tourists embark on religious travel for the primary purpose of sharing faith and fellowship together as they explore the various religious sites within Sukur and Adamawa State at large. Others seek inspiration and desire to witness significant religious events while assisting others with humanitarian and spiritual needs. This paper examines the tourism potential of religion/religious sites and belief systems in Sukur Kingdom with a view to harnessing them for sustainable tourism development. The study uses ethnographic methods to elicit information and analyze the data collected from respondents.

- \* Yusha'u, Ahmed M., Vincent N. Ojeh, Morrison I. Atuma and Philip A. 2018. The impact of Boko Haram attack on the tourist activities: water resources, life style, climatic conditions as precursors in Sukur Kingdom, Adamawa State, North East Nigeria. *Discovery Science* 14: 51-64. (<https://discoveryjournals.org/discoveryscience/>).

*Abstract:* This study examined the effect of the terrorist acts on tourist activity in Sukur Kingdom which is a host kingdom to the Sukur World Heritage Site, the first World Heritage Site (WHS) in Nigeria and the first Cultural Landscape in Africa designated with that status by UNESCO in 1999. The aim is to examine the present state of tourism potential of the Kingdom and also evaluate Government policies and procedures put in place to avoid a future occurrence of terrorist attack in the Kingdom. Data for the study was collected primarily by the administration of 165 copies of well- structured questionnaires. Descriptive statistics was adopted to analyze the findings of the study. The results revealed that activities of the insurgents have resulted in the destruction of some heritage properties and most of these properties cannot be replaced due to their sacred nature. The result also shows that fear of potential terrorist attack has resulted to stagnated nature of tourism activities in the Kingdom. It is therefore recommended that more job opportunities should be made available for the ever-increasing youth in the locality and soft loans with little or no interest should be made available by government and other NGOs. This will discourage jobless youths from the act of terrorism as insecurity in Nigeria and other parts of the world has been largely attributed to the problem of unemployment among youths. However, since the Sukur community cannot fund the bills of rebuilding their tourism potential, government at all levels should collaborate with the kingdom in the rehabilitation of its lost glory as a center of tourism in Adamawa state thereby boosting the economy of the state.

- \*Afamefuma, E. and E.E. Okonkwo. 2019. Exploring the Sukur cultural landscape in Adamawa State of Nigeria: a methodological discussion. *Quality and Quantity* 53: 2131-41. [https://ideas.repec.org/a/spr/qualqt/v53y2019i4d10.1007\\_s11135-019-00862-0.html](https://ideas.repec.org/a/spr/qualqt/v53y2019i4d10.1007_s11135-019-00862-0.html)

*Abstract:* The Sukur Kingdom, one of the ethnic groups located in the west of the Mandara Mountains is within the Sukur District of the Madagali North Development Area in Madagali Local Government Area of Adamawa State, Nigeria. Sukur Kingdom flourished between the early 16th and late 18th centuries as a cultural landscape. In 1999, Sukur cultural landscape became a world heritage site (WHS) and the first to be named in Nigeria. However, the survival of the

cultural landscape is in serious doubt, especially with the recent spate of terrorist attacks which have ravaged the northeastern region of Nigeria. This is more worrisome because not many research have been conducted in the area to highlight and document the tourism potentials of the landscape, to help spur more attention. In this paper, we narrate how we conducted our ethnographic fieldwork, selected and interacted with respondents within the Sukur Kingdom and other key stakeholders in the area to help understand the context of the WHS. We also try to share how our ontology and epistemology influenced and guided our research approach during our fieldwork while we equally argue for more rigorous qualitative research to be conducted in the study area as this would contribute to public awareness.

\*Na'acha, F.E., Nachana'a, A.C., Achari, P.W., Nachaiya, C.N., Victoria, B., Anthony, N., Celestine, O., and S. Festus. 2019. Community participation in sustainable tourism development: the case study of Sukur Heritage Site, Adamawa State, Nigeria. IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS) 24 (4) Ser. 4 (April. 2019) 31-38. (<http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol.%2024%20Issue4/Series-4/E2404043138.pdf>)

*Abstract:* This study investigate the importance of community participation in sustainable tourism activities of Sukur world heritage site in Madagali Local Government Area, Adamawa State. The aim of the study was to assess community participation in development and sustenance of the Sukur site as a resort center in Nigeria. Sukur, the study area comprise of 11 villages with cumulative population of 6622 inhabitants based on the 2006 National Population Census data. Semi structured questionnaire was distributed to 386 respondents proportionally sampled for this study. Simple percentage was used to assess community awareness of respondent on the status of Sukur as a heritage site and problems hindering community participation on tourism development. The chi square analysis based on likert scale values was used to assess the level of community participation in the study area. The chi square value of 2.86 indicates among other things that the level of participation of the community members in tourism activities was insignificant. This was attributed to the low level of tourist flow in Sukur. This study therefore recommends the adoption of enlightenment campaigns to raise awareness on the need to be involved in tourism development of the study area and for the government to make all the necessary inputs towards making the study site attractive to Nigerians first, among others.

### **Our qualifications as commentators**

PhDs in anthropology, we have been involved in archaeological and ethnographic research in and around the Mandara Mountains of Cameroon and Nigeria since 1984 and have focused on Sukur since we first visited in 1991 to ask permission of the Hidi to return a year later to study Sukur history and culture. Between 1992 and 1996 we were resident in upper Sukur (Sukur-sama or the hill village) close to the house of the Hidi for a total of over a year and in all seasons. In 1996, together with the late Hidi Gezik Kanakakaw we wrote the first draft of the citation that in 1999 led to the inscription of the Sukur Cultural landscape on the UNESCO World Heritage site list. In 2017 ND took the lead in preparing the successful case for inscription of the site on the World Monument Fund's 2018-19 Watch List. Since 2003 we began jointly to author the [www.sukur.info](http://www.sukur.info) website. We briefly visited Sukur from Cameroon in 2004 and returned for a total of six weeks in 2008 while serving as honorary visiting scholars at the University of Maiduguri. In subsequent years the presence or threat of Boko Haram, which brutally assaulted Sukur in late 2014, has prevented us from returning. We have maintained links by email and phone, and have contributed financially and otherwise to victims, including by authoring the [bokoharamvictimsrelief.org](http://bokoharamvictimsrelief.org) website. In numerous papers and chapters, in books (Sterner 2003, \*David [ed.] 2012) and freely available ethnographic films (<https://www.youtube.com/user/nicdavid37>) we have published our ethnographic and archaeological research on Sukur and other Mandara montagnards and sites. For all these

reasons, we claim to be qualified to comment on others' research on Sukur that falls in the broad category of social science.

## Commentary

Table 1 sets out significant facts about the 14 scholarly publications, most supposedly peer-reviewed, that we have tracked down over the years. What stands out?

- First, most authors show a lack of gratitude to the Sukur. Only one thanks the “chief’s son” and “a custodian of the kingdom”, both unnamed. Guests normally thank their hosts and indeed the institutions that have funded their research, but this is not the case here.
- Second, and this indicates another aspect of disrespect, many uncritically accept the statement in the UNESCO citation that “The cultural landscape of Sukur has survived unchanged for many centuries, and continues to do so ....”. This is of course nonsense. The cultural landscape is the product of long term interaction between the occupants of the Sukur plateau and their environment. This tradition has over the centuries incorporated many forms of innovation: new crops (notably maize and groundnuts), economic opportunities (notably iron production and marketing), brutal raiding and slaving, political, cultural and multiple other novelties. However, innovation has been accompanied by continuity, evidenced most obviously in the survival of the Sakun language which is related to but distinct from those of its Chadic-speaking neighbors.
- The authors are reticent about the nature of their interactions, if any, with Sukur people. When did they visit Sukur; for how long; where did they stay; did they engage assistants; in what language or languages did they communicate? Or, as one may infer in the case of Tagowa (2010), was theirs a library study? Amefuna and Okonkwo (2019) are the only authors to provide information on the duration of their time in the field.
- Following from the above we should not be surprised that few of the authors clearly state when their research was carried out — despite the fact that tourism is, as Islamist insurgencies and Covid-19 are presently demonstrating, highly susceptible to political, epidemic and other disruptions. Dates of photographs or of a survey noted incidentally are sometimes the only indication of the time of their presence at Sukur.
- It is also curious that in papers dealing with tourism at Sukur, the actual numbers of tourists for whatever period are never specified and rarely estimated. Two papers with Finanga as senior author, both published in 2013, give estimates of 12 and 30 *visitors* (not necessarily tourists) a month. A claim by Na’acha et al (2019) that they obtained 100 tourist responses to questionnaires appears fanciful. JS’s notes on the NCMM Registry of visitors to Sukur between 2000 and 2008 record an average 5.6 visitors per month and only 11 tourists a year (with a range from 0 to 28) (see Table 1, sheet 2). Discussions of the impact of various factors on Sukur tourism are thus of dubious value. (The NCMM may possess more data on visitation, but if so neither we nor the authors have consulted it.)
- Although it is possible that a paper published as late as 2013 might have been sent to press before it became obvious that Boko Haram would become a threat to tourism in northeast Nigeria, it is extraordinary that the insurgency is discussed in only two of the six papers published between 2014 and 2019. This suggests a lack of concern for the Sukur and their neighbors, and indeed for conclusions drawn in a specific historic context.

- Another measure of disrespect for the Sukur is the authors' lack of interest in Sukur history and ethnography. We are aware that the holdings of many if not all Nigerian university libraries are grossly deficient for periods after the later 1970s, and that access to the internet is unreliable. Nonetheless we find it extraordinary that six of these papers cite none of the academic publications on Sukur history, culture and society and only one cites more than two.<sup>4</sup> It is even more incredible that only two papers cite this [www.sukur.info](http://www.sukur.info) website which already contained considerable relevant content as early as 2007, including a large scale map and access to Kirk-Greene's seminal paper of 1960.
- A final example of disrespect is the authors' mistreatment of Sakun, the language of the Sukur. Words purporting to be Sakun are spelled without reference to any standard and in some instances are actually not Sakun but Hausa! An imperfect but appropriate transcription was available to them at [www.sukur.info/Lang/langindex.htm](http://www.sukur.info/Lang/langindex.htm).

One can only conclude that, generally speaking, the authors were more interested in adding a paper to their resumés than substance to their respective disciplines. This is sad since these are not unintelligent people but rather academics under pressure to perform in a system that appears to reward quantity rather than quality of performance.<sup>5</sup>

We will not offer detailed reviews of each paper — they are for readers to explore — but wish to warn readers of factors that may render the authors' conclusions invalid or at least subject to caution.

- The first of these is that many of these authors repeat old misconceptions of Sukur history and of society without critical review or even reference to the original authors. For example there is no credible evidence that Sukur was ever a militarily powerful kingdom, nor that the Hidi is or ever was in the anthropological sense a sacred king (see Smith and David 1995, David and Sterner 1996, and [www.sukur.info](http://www.sukur.info)). Readers should, for example, neither trust Okonkwo's (2015) account of traditional Sukur religion nor even simple facts such as the often misstated altitude of the Hidi residence, which is at 995 m a.s.l. And so on.
- The validity of all ethnographic observations necessarily depends upon the sampling techniques employed, with some authors' papers relying heavily on questionnaires. Claims that some of these samples are random are false, in that it is certainly untrue that all members of the sampled population had an equal chance of being selected. It appears quite probable that often only males were sampled in some cases and only one author provides data on respondents' gender. Furthermore the description of sample makeup appears unreliable, as in the case of Biodun (2015) who claims by implication that there are at Sukur units of management, education, site guides and site guards that each comprise ten or more people. To the best of our knowledge there are no more than three people employed *in total* in these categories. Similarly, the Na'acha and coauthors' (2019) claim that they received responses to questionnaires from 100 tourists is fantasy.

<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately this paper plagiarizes Sterner's (2003) monograph by citing sources referenced in her work as if the authors had discovered and read them themselves. Their paper, ethnographic in content, also includes the following disclaimer, "The research is not involved in Human Participants ...."!

<sup>5</sup> This system encourages authors to choose less than stellar journals or other publication outlets. We were amazed, for example, that the *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* received Nacha'a et al's (2019) paper on 27/03/2019 and accepted it for publication only 16 days later, not enough time for meaningful peer review.

## Conclusion

While there is much to be learned from these papers, for example regarding the methodology of social science, too many of the authors discussed have jumped onto a World Heritage Site bandwagon without taking the trouble to learn about Sukur culture and society, or even about tourism and cultural heritage management at Sukur. The application of questionnaires to Sukur residents, mostly farmers and many illiterate, is fraught with difficulties. No representative sample drawn from that population could possibly consist of 34% “civil servants”. The questionnaires were presumably in English, a language in which most respondents would have had little competence. No author mentions the interpreters who must have been involved and who would have required training in order accurately to transmit to respondents the questions posed — and, even then, were the respondents in a position to answer? Given the very few tourists that the average Sukur is likely to have seen, how can they respond to a question on the impact of tourism on commodity prices? Irrelevance of the question is not an acceptable answer on a Likert scale. Whatever the sampling method, we would argue that useful answers to questions and useful recommendations by authors demand that those authors research the culture and history of the population(s) they are studying, and this none of them did.

## References not cited above

\*Asterisks indicate sources that are freely available on the internet.

\*David, N. (ed.). 2012. *Metals in Mandara Mountains society and culture*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.

Sterner, J.S. 2003. *The ways of the Mandara Mountains: a comparative regional approach*. Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag.

Urbain, J.D. 2002. *L'idiote du voyage: histoires de touristes*. Paris: Payot