

Politics and Dynamics of Personality Cult in Africa

Chikwado Ezugworie & Victor Nwawube

Department of Political Science, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State

Abstract

A personality cult is a circumstance where an open figure is purposely introduced to the individuals of a nation as an extraordinary individual who ought to be appreciated and adored. It is relevant to comprehend that distinctive African nations had early fathers from the religious to secular world who contributed colossally to the disclosure and systematization of country states. These personalities are expected to be adored as trailblazers of nationhood but have been subverted with present-day characters whose belief systems and perspectives are very unusual to the nations. The thrust of this paper is on a personality cult, religion and politics in Africa. Data were collected using the documentary method and analyzed via the content analysis method. The study was anchored on the theory of charismatic leadership propounded by Robert Tucker (1968). The study discovered that cults were part of a larger universe of symbolic politics that played a vital role in disseminating party goals and social hierarchies and that they served to centre emotions and loyalties in a particular symbol. However, a pure instrumentalist view fails to account for the cults' numerous popular manifestations, particularly in local contexts. The examination in this way prescribes, among others, that authority and non-formally attributed implications ought to be paid attention to in state-society connections to encourage and continue pioneer cliques.

Keywords: *Personality Cult, Religion, Politics, Ethnicity and Africa*

Introduction

A cult of personality or cult of the leader emerges when a country's regime or, more rarely, an individual uses mass media, propaganda, the big lie, spectacle, the arts, patriotism, and government-organised demonstrations and rallies to create an idealized, heroic, and worshipful

image of a leader, often through unquestioning flattery and praise. In one-party and dominant-party nations, a cult of personality is comparable to apotheosis, except that it is developed by modern social engineering tactics, usually by the state or the party. It is common in totalitarian or authoritarian states (Sivan, 2015).

The term was popularized in 1956, Nikita Khrushchev's secret speech on the cult of personality and its consequences, delivered on the penultimate day of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union's 20th Congress. In his address, Khrushchev, who was the Communist Party's First Secretary and, by extension, the country's leader, condemned the lionization and idealization of Joseph Stalin and, by extension, his communist contemporary Mao Zedong, as being contradictory to Marxist teaching. The speech was later made public and was part of the Soviet Union's "de-Stalinization" campaign.

In ancient Rome's Imperial religion, emperors and some members of their families were associated with the divinely sanctioned power of the Roman State. Monarchs and other state rulers have long been held in high regard and endowed with superhuman characteristics throughout history. In medieval Europe, for example, monarchs were considered to hold office by God's will, based on the notion of the divine right of kings. The Inca, Aztecs, Tibetans, Siam (now Thailand), and the Roman Empire are all known for redefining monarchs as "god-kings." (Mikaberidze, 2011). In the 18th and 19th centuries, the growth of democratic and secular ideas in Europe and North America made it increasingly difficult for kings to maintain this image. However, the following advent of mass media, such as radio, allowed politicians to portray a favourable picture of themselves to the populace as never before. The most well-known personality cults evolved from these circumstances in the twentieth century. These cults are frequently political religions.

The term Cult of Personality, like its French and German counterparts, first appeared in English circa 1800–1850. Initially, it had no political connotations, but it was strongly associated with the

Romantic “cult of genius.” The phrase was first used in a political context in a letter from Karl Marx to German political worker Wilhelm Blos on November 10, 1877.

Frequently, a single leader became identified with this revolutionary shift and came to be regarded as a beneficent “guide” for the nation, without whom the nation’s transformation to a better future would be impossible. Personality cults evolved in totalitarian societies, such as Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, and Mao Zedong, which has been used to justify them. Mao Zedong’s respect has remained universal throughout China. According to a poll conducted by the Global Times in December 2013, over 85 per cent of Chinese people viewed Mao favourably. According to Jan Plamper, while Napoleon III made several originations, Benito Mussolini in Italy in the 1920s, who pioneered the dictator-as-cult-figure concept, was later followed by Hitler, Stalin, and others utilizing the propaganda powers of a totalitarian state (Arshin, 2014).

The Stalin cult, according to *Pierre du Bois*, was meticulously developed to legitimize Stalin’s leadership. There were numerous purposeful distortions and falsehoods employed. Key documents were destroyed when the Kremlin refused access to archive records that might reveal the truth. Photographs were tampered with, and documents were conceived. People who knew Stalin were compelled to produce official accounts to satisfy the cult’s ideological demands, mainly since Stalin himself delivered it in *Short Course on the History of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)* in 1938, which became the official history. According to David (2010), the Stalin cult was a significant component of Stalinism and hence one of the most prominent elements of Soviet authority... Many Stalinist researchers regard the cult as essential to Stalin’s leadership or as proof of Stalin’s megalomania. Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser link the “cult of the leader” in Latin America to the concept of the *caudillo*, an influential leader who is unconstrained by any office or limitation. These populist strongmen are portrayed as “masculine and

perhaps violent,” They employed the cult of personality to bolster their power. The connection can be traced back to Argentina’s Juan Peron, according to Mudde and Kaltwasser (Amir, 2010).

Conceptual Clarification

Personality Cult

The term ‘Cult’ became associated with the term ‘personality’ in modern European languages in the first part of the nineteenth century, but it does not seem to have appeared in Russia until considerably later. It is widely assumed that the term “cult of the individual” was first used in Russia in Nikita Krushchev’s 1956 Secret Speech to the VKP’s twentieth Party Congress. He denounced the “cult of the individual” surrounding the then-deceased Stalin; however, Georgi Malenkov, who briefly succeeded Stalin as premier and first secretary of the Communist Party, used the term concerning the then-deceased Stalin in April 1953, in a speech to the Central Committee. Personality cults were considered intrinsically anti-Marxist, with Marx and Friedrich Engels speaking out against the self-glorification around them as their celebrity rose in 1877. Although, the variances in usage among academic subjects are minor, the specific definition given to the word personality cult varies slightly depending on the historical era and the writer’s discipline and inclination. Stalin, Mao Zedong, Adolf Hitler, Napoleon Bonaparte, Maximilian I, Caesar Augustus, and Alexander are the most well-known leaders with personality cults.

According to political scientist Pao-min Chang (2012), a personality cult is the intentional elevation of one man’s status and authority by the deliberate production, projection, and transmission of a godlike image. Historian Rpad von Klimó posits that personality cults should be understood as secularized forms of religious rites. He described a cult of personality as a collection of symbolic behaviours and texts that convey and ritualize the specific meanings attributed to a single individual to form a fictitious society. Similarly, Plamper

defines a *personality cult* as the godlike exaltation of a modern political leader through mass media techniques and excessive glorification of this leader.

Adrian (2016) describes the cult of personality as a quantitatively excessive and qualitatively extravagant public display of praise for the leader in the ABC of Sycophancy: Structural Conditions for the Emergence of Dictators' Cults of Personality. He wrote about the necessary, but not sufficient, structural conditions that lead to the formation of personality cults, as well as a path-dependent chain of events that lead to the cult formation: "a particular combination of patrimonialism and clientelism, lack of dissidence, and systematic falsification pervading the society's culture" (Ejike, 2018).

Religion

The concept of political religion is dominant to any study of charismatic leadership, and particularly personality cults. As previously noted, the term 'cult' has a religious meaning, and personality cults centered on politicians share many similarities with religious worship. According to historian Marina Cattaruzza, the term "political religion" is nearly invariably connected with authoritarian governments of the 1930s, such as Stalin's Russia, Hitler's Germany, and Mussolini's Italy (Barry, 2015). *Political religions* are a recent phenomenon that emerged only after establishing a political sphere separate from religion and after the religion had been reduced to a private concern with a private dimension. According to Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce, religious belief is crucial to human existence, who claims that if formal religion is suppressed, individuals will try to construct their religion.

Politics

Politics refers to the range of actions involved in governing a country, state, or region. It entails making judgments that affect entire groups of people. It refers to obtaining and exercising governance-organized authority over human society, notably a state. In modern nation-states,

people often form political parties to reflect their ideals. Members of a political party frequently agree to have the same stance on numerous topics and support the same legislative reforms and leaders (Hawley, 2016). An election is usually a contest between opposing political parties. The African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa, the Democratic Party (DP) in the United States, the Conservative Party in the United Kingdom, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in Germany, and the Indian National Congress in India (2546 political parties), which has the most political parties in the world, are just a few examples of political parties around the world.

Politics is a broad term with many meanings. It has several descriptive and non-judgmental definitions (such as “the art or science of governing” and “political ideas”), but it is frequently used in a negative context. A range of approaches is used in politics, including publicizing one’s political beliefs, negotiating with other political subjects, passing legislation, and using force, including warfare against rivals. Politics is practiced on a wide range of social levels, from traditional societies’ clans and tribes through modern municipal governments, businesses, and organizations, all the way up to sovereign nations and the international level. As a result, a political system is a framework that establishes appropriate political procedures in a specific community.

Africa

Africa is the second-largest and most populous continent on the planet. It spans 6% of the Earth’s total surface area and 20% of its land area, with a total area of 30.3 million km² (11.7 million square miles), including adjacent islands. It is home to about 16 per cent of the world’s population, with 1.3 billion people as of 2018. The Mediterranean Sea to the north, the Suez Canal and the Red Sea to the northeast, the Indian Ocean to the southeast, and the Atlantic Ocean to the west encircle the continent. Madagascar and several archipelagos make up the continent. There are 54 sovereign nations

with full recognition, nine territories, and two de facto independent states with little or no recognition. The Northern Hemisphere contains most of the continent and its countries, whereas the Southern Hemisphere has a significant percentage and number of countries (Goldberg, 2015).

Africa's average population is the youngest of all the continents, with a median age of 19.7 in 2012, compared to a global median age of 30.4. Algeria is Africa's largest country in terms of land area, and Nigeria is the most populous country. As indicated by the finding of the earliest hominids, Africa, particularly central Eastern Africa, is primarily considered the genesis of humans and the Hominidae clade (great apes). Africa is home to a wide range of ethnic groups, customs, and languages. European powers conquered practically all of Africa in the late nineteenth century, and most current African republics arose from a decolonization process in the twentieth century. African nations collaborate through the establishment of the African Union, which is headquartered in Addis Ababa.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the charismatic legitimation theory propounded by Robert Tucker (1968) in the 1960s as a paradigm for studying personal leadership growth in developing countries. The theory's hypothesis matched the predicted roles of post-independence leaders who had amassed significant followership during the battle for independence in nation-building and economic development. The theory's inability to explain certain expectations, particularly the transformation of charismatic legitimation into personality cults and unaccountable authoritarian control, has prompted criticism. Like the trait approach, this theory began with an emphasis on identifying the qualities of great persons then shifted to include the impact of situations on leadership. However, it failed to reemphasize the critical role of traits of ineffective leadership.

Nevertheless, this article reviews the theory in light of African and Nigerian experience, arguing that, given the character of the country's elite, effective and accountable leadership cannot be left to the preferences and choices of leaders, no matter how exemplary, messianic, heroic, or revolutionary they may be. The paper offers a case for putting in place the necessary institutional correlates that are compatible with democracy, the rule of law, and accountability and capable of curbing trends toward political power personalization.

Brief Historical Analysis of Personality Cult

Personality cults around political leaders predate the twentieth century's totalitarian governments, and they are not limited to a single philosophy or political system. They have been discovered in a wide range of locations and eras throughout human history. Conducting a cursory overview of some of the main elements of personality cults from antiquity to the time immediately preceding Stalin's dictatorship can provide helpful information. It will be shown that, while many aspects of Stalin's cult, as well as the accolades and exceptional attributes lavished on him, appear to be unique and tailored specifically to the expression of Stalin's outstanding leadership, they are generic and formulaic when viewed in the context of previous personality cults. The first documented occurrence of a divine cult of a live human is widely assigned to the Spartan general Lysander, who was venerated on Samos at the end of the 5th century BC. Personality cults existed in Pharaonic Egypt, around Alexander the Great, Roman emperors, Japanese emperors, Napoleon, Napoleon III, Russian tsars, and a variety of other imperial systems, fascist administrations, and socialist regimes (Morison, 2018).

The use of art to publicize and promote the leader's identity has a long history as well. The Ancient Romans, for example, excelled at sculpting, particularly portrait busts, which were only used by patricians. The emperor's busts were manufactured in large quantities and sent around the empire to be displayed in public places and private

houses. , every Roman citizen was compelled to burn incense in front of the emperor's bust to express loyalty and allegiance. Caesar Augustus was portrayed as a military commander (imperator), the first citizen of Rome, and the leading priest, among other things. These roles were archetypal and tied to his official titles and duties, expressing the ruler's nature in his numerous established connections with his subjects.

The political poster, which is of great significance to this study, is possibly the most closely paralleled in numismatics. Darius, the Great of Persepolis, used coinage to transmit his image to the people across his vast realm. Antony and Octavian both struck coins with their pictures in the position previously reserved for the gods as part of their propaganda campaign to succeed Julius Caesar in Ancient Rome. Brutus, too, struck coins depicting his forefathers occupying the temple of the gods. Dionysus' symbols and pictures of Antony with an ivy crown on his head can be found on Asian coins. Antony, like Octavian, linked himself publicly with Dionysus and attempted to build a heavenly lineage for himself. Apart from their merely pragmatic utility as cash within the economic system, coins were small, portable, extensively distributed, and frequently in public view, making them an effective method of propaganda. They may have also taken on apotropaic properties at times (Tobiah, 2019). Maximilian's images were rich in symbolism, establishing a complex visual language that spoke to his attributes, archetypal leadership qualities, ancestry, and position's validity. Maximilian did not abandon other types of art and propaganda that had a long and illustrious history. He appeared in statues, and his deeds were announced on triumphal arches and through the issuance of coinage, following in the footsteps of previous Roman emperors. Maximilian planned a large number of public works to demonstrate not only his historical ties to the Roman Empire but also his spiritual and ideological ties to Emperor Constantine, displaying his Christian piety and faith, his leadership qualities, and his warrior identity, much like the emperors striving for divinity before

him. Concerned that his claims to historic legitimacy would not be enough to secure a stable and peaceful rule, he 'beefed up' these claims with some inventive genealogy and using his created image to appeal to his subjects on charismatic grounds.

Napoleon's cult grew in popularity in Russia, England, France, and Germany and, to a lesser extent, the rest of Europe in the nineteenth century. Napoleon portraits could be found in practically every home in Germany and France. Despite Russia's victory in compelling Napoleon to depart from Russian soil in the Patriotic War of 1812, they witnessed Napoleonic worship. Napoleon's status as a conquering enemy, as well as his later humiliating escape and abandonment of his remaining troops, appear to have done little to tarnish his reputation as a great general and emperor. Napoleon Bonaparte's cult was later used by his nephew Louis Napoleon (Napoleon III) as a means of power. One of the most complex and arguably most analogous cults of a revolutionary hero before Lenin was George Washington, which helped legitimize the American Revolution. An exemplary (and perhaps invented) biography, a multitude of historical paintings, enormous statuary, and the presence of pictures in practically every family home were all part of Washington's cult (Carter, 2010).

The Role of Mass Media

The media has played a vital influence in the formation of personality cults. According to Thomas (2013), the charismatic leader, particularly in politics, is increasingly becoming a product of the media and self-exposure. When it comes to the media in the United States, Robert (2018) says it is difficult to tell how much the media reflects and how much they produce the cult of personality in American politics. They certainly did not develop it all by themselves, but they undoubtedly contributed significantly to it. In Africa, politics is dominated to the extent that it is unusual in the modern world by the personalities of political leaders. In recent years personalised politics, the leader's

“charisma” has been almost wholly a product of media exposure (Cullinane, 2018), which is made easier because a significant number of these media parastatals are subservient to the political leaders.

Personality Cults in Selected African Countries

Equatorial Guinea

The first president of Equatorial Guinea, Francisco Macias Nguema, was the centre of an extreme personality cult, presumably spurred by his heavy use of bhang and iboga, and he gave himself titles like “Unique Miracle” and “Grand Master of Education, Science, and Culture.” The island of Fernando Pó had its name Africanized after him to Masie Nguema Biyogo Island; upon his overthrow in 1979, its name was again changed to Bioko. The capital, Santa Isabel, had its name changed to Malabo. He modified the national motto of Equatorial Guinea’s coat of arms from “There is no other God but Macias Nguema” to “There is no other God than Macias Nguema” in 1978. (Isemberg, 2019).

Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, accused of creating a personality cult, has perpetuated this pattern. As proof of this, in July 2003, state-run radio declared Obiang to be the country’s deity, with complete control over men and things. It went on to say that the president was in constant contact with God and that he could choose to kill without fear of being held accountable or going to hell. In 1993, he made similar remarks. Marcos had declared himself a god as well. Obiang has cultivated his cult of personality by ensuring that his public speeches end with well-wishes for himself rather than the republic (Soucek. 2018). Numerous prominent buildings have presidential lodges, many towns and cities have streets dedicated to Obiang’s coup against Macau, and many people wear clothing with his visage. Like his predecessor and other African tyrants like Idi Amin and Mobutu Sese Seko, Obiang has several inventive titles. Among them are the gentlemen of Bioko’s vast island, Annobón, and Ro Muni. El Jefe (the boss) is another moniker he uses (Michael, 2017).

Libya

During Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's leadership in Libya, there was a personality cult devoted to him. His image appeared on postage stamps, watches, and school satchels, among other things. Quotations from *The Green Book* appeared in several places, including street walls, airports, and even pens, and they were also turned into pop music for public consumption (Navaro-Yashin, 2016). Gaddafi stated that he despised the personality cult surrounding him but that he was willing to put up with it because the Libyan people adored him. According to his biographers, Blundy and Lycett, he was a populist at heart. Throughout Libya, thousands of fans would gather at public events when he spoke; the government claimed these as "spontaneous demonstrations," however, there have been documented cases of groups being coerced or paid to participate (Dubois, 2016). He was notorious for arriving late to public gatherings, and he would occasionally fail to show up at all. Although he possessed a gift for oratory, biographers Blundy and Lycett thought he was a lousy orator. Gaddafi was known for his long, rambling lectures, which usually entailed attacking Israel and the United States, according to biographer Daniel Kawczynski (Philip, 2015).

Togo

President of the Togolese Republic, Gnassingbé Eyadéma, had a massive personality cult that included but was not limited to, a thousand dancing women who sang and danced in praise of him; school children beginning their days by singing his praises; portraits that adorned most stores; a bronze statue in Lomé; and \$20 wristwatches with his portrait that dissipated. In addition, the anniversary of a failed assassination attempt on Eyadéma's life was remembered annually as the Feast of Victory against Evil Forces (Reese, 2015). To commemorate the anniversary of the 1974 plane disaster he believed to be the sole survivor, Eyadéma changed his first name from Étienne to Gnassingbé.

Personality Cult in Nigeria: The Case of Nnamdi Kanu

As previously stated, the term ‘cult’ comes from the religious realm, but it is crucial to highlight that the clear distinction between religious and secular sectors that characterizes many Western democracies today did not exist in the ancient world (Chetan, 2017). The leader cult and its ritual manifestation can have a unifying societal impact, emphasizing social, political, and moral cohesiveness. This may be seen in the followers of Biafra/Nnamdi Kanu (the self-declared leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra, who is pushing for the separation of southeast Nigeria from the rest of the country).

It is pointless to try to reason with Kanu’s fans about the man or their Biafran fantasy. They appear to feel that they are immune to the need to reason, and they have all been engulfed by Kanu’s cult of personality since his detention by Nigerian security forces in October 2015. Following his release on bail, images of adult men and women worshipping at his feet, crowds following him everywhere he goes, and simple terms like “head of a separatist movement” are no longer acceptable to define Kanu for his supporters. He has been compared to Christ and is now their “supreme leader,” “saviour,” and possibly Moses, and Christ rolled into one: “I recall when Christ came, not everyone viewed him as saviour.” This was in reaction to “non-believers” (Bilias, 2017).

Kanu is reportedly a devout believer of Judaism, and he and his adherents are not afraid to wax biblical about the Biafran cause being a divine mandate. Kanu is alleged to be a guy sent by God to battle for his people’s freedom. As a result, opposing Kanu or Biafra is equivalent to opposing God (Felix, 2017). The irony is lost on Kanu fundamentalists. One of the most severe challenges facing pro-Biafrans in Nigeria is the hold of Islamic extremism, particularly in the country’s north, and the reality that many Igbos have perished due to extremist violence. Kanu and his supporters, on the other hand, are perfectly content with their Biafran fanaticism and exceptionalism. According to Kanu, in response to a recent interview when asked

how the public would react to his demand for a boycott of the governorship election in Anambra State in November, People will not vote because “we controlled them 100 per cent,” The idea that he can control a large number of people is highly hazardous for both the controller and the controlled. It is at odds with democratic norms and the Igbos’ republican spirit, which Kanu claims to lead. This may well go over Kanu’s and his supporters’ heads, as seen by their intense assumption that a Donald Trump presidency will bring Biafra to fruition (Curtis, 2).

Nigeria’s failed state conditions, Kanu’s detention and subsequent Nollywood-style antics after his release, false claims about Biafra’s divinity, and the suppression of dissent have all contributed to the current phenomenon of fanatical followership and a personality cult, which the Nigerian authorities have no idea how to deal with it.

Conclusion

Observing the cult of personality from a historical perspective, starting with the ancient world and progressing through Europe to modern times, it becomes clear that the essential characteristics of charismatic leadership, as well as the cults of personality built around charismatic leaders, have more similarities than differences, regardless of geography or epoch. This is not unexpected, given that charismatic leaders and the conditions that breed them have existed throughout history, and the issues that these leaders and their countries face are very consistent. Although, political propaganda portrays each of these leaders as uniquely gifted and blessed, or at the very least as a member of a rare breed, their public personas are nearly identical in many ways, with their personality cults sharing several key genres, symbols, and fictional features.

The study recommends that dignitaries representing the nation’s personality cult be evaluated based on their dignity and patriotic aspects. Spiritual leaders should respect their God to be able to proclaim the truth and give better answers, which may or may not be

used against the state. Men of dignity and integrity should be chosen to occupy such areas so that they are not exploited as a tool by opposition parties, as this will prevent extortion and looting of the people and the government as a result of covetous behaviour. The country should also work to instil moral values in its citizens so that they can lead the country to greater heights.

References

- Amir, T. (2010). *The Persian Night: Iran Under the Khomeinist Revolution*. Encounter Press.
- Arshin, A. (2014). *A Critical Introduction to personality Cult*. Cambridge University Press.
- Barry, R. (2015). *The Middle East: A Guide to Politics, Economics, Society and Culture*. Routledge.
- Bilias, O., George A and Brob, N. (2017). *African History: Retrospect and Prospect*. New York Free Press.
- Carter, V and Findle, O. (2010). *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism, and Modernity: A History of Personality Cult in Africa*. Yale University Press.
- Chetan, B. (2017). *Liberation and Purity: Race, New Religious Movements and the Ethics of Postmodernity*. Taylor & Francis.
- Cullinane, M. (2018). *Nigeria and the dynamics of Personality Cults*. LSU Press.
- Curtis, M. (2016). *The Danger of the Cult of Personality in Politics*. Longman Press.
- Dubois, L. (2016). *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History*. London Press.
- Ejike, M. (2018). *Nigeria and politics in Africa*. University of Michigan Worldmark Press.
- Goldberg, J. (2015). *Cult Personality Corrupting Conservatism*. London Press
- Hawley, J. (2016). *The Nature of African Politics*. Yale University Press.
- Isemberg, N and Burstein, A. (2019) *The Problem of Democracy: The Cult of Personality*. Penguin.

- Michael, C. (2017). *Homeland Security: Assessing the First Five Years*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Mikaberidze, A. (2011). *Conflict and Conquest in the Islamic World: A Historical Encyclopedia*. UKM Publishers.
- Morrison, M., Terry, J., Conaway, K and Wayne, A. (2018). *Nigeria and Politics*. Adams Media Press.
- Navaro-Yashin, Y. (2016). *Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Africa*. Princeton University Press.
- Philip, P. (2015). *Anatomy of a Nightmare*. Henry Holt and Company.
- Reese, E and Robert, S. (2016). *Africa and personality Cult*. Routledge.
- Sivan, A., Emmanuel, M., Friedman, J and Menachem, E. (2015). *Religious Radicalism and Politics in the Middle East*. State University of New York Press.
- Soucek, S. (2018). *A History of Personality Cult in Africa*. Cambridge University Press.
- Tobiah, U. (2019). *Secularism and Muslim Democracy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Yonah, A. (2017). *Personality Cult in Africa*. London Press.

Climate Change: Genesis, Consequences, Remedies and Global Politics

Author: Tola Badejo, PhD

Publishers: Concrete Communications Limited, Lagos & College Press, Ibadan

Year of Publication: 2021

Pages: 98

Reviewers: Jide Owoeye & Tunde Oseni

This 98-page book by Tola Badejo is a treatise in Environmental Management Science as it is in International Political Economy- Such a book is rare. Succinctly titled; ***Climate Change: Genesis, Consequences, Remedies and Global Politics***, Badejo's book presents to us a meticulous, data-rich and graphically illustrated environmental science text. Although, the author is a Zoologist by training, his research interests, particularly in his post-doctoral endeavours, have covered Applied Ecology in its broader sense. As the author reflects, this work is a 'comprehensive account' of multiple researches he has embarked upon over the last thirty years.

As a matter of fact, the thematic focus of this book is both multi-disciplinary and intellectually stimulating. A chapter by chapter understanding of the intertwined issues of climate change, including political, economic, social and technological dimensions, make the book an enriching addition to knowledge production not only in environmental but also natural, applied and social sciences. The reader begins to have a sense of intellectual curiosity with both the opening preface by the author and lucid foreword by Professor Francis Adesina of Geography department of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.

This is aside a two-page ‘preamble’ by the author in which critical and technical background is provided for the study.

Our Intervention

From the programme of event earlier sent to me, I could deduce that the reviewers have been selected to discuss the various themes of the book as related to their own disciplines. Accordingly, mine lies in the politics of the subject matter.

For this reason, I will speak less on the Causes of Greenhouse Gases (Chapter 1) or Consequences of Global Warming (Chapter 2). Other areas including Remedies for Global Warming such as reforestation, energy conservation and renewable energy sources (Chapter 3) would also be treated by other experts on this panel.

Rather, I would be more interested in Chapter Four, “Politics of Global Warming” and Chapter six. “Deviation from sustainable Development Goals by Newly Industrialized countries” My thoughts on these two sections of the book would then be aligned with the author’s conclusion in Chapter 7.

First, global power politics is uneven. In International Relations, we often talk about the asymmetrical relationship between the Global North and Global South. In Badejo’s book, this reality is well analysed. In relating this to solving ecological crisis particularly climate change, Badejo advocates that “it is logical to expect that industrialised nations should spend more money than less industrialised nations in cleaning the environment because they contribute more to emission of Greenhouse Gases”. The economic inequality among nations has equally enabled the ecological injustice. Enforcement of “Carbon Tax”, the author argues, is the core policy at curbing climate change.

Second, international politics of climate change is not likely to end soon. The reason for this is well captured in Badejo’s book. States are run based on national interest which of course, may be fuelled by elite interest or different ideological learnings. For Badejo, subtle (and at times total) rejection of the Paris Agreement (by Trump’s America,

for instance) is not based on sound 'ecological reasoning'. (p.69) Ecology, the author affirms, is not economics. If the United States could undermine the various treaties on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and limiting the rise in average global temperatures, which other powerful country would not? In short, America's political stance against both the Kyoto Protocol and Paris Climate Change treaty showcase dynamics of power politics on Climate Change. On this, the author writes:

Unfortunately, those supporting the Paris Agreement are more than those who do not support it in the present administration of President Donald Trump in USA. President George W. Bush tore the Kyoto Protocol apart in 2001. President Trump tore the Paris Agreement apart in 2017. This reveals one naked fact. The world cannot trust the Republicans with environmental issues (pg. 76).

While it is true that partisan cum ideological differences in American politics affects the country's inconsistent support for climate change treaties, it is almost a given fact that a Republican government would tow the lines of Big Businesses and industries than a typical Democratic regime.

In fairness to the West, a strong economy is a product of industrialisation. This is why in Chapter six, the author explicated the growing contribution of carbon by countries such as China, South Africa, Mexico, Brazil, India, among others. The question is not whether or not industrialization leads to CO₂ emission; it is about what the countries need to do, or are doing, to reduce or eliminate Greenhouse gases. Badejo notes:

In their pursuit of economic stability, the so-called Asian Tigers (Hong Kong, South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan) have been steadily contributing more emissions to the atmosphere since 1980. This is to the detriment of the concept of sustainable climatic environment (pg.84)

The author does not just complain about the negative consequences of action and inactions that have affected the health of the global ecology, he offers some practical solutions which includes that countries of the world should:

- (i) tap into sustainable, renewable sources of energy;
- (ii) reduce politics that may hamper sustainability policy at all levels.
- (iii) disaggregate economic indices that may make some countries embark on a rat-race path of development that may further hurt the planet earth.

Perhaps a lacuna in the volume is the pass over of the significance of Climate Change for our country's contemporary security outlook. For instance, is it true that banditry and Herdsmen killings etc. could be excusable due to Climate Change? If so, are we the only country bordering the Sahel where drought had driven Fulani Cattle Herders south wards causing mayhem on farm lands? Nonetheless, Badejo's analysis points out that politics, when negatively infused, corrupts policy. When such a policy is a global effort to save the world system, the problem persists. Although, I have read the book in its manuscript format only, I anticipate that it will come out in good colour, with the layouts well aligned. There is no doubt that readers would benefit from the ideas and tips in this book. One can only hope that the book will reach the appropriate quarters, especially the decision-makers whose responsibility largely determines the implementation of these well-articulated ideas about such a topical issue as Climate Change.