

# Nigerian Cultural History and Challenges of Postcolonial Development



# Nigerian Cultural History and Challenges of Postcolonial Development

Edited by

Aderemi Suleiman Ajala  
and Samuel Oluwole Ogundele

**Cambridge**  
**Scholars**  
Publishing



Nigerian Cultural History and Challenges of Postcolonial Development

Edited by Aderemi Suleiman Ajala and Samuel Oluwole Ogundele

This book first published 2023

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2023 by Aderemi Suleiman Ajala, Samuel Oluwole Ogundele  
and contributors

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced,  
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means,  
electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without  
the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-5275-0226-0

ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-0226-0

# CONTENTS

Preface .....	viii
Acknowledgements .....	x
Contributors.....	xi
<b>Section One – Background</b>	
Chapter 1 .....	2
Introduction <i>Aderemi S. Ajala &amp; Samuel O. Ogundele</i>	
Chapter 2 .....	6
Nigerian Physical Features and Challenges of Postcolonial Development <i>Dickson 'Dare Ajayi</i>	
<b>Section Two – Aspects of Precolonial Development in Nigeria</b>	
Chapter 3 .....	26
Nigeria's Early Cross-Cultural Exchanges and Cohesion <i>Samuel O. Ogundele</i>	
Chapter 4 .....	36
Precolonial Trade Relations on the Jos Plateau and Adjoining Lowlands <i>Macham Mangut</i>	
Chapter 5 .....	51
Trade Contacts in Precolonial and Postcolonial Nigeria <i>Abimbola O. Adesoji &amp; Olusegun Olaniyi</i>	
<b>Section Three – Postcolonial Challenges of Development</b>	
Chapter 6 .....	66
Earliest Manifestation of Stone Age Phenomena Before Arabisation and Europeanisation in Nigeria <i>Samuel O. Ogundele</i>	

Chapter 7 .....	79
Between Tradition and Modernity: Marriage Dynamics in Colonial South-western Nigeria	
<i>Morenikeji Asaju</i>	
Chapter 8 .....	103
Of Nationalism and Violence: Post-Biafran War and the Imagination of Nationhood in Nigeria	
<i>Aderemi Suleiman Ajala</i>	
Chapter 9 .....	122
The Political Economy of State Creation and Local Government Administration in Nigeria	
<i>Eze, Malachy Chukwuemeka</i>	
Chapter 10 .....	140
Women and Leadership in Postcolonial Nigeria	
<i>Chinyere Ukpokolo</i>	
Chapter 11 .....	161
Language and National Integration in Nigeria: A Contemporary Perspective	
<i>Oyetayo A. Bankale</i>	
Chapter 12 .....	188
Modern Political Experience: Constitutional Development in Nigeria, 1960-2020	
<i>Monsuru Muritala</i>	
Chapter 13 .....	208
Space, Body, Public Service and Corruption in Nigeria	
<i>Olatunde B. Lawuyi &amp; M. Olukayode Akinsete</i>	
Chapter 14 .....	222
Corruption and the State in Nigeria	
<i>Ayokunle Olumuyiwa Omobowale, Olugbenga Samuel Falase, Ewere Nwali, Samuel Ariwoola and Adebimpe Adefila.</i>	

Chapter 15 .....	237
Nigerian Education History in the Context of Transformation and Development in Postcolonial Nigeria	
<i>Ikeoluwapo B. Baruwa</i>	
Chapter 16 .....	252
Movable Heritage and Sustainable Development in Postcolonial Nigeria	
<i>Afolasade A. Adewumi</i>	

## PREFACE

This editorial is in recognition of a gap in Nigerian development thinking. Nigerian development, especially in the postcolonial era, has been a subject of concern, not only to academics, but also to global stakeholders in development. Considering the enormous potential, including but not limited to cultural diversities, human capitals and natural resources, it is unthinkable to have a country like Nigeria still crawling in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is unthinkable to still have an underdeveloped nation despite its rich natural resources and abundance of fauna and flora. It is therefore assumed that Nigeria, with its rich diversity of cultures should not be a poor country in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is indeed unthinkable that Nigeria should experience such a magnitude of ethnic violence and displacement as it does in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, despite the precolonial years of interconnectedness among the Nigerian people. Of course, from the Stone Age to now, Nigeria is a very different country. Having passed through many phases of developmental efforts, one also might think that transitional cultural history, which narrates the ups and downs and cultural evolutions would inspire Nigeria to correct its developmental efforts. Yet, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, all Nigerian development sectors have seen no significant improvement, suggesting that no lesson has been learnt from Nigeria's history.

While previous analyses of underdevelopment in Nigeria have ignored the impact of cultural history in national development, this editorial critically examines Nigerian history and challenges of postcolonial development from a cultural perspective. Cultural history is an indispensable tool to understand development. It examines the collective memories and accumulated experiences of individual human groups across the ages. So, every society must appreciate the centrality of cultural history to development. Thus, in this editorial, we assemble critical opinions from different academic disciplines to engage with the discourses of cultural history and development in Nigeria. This effort, therefore, produces far-reaching discussions on different aspects of Nigerian cultural history which sees colonisation as a turning point of Nigerian development trajectories. Specifically, the central themes in this editorial are: inter-ethnic relations and cultural cohesion; trade contacts; Nigeria's political system; the evolution of the education system; issues which arise from linguistic differences; women in leadership; nationalism and the Biafran war; trafficking of important cultural objects; and corruption in Nigeria.



As a rethinking of cultural history, which focuses on the analysis of developmental issues in postcolonial Nigeria, it is hoped that this editorial will be insightful for researches with regards to concerns about Nigerian development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Aderemi Ajala and Oluwole Ogundele  
September 2022.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We recognise and appreciate the interest drawn by our proposal to package this editorial. At first, such interest attracted quite a number of scholars, who have subsequently contributed chapters to this editorial. Tight deadlines were given, painstaking reviews were done, and yet the interest to contribute in the editorial kept all of us on to achieve this production. We are deeply impressed by the submissions of all the contributors in the editorial. Similarly, we are grateful to our anonymous reviewers for doing good jobs.

We would like to give a special thank you to Cambridge Scholars Press for giving us a book printing grant and working with us in the production of the book. We hope that this shall be an enduring relationship for the future.

Aderemi Suleiman Ajala & Samuel Oluwole Ogundele  
Nigeria.  
September 2022

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Abimbola O. Adesoji** is a Professor of History at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. His research interests are traditional and contemporary Yoruba history and the socio-political history of Nigeria. His most recent articles are “Negotiating tightropes: a historical appraisal of NGOs and their adaptability in Nigeria’s changing political space” in Melina C. Kalfes and Kathrin Knodel (Eds.) *NGOs and lifeworlds in Africa: transdisciplinary perspectives* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2021) Chapter 9:203-225; “Olaju: understanding Yoruba culture and society in changing perspectives” (co-authored) in Oluranti Ojo and Israel Saibu (Eds.) *Culture, society and development in Nigeria: issues, challenges and prospects* (Abuja: University of Abuja Press, 2021) Chapter 1:1-17; and “Newspapers and the Sharia debate in Nigeria: contexts, issues and trends”, *Lagos Notes and Records* (2021) Vol. 27 (1):1-31 (Faculty of Arts, University of Lagos).

**Adebimpe Adefila** is a PhD candidate at the Department of Sociology, at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. She has a background in Economics, a Masters in Sociology (Development) and her doctoral research is on the Palm Oil Industry in south-western Nigeria. Adebimpe has a special interest in Economic Sociology of the informal sector, gender relations in the workplace and the globalisation process.

**Aderemi Suleiman Ajala** is a Professor of Cultural Anthropology in the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He is a recipient of many research fellowships and grants. He is the author of *Nationalism and Politics in Postcolonial Nigeria* (2011) and *Yoruba nationalism-culture, Politics and Violence in Southwestern Nigeria* (2013), among others. He has also published journal articles and editorials on culture and health in Africa. As an evolving researcher, he is currently interested in pastoral nomads in Oyo North, south-western Nigeria, examining how pastoral economy and environment in Oyo North negotiate to produce invention of healthcare strategies among the people.

***Afolasade Adewumi*** holds a PhD in Heritage Law. She is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Jurisprudence and International Law. She teaches Cultural Property Law, Human Rights and Nigerian Legal System. She is a member of international and national organisations on heritage matters. She served as an international heritage expert to Malawi at the National workshop on First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of February, 2017. She is a member of the Steering Committee for the Drafting of the White Papers on Cultural Heritage - International Law Association - 150 YEARS - PARIS 2023. She has widely published in learned journals and textbook editorials.

***Ayokunle Olumuyiwa Omobowale (PhD)*** is a Professor of Sociology at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He studies Development in Context. He won the University of Ibadan Postgraduate School Award for scholarly publication in 2007, the Institut Français de Recherche en Afrique Research Fellowship in 2009, the American Council of Learned Societies – African Humanities Programme Post-Doctoral Fellowship in 2010 and the African Studies Association (USA) Presidential Award in 2014. Prof Omobowale was also a Visiting Scholar at the Centre for African Studies, Rutgers University, New Jersey, USA in November 2014. He is the author of *The Tokunbo phenomenon and the second-hand economy in Nigeria* (2013). Prof Omobowale is the Editor of *Ibadan Journal of Sociology* and he is also an International Partner and Participant in the International Network on Women on the Move COST Action (CA19112) 2020-2022.

***Chinyere Ukpokolo*** is an Associate Professor of Anthropology and teaches in the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. She researches focuses in on the areas of gender, ethnicity, higher education, and ethnography. She has made contributions on gender issues to encyclopaedias such as *Encyclopaedia of Yoruba* (2016), and *Oxford encyclopaedia of African women's history*, Oxford University Press. She also edited the book, *Being and becoming: gender, culture and shifting identity in Sub-Saharan Africa* (2016), and co-edited *Space, Transformation and representation: reflections on University culture* (2012).

***Dickson 'Dare Ajayi*** is a Professor of repute at the Department of Geography, at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He has published widely in Industrial Geography, Regional Development, and Environmental Studies.

***Ewere Okwudei Nwali*** is a PhD candidate of the Department of Sociology, at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. His doctoral research is on Sand Mining, Land Degradation and Conflict Management in Evbuobanosa. His research interests are in Political Economy of Resource Allocation, Environmental Sociology, Migration and Conflict Management. He is an adjunct with the Digital Bridge Institute, Abuja Nigeria.

***Eze, Malachy Chukwuemeka*** obtained a Diploma in Public Administration & Local Government, B.Sc. (*First Class Hons.*) Political Science, and an M.Sc. in Political Science – International Relations. He is a Lecturer in the Department of Political Science, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Nigeria, with over 16 years of teaching and research experience. He has authored 6 books and over 31 Journal articles and book chapters. Eze obtained the University of Cambridge and Federal Government of Nigeria Scholarship Award; he is a Fellow of the Institute of Management Consultants (FIMC), a Travel Fellow of the African Studies Association in the United Kingdom (ASAUK) and a recipient of the University of Nigeria's Distinguished Alumnus Award.

***Ikeoluwapo B. Baruwa*** is a member of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain (PESGB), the Philosophers of Education Association of Nigeria (PEAN) and the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) amongst others. Ikeoluwapo doubles as a research fellow of The French Institute for Research in Africa (IFRA) and a reviewer for the International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research (IJLTER). He is a doctoral student with research interests in the philosophy of education, the philosophy of adult education, pedagogy, andragogy and ethics. With a number of globally recognised earned certificates, Ikeoluwapo has authored and co-authored cutting-edge academic papers published in reputable journals and has been cited on the Internet. He once served as a scientific member for the Alexander von Humboldt Conference held at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, in February 2020.

***Macham Mangut*** is an Archaeologist and an Historian. He teaches archaeology in the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies, at the University of Jos, Nigeria. He obtained his bachelor's degree in History/Archaeology in 2009 from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria. He obtained his Masters in 2014 and his PhD in 2021 both in Archaeology from University of Ibadan, Nigeria. His areas of interest include Historical Archaeology, Migration Studies, Landscape Archaeology, Heritage

Management, Ceramic Analysis, and Remote Sensing and GIS. He is currently a 2022 ACLS/AHP fellow.

***Monsuru Muritala, PhD***, is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of History, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He was a Cadbury visiting fellow of the Department of History and Cultural Studies, at the University of Birmingham, United Kingdom in 2015; a British Academy visiting fellow of the School of History, at the Queen Mary University of London, United Kingdom in 2018; an AHP fellow of the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS); and a Post-Doctoral Fellow, at the African Centre for Career Enhancement and Skills Support (ACCESS), University of Leipzig, Germany in 2020. He specialises in Nigerian Economic and Urban History. He is the author of *Livelihood in colonial Lagos*. He is currently the Lead Researcher of AFRAB research team in Nigeria.

***Morenikeji Asaju*** is a Cadbury Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of African Studies and Anthropology, at the University of Birmingham as of 2022. She is a faculty member of the Department of History, at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. She was also a Leventis Scholar at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), part of the University of London in 2020, and an A.G Leventis Visiting Research Fellow at the Centre for African Studies, University of Cambridge from 2021-2022. Morenikeji received her PhD in African History from the Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies (BIGSAS), at the University of Bayreuth, Germany. Her research and teaching interests include marriage and gender in colonial Africa, slavery, African historiography, historical method, and post-colonialism. Her work has appeared in *Slavery and abolition*, *African notes* and *BIGSAS works*. She is currently working on a monograph about gender, marriage, and the colonial courts in Abeokuta, south-western Nigeria.

***Olatunde Bayo Lawuyi*** recently retired as a Professor of Anthropology in the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He has published extensively in areas of Yoruba indigenous epistemology and cosmology, public space and culture; identity, consciousness of development and social order. He has published six books and several articles in journals. He has also participated in developing curricular on anthropology and culture studies in several universities in Nigeria and abroad.

***Olugbenga Samuel Falase*** got his PhD from the Department of Sociology, at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, in 2018. He has been a recipient of the Next Generation, Social Science Research Council (SSRC) fellowship in 2014, 2016, 2017 and 2020, and an awardee of the Life Above Poverty Organisation (LAPO) Doctoral Research Support Grant in 2015. His doctoral research, titled ‘The Politics of Forest Governance in South-western Nigeria’, explored the everyday ‘taken for granted’ nuances and context in forest governance. He specialises in Development, Rural Studies and ‘Sociology of Forest’. He is a lecturer and researcher in the Department of Sociology, at Lead City University, in Ibadan, Nigeria.

***Olukayode Michael Akinsete*** is an anthropologist in the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. His research interests include culture and health, urbanisation, culture and environment, development and ethnography. He has published widely in all these research interests.

***Olusegun O. Olaniyi*** holds a PhD in History from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. His research interests include the Economic and Social History of Nigeria with special interest in Development Studies. His most recent works include ‘Olaju: understanding Yoruba culture and society in changing perspectives’ (co-authored) in Oluranti Ojo and Israel Saibu (Eds.) *Culture, society and development in Nigeria: issues, challenges and prospects* (Abuja: University of Abuja Press, 2021, Chapter 1:1-17), and ‘Beyond the modern era: placing migration, diaspora rewards and socio-economic development of Africa in proper perspective’ (co-authored) in Olusanjo Matthew Daramola et al., (Eds.) *Migration: identity construction and reconstruction* (Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Publications, 2020, Chapter 8: 131-143). He is a fellow of the Institut Français de Recherche en Afrique (French Institute for Research in Africa) IFRA-Nigeria and the Ife Institute of Advanced Studies.

***Oyetayo Bankale*** currently researches in the Department of Linguistics and African Languages, at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. Her academic interests span from comparative historical linguistics to phonology and sociolinguistics. Having gained decades of experience on the field, Dr Bankale has a thorough grasp of the Nigerian linguistic terrain and the fine grains of the typologies of language families. She has been visiting scholar at the University of California Los Angeles and the University of Georgia, USA, as well as a beneficiary of the MacArthur Start-up Grant for Female

Scholars. A brilliant analyst of linguistic data, she is an active participant in numerous international conferences.

***Samuel Ariwoola*** is currently finishing his PhD in the Department of Sociology, at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. His research interests span African development issues to global affairs generally. He currently teaches Sociology with sixth form colleges in Ibadan and Lagos, where he resides.

***Samuel Oluwole Ogundele*** is a professor of Settlement Archaeology in the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He has worked as a Consultant Archaeologist on Heritage Management to the Nigerian Government. He has a post-doctoral fellow from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa and served as a visiting Professor at the University of Ghana, Legon, Accra. He also served as an external examiner for the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies, at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and as a Visiting Lecturer at the UNESCO Museum School, Jos, Nigeria. He has published five books on various aspects of African indigenous knowledge systems and human origins. He has also published over 80 articles in scholarly journals.



# **SECTION ONE**

## **BACKGROUND**

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

ADEREMI SULEIMAN AJALA  
& SAMUEL OLUWOLE OGUNDELE

Nigerian cultural history is a complex journey of human engagements that is yet to be properly understood and captured, let alone appropriated by the political class and society at large. This has a lot of negative impacts on the 21<sup>st</sup> century Nigerian development agenda. The dynamics of (under)development in Nigeria are characterised by different forms of conflicts, poor governance, ethnic distrust, and presumption of ethnic marginalisation, a gross lack of appreciation of indigenous knowledge systems including language, low recognition of the roles of women and corruption. All these are challenges of postcolonial development on a sustainable scale. In other words, the need to return to the ontology of history and culture is critical to the building of a heritage of commonalities as well as flows/interconnections. Indeed, modern education in Nigeria cannot afford to gloss over this existential reality.

Cultural history is an exercise in collective memories and accumulated experiences of human groups throughout the ages. However, not every society appreciates the centrality of history and culture to development, both for now and in the future. This is anchored to several factors. One of these is colonialism/neocolonialism, which applies to Nigeria. In societies where cultural histories are not appreciated and appropriated, memories are reduced to the domain of mere individual faculty. This rubbishes the importance of cultural history as an instrument of revolution by education.

Nigeria's four thousand years of history, involving transformation and/or continuities suggests a complexity concerning cultural and ecological diversity. This situation leads to regional variations in politics, commerce, industrial growth and national development. Despite the diverse cultural histories of Nigeria, many social memories still exist as convergences of developments. According to Ogundiran (2005), these convergences are outgrowths of common historical processes and flows

experienced by different peoples and societies as far back in time as about 2000 B.C. They were the result of commerce, agricultural productions, inter-marriages, and military alliances. The subsequent developments led to the formation and re-formation of group identities, including institutionalised hierarchies. This shows the mixed character of the modern Nigerian state. The experience can be used to craft a superb political landscape, rooted in cross-cultural understandings.

Given the above, a multi-disciplinary approach is needed to properly historicise Nigerian development challenges and opportunities. Nigeria needs socially engaging concepts and methods in such disciplines as History, Archaeology, Anthropology, Linguistics, Religious Studies, Philosophy, Political Science, and Art History. It is time for Nigeria to begin to use what it has to get what it needs (Ogundele 2020).

This 16-chapter book is divided into 3 sections. These chapters contain some analyses of developments during the precolonial, colonial and postcolonial periods. The first section addresses the background to the book. Within this, the two chapters are written by Aderemi Ajala, Samuel Oluwole Ogundele, and Dickson Ajayi. Ajala and Ogundele present a short overview of the book through the theorisation and contextualisation of various issues. On the other hand, Ajayi examines how Nigeria's physico-geographical features have been engendering development challenges in postcolonial Nigeria. The second section is entitled, "Aspects of Precolonial Development in Nigeria". This part is made up of four chapters written by Samuel Oluwole Ogundele, Macham Mangut, Abimbola Adesoji, and Olusegun Olaniyi. Within, attempts have been made to historicise aspects of precolonial encounters such as "Nigeria's Early Cross-cultural Exchanges and Cohesion" (Ogundele), "Pre-colonial Trade Relations on the Jos Plateau and Adjoining Lowlands" (Mangut), "Trade Contacts in Pre- and Postcolonial Nigeria" (Abimbola O. Adesoji and Olusegun Olaniyi), and "Early Manifestations of Stone Age Phenomena Before Arabisation and Europeanisation in Nigeria" (Samuel Oluwole Ogundele).

The third part of this book focuses on the challenges of postcolonial development. The first chapter here is titled "Between Tradition and Modernity: Marriage Dynamics in Colonial South-western Nigeria" (Morenikeji Asaju). This is followed by a chapter on the "Political Economy of State Creation and Local Government Administration in Nigeria" written by Eze Malachy Chukwuemeka. The next chapter addresses the issue of "Women and Leadership in Postcolonial Nigeria." This is authored by Chinyere Ukpokpolo. On the other hand, Oyetayo A. Bankale writes on "Language and National Integration in Nigeria: A contemporary Perspective". "Modern Political Experience: Constitutional

Development in Nigeria (1960-2020)” is authored by Monsuru Muritala. Olatunde B. Lawuyi theorises on corruption using Yoruba local concepts and ideologies to examine the contextualisation of space, body, public service, and corruption in Nigeria. This is followed by another paper on “Corruption and the Nigerian State” written by Ayokunle Olumuyiwa Omobowale, Olugbenga Samuel Falase, Ewere Nwali, Samuel Ariwodoola, and Bimpe Adefila. The last two chapters of this book critically examine the concept of “Educating Developing Nigerian Society for Transformational Purposes” (Ikeoluwapo B. Banuwa) and “Curbing Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property as a Step Towards Sustainable Development” (Afolasade A. Adewumi).

Given the above scenarios, this book is a modest attempt to zoom in on the epistemological crisis of cultural education and development in Nigeria from the earliest decipherable time-period to the present. Nigeria, the most populous geo-polity in the black world, has an estimated population of over 200 million. Again, the heterogeneous character of the population is simply terrific. Notable ethnicities here include the Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, Igala, Berom, Kanuri, Edo, and Epira. In addition, Nigeria is an oil-rich country, with petroleum occupying a large expanse of Nigeria. But unfortunately, the challenges posed by the “unholy alliance” of the Southern and Northern Protectorates from 1914, orchestrated by the British colonial overlords are yet to be resolved through the lens of Nigeria’s world-class ancient cultural and historical heritage. It is worrying that, despite Nigeria’s monumental oil and gas resources among others, more than 80 per cent of the population live on incomes of less than one dollar daily. The slow pace of socio-economic and political development arises from a myriad of factors bordering on the country’s colonial history, geography, endemic corruption, cronyism, village solidarity and religious bigotry. Therefore, this book reveals that there are hopes, provided the Nigerian political leaders and society at large can return to the ontology of culture and history in a most critical fashion. Archaeological and literary excavations of the vast hidden stores of architecture/engineering, medicine, pottery productions, iron metallurgical practices, sophisticated socio-political relations and fundamental innovations in agriculture have shown that Nigeria should be able to craft its own unique ideas about economic sustainability and progress. This must necessarily entail participating in the international community in a critical way.

In essence, this book is an attempt to re-link Nigeria with its de-coupled roots. The de-linking of the present from the past, was a deliberate attempt to keep the country in a state of perpetual underdevelopment. Evidence has shown that Nigeria can still be a workable project in the face of appropriate

socio-cultural and historical education. This is one way of translating the independence of 1960 into total decolonisation and, by extension, sustainable development in a myriad of ways.

## References

- Connerton, P. (1989) *How societies remembered*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ogundele, S. O. (2020) “Epistemology, values and moral perceptions in Nigerian culture”, in Ajala, A.S. (Ed.) *Indigenous epistemology, strengthening research, and decolonisation of education in Nigeria*. Ibadan: African Ethnography Services Ltd.
- Ogundiran, A. (2005) “Four millennia of cultural history in Nigeria (ca.2000 B.C-1900 A.D.): archaeological perspectives”. *Journal of World Prehistory*. 19:133-168.

## CHAPTER 2

# NIGERIAN PHYSICAL FEATURES AND CHALLENGES OF POSTCOLONIAL DEVELOPMENT

DICKSON ‘DARE AJAYI

### **Introduction**

Nigeria, as a country, has a lot of physical features as demonstrated by its distinctive regions of deserts, plains, swamps, mountains and steamy jungles. The country has one of the largest river systems in the world, which is dominated by the river Niger, the third biggest river in Africa. The river flows into north-western Nigeria, and runs towards the south-east, meeting the Benue River in the central part of the country, and then keeps running towards the coast (Bankole, 2018). Nigeria’s coastline covers about 530 miles, which stretches from the borders of the Benin Republic in the west, to the border of Cameroon in the southern part of the country. Specifically, there are more than 200 miles of coastal waters, stretching out into the Atlantic Ocean from Nigeria. The coastline includes many sandy beaches that are a tourist attraction and these areas are well developed. From those beaches, tourists can swim, dive, and observe the wild nature of the coasts. The majority of such beaches are located close to Lagos State. In addition, whereas there are other lakes located in Nigeria, Lake Chad is perhaps the most visited. It is located in the far west of the Chad Republic and in the north-east of Nigeria. A part of the Lake also extends to the Niger Republic and Cameroon.

Huge deposits of crude oil are one of the most important physical features of Nigeria. The country is one of the biggest players in crude oil in the whole world. There are reserves of about 25 billion barrels of crude-oil in the country, which makes Nigeria rank 10<sup>th</sup> among countries with the largest crude-oil reserves. As it stands, the majority of the exploration of the crude-oil is within the Niger Delta region. There are about 500 fields in the

Niger Delta, with over 55 per cent of these being onshore, and the remainder in shallow waters (less than 500 metres deep) (National Petroleum Investment Management Services, 2022). Apart from crude-oil, there are deposits of other natural resources in Nigeria. These natural resources range from precious metals and various stones, to industrial materials such as Barites, Gypsum, Kaolin, and Marble. All of the 36 states, including Abuja, have at least one natural resource, although the majority of these are yet to be exploited<sup>1</sup>.

The above information suggests the availability of numerous physical features in Nigeria, ranging from vegetation and water bodies to natural resources. However, these physical features are being negatively affected by climate change (Akpodiogaga-a and Odjugo, 2010), mining (Adeoye, 2016; Bartrem, Von Lindern, Von Braun and Tirima, 2022), and industrialisation (Adekunle and Eniola, 2008). Salkida (2012) noted that Lake Chad was once the largest water reservoir in the Sahel region of Africa, covering an area of about 26,000 square kilometres, which is about the size of the US state of Maryland and bigger than the whole of Israel or Kuwait. By 2001, however, the lake covered less than one-fifth of that area. Thus, this chapter examines the effects of climate change and desertification, industrialisation, and mineral exploitation on the physical features and as well on the formation of cultural groups in Nigeria. Here, physical features are identified as mineral resources, vegetation, soil, air, and water sources. In order to achieve the purpose of this paper, there are subsections on climate change and desertification, industrialisation and mineral exploitation, the effects of climate change and mineral exploitation on physical features, and the formation of cultural groups in Nigeria. Evidence to support these hypotheses have been acquired from articles, newspapers, texts, reports, etc.

## **Climate Change and Desertification in Nigeria**

The issue of climate change, as evidenced by changes in climatic elements like rainfall, temperature, wind, etc., concerns everyone in the world. For instance, there have been unusual heavy downpours resulting in flooding and landslides in different regions of the world. Between early 2016 to mid-2022, there were over 2,200 flood events across the globe and these events were not without effects on human beings and their belongings (Floodlist, 2022). The heavy rainfall overnight from the 20<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> of June, 2022, triggered flash flooding and landslides in parts of Abidjan, Côte

---

<sup>1</sup> For details, see Federal Ministry of Information and Culture. Available at: <https://nigeria.gov.ng/about-nigeria/nigeria-natural-resources/>

d'Ivoire causing the deaths of 6 people, homes and roads were also destroyed. Nigeria, as a country, has similarly experienced extreme climatic conditions, demonstrated by the occurrence of numerous floods in the past. For example, it was reported that from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup> of August, 2021, 7 people died and 74,713 people were displaced by floods across 79 Villages in 16 local government areas of the Adamawa State in the north-eastern part of Nigeria. The hardest-hit areas were Demsa (where 8,332 people were affected), Yola South (7,551), Lamurde (7,725), Yola North (6,235), Girei (6,351) and Maiha (where there were 2 deaths).<sup>2</sup> It becomes obvious that no place in the world is safe from the adverse effects of climate change.

The above mentioned suggests that it is necessary to have an overview of how climatic conditions have changed over the years in Nigeria. An analysis of climatic variation between 1901 and 2020 shows that the annual mean temperature in Nigeria since 1901 has been increasing over the years (Figure 1). Between 1901 to 2020, the average value of the mean temperature was 26.94°C. It is worth noting that the annual mean temperature fluctuated between 26°C and 27°C until 2001, then remained stable at 27°C. This indicates that the new millennium was accompanied by increased temperatures. Indeed, the annual mean temperature increased from 27.04°C in 2001 to 27.37°C in 2020. The temperature increases in Nigeria (1.1°C) over the 105 years was higher than that of the global mean temperature increase (0.74°C) recorded since 1860, when temperature measurements started (Spore, 2008; IPCC, 2007). Indeed, Akpodiogaga-a and Odjugo (2010) notes that, should this trend continue persistently, Nigeria may experience between a middle (2.5°C) and high (4.5°C) risk temperature increase by the year 2100.

The rainfall trend in Nigeria between 1901 and 2020 shows a general decline, as shown in Figure 2. Within 120 years, rainfall in Nigeria dropped by 93.36mm. The pattern of declining rainfall became worse from the early 1970s, and has continued. This period of drastic rainfall decline corresponds with the period of sharp temperature increases. Although there is a general decrease in rainfall in Nigeria, the coastal areas of Warri, Brass and Calabar are experiencing slightly increasing rainfall, as observed by Odjugo (2005; 2007). The increasing rainfall in most coastal areas and decreasing rains in the continental interiors are clear proof of climate change (IPCC 1996; NEST 2003). Odjugo (2005; 2007) observes that the number of rain days dropped by 53 per cent in north-eastern Nigeria and 14 per cent in the Niger-Delta coastal areas. These studies also show that while the areas that

---

<sup>2</sup> For details, see:

<https://floodlist.com/africa/nigeria-floods-adamawa-september-2021>



experience more rainfall maximal is shifting southward, the short dry season – also known as August Break – is being experienced more in July. This is contrary to its normal occurrence in the month of August prior to the 1970s. These are major disruptions in the climatic patterns of Nigeria, showing evidence of a changing climate.

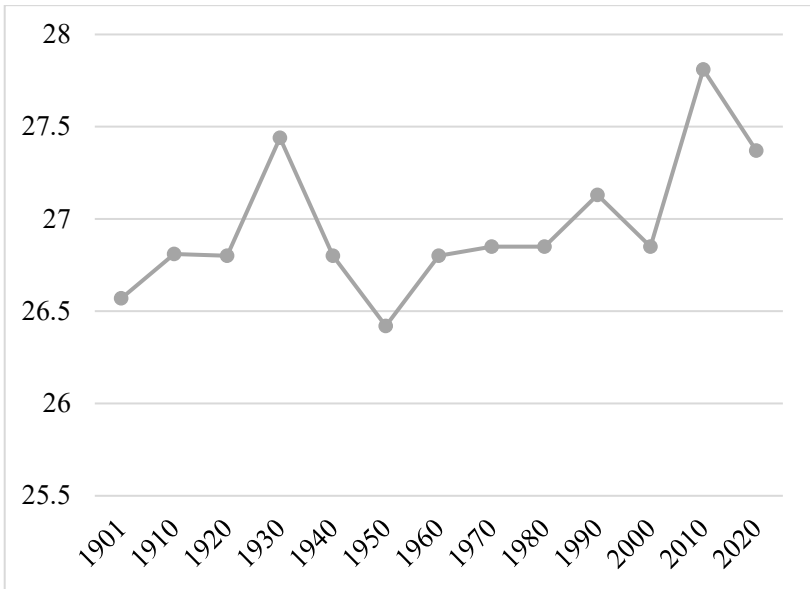


Figure 1: Mean Temperature in Nigeria from 1901 to 2020 (World Bank, 2021)

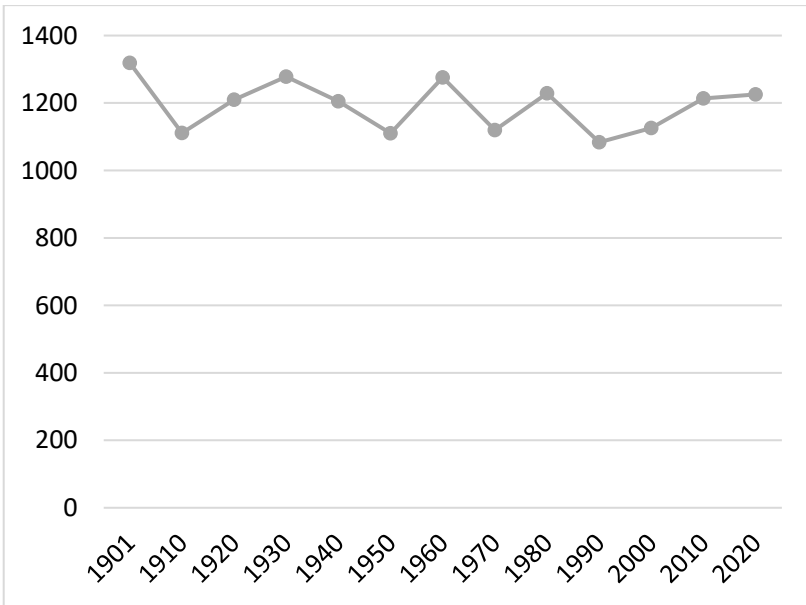


Figure 2: Annual Rainfall Distribution in Nigeria, 1901 to 2020 (World Bank, 2021)

It is important to note that the adverse effect of climate change in Nigeria is experienced on a regional basis (Akande, Costa, Mateu and Henriques, 2017). Nigeria has a tropical climate with two precipitation regimes: low precipitation in the north and high precipitation in parts of the south-west and south-east. This regional variation in precipitation leads to aridity, drought and desertification as well as flooding and erosion in the northern and southern parts of Nigeria respectively. Vulnerability analysis also demonstrates that the northern region tends to experience higher degrees of exposure to climate change than those in the southern part of Nigeria (Federal Ministry of Environment, 2014; Madu, 2016). Whereas the north-east and the north-west are the most vulnerable, the south-west and south-east are relatively less vulnerable than other parts of the country. The higher vulnerability in the north is a result of the combination of rising heat and less rain which has hastened desert encroachment, the loss of the wetlands, and has seen a fast reduction in the amount of surface water, and flora and fauna resources on land (Federal Ministry of Environment, 2014; Ebele and Emodi, 2016; Abdulkadir, Lawal and Muhammad, 2017; Akande et al., 2017). Within southern Nigeria, the South-South (Niger Delta region) is the most vulnerable, due to rising sea-levels, increased precipitation, coastal

erosion and flooding – which have resulted in the displacement of many settlements (Sayne, 2011; Federal Ministry of Environment, 2014; Matemilola, 2019).

Generally, there have been large runoffs and flooding in various places across Nigeria. This situation is as a result of longer durations and intensities of rainfall (Enete, 2014) and it is projected to continue to increase (Haider, 2019). Rainfall in southern areas is expected to rise and rising sea levels are expected to exacerbate flooding and the submersion of coastal lands (Ebele and Emodi, 2016; Akande et al., 2017). Droughts and desertification have also become a constant event in Nigeria, and are expected to continue in northern Nigeria, arising from a decline in precipitation and a rise in temperature (Amanchukwu, Amadi-Ali and Ololube, 2015). Lake Chad and other water sources in the country are drying up, and at risk of disappearing (Dioha and Emodi, 2018).

Climate change is often associated with migration from one region to another. The process of migrants trying to settle in the new region leads to conflict over identity, space and economy between migrants and the already existing population. In some cases, people can integrate with ease while, in some other cases, it has led to the complete overthrow of the existing structure (replacing it with a new one). Akubor (2017) provides a historical account of how people have migrated from Lake Chad as a result of climate change. Available archaeological facts and historical documents suggest that Lake Chad has been affected by climactic changes for the last 20,000 years or so. As far back as 7,000 B.P., climate changes in the region led to, not only substantial alteration in the distribution of surface water but also, a series of revolutionary modifications in the fauna and flora and consequently the conditions of human life. This process has continued till now and has led to what scholars have described as climigration (climigration has been coined as a word to describe this type of displacement). Climigration occurs when a community is no longer in existence.

Akubor (2017) establishes that climigration has led to the present admixture of peoples, tribes and religions in the north-eastern part of Nigeria, which also spreads to the entire northern Nigeria as being witnessed today. Climate change has further led to the migration of, for example, herders moving towards the southern part of the country. This situation has led to a series of conflicts between farmers and herders. There is evidence that says herders have displaced farmers from their communities. The International Centre for Investigative Reporting (2021) reveals that people at Torkula village in the Guma Local Government Area, Benue State, were displaced by herdsman. The majority of the villagers are living presently in one of the unofficial Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps in Benue

State. However, the government insists that these herdsmen, who are displacing people from their villages, are not from Nigeria. Rather, they are from neighbouring countries.<sup>3</sup>

## **Industrialisation and Mineral Exploitation in Nigeria**

Crude oil is a major mineral in Nigeria. As history tells us, oil was discovered in Nigeria in 1956 at Oloibiri by Shell-BP in the Niger Delta region after half a century of exploration. Deposits of crude oil have also been discovered in other parts of the country. For instance, Nigeria's Minister of State for Petroleum Resources claimed that one billion barrels of crude oil have been discovered in the Kolmani River region, between the Bauchi and Gombe States of north-eastern Nigeria's (Jeremiah, 2021). Despite the discovery of crude oil in other parts of Nigeria, the crude-oil exploration is mainly in the Niger Delta region. Indeed, 93 per cent of Nigeria's crude oil is produced in four Niger Delta coastal states: Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers (Ojewale and Le Roux, 2022).

It is generally known that working in the oil sector is a lucrative job in Nigeria. Almost every Nigerian hopes to get a job in one of the big oil companies that are operating in Nigeria like Shell, Total, or Exxon-Mobil, etc. Ironically, there are news and reports that suggest these companies over-exploit their staff through the maximisation of labour and minimisation of earnings. These staff are usually on a contract basis and, as such, they are called contract workers by oil companies to increase labour discharge and reduce earnings. There are accounts of exploitation by some of the contract workers as seen in Box 1 below. Furthermore, there have been cases of several union strikes by the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG), mostly because of workers' welfare issues. As highlighted, there were situations whereby workers were at their jobs for between 10 and 20 years in continuous employment, and their jobs were terminated without payment of terminal benefits.<sup>4</sup>

This information suggests a gross exploitation of staff, most especially of contracts workers in the oil industry in Nigeria. However, those oil companies may claim they are not responsible for the staff exploitation because these staff are not directly employed by their organisations. They are rather being employed by other organisations or contractors who act as consultants on their behalf. Those contractors should be responsible for the

---

<sup>3</sup> See details: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/02/bandits-criminal-herdsmen-are-not-nigerians-fg/>

<sup>4</sup> See: <https://independent.ng/dangers-of-exploiting-oil-workers-skills/>

welfare of contract workers, despite the fact that they are working directly for the oil companies. The emerging question is, “To what extent can contractors take care of contract workers’ welfare?” To answer this question, a lot of further questions will arise: should the contract with the contractor include a welfare package? If the welfare package of the contract workers is part of the contract, is there any mechanism by which the oil companies can monitor its implementation? We should not forget that oil companies use these contractors for staffing to maximise their profit, and there are other incentives too.

It becomes obvious that the problem of staff exploitation within the oil industry in Nigeria is complex, and effective measures are required to eradicate the gross exploitation of staff in the oil companies, as captured in the story in Box 1.

“We work like an elephant and eat like an ant...our salary is about 95,000 naira (US\$257). In Nigeria today, you can’t do anything with that. You can’t pay your children’s school fees. You can’t eat well. You can’t do anything good for yourself”

“If you ask for a pay rise, you will be driven out by the police and your job is finished. You will no more have access to the yard until you sign something saying you will not join a union and you will not ask for a pay rise”.

“They keep on classing us as ad-hoc workers but we have been working continuously for as long as 20 years while being paid less than US\$150 a month”.

“We are exposed to all the hazards. We work in the field. Even with our healthcare insurance provider (HMO), we are not doing well. We are just working to die. When we are sick and go to the clinic, they don’t treat us well because the money they (the contractors) give to the HMOs is too meagre.”

**Box 1: Account of Staff Exploitation in an Oil Company in Nigeria (IndustriALL, 2018)**

Oil spillages are one of the major effects associated with crude oil exploration in Nigeria. Figure 3. shows the number of oil spills recorded in Nigeria between 2015 and March 2021. Sabotage was discovered to be the major cause of oil spillage in Nigeria. Apart from oil spillage, illegal oil

refineries have made crude-oil exploitation occur in Nigeria. Illegal oil refining is essentially siphoning off crude oil from pipelines and redirecting it into tanks, generally in bushes and forests, where the crude oil is boiled at high temperatures to turn it into different petroleum products. According to government estimates, more than \$3 billion worth of oil has been stolen between 2021 and March of 2022, which indirectly affects the availability of funds for other needs like education and health care (Fakomogbon, 2020), since Nigeria operates a mono-economy – this puts more emphasis on crude-oil exportation. Aside from revenue loss, illegal oil refining is always associated with collateral damages. More than 100 people, including men, women and children, were killed in April 2022 following an explosion at an illegal oil refinery in southern Nigeria, on the border of the country's Rivers and Imo States (Owolabi, 2022). At least 25 people, including some children, were killed in an explosion at another illegal refinery in the Rivers State in October of 2021 (Owolabi, 2021).

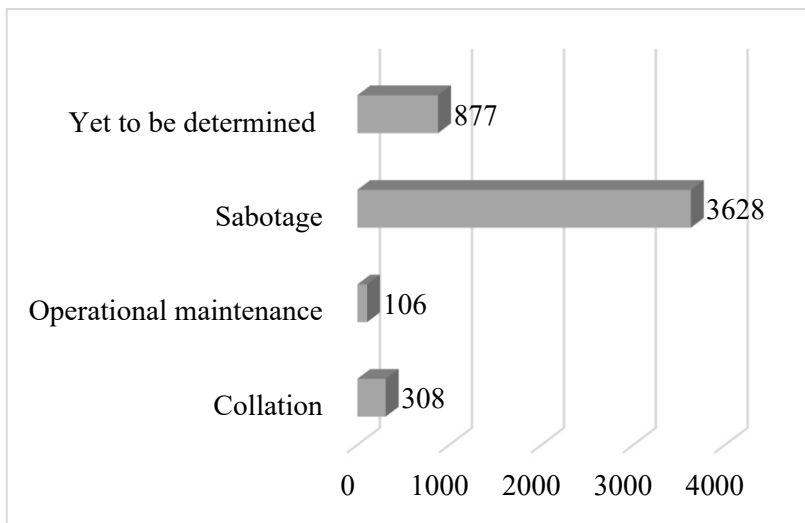


Figure 3: Number of Oil Spillages Recorded in Nigeria, 2015 to 2021 (Premium Times, 2021)

In addition, the adverse effects of oil spillages on physical features, most especially within the Niger Delta region, cannot be overemphasised (see Plate 1). As a result of oil spillage, farmers no longer have enough land for farming in the region because the soil has been polluted. There is no more potable water and all fish in rivers have been killed, making it impossible