



A Value Analysis of Nigerian Politicians' Claim on Awolowo's Political Ideology

By

Olusegun Hakeem Adebumiti

Department of Mass Communication,

Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, Nigeria.

E-mail:hakeemade@gmail.com, +2347030424406

&

Daniel Ofomegbe Ekharefo, PhD.

Department of Mass Communication,

Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, Nigeria.

E-mail:talk2ofomegbe@gmail.com, +2348032682533

Abstract

This study was designed to establish the relationship in terms of value that exists among Nigerian politicians who are laying claim to the political ideology of the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo. Using the phenomenology method, the researchers studied two notable Nigerian politicians in the southwest part of Nigeria (Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Olusegun Rahman Mimiko) and found out that the two politicians campaigned with the cardinal programs of Awolowo when seeking elective position as governors of their states (Lagos and Ondo respectively). The two politicians studied served as poster boys for Awolowo's political ideology popularly referred to as Awoism as they affected the masses in their welfare programs which centred on free education, free healthcare, agricultural development, job creation, urban renewal and development of the judicial system among others. Based on this research findings, the study recommended that Nigerian politicians who are laying claim to the political ideology of the late sage as Awolowo is called should eschew corruption and endeavor to institute a masses driven policy that would lift the people out of poverty by creating an enabling environment for all to work and prosper.

Key words: Agriculture, Awoism, Corruption, Democratic Socialism, Education, Healthcare, Political Ideology

Introduction

Politics is as old as humanity. Without sounding immodest, we can say politics is a way of life. With democracy taking the stage in most countries of the world, the system of running the state has now been left in the hands of politicians who play the game of politics.

Here in Nigeria, politicians since the first republic have evolved around capitalist idea on one hand and socialist on the other. One of the politicians whose idea had stand the test of time is the late Obafemi Awolowo popularly referred to as Awo. Awolowo was known for championing democratic socialism ethos, so he belongs to the left. Though he is dead, there is no doubt that his philosophy is needed especially in this era when most of the countries in Africa (Nigeria inclusive) are faced with the crisis of leadership.

Awolowo was a leader with highly cerebral power and moral fibre whose ideas were masses driven aimed at providing qualitative education to all. His policies on education,





infrastructure and agriculture were well defined and this earned him the trust of the masses. He was very articulate with the need of the country when he challenged the European hegemony that held sway during the pre-colonial period. In his bid to ensure that Nigeria's independence became a reality, he established television and newspaper outfits to propagate the views of the country and highlight the evils of the colonialists.

The television service, Western Nigeria Television (WNTV) provided the foundation for what we now have in the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and his newspaper, Nigerian Tribune is still on the newsstand till the present hour. His programs on education, agriculture, infrastructure to mention a few have stood the test of time with successive governments in Nigeria laying claim to such vision by reintroducing some of his cardinal programs to salvage the challenges facing the masses particularly people living below the average level of wealth. Oyenuga (2017) opines that "education is a necessary condition for sound politics and politicking. As such Awolowo in his pedagogy and in a welfare fashion makes it free through his regime of mental magnitude. Awolowo makes it explicit that man must discipline himself." Oyenuga (2017) further stated:

Education is not only instilling knowledge but awakening the enormous creative potential within man. It enables man to develop his full potentials and contribute to the societies. Politics and education must be complementarily harnessed. It is only a sound mind that can properly grasp the fundamentals dimension of politics and put in place necessary dynamics to solve the problem of the people. The problem of politics is the problem of human beings, thus human beings must be properly positioned, mentally and morally to cope with the challenges. It is worthwhile to note that as remarkable as Awolowo's political philosophy is, the complexity of modern political and economic situation in Nigeria and the well rooted nature of capitalism make democratic socialism apparently difficult to attain and implement.

Awolowo's stand on Education was clear from day one, hence, many Nigerian politicians campaign with the cardinal programs of Chief Awolowo. Today, most especially in Southwest Nigeria, hardly will any politician campaign without mentioning free education, free healthcare and road construction etc. some will even dress like Awolowo, putting on his cap and lenses in their posters.

Oyenuga (2017) while reacting to such development however noted that it is "absurd in Nigeria that money bags leaders who obtain political power through fraudulent means find themselves as public office holders and law makers." According to him, this set of politicians lack intellectual foresight on the dimension of contemporary politics thereby having nothing to offer a nation like Nigeria. They only lay claim to Awolowo's philosophy which is a combination of democracy and socialism aimed at salvaging the masses. Awolowo's brand of socialism is a popular and democratic one.

The Man Obafemi Awolowo

Jeremiah Oyeniyi Obafemi Awolowo was born on March 6, 1909, to Chief David Sopolu Awolowo and his wife Mary Efunyela Awolowo in Ikenne, Remo, in what is now Ogun State of Nigeria. He had his primary school education at St. Savior's School, Ikenne, and at Imo





Wesleyan School, Abeokuta. His education at this early stage was interrupted for several years by the sudden death of his father in April 1920, an event that left him without financial support and compelled him to fetch firewood for sale, and do similar jobs, to support his schooling (obafemiawolowofoundation.com).

He had higher education at Wesley College, Ibadan (a teachers' college) in 1927, and much later at the University of London as an External Student. He was awarded the degree of Bachelor of Commerce (Hons.) and the Bachelor of Laws by the University of London and was called to the Bar by the Honorable Society of the Inner Temple on November 19, 1946.

On 26th December, 1937, Obafemi Awolowo got married to Miss Hannah Idowu Dideolu Adelana. They remained each other's best friend to the end; together they fought for the cause of justice and for the release of their fellow man's mind from ignorance and the freedom on his body from disease. They had 5 children: Olusegun (1939-1963), Omotola, Oluwole, Ayodele and Tokunbo.

After a brief spell as school teacher, stenographer, and *Daily Times* reporter-in training, Obafemi Awolowo set himself up in Ibadan as a produce buyer and a transporter. It was in Ibadan that his political life began to unfold. He served there as secretary of the Nigerian Youth Movement before he went abroad to study Law in Great Britain.

When he returned from Britain, Awolowo formed the cultural group known as "Egbe Omo Oduduwa" in 1949 and a political party, the Action Group, (AG), in 1951 also known as Egbe Afenifere in Western part of Nigeria as part of the Social Program for the emancipation of Yoruba race. His party won the first elections ever conducted in Western Nigeria. As a result of that victory, the AG formed the first elected government in the Western Region and Obafemi Awolowo, now a Chief, became the Leader of Government Business and Minister for Local Government in 1952. In 1954, Awo (as he had come to be fondly known within his party) became the first Premier of the Western Region. His party won the elections again in May 1956 and Awo retained his position as Premier. He voluntarily gave up that position when, on December 12, 1959, he was elected into the House of Representatives where he became the Leader of Opposition in Nigeria's central legislature.

He stood up stoutly against mediocrity and drift in government, and began to define alternative channels along which Nigeria's government should go. His own concept of a Nigerian nation was probably too advanced for his opponents, who began to see the Awolowo-led opposition as a major threat. Following a trial for treasonable felony, he was jailed for 10 years in September 1963.

By July 1966, Nigeria's problems had become so intractable that disintegration of the country seemed inevitable. A new Federal Military Government promptly opened the gates of Calabar Prison, brought Awolowo out and appointed him as a minister to take charge of the country's treasury and to provide political support as Vice Chairman in the Federal administration. In those two roles, he was one of the major architects of Nigeria's victory over secession in the 30-month Civil War. When the war ended, Awo waited just long enough to give Nigeria a National Development Plan; as soon as the Plan was completed, he resigned from the government, although, to his last day, he remained grateful to the man who gave him an opportunity to serve his country.



When Nigeria's Armed Forces lifted the ban on civilian participation in politics in September 1978, Nigerians who believed in Awo's political ideas and principles joined him in forming the Unity Party of Nigeria which presented Nigeria with a dynamic program of socio-economic change along democratic socialist lines. Awo led the party until it was banned, along with Nigeria's other political parties, during the military take-over towards the end of 1983. Chief Awolowo was a great political thinker who committed many of his thoughts to writing. From 1946, he had started a long career in political writing, which flourished whether he was in freedom or in detention, whether he was in power or out of it. It continued to flourish till the very end of his life.

Chief Awolowo's greatest achievements resulted from the foresight, clear sense of direction and sheer competence that he brought into government. At the beginning of his career in government, Chief Awolowo quickly reformed the local government system of the Western region and took revolutionary steps to 'Nigerianise' and improve the Western Nigeria Civil Service. An extremely good judge of men's qualities, he had also put together a very efficient team of ministers. Having taken those steps, he was set to achieve within five (5) years a string of "Firsts" in the history of Africa. Between 1954 and 1959, his government:

- a. evolved, and was served by, the most efficient Civil Service in Black Africa;
- b. introduced and successfully implemented the first Free Primary Education programme in Africa;
- c. introduced and successfully managed the first Free Medical Service programme in Nigeria - for children up to the age of 18;
- d. established the first Television Station in Africa;
- e. built the Liberty Stadium, the first such modern sports facility in Nigeria;
- f. introduced and successfully implemented the first minimum wage policy in Nigeria and actually paid to Western Nigerians from October 1954 a minimum wage that was double the amount paid to workers of the same level in some other parts of Nigeria;
- g. set up Nigeria's first industrial complex at Ikeja;
- h. set up Nigeria's first commercial Housing Estates at Ikeja and Bodija, Ibadan.

Besides these, Chief Awolowo's government had:

- i. laid the foundation for development in commerce and industry by creating an efficient Western Nigeria Development Corporation, the ancestor of the present-day O'dua Investment Company;
- j. taken successful bold steps to revolutionize the production and marketing of cocoa by farmers in Western Nigeria; and
- k. created the infrastructure for rural development by promoting 900 cooperative societies in about three (3) years and by providing within five (5) years almost 10 times as many miles of road as he inherited from the British administration.



There is a not-so-visible achievement arising from all these. By making election promises and fulfilling them within a few years, Awo had led his region to evolve a culture that demands and evaluates a socio economic program from those who seek to govern them. In the Federal government, Awo managed the finances of Nigeria so shrewdly and so competently that the Federal Government successfully waged an expensive 30-month war against secession without resorting to foreign loans and without compromising its sovereignty (obafemiawolowofoundation.com).

In recognition of his invaluable service to Nigeria, he was given the highest honor in the land, the Grand Commander of the Order of the Federal Republic (GCFR) in 1982. He was also awarded the Grand Band of the Order of the Star of Africa by the Republic of Liberia in 1968, and made Grand-Officer de l'Ordre National du Lion, Republique du Senegal, in 1972. He published many books and still had some in the press at the time of his transition. Among his best-known works are: *Path to Nigerian Freedom* (1947); *Awo - an autobiography* (1960); *Thoughts on the Nigerian Constitution* (1966) and *The People's Republic* (1968).

Others are *The Strategy and Tactics of the People's Republic* (1970); *The Problems of Africa: The need for ideological reappraisal* (1977); *Adventures in Power Book 1: My March through Prison* (1985). He had planned to launch Book 2 entitled *The Travails of Democracy and the Rule of Law* on 6th June 1987. The oldest privately owned newspaper in Nigeria, the *Nigerian Tribune*, and two other newspapers (the weekly *Sunday Tribune* and *Irohin Yoruba*) were founded and owned by Chief Obafemi Awolowo.

This study examined the relationship between Nigerian politicians particularly in Southwest and Awolowo's political philosophy. It intends to carry out a value analysis of their claims on the political idiosyncrasies of the late sage who was born in 1909 and died in 1987.

X-raying Awolowo's Political Philosophy

Chief Jeremiah Obafemi Awolowo (1909 – 1987) was one of the foremost Nigerian nationalists and brilliant statesman who fought selflessly to put an end to colonial rule in the country.

Ayila (2009, p.84) opines that the best Awolowo could be remembered for was “integrity, ardent nationalism, principled and virile opposition and dogged federalist convictions. Awolowo believed in an egalitarian society where everyone is entitled to free education and healthcare. His free education system stood the test of time up till the 21st century, politicians in Nigeria still allude to his philosophy on education.”

He fought the colonialists with every will he had, hence, he established the first television station in Nigeria, the Western Nigeria Television (WNTV) and a vibrant newspaper, *Nigeria Tribune* which has stood the course of time. His media outfit put pressure on the colonialists to see reason for an independent Nigeria. It is important to state here that Awolowo operated both in a colonial and post-colonial Nigeria. He dedicated his material and mental power in ending the evils of colonialism and charting the way for an independent Nigeria, during a period when foreign policy, ideology and economic system were super-imposed on the African landscape.

On corruption, he intellectually challenged the web of corruption in the country and the extremism of the power cabal who were desperately concerned with the quest for power. As opined by Oguejiofor (2001):





In a constant situation of political instability and social uncertainty, those who are in influential official positions take it as their chance to secure their future and that of their hangers-on. The capacity of such leaders for corruption is almost unlimited. This further makes the whole sociopolitical edifice shaky. Those who come next have even more selfish reasons to be dishonest... leadership becomes a far cry from the service it should be and being self-serving, arrogant and unscrupulous constitutes ironically a cog in the wheel of progress.

Awolowo was faced with a lot of challenges ranging from political instability, endemic corruption, and series of military takeover of government to having to relate with leaders who were not prepared for the function of government. Awolowo was not only a leader, he was the leader of opposition in the parliament and his party, the Action Group constituted an oppositional vanguard. However, the inordinate quest for power, passion for corruption and politics of cultural sub-nationalism also contributed to the problems faced by Awolowo in the post-colonial era.

From the foregoing, it became difficult for Nigerian leaders to develop the state and its institutions with a view to making them equal to the need of a post-colonial civilization. In fact, the leaders lacked the socio-political and material will which could ensure the institutionalization of a program of radical and structural development or change, the aim of which would be to synchronize the needs and interests of the people with the state. States and politics became avenues for amassing wealth and party politics became tense and fierce.

However, Chief Obafemi Awolowo rose to the occasion to challenge these ills as is evident in his literary works: *Path to Nigerian Freedom*, *The People's Republic*, and *Thoughts on the Nigerian Constitution* etc. He instituted full free primary education for all; introduction of full farm settlement program to drive Agricultural development thereby ensuring food security as well as road and infrastructure development. The educational program also heralded lasting legacies with the distribution of free books, establishment of teachers' training colleges, building of modern schools etc.

Proceeds from Agriculture particularly sales from Cocoa were used to build the first skyscraper in Nigeria, the Cocoa Building, Universities, Teaching Hospitals as well as many laudable projects. These programs were a pointer to Awolowo's political philosophy which is well-grounded in social democratic ideology. Human beings were pivotal to Awolowo's Political Philosophy. For him, the wellbeing of man serves as the ideological compass of his political thinking. Awolowo (1961) noted:

One of my duties to the state is to preserve its corporate existence against internal disorder and external aggression and to cater for their welfare and promote their happiness. The general well-being of the citizens depends on objective and subjective factors. He needs a healthy body, sound and cultivated mind, natural, conventional and legal rights.

What Awolowo seems to be saying in the above quote is that a good leader must be sensible and sensitive. He or she must show sympathy and empathy with the citizens. The citizen's wellbeing must be the item on the lists of his or her priorities. This wellbeing is not



judged by material dividend or prosperity alone. It is physical and psychical; material and mental and good government must provide conducive environment to enhance this. Awolowo (1977) again said:

The brain of a man is developed by education (secular and religious) and his body by physical exercise, good and adequate food, comfort and self-respect of simple, neat clothing and shelter.

The above points to the fact that a good government must ensure adequate, physical and spiritual development of the people in order for them to be free. They must be free within the limit and scope of the law but this does not mean all men are qualified to lead. That man is wealthy does not qualify him for leadership. A leader must be spiritually inclined to control, the intractable lust of the flesh. Awolowo (1961) added:

The terrestrial part of man is inherently selfish, tyrannical and corruptible. The ethereal part of him, that is the soul, is pure, just incorruptible, uplifting and ennobling. Consequently, man is constantly subjected to internal conflict in which either the body or soul must win in the short run, victory may go to the former but in the long run to the latter...

What the late sage is simply alluding to here is that man who must lead needs strong spiritual traits to function in the realm of power. According to Oyenuga (2017), the purpose of politics is first and last the material wellbeing of man but man himself and even the government must create the constitutional latitude for the spiritual enlightenment of man. This issue of spiritual knowhow is the crux of the matter in Awo's "The Regime of Mental Magnitude". This theory is concerned with man's ability to suppress the human desire that set aside selfish interest and crass materialism. Importantly, the theory harps on good governance, transparency, accountability, social justice, equity and selflessness (Aboluwodi, 2012, p.2).

The belief of Awo is that the suppression of one's ego for the benefit of the soul is highly necessary. That is why he advocated the development of self-discipline and that leaders should maintain a high degree of self-control. A sincere political leader must enter the regime of mental magnitude properly and eminently equipped with a considerable measure of intellectual comprehension and cognition insight and spiritual illumination (Anele, 2014).

For such a leader, overcoming tyranny of the flesh and attraction of crass materialism is the way to go. "Of course, the concept of mental magnitude holds reason as the unerring guide to purposeful action and self-discipline as an essential requirement for meaningful social change" (Omoboriowo, 1982, p.46).

A leader must attain a high level of moral and mental magnitude. Such a leader must be concerned with the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of the people (Awolowo, 1961, p.173). Today, politics has assumed a very dangerous dimension in Nigeria, but for Awolowo, politics is a channel to solidify man on a solid material base and further the welfare of humanity. Hence, the political destiny of any nation must not be entrusted into the hands of untrusted, untested and uninformed men. This is also noted in our private life, before we entrust our personal or business affairs to someone, we must take the pain to inquire into his qualifications to determine the person's competence and character. Such competence and character must of necessity be examined in the full glare of public limelight. This is because what is at stake is the





welfare of the community or nation. Politics is not a dirty game. “Whether the game of politics is clean or dirty depends wholly and solely on the manner in which a particular set of politicians play it” (Awolowo, 1961, p.177)

From the aforementioned narratives about Awolowo’s view on human beings, politics and freedom, one could aptly deduce that politics in a democratic society is people oriented. It is now left with the people to entrust the management of their affairs to one or more of the parties. When this is done, the party or parties become the government and the trustees of the people, hence, they must administer the trust with absolute prudence, probity and public spiritedness.

On freedom, it is Awolowo’s resolve that the citizen of a country enjoys freedom when he or she is free to say and do what he likes subject to laws enacted by the freely enacted parliament or the popular law making body of the land. There is no doubt that the freedom of a people depends on the type of government in power. Therefore, in a democracy and normal circumstances, the freedom of a country connotes the freedom of its individual citizen. Thus, political freedom is useless when it does not go hand in hand with economic freedom.

According to the late sage, it is a fallacy to assume that the subjection of a country has ended simply because it is politically free. For him, when a country is still being manipulated by neo-colonial forces and strategy such country is not free. Freedom at individual level transcends freedom of speech. As listed by Awolowo; freedom from British rule, freedom from ignorance, freedom from disease and freedom from want (Awolowo, 1987, p.14). Freedom of man equally covers the freedom to liquidate the frontier of ignorance that is freedom to be educated. Education to Awolowo as rightly quoted by Bolanle Awe “Is the process of physical and mental culture whereby a man’s personality is developed to the fullest” (Awe, 2007).

Awolowo’s Ideas on Democratic Socialism

Oyenuga (2017) posits that Obafemi Awolowo believes the fact that the best political system or ideal for humanity is democratic socialism. His belief was that it is established on the principles of the well-being of the individuals and brotherhood among all men. The foundational concept of socialism as Obafemi Awolowo highlights is “from each according to his ability and to each according to his need.” (Awolowo, 1977, p.18).

The socialist ideals of Obafemi Awolowo are clearly expressed in three of his books. *The People’s Republic*, *The Strategy and Tactics of the People’s Republic* and *Problems of Africa*. For Awo, his firm belief is that only a socialist mode of production can salvage an unstable economy as that of Nigeria.

Babatope (1985, p. 22) enumerates Awo’s socialist’s ideal to include that socialism must re-order the lives of the people in such a way that everyone feels happy to belong to the nation. That it must guarantee the basic necessities of life for all Nigerians and making it possible for all citizens to have equal opportunity of development. That the theory of violence must be rejected and that free education at all levels is a right not a privilege.

Awolowo identified two classes of socialism i.e. revolutionary socialism and democratic socialism. He lists the aim of his socialist drive to include social justice, equal opportunity for all, respect for human dignity and happiness of all. His opinion about revolutionary socialism involves a radical overturning of an oppressive system through the instrument of force. The revolutionary socialist believes that the political power of the state together with the economic



power of the capitalists should be hijacked by violent means and replaced by the dictatorship of the proletariat (Oyenuga, 2017).

On the other hand, the democratic socialist has a different ideal. The democratic socialist has a belief that the ends of socialism can be attained by democratic means. The essence of democracy, however, is the consent of the majority which shall be expressed freely and without any form of coercion. Since the corner stone of socialism is the conversion of private ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, to public ownership it follows that under democratic socialism, such conversion cannot be done in one fell- swoop. It also follows that every conversion shall be accompanied by the payment of fair compensation. (Awolowo, 1951, p.62).

A thorough reading of this extract shows that democracy is deployed as an instrument to enthrone socialist government. Socialism is a political and economic theory which advocates that the means of production, distribution and exchange should be owned or regulated by the community as a whole. It is characterized by public ownership and centralized planning of all major industries. It is a theory or system of social organization that advocates the vesting of the ownership and control of the means of production and distribution of capital, land etc. in the community as a whole (Williams, 2013, p.34).

Oyenuga (2017) summarizes Awo's stand on democratic socialism as one with the belief that education will be free from kindergarten to university, unemployment will be abolished. A scheme for social insurance will be introduced and old age pension will be paid. It is important to note that in Awolowo's democratic socialism, the profit motive is not fully suppressed because the public and private sectors exist side by side. However, planning is done by a popularly elected government which prioritizes the welfare of individuals.

Awo's view on Religion and Politics

Karl Marx, a revolutionary socialist drew a thick line between religion and socialism, but Chief Awolowo exposes the inter-play of the two. His belief was that religion and politics are compatible and complementary. For him, religion emphasizes moral ideals that give it a human face. The best in politics derives from and is firmly rooted in religious ideals (Oyenuga, 2017). Since religion teaches love which is at the height of peaceful co-existence, it institutionalizes fundamental human rights and tolerance. Hence, in Awo's opinion a good knowledge of religion is crucial for peaceful co-existence. According to such belief, nothing is politically right which is morally wrong. Thus, religion and morality intersect. Religion helps to promote divine consciousness and generate a spiritual sensibility that helps to warn a leader against corruption and allied evils (Oyenuga, 2017).

Value Theory – A Framework of Analysis

It is pertinent to state that we are living at a time in history when discussions about values are taking the front burner across the world. For the purpose of this study, the researcher looks at value theory as explained by Professor Wlodek Rabinowicz in his article, "Research program: Value Theory", where he divided philosophical discussions of value into two forms, namely, conceptual issues and substantial issues. Aside Rabinowicz, some of the foremost scholars who wrote on value include, G. E. Moore in 1903, Franz Brentano in 1889, A. C. Ewing in 1948, and T. M. Scanlon in 1998.





The most fundamental conceptual question about value is how, if at all, the concept of value is to be analyzed. What is it for something to be valuable? So, for something to be adjudged valuable, it must be an appropriate object of a favorable attitude or response.

According to Rabinowicz (2007), the characteristic feature of this proposal is that the reasons for favoring are to be found in the properties that make the object valuable and not in its value itself. In this sense, the 'buck' is being passed from value to value-making properties. He established that one of the goals of the program is to further examine the buck-passing account of value and to assess its viability. Thus, we can conclude that the late sage, Awolowo was during his lifetime and the afterwards valued for his favorable attitudes to humanity which are encapsulated in his socio-democratic programs.

Another assumption about value theory as established by Rabinowicz is that it is defined in terms of the stance that ought to be taken towards an object. That it is fitting to have a certain attitude, that there are reasons to have it, or that the attitude in question is appropriate or called for. However, according to the influential consequentialist view of ethics, the fundamental ethical norm prescribes (some form of) value maximization. Thus, for a consequentialist, normative claims are secondary to claims about value. Here, we can situate that Chief Awolowo has some certain attitudes which distinguished him from other politicians in the country. For instance, Awolowo was so brilliant that even the General Yakubu Gowon-led administration released him from prison and appointed him the Minister of Finance, and was later responsible for how Nigeria managed her resources shrewdly during the 30-month civil war.

The value theory also talked about what constitutes value judgements. It raised concerns as to if such judgements have truth-values? Are they either true or false? Or should they instead be interpreted as mere expressions of approval and disapproval, or as imperatives or recommendations of some sort, which lack truth value? Answers to such questions according to Rabinowicz are not only of purely philosophical interest. They have relevance for moral education, for the ways to conduct moral and political debates, for propaganda etc. The late sage, Awolowo exerted these qualities a lot by investing in education, human capacity development, political ideas and the use of propaganda as seen in the establishment of the Western Nigeria Television (WNTV) which was used to put pressure on the British colonialist at the height of Nigeria's quest for independence.

On substantive issues, Rabinowicz (2007) noted that there is really just one fundamental substantive question about value: what values do things actually have? Some scholars are of the view that only one sort of thing has value. Others (pluralists) however claimed that more than one sort of thing has value. Another influential position is that of welfarism, which takes all value to be determined by the distribution of welfare among individuals. This no doubt was the crux of Awolowo's socio-democratic principles which was geared towards taking care of the welfare of the masses. Awolowo introduced free education in all the states of the western region thereby ensuring that a large amount of the people of western Nigeria got educated. Not only that, he introduced and successfully managed the first Free Medical Service program in Nigeria for children up to the age of 18, he introduced low cost housing for civil servants and increased their minimum wage. In addition, Awolowo created the first industrial hub in Ikeja and





an agricultural policy that ensured Cocoa became the cash cow in Western Nigeria which proceeds were used for infrastructure development.

Methodology

The methodology employed for this study is phenomenology approach which measures the certain phenomenon in an individual. Here, the phenomenon to be discussed is Chief Obafemi Awolowo. This approach has been employed to gauge the relationship between politicians in Nigeria most especially in the southwest who have laid claim to the political philosophy of the late sage as Awolowo is popularly referred to. These politicians are known for using Awolowo's cardinal programs (free education, free healthcare, improved agriculture drive etc.) to campaign for votes whenever election presents itself. These politicians are also noted for their dressing which is aimed at mimicking Awolowo style of dress. They wear his type of cap, his lenses and even use his pictures on their posters during electioneering campaigns. Most of them would even raise the victory sign (Two fingers) up whenever they are being cheered by their supporters in public gathering, an identity known with the late sage whenever he was reacting to cheers from his supporters.

Thus, the researcher purposively selected two politicians in the southwest who ruled for two terms of Eight years since the return of Nigeria to democratic governance in 1999. The Two politicians are former Lagos state governor, Bola Ahmed Tinubu who ruled between 1999 and 2007 and former Ondo state governor, Olusegun Rahman Mimiko who ruled between 2009 and 2017.

a. Bola Ahmed Tinubu

Born in Lagos on March 29, 1952, to the illustrious Tinubu family of Lagos State, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu ruled Lagos state between 1999 and 2007. Before then, he had been voted to represent Lagos central in the Senate during the third republic before it was aborted by the military.

Asiwaju as he is fondly called by his supporters is one of the many politicians in southwest Nigeria today who have imbibed the lifestyle and philosophy of late Chief Obafemi Awolowo. Up till today, he wears a replica of the Awolowo glasses and when he assumed office in 1999 as governor of Lagos state, he drew up a clear and focused "Action Plan" for the state in conjunction with critical stakeholders including the organized private sector, civil society groups and the public service. The result was the evolution of the Ten-point agenda focusing on Education, Health care, Job creation/poverty alleviation, Power and water supply, Public transportation/Traffic management, Physical Planning/Environmental renewal, Infrastructure renewal, Justice/Law and order, Food security and public sector reforms (www.bolatinubucolloquium.com).

A close look at Tinubu's Ten-point agenda mentioned above revealed the established ideology of Socio-Democratic school of thought as envisioned by Chief Awolowo. When you look at education, Awolowo introduced in the western region of Nigeria what has now become free and compulsory education which every politician in the region now lay claim to. Tinubu knew this quite alright when he made education the first thing of focus on his Ten-point agenda. He invested heavily in infrastructure which was geared towards adding value to the state-owned institutions. Under him, there were rehabilitation of primary and secondary schools in all local



governments of the state through the Schools Rehabilitation Program, massive construction of school furniture and equipping of laboratories; provision of free education in all public primary and secondary schools including payment of WAEC/NECO fees as well as all internal examination fees to ensure that indigent children do not drop out of school (www.bolatinubucolloquim.com).

On health care, Tinubu had a great scorecard just like the late Awolowo. The late sage (Awolowo) was renowned for the introduction of free medical services which covered for children up to age 18. He invested in infrastructure which caters for the health needs of the people. For Tinubu, he upgraded buildings and facilities at the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH) to world class grade; expansion and rehabilitation of old General Hospitals and building of new General Hospitals in the state. He did not stop at that, he made provision of free health services for children under 12, the aged above 60 and free ante-natal care for women; Free eye screening, eye treatment, eye surgery and provision of free eye glasses popularly known as 'jigi Bola', free treatment for malaria, tuberculosis and leprosy, free Limb Deformity Corrective Surgery, free Cleft-Lip Corrective Surgery and the introduction of the Quarterly Eko Health Missions that provides free medical services including free heart surgeries to local communities (www.bolatinubucolloquim.com).

Awolowo was known for job creation and poverty alleviation which were evident in the creation of farm settlements, employment of teachers, and increasing workers minimum wage among others. Tinubu was also active in that direction as job creation and poverty alleviation formed part of his Ten-point agenda. In order to achieve this, he created 37 new Local Development Council Areas bringing the total number of Local Government Areas in the state to 57, thus bringing governance to the grassroots. This no doubt helped in reducing poverty and creating jobs as governance was brought closer to the masses.

On Power and Water supply, Tinubu just like Awolowo challenged the government at the center on innovativeness by initiating in spite of stiff opposition from the federal government, the first successful Independent Power Project (IPP) by any state government generating 260MW of electricity from Ikorodu to the National Grid. He constructed micro water works at Onikan, Ikeja, Iwaya, Igando, Oworonsoki, Atan, Bariga, Isolo, Shomolu and Iponri among others to improve water supply in Lagos state (www.bolatinubucolloquium.com). As rightly captured by the bolatinubucolloquium.com:

Tinubu's visionary administration re-structured the machinery of government creating new ministries such as Housing, Physical Planning Sports and Youth Development as well as Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation for more effective policy implementation. Asiwaju Tinubu brought seasoned and accomplished technocrats into government as Commissioners and Special Advisers in their areas of expertise. Through meticulous planning and disciplined implementation, the Asiwaju Tinubu Administration grew the budget size of Lagos State from N14.200 billion in 1999 to N240.866 billion in 2007. It is significant that at no time under Tinubu's stewardship did budget implementation performance fall below 60%. In a similar vein, the Tinubu Administration



consistently maintained an annual budgetary ratio of at least 60-40% in favor of Capital over Recurrent expenditure to ensure rapid infrastructure development.

It is safe to say that Awolowo's legacies based on socio-democratic ethos are today being sustained by politicians who believed in his ideology. For politicians like Tinubu which the researcher has analyzed above, sustaining Awolowo's vision goes beyond mere lip service i.e. pre-election mantra but the need to follow these ideas with Action Plans that would endear the people towards the government and also provide an avenue for sustainable growth and development.

b. Olusegun Rahman Mimiko

Dr. Olusegun Rahman Mimiko was born on Saturday 3rd day of October 1954 in Ondo, Ondo State of Nigeria. His father was late Pa Atiku Bamidele Mimiko. Dr. Mimiko's mother was late Madam Muinat Mimiko (www.ekimogundescendant.org).

Mimiko's political journey began while at the University of Ife, a University later named after Obafemi Awolowo. At Ife, Mimiko was a member of the Students' Representatives Council (Parliament). His love for Chief Awolowo knew no bound, as Mimiko sought political expression and identity in Obafemi Awolowo's Unity Part of Nigeria during the second republic immediately after his National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). His political philosophy has been that of socio-democratic principle as envisioned by the late sage (Awolowo). Up till the present, Mimiko wears the Awolowo cap to show his unalloyed alliance to the Awo school of thought. During Mimiko's quest to become the Governor of Ondo state, in 2007, he contested under the Labour Party, a party formed within four (4) months to the election and won. On the logo of the party is a Father, Mother and Child, a pointer to a welfare driven political party and this no doubt endeared him to the populace who accepted the party as their own. When Mimiko became governor after a protracted case in court for 22 months, he christened his programs for the people of Ondo state "Caring Heart", an acronym which stands for Education, Urban Renewal, Agriculture, Healthcare, and Roads Construction among others.

On Educational reforms, just like Awolowo, Mimiko initiated an educational intervention policy which started with introduction of the 5Is formula meaning Incentive, Inspection, Institutional Management, Infrastructure development and ICT development. He also established the Quality Education Assurance Agency as an autonomous institution with the task of discharging supervisory duties in schools. The Mimiko administration also invested heavily in the provision of free education, free shuttle buses for transporting pupils in primary schools and students in secondary schools free of charge (The Hope Newspaper, 2015), the renovation of over 300 schools including the merging of some primary schools which birthed the Caring Heart Mega primary schools, a major overhaul of the secondary and tertiary institutions, and the creation of University of Medical Sciences, the first in western sub-Saharan Africa.

The Hope Newspaper (2015) quoted Mimiko as saying, "The Mega School and free shuttle bus concepts were all targeted at bridging the gap between the children of the rich and the poor so that the poor can have a sense of belonging in the society".

Tokunbo Awolowo-Dosunmu, the last child of Chief Obafemi Awolowo and former Nigerian ambassador to the Netherlands described Mimiko's intervention in Education as going



a step further of the legacies of Awolowo, particularly in the area of democratizing access to education (The Nation Nigeria, 2017). Former presidential candidate, Tunde Bakare also described the Mega school initiative as reminiscent of the late Chief Awolowo's educational development legacy, which fast-tracked the development of the South Western states in the country.

Mimiko's urban renewal drive was also people centered though with some challenges as something had to give way for the other. He outlawed the prevalent roadside sale of vehicles by building an auto mart station tagged the "Cotonou of Ondo". He removed hundreds of street traders, public transporters and artisans from the main roads by providing neighborhood markets, Motor Park and mechanic village for them. Mimiko's neighborhood markets are replicated in other major towns of the state including Okitpupa, Ondo, Ikare and Owo.

His urban renewal projects also include low income housing, rebuilding of dilapidated schools, revival of the comatose agricultural farm settlements, improved intra and inter-city transportation, skill acquisitions for unemployed youths, citywide infrastructure development, and urban aesthetics. Another urban renewal drive in Akure, the state capital was the construction of the Dome and International Conference Centre, popularly called 'The Dome'. A 7000 capacity event center which sits on a 36.05-hectare of land, the presence of the International Conference center later generated a wave of urban renewal activities in the city. The Akure shopping mall which houses Shoprite and Filmhouse Cinemas (West Africa) is a stone throw from 'The Dome'.

Mimiko also ventured into roads construction which complemented the urban renewal drive. He reconstructed strategic roads which include the ever congested 35-year old Oba Adesida road, and the ancestral Arakale road, noted for sacred shrines. His administration expanded, beautified, and electrified the Oba Adesida and Arakale roads among others. Those whose houses were demolished to pave way for roads construction were adequately compensated to the tune of N1billion.

Agriculture is one of the key sectors that the late sage, Awolowo invested and the results were phenomenal Mimiko like every other politician in the south west promised to prioritize Agriculture when elected. This the Mimiko administration pursued from the onset when in 2009, the administration established the Ondo State Wealth Creation Agency (WECA) in response to the quest for economic diversification and the creation of employment in areas relating to Agriculture and Food Security. His administration also launched the Profarmers and Agropreneurs Sustainable Scheme (PASS). Under the scheme, young graduates are assigned to the state's Agro Business Cities and other units under WECA for training and practical knowledge. WECA re-modelled the farm settlement concept, introduced by Pa Awolowo under the old Western Region, and established four modern farm settlements called Agro Business Cities (ABCs) in three senatorial districts of the state. Agricultural practices carried out in the Agro business cities include poultry, fishery, cattle rearing, arable farming, sericulture, and apiculture (Tribune Online, 2016). The Mimiko administration also established the Cocoa Revolution Project (CRP) - a pilot land restoration program to aid farmers in the development of skills needed to produce premium cocoa beans. The project began with the rehabilitation of the





1,744 hectares Oda Cocoa Plantation in the Akure South area and the Cocoa Catalytic Industry, Idanre (Vanguard, 2015).

On health, the Mimiko government kicked off his administration by establishing the Mother and Child Hospital in his first 100 days in office. The specialized hospital was to cater for the health needs of mothers and children. The program covers free treatment and drugs for children below age five while pregnant women were treated free of charge. Pregnant women who were delivered through caesarian operations were also treated free of charge. A follow up to this was the establishment of the Abiye Safe Motherhood program which ensures that traditional birth attendants in the state refer their patients to the government health facilities in exchange for monetary value. Mimiko didn't stop at that, he established specialized hospitals called Trauma center and Kidney care center at the medical village in Ondo town to cater for surgical and kidney related cases. In order to institutionalize his various interventions in health, he established the first University of Medical Sciences in Nigeria (Adebumiti, 2016) which is now serving as training ground for prospective medical practitioners in the state and beyond.

It is instructive to note that Mimiko, a medical doctor turned politician democratized the health sector with a view to alleviating the suffering of the people by subsidizing the cost of healthcare. This he did as Commissioner for Health in the state before becoming the governor and through his private clinic, MONA clinic located in his country home, Ondo (Obafemi, 2017).

The above achievements of Mimiko in socio-democratic philosophy has again brought to the fore the phenomenology of Chief Obafemi Awolowo. The reason being the fact that the two politicians (Tinubu and Mimiko) studied under this methodology are both students of the Awolowo political school of thought. They reinforced the belief that the cardinal programs introduced by the late sage at the twilight of Nigeria's democratic governance most especially in the western region have stood the test of time with their reintroduction of those programs even though they improved on them in line with the present need and reality.

Conclusion

The foremost leaders of the Nigerian state from the pre and post-colonial eras were people with great minds who sacrificed a lot for the development of the country. The late Chief Obafemi Awolowo was no doubt one of them as his contributions to the growth of the Nigerian state were far reaching and effective. This is why the philosophy and ideas of late Awolowo was christened Awoism by his followers. Awoism, a nomenclature used to express the political leanings, ideology and biases of Chief Awolowo emerged at the twilight of his death in the late 1980 and his followers still used the term to refer to themselves till the present. Awolowo's political ideology was democratic socialism which was about the general welfare of the masses. His cardinal programs (free education and healthcare etc.) while he was premier of the western region when Nigeria was still running a regional government in the 1960s ensured that the majority of people in the southwest geopolitical zone of the Nigeria became more educated than the rest of the other zones.

Though, it may be difficult to implement all the ideas of Awolowo in the Nigerian capitalist setting, there are key welfare elements therein that can be integrated into the capitalist structure in the country. This is why some politicians in the southwest have been laying claim to Awolowo's political ideology in order to win support of the masses thus winning elections based



on the Awolowo's cardinal programs of free education, free healthcare, agriculture etc. This set of politicians go as far as using Awolowo's picture on their campaign posters in order to get the masses to support them because Awolowo was an enigma within their communities.

However, only few of them have been able to deliver good governance to the people as Awolowo did. Majority of them are only known for using his name and picture to get votes and then abandon the masses. This is what is responsible for the growing index of poverty among the people as politicians in recent times have been after their personal and selfish interests by being corrupt. Only few of them have been able to sustain the Awoism ideology of empowering the masses. This is what the researchers highlighted in this paper by bringing to the fore two notable politicians in the southwest (as discussed in the methodology) who were known for upholding democratic socialism ideologies and this no doubt endeared them to the masses. They got re-elected without strict opposition when the opportunity presented itself because of the people oriented programs the masses enjoyed during their first tenure.

References

- Adebumiti, O. H. (2016). Behold unto us a Varsity is born. *The Precision NG*. Retrieved from <http://theprecisionng.com/2016/07/behold-unto-us-varsity-is-born.html>, May 9, 2020.
- Akinjide, A. (2012). *The Philosophical Import of Obafemi Awolowo's Theory of Mental Magnitude of Ojo Bamgbelu Path to Nigerian Development*. Akure: Zaku Press.
- Anele, P. (2014). "Politics and Morality in Nigeria: "A Critical Analysis" *Nigerian Vanguard*, November 14, 2010.
- Awolowo, O. (1951). "Politics and Religion" A lecture given to students at the Adventist college of West Africa, Ilishan Remo.
- Awolowo, O. (1961). *Philosophy for Independent Nigeria*. A lecture delivered to Nigerian Students of Conway Hall, London.
- Awolowo, O. (1968). *The peoples Republic*. Ibadan: Oxford University Press.
- Awolowo, O. (1976). *Voice of Reason*. Akure: Fagbamigbe Press
- Awolowo, O. (1977). *The problem of Africa: The Need for Ideological Re-appraisal* Ibadan: Macmillan Educational Limited.
- Awolowo, O. (2012). "Philosophy for Independent Nigeria" in Ayemole, T. *Great Essays*. Lagos: Barklow.
- Awolowo, O. (n. d). *The Problems of Africa*. London: Macmillan.
- Bochenski, J. M. (1962). *Philosophy: An Introduction*. Holand: D Related Publishing Company.
- Nigerian Tribune (2016, November 8). Agribusiness: Ondo WECA's success story. Retrieved from <http://www.tribuneonlineng.com>. November 8, 2016.
- Nwankwo, A. (1990). *Perestroika and Glasnot. Their Implications for Africa*. Enugu: Fourth Dimensions.
- Obafemi, O. (2016). *Mimiko's Odyssey: A Biography of Revelations*. Ilorin: Ajon Creator Series.
- Oguejiofor, O. (2001). *Philosophy and the African Predicament*. Ibadan: Hope Publications.



- Oladipo, O. (1998) "Modernization and the Search for Community in Africa" in Oladipo, O. T. (ed) *Remaking Africa*. Ibadan: Ikpe Publications.
- Omoboriowo, A. (1982). *Select Themes on the complex Ideology of Chief Obafemi Awolowo* Ibadan: Evans Books.
- Oyenuga, O. F. (2017). Critical Interpretation of Awolowo's Political Philosophy. *Agogo: Journal of Humanities* 2(1), 24-28.
- Taiwo, O. (2013). Obafemi Awolowo: Knowledge, Leadership and Governance. *P.M. News*, July 29, 2013.
- The Hope Newspaper (2015, October 16). ODSG increases free school shuttle buses. Retrieved From <http://www.thehopenewspaper.com>. October 16, 2015.
- Vanguard News (2015, December 19). Cocoa Revolution: Ondo will soon be richer than Lagos. Retrieved from <http://www.vanguardngr.com>. www.obafemiawolowofoundation.com. www.bolatinubucolloquim.com.

