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The Politics of Climate Change Management and Its Implications on The Green Revolution in Africa

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Abstract
This study critically examines the politics of climate change management and its implications for the green revolution in Africa through a comparative analysis of Kenya, South Africa, and Nigeria. The primary purpose is to assess how climate change management's politics affect Africa's green revolution. The study (i) examined whether the Global South and Global North engagement on climate change can bring relief (succor) to the world's inhabitants, especially vulnerable African populations. It analyzes the nature of climate change engagement between the Global South and the Global North. It evaluates the challenges facing the implementation of climate change treaties and conventions in Africa, considering political, economic, and institutional barriers. Methodologically, the research uses a desktop, comparative case study approach, drawing from various secondary sources, including peer-reviewed journals, policy reports, and institutional publications. It integrates political economy analysis with climate governance frameworks to assess national capacities and performance in climate adaptation and agricultural reform. Findings reveal that while Kenya has made notable strides through devolved climate finance and localized adaptation initiatives, structural inequalities and limited farmer inclusion persist. South Africa faces significant policy fragmentation and a lack of political coherence, while Nigeria struggles with institutional weakness, climate-induced conflict, and inadequate rural infrastructure. Across all three cases, donor-driven models such as AGRA have largely failed to produce transformative outcomes due to their technocratic orientation and limited responsiveness to local contexts. The study concludes that a climate-resilient Green Revolution in Africa is politically feasible only if driven by inclusive, locally owned policies supported by strong institutional frameworks and sustained political commitment. It recommends enhanced treaty implementation, equitable policy frameworks, and assertive African engagement in global climate negotiations.
Keywords: Politics of Climate Change Management, Green Revolution, Climate Change Treaties, North-South Relations, Sustainable Agriculture, and Africa.
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1.0 Introduction

Climate change management is increasingly recognized as a critical global governance challenge that intertwines environmental, economic, and political dimensions. According to Fawzy et al. (2020), the politics of climate change management refers to the complex governance processes, policy frameworks, and political negotiations involved in addressing climate change, including mitigation, adaptation, and international cooperation. It encompasses how power dynamics, political will, institutional arrangements, and stakeholder interests shape the responses to climate change at local, national, and international levels. Central to this political arena are decisions about resource allocation, treaty negotiations, compliance mechanisms, and the inclusion or exclusion of vulnerable populations and developing countries in climate action.

Simultaneously, the Green Revolution has been historically defined as the dramatic increase in agricultural productivity through technological innovation, including the use of high-yield crop varieties, chemical fertilizers, irrigation infrastructure, and improved agronomic practices (Jayne et al., 2014; Bernardi et al., 2023). Globally, the Green Revolution transformed food production in Asia and Latin America during the mid-20th century, increasing food security and economic growth. In the African context, however, the Green Revolution remains elusive and contested, with efforts to replicate the successes of other regions encountering diverse socio-political and environmental challenges (Bassermann & Urhahn, 2020; Elhasnaoui et al., 2023).

From a global perspective, the politics of climate change management is marked by a paradox: those countries that have historically been the largest emitters of greenhouse gases, principally Western nations and the United States — are often the architects of international climate conventions but simultaneously have a record of non-compliance or withdrawal. As Rivera et al. (2022) averred, despite spearheading frameworks such as the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement, the United States notably withdrew from these accords at critical junctures, raising questions about the sincerity of its commitment to global climate governance (United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2023). Moreover, major Western powers continue to emit disproportionately while urging developing countries to adopt stringent mitigation measures, exacerbating tensions in North-South climate relations (IMF, 2021; Kabukuru, 2022).

Therefore, the politics of climate change management must be understood not merely as technical or environmental policymaking but as a profoundly political process shaped by historic responsibilities, economic interests, and geopolitical power struggles. The role of Western nations in shaping climate treaties often reflects broader patterns of global inequality, where the Global North exerts control over climate finance, technology transfer, and policy direction, sometimes at the expense of the Global South's development priorities (Dube, 2022; Allied for Climate Transformation by 2025 (ACT2025), 2023). This fraught relationship results in skepticism among African and other developing countries about the real intentions behind climate diplomacy, hindering practical cooperation (Le Monde Afrique, 2024; Djenontin et al., 2025).

Given this global political context, why focus on the politics of climate change management? Effective climate governance is essential for ensuring equitable and sustainable development outcomes. Without political will, transparent institutions, and inclusive policy processes, climate initiatives risk perpetuating inequalities and failing the most vulnerable populations, especially in Africa, where climate impacts are most severe (Bhargava & Bhargava, 2023; Mahlaba et al., 2024). Moreover, understanding the politics behind climate management provides insights into why some climate treaties remain aspirational rather than transformational.

Similarly, the Green Revolution is pivotal because agricultural productivity remains the cornerstone of food security, poverty alleviation, and economic growth for millions in Africa (Otsuka et al., 2025). Despite its global success, the Green Revolution in Africa has lagged due to complex factors, including fragmented policy frameworks, limited access to technology and finance, and socio-political challenges (Bernardi et al., 2023; Wise, 2020). This gap has severe implications, as climate change intensifies agricultural risks through droughts, floods, and conflict (Lydie, 2022; Cappelli et al., 2023). Thus, the Green Revolution's promise for Africa cannot be separated from the politics of climate change, since sustainable agricultural transformation requires climate-resilient policies, investment, and governance that address both productivity and environmental sustainability.

Indeed, the relationship between the politics of climate change management and the Green Revolution is direct and reciprocal. Climate change governance shapes the enabling environment for agricultural innovation by determining the availability of climate finance, the robustness of adaptation programs, and the political prioritization of rural development (Future Agricultures, n.d.; International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage, 2023). Conversely, agricultural policies influence climate outcomes by affecting land use, emissions, and resilience. For Africa, integrating climate change politics with the Green Revolution agenda is critical to ensure that agricultural growth is sustainable, inclusive, and responsive to environmental challenges (Jayne et al., 2014; Blueprint, 2022).

The focus on Africa is imperative because the continent is at the frontline of climate vulnerability yet contributes the least to global emissions (Kamer, 2022). African nations face unique challenges, including governance deficits, agricultural underinvestment, and frequent climate-related conflicts (Muggah, 2021; Tarif & Grand, 2021). Despite this, Africa's agriculture sector holds enormous growth and poverty reduction potential if climate and agricultural policies are effectively aligned and implemented (Elhasnaoui et al., 2023; Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, 2020). However, climate finance flows remain inadequate and often tied to donor priorities rather than African-led solutions, reflecting persistent North-South asymmetries (Dube, 2022; Climate Finance in Africa, 2024).

This study seeks to fill important knowledge gaps by (i) exploring whether the Global South and Global North engagement on climate change can bring relief (succor) to the world's inhabitants, especially vulnerable African populations. (ii) To analyze the nature of engagement between the Global South and Global North on climate change. (iii) To examine the challenges facing the implementation of climate change treaties and conventions in Africa, considering political, economic, and institutional barriers.

Through this inquiry, the study will clarify how the independent variable, the politics of climate change management (measured through policies, political will, international cooperation, and governance indicators), influences the dependent variable, the Green Revolution in Africa (measured through agricultural productivity, technology adoption, infrastructure development, and sustainability). Ultimately, understanding this nexus is crucial for designing climate and agricultural policies that are both politically feasible and environmentally sustainable, thereby advancing Africa's development in a warming world.

2.0 Conceptualising the Intersection of Politics of Climate Change Management, Green Revolution, and Sustainable Agriculture within the Framework of Climate Change Treaties and North-South Relations in Africa

The intersection of climate change politics, the Green Revolution, and sustainable agriculture in Africa is a complex and multifaceted issue shaped by global governance frameworks, geopolitical dynamics, and local developmental needs. At the heart of this nexus lies the challenge of managing climate change to support agricultural transformation while addressing Africa's unique vulnerabilities and socio-economic realities.

Climate change management is inherently political, involving international negotiations, policy formulation, and the allocation of financial resources. Despite being one of the least contributors to global greenhouse gas emissions (Kamer, 2022), Africa faces disproportionate climate impacts, exacerbating poverty and threatening food security (Bhargava & Bhargava, 2023). The continent's climate policies and responses are shaped by its limited capacity to mobilize adequate climate finance, often dependent on pledges and commitments from wealthier nations in the Global North (Dube, 2022; Kabukuru, 2022). This creates a North-South power imbalance where African countries must navigate global climate treaties and local development goals.

The African Climate Change Policy Performance Index (ACT2025, 2023) highlights the uneven implementation of climate policies across the continent, underscoring the need for more coherent governance frameworks that integrate climate adaptation and mitigation with sustainable development. Political instability and climate-induced conflicts compound these challenges, undermining policy continuity and resilience (Cappelli et al., 2023; Tarif & Grand, 2021).

The Green Revolution in Africa seeks to boost agricultural productivity through modern technologies, improved seeds, fertilizers, and irrigation techniques (Elhasnaoui et al., 2023; Bernardi et al., 2023). However, the conventional model of the Green Revolution, initially successful in Asia, faces criticism in the African context due to its heavy reliance on external inputs, which are often costly and environmentally unsustainable (Bassermann & Urhahn, 2020; Wise, 2020). These critiques argue that the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and similar initiatives have sometimes failed to address structural inequalities and local ecological conditions (Ignatova, 2021).

Sustainable agriculture in Africa must balance increased food production with climate resilience and environmental stewardship. Future Agricultures Consortium (Otsuka et al., 2025) advocates for approaches that promote agroecological methods, strengthen local institutions and empower smallholder farmers. Such strategies align with climate change mitigation goals by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing soil health (International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage, 2023).

International climate change treaties such as the Paris Agreement frame the global governance of climate action. However, their implementation often reflects entrenched inequalities between the Global North and South (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2022). African nations have consistently called for more equitable climate finance mechanisms and technology transfers to support adaptation and sustainable development (Le Monde Afrique, 2024).

North-South relations in climate politics are characterized by divergent responsibilities and capacities. While the Global North bears historical responsibility for most emissions, the Global South, particularly Africa, must contend with the consequences and pursue climate-resilient development paths (International Monetary Fund, 2021). These dynamic influences the political feasibility and effectiveness of climate policies and Green Revolution programs, often resulting in fragmented efforts that struggle to harmonize international goals with local realities (Jayne et al., 2014; Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, 2020).

Conceptualizing the intersection of these themes reveals the necessity of a holistic approach to climate change management and agricultural transformation in Africa. Effective governance must integrate climate change

treaties, sustainable agricultural practices, and socio-political realities within international cooperation and justice. This includes addressing climate finance gaps (Climate Finance in Africa, 2024), enhancing institutional capacity (Future Agricultures, n.d.), and fostering inclusive policies that support marginalized communities and protect biodiversity (Bassermann & Urhahn, 2020).

Ultimately, the success of the Green Revolution in Africa depends on reconciling the continent's developmental aspirations with the imperatives of climate resilience and sustainability, underpinned by fair and participatory North-South relations. This requires sustained political will, equitable resource allocation, and innovative, environmentally sound, and socially just strategies.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study adopts a hybrid theoretical framework combining Dependency Theory and Global Environmental Governance (GEG) Theory. These frameworks offer complementary lenses for understanding the historical, political, and institutional forces shaping Africa's climate change engagements and agricultural transformation.

Firstly, Dependency Theory, as articulated by scholars such as Frank (1967), Amin (1976), and Cardoso and Faletto (1979), provides a structural critique of the global economic order. The theory contends that countries in the Global South remain underdeveloped due to their subservient integration into the global capitalist economy. Africa, under this lens, is viewed as a "periphery" whose resources, labor, and environmental services have historically been exploited for the benefit of "core" nations in the Global North (Frank, 1967; Amin, 1976). This historical exploitation extends into contemporary climate governance, where Africa is often positioned as a passive recipient of policies and technologies designed elsewhere.

Secondly, the GEG Theory, advanced by scholars like Peter Haas (Haas, 1992), Frank Biermann (Biermann, 2007), and Oran Young (Young, 1999), focuses on how transnational actors, international institutions, and multilateral agreements coordinate responses to environmental issues. It stresses the role of epistemic communities, governance networks, and the distribution of authority in shaping environmental outcomes. GEG highlights the fragmentation and inequality of the global climate regime, where power asymmetries influence whose voices are heard and whose priorities are addressed (Haas, 1992; Biermann, 2007).

Moreover, these theories offer a robust explanatory model for the dynamics at play in African climate governance when applied together. Dependency Theory diagnoses the structural roots of Africa's vulnerability to climate change, such as underinvestment in green technologies, donor-dependence, and externally driven development paradigms (Kabukuru, 2022; Dube, 2022). In parallel, GEG Theory sheds light on the procedural and institutional limitations of global climate frameworks—such as the unequal representation of African nations in climate negotiations or the inadequacy of climate finance pledges (ACT2025, 2023; Le Monde Afrique, 2024).

Consequently, this combined framework is relevant to the study's first objective: exploring whether the Global South and Global North engagement on climate change can bring succor to vulnerable African populations. From a Dependency Theory perspective, these engagements are often marked by conditionality and self-interest, thus limiting their emancipatory potential (Bhargava & Bhargava, 2023). GEG Theory, meanwhile, recognizes opportunities for cooperation but questions the legitimacy and effectiveness of current governance arrangements (Young, 1999). For instance, the African Climate Change Policy Performance Index (ACT2025, 2023) highlights persistent imbalances in climate finance and technology distribution between North and South.

In addition, concerning the second objective—to analyze the nature of engagement between the Global South and Global North on climate change—Dependency Theory helps frame these interactions as hierarchical and asymmetrical. Often, African countries are compelled to align with donor-driven agendas, as seen in climate-linked programs like AGRA, which have been critiqued for prioritizing external market interests over local food sovereignty (Bassermann & Urhahn, 2020; Wise, 2020). GEG Theory complements this analysis by explaining how institutional arrangements—such as those under the UNFCCC—are shaped by power disparities and lobbying by dominant economies and private interests (Biermann, 2007; Haas, 1992).

Furthermore, the third objective—to examine the challenges facing the implementation of climate change treaties and conventions in Africa—is best understood through both theories. Dependency Theory reveals how political and economic subordination, debt dependency, and aid conditionalities undermine policy sovereignty (Dube, 2022). Simultaneously, GEG Theory highlights governance-related obstacles such as institutional fragmentation, weak compliance mechanisms, and insufficient adaptation finance (Mahlaba et al., 2024; United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), 2022). Indeed, climate-related programs often

suffer from misalignment between global ambitions and local realities (Jayne et al., 2014; Elhasnaoui et al., 2023).

Ultimately, the interplay between these theories allows for a nuanced interpretation of how international climate efforts intersect with the domestic political economy in Africa. While Dependency Theory diagnoses the entrenched inequalities that limit Africa's agency, GEG Theory exposes the governance bottlenecks that constrain effective climate action. Together, they underscore that the Green Revolution in Africa—to be genuinely transformative—requires more than technological transfers or external funding. It demands equitable partnerships, restructured global governance, and strengthened local institutions (Bernardi et al., 2023; Future Agricultures, n.d.).

3.0 Methodology

This study adopts a desktop research design to investigate the politics of climate change management and its impact on the Green Revolution in Africa. It utilizes primary data sources, including climate treaties, national strategies, institutional reports, and academic literature. Document analysis and case studies from Kenya, South Africa, and Nigeria were analyzed thematically. In contrast, a comparative analysis was used to identify patterns in North-South climate engagement and implementation of African treaties. Additionally, the research adhered to principles of transparency and integrity by properly citing all sources and respecting intellectual property rights.

4.0 Discussion, Analysis and Findings

This section examines how global climate politics intersect with Africa's efforts toward a sustainable Green Revolution. It begins by analyzing North-South engagement on climate change, focusing on equity in partnerships, finance, and technology transfer. It then explores challenges in implementing climate treaties in Africa, such as economic constraints and institutional weaknesses. The discussion also considers political and institutional factors shaping climate governance outcomes in Africa. Finally, it draws insights from case studies in Kenya, South Africa, and Nigeria to highlight practical experiences and lessons. The analysis connects global commitments to African realities to assess pathways for effective climate action.

4.1 The Dynamics of North–South Engagement on Climate Change

North–South engagement on climate change has become a cornerstone of global climate diplomacy, particularly concerning the African continent, which remains highly vulnerable despite contributing minimally to global greenhouse gas emissions (Kamer, 2022). From the onset, unequal power relations have defined climate cooperation between the Global North and Global South, often reflecting broader patterns of dependency and underdevelopment (Amin, 1976; Cardoso & Faletto, 1979). Developed nations have long dominated agenda-setting and financing, while African countries continue to demand equity, justice, and accountability in climate negotiations (Le Monde Afrique, 2024; ACT2025, 2023).

Moreover, financial commitments and technology transfers have formed central pillars of North-South climate engagement. Although developed countries pledged $100 billion annually to assist developing nations, access to climate finance in Africa remains constrained by bureaucratic hurdles, lack of technical capacity, and donor-driven priorities (Dube, 2022; Climate Finance in Africa, 2024). Consequently, African states often struggle to align donor funding with national development strategies, weakening ownership and long-term sustainability. The IMF (2021) averred that Africa cannot tackle the climate crisis alone and requires predictable and adequate international support.

In addition, climate cooperation has operated mainly within institutional frameworks such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which highlights common but differentiated responsibilities (UNFCCC, 2022). However, these frameworks are frequently criticized for being insufficiently responsive to Africa's specific vulnerabilities, including food insecurity, drought, and climate-induced conflicts (Cappelli et al., 2023; Bhargava & Bhargava, 2023). African negotiators have pushed for more context-sensitive approaches, underscoring adaptation financing, resilience-building, and capacity development over mitigation-only frameworks (Djenontin et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the rise of philanthropic and private-sector actors from the Global North, such as those involved in the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), adds complexity to North-South dynamics. While framed as partnerships for agricultural transformation and climate resilience, such initiatives have been critiqued for imposing top-down models that ignore local knowledge, undermine biodiversity, and exacerbate dependency (Bassermann & Urhahn, 2020; Wise, 2020). This has raised concerns about "philanthrocapitalism" and the commodification of African agriculture under the guise of climate-smart practices (Ignatova, 2021).

Simultaneously, regional African actors and civil society groups assert greater agency in shaping the climate agenda. Reports like the Kenya Climate Change Policy Review (AFSA, 2020) illustrate how local actors demand inclusive governance, climate finance transparency, and respect for indigenous practices. These demands highlight the need for climate partnerships to move beyond extractive or charity-based paradigms toward genuinely reciprocal and justice-oriented cooperation.

In conclusion, while North-South engagement has enabled global coordination and resource mobilization on climate issues, it remains marked by structural inequalities and contestations over priorities, financing, and control. For Africa to benefit meaningfully, this engagement must evolve into a more equitable partnership grounded in mutual accountability, adaptive governance, and empowerment of local actors.

4.2 Policy Implementation Challenges of Climate Change Treaties in Africa

Undoubtedly, Africa has been at the forefront of international climate change discourse, yet implementing climate change treaties across the continent faces a multitude of challenges. Although African nations are signatories to major international frameworks, such as the Paris Agreement and various COP resolutions, the translation of these global commitments into tangible national actions remains limited. Indeed, the gap between policy adoption and implementation reflects structural, financial, institutional, and political complexities unique to the African context.

First, limited climate finance is a fundamental obstacle. While Africa contributes less than 4% of global carbon emissions (Kamer, 2022), the continent bears a disproportionate burden of climate impacts and receives insufficient financial support. Although developed countries have pledged climate funds, the disbursement remains unreliable (Kabukuru, 2022). Consequently, African states struggle to implement climate adaptation and mitigation plans due to budgetary shortfalls and overdependence on external funding (Dube, 2022). The IMF (2021) further highlights that Africa cannot confront climate change alone, underscoring the inequity in the global financing structure.

Furthermore, institutional capacity limitations severely hinder implementation. Many African countries lack coherent national strategies and effective coordination mechanisms across governmental agencies (Mahlaba et al., 2024). For instance, Kenya's policy framework has faced fragmentation and weak enforcement issues despite commendable formulation efforts (Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa, 2020). Similarly, weak monitoring and evaluation systems prevent accurate tracking of climate-related outcomes, undermining treaties' effectiveness (ACT2025, 2023).

Additionally, the political economy of climate governance complicates treaty domestication. In several African nations, donor priorities influence policy decisions more than local needs, which compromises policy ownership and sustainability (Death, 2014; Ignatova, 2021). As Amin (1976) and Frank (1967) argue in their dependency theory frameworks, Africa's peripheral status in the global capitalist system limits its autonomy in shaping climate actions. Consequently, externally imposed models like the Green Revolution, often championed without context-specific adaptation, fail to yield inclusive climate resilience (Bassermann & Urhahn, 2020; Wise, 2020).

Moreover, governance challenges such as corruption, lack of transparency, and weak rule of law further erode policy execution. According to the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (2024), several countries experience declining environmental governance scores, which reflect limited public trust and institutional dysfunction. This is exacerbated by elite capture of climate funds and politicization of environmental projects, leading to ineffective or misaligned outcomes (Ochi et al., 2022; Ndukwe & Ogbonnaya, 2023).

Simultaneously, socio-political instability and conflict interfere with climate treaty implementation. Armed conflicts, often exacerbated by climate-induced resource scarcity, disrupt governance structures and divert attention from climate priorities (Cappelli et al., 2023; UNFCCC, 2022). In regions like the Sahel, climate stressors have fueled displacement, food insecurity, and violence, making it difficult to sustain long-term environmental policies (Hussona, 2021; Muggah, 2021). This entanglement of climate and security risks necessitates integrated approaches, which are often lacking in treaty frameworks.

Likewise, public perception and participation play critical roles. Many African communities remain unaware of international treaties or feel alienated from policy processes (Djenontin et al., 2025). Without grassroots engagement, policy implementation risks becoming top-down and ineffective. Therefore, fostering local ownership and traditional knowledge integration is essential for contextual relevance and effectiveness (Darounansam, 2025).

In addition, the interplay between climate change and agriculture presents specific policy dilemmas. Agriculture remains central to African economies and livelihoods, yet climate-smart practices have been slow to scale due to technical, financial, and cultural barriers (Jayne et al., 2014; Masipa, 2017). While climate treaties advocate for sustainable agriculture, practical adoption remains minimal without institutional support, technological access, and extension services (Elhasnaoui et al., 2023; Lydie, 2022).

Equally important, technological and infrastructural constraints restrict the implementation of climate commitments. Lack of early warning systems, limited renewable energy infrastructure, and weak research-extension linkages undermine national capacities to fulfill treaty obligations (Kilelu & Gichuki, 2020; Hazarika et al., 2021). The role of innovation is often underfunded or bypassed in favor of short-term political gains, thus stalling long-term climate planning.

In conclusion, although African countries have demonstrated diplomatic commitment to international climate treaties, the practical implementation of these agreements remains fraught with challenges. These include inadequate financing, weak institutions, donor-driven policy models, governance deficits, conflict, and limited local participation. Addressing these structural and political barriers requires context-sensitive solutions that promote climate justice, enhance institutional capacity, ensure equitable finance, and foster inclusive governance. Only then can Africa effectively translate its climate commitments into sustainable action.

4.3 Political and Institutional Factors Influencing Climate Governance Outcomes in Africa

Political will and leadership commitment are foundational to effective climate governance in Africa. Climate change has yet to be fully integrated into national development priorities in numerous countries. As the *ACT2025* (2023) highlights through the African Climate Change Policy Performance Index (ACCPPI), many governments across the continent exhibit fragmented institutional coordination and limited enforcement capacity, weakening climate policy implementation. Furthermore, although climate policies exist on paper in states such as Kenya and Nigeria, their enforcement is impeded by low prioritization and a lack of cohesive institutional mandates (AFSA, 2020; Ochi et al., 2022).

Moreover, governance quality and state capacity significantly shape climate outcomes. The *Ibrahim Index of African Governance* (2024) reveals that countries with stronger governance indicators, such as transparency, rule of law, and citizen participation, are better positioned to implement sustainable climate action. Conversely, weak institutions plagued by corruption, elite capture, or clientelism often distort climate agendas, undermining the pro-poor orientation of green transition policies (Jayne et al., 2014; Kirea & Wasiaya, 2023). As Satgar et al. (2019) argue in South Africa, political parties often co-opt climate discourse to gain legitimacy without meaningful transformation.

Simultaneously, global political economy structures deeply influence climate governance in Africa. Drawing from dependency theory (Amin, 1976; Cardoso & Faletto, 1979), African countries often lack agency in shaping global climate agendas dominated by wealthier nations. While Africa contributes less than 4% of global CO_2 emissions (Kamer, 2022), it bears disproportionate climate burdens without adequate compensation or support (Bhargava & Bhargava, 2023). The uneven flow of climate finance further reflects geopolitical asymmetries. According to Dube (2022), international climate finance mechanisms often bypass African state institutions, limiting domestic control and ownership of adaptation and mitigation strategies.

In addition, institutional fragmentation and overlapping mandates dilute climate governance efficiency. In many African countries, environmental, agricultural, and energy ministries operate in silos, leading to policy inconsistencies and inefficiencies (Kilelu & Gichuki, 2020). For instance, while Kenya's climate change framework is relatively advanced, it lacks inter-agency coordination and funding limitations (AFSA, 2020). Similarly, Nigeria's climate institutions struggle with disjointed responsibilities and inadequate integration of green public administration principles (Ndukwe & Ogbonnaya, 2023). This institutional incoherence hinders the mainstreaming of climate resilience into development planning.

In parallel, ideological and epistemic influences play an important role. As Haas (1992) notes, epistemic communities, networks of professionals with shared knowledge, can shape international policy coordination. However, in Africa, external actors often dominate the epistemic space, imposing technocratic or market-driven solutions that may not align with local realities. For example, the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) has been criticized for promoting input-intensive farming models that prioritize yields over ecological resilience or farmer sovereignty (Bassermann & Urhahn, 2020; Wise, 2020). This dynamic exemplifies the

influence of "philanthrocapitalist" development, which tends to marginalize indigenous knowledge systems (Ignatova, 2021).

Furthermore, regional cooperation mechanisms are essential but underutilized. While initiatives such as the African Union's climate strategy and joint African positions at COP summits represent progress, they are often undermined by national interests and donor-driven agendas (Le Monde Afrique, 2024). Fragmentation at the continental level results in missed opportunities for knowledge sharing, pooled finance, and coordinated policy interventions (Mahlaba et al., 2024). Strengthening institutions like the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) and the African Development Bank's Climate Change Action Plan is vital to advancing collective governance outcomes.

Likewise, conflict and political instability further exacerbate the challenges of climate governance. Studies show that climate-induced stressors such as droughts and floods can intensify communal and interstate conflicts, particularly in fragile states (Hussona, 2021; Muggah, 2021; Cappelli et al., 2023). In such contexts, governance institutions are overwhelmed by security imperatives, rendering long-term climate planning nearly impossible. According to the UNFCCC (2022), integrating conflict sensitivity into climate action is imperative, especially in hotspots like the Sahel and the Horn of Africa.

Equally important, civic engagement and public perceptions significantly influence climate governance legitimacy. Djenontin et al. (2025) reveal that many Africans perceive climate change as a government responsibility yet remain excluded from decision-making processes. This democratic deficit undermines trust and diminishes community-level ownership of climate initiatives. As a result, participatory governance models that incorporate local voices—especially those of women, youth, and smallholder farmers—are essential for equitable and effective outcomes (Darou-nansam, 2025; Death, 2014).

Lastly, climate governance is constrained by financial dependence and external conditionalities. Although Africa receives climate finance pledges from developed countries, the disbursement is slow and tied to donor priorities (Kabukuru, 2022). This dependency often results in externally led projects that lack long-term sustainability or integration with national systems (Climate Finance in Africa, 2024). Therefore, enhancing domestic resource mobilization and reforming global climate finance architecture is crucial to empowering African states to lead their climate transition pathways.

In conclusion, African political and institutional factors critically shape climate governance outcomes through interlinked mechanisms, including leadership commitment, governance quality, institutional coherence, geopolitical inequalities, and societal engagement. Addressing these challenges requires systemic reforms that prioritize local agency, democratic accountability, and coordinated action at both national and regional levels.

4.4 Country-Specific Case Studies: Insights from Kenya, South Africa, and Nigeria

Kenya presents a complex climate policy environment deeply influenced by global development discourses and the interests of local elites and international donors. According to the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (2020), Kenya's climate change policies show formal commitment to sustainable development goals and adaptation strategies; however, these efforts are often undermined by inconsistencies in implementation and weak institutional coordination. Additionally, Kilelu and Gichuki (2020) emphasize that agricultural and climate policies in Kenya remain narrowly focused on market-led solutions, often sidelining indigenous knowledge systems and local community engagement. As such, while Kenya has integrated climate considerations into national development frameworks, the technocratic nature of these policies tends to reproduce patterns of exclusion and dependency.

Moreover, Kenya's case is further complicated by its adoption of Green Revolution-inspired agricultural models. Elhasnaoui et al. (2023) note that the promotion of high-input, export-oriented farming under initiatives like AGRA has failed to yield the promised benefits for smallholder farmers. On the contrary, Bassermann and Urhahn (2020) argue that AGRA has exacerbated inequality, environmental degradation, and rural disempowerment. These critiques are echoed by Wise (2020), who highlights that food insecurity and poverty persist in rural Kenya despite substantial financial investment. Consequently, Kenya's climate policy architecture reflects the contradictions of peripheral capitalism described by Amin (1976) and Cardoso and Faletto (1979), where externally driven reforms fail to resolve structural vulnerabilities.

In contrast, South Africa's climate governance is shaped by its unique political economy, characterized by a highly industrialized economy and deep socio-economic inequalities. Death (2014) notes that the country has

embraced the discourse of the green economy as a strategy for achieving ecological sustainability and inclusive growth. Nevertheless, the operationalization of these ideals has been hampered by entrenched interests in fossil fuel sectors, policy incoherence, and limited redistribution. As Satgar, Adam, and Mogatusi (2019) observe, mainstream political actors in South Africa have been reluctant to confront the political and economic power of carbon-intensive industries, resulting in a fragmented and insufficient response to the climate crisis.

Furthermore, South Africa's vulnerability to climate-induced shocks such as droughts and floods underscores the need for a just transition. Masipa (2017) underscores that climate change directly threatens food security, especially for poor and marginalized communities. According to the African Climate Change Policy Performance Index (ACT2025, 2023), while South Africa scores moderately on climate policy development, it falls short on inclusiveness and adaptive capacity. This situation exemplifies Biermann's (2007) argument about Earth system governance, where global imperatives often clash with local developmental realities, necessitating stronger multilevel cooperation and citizen participation.

Meanwhile, Nigeria represents a country grappling with the multidimensional impacts of climate change, from rising temperatures and desertification to violent conflicts and displacement. As Ochi, Ezeamu, and Anyiam (2022) highlighted, Nigeria's climate policy is in a context of fragile institutions, resource dependence, and pervasive corruption. The Nigerian government has articulated ambitious climate goals, including its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), yet implementation remains poor due to underfunding, poor governance, and elite capture. Similarly, Ndukwe and Ogbonnaya (2023) emphasize the limited role of green public administration in promoting sustainable outcomes.

Significantly, Nigeria's linkage between climate change and security risks has attracted growing attention. Wonah (2021) and Muggah (2021) note that ecological degradation in the Lake Chad Basin has intensified resource competition, fueling insurgency and communal violence. Likewise, Darou-Nansam (2025) shows that family farming in Nigeria faces economic and ecological pressures due to climate variability, which undermines rural livelihoods and exacerbates poverty. Therefore, as Bhargava and Bhargava (2023) stress, protecting vulnerable populations from climate-induced shocks requires technical solutions and profound structural reforms that address inequality and promote resilience.

In summary, the cases of Kenya, South Africa, and Nigeria reveal divergent yet interlinked trajectories of climate governance in Africa. While each country faces unique socio-political contexts, they share common challenges such as policy fragmentation, external dependency, and insufficient inclusion of local communities. As Dube (2022) and Djenontin et al. (2025) suggest, building effective and equitable climate responses in Africa necessitates greater investment in local institutions, knowledge systems, and participatory governance. Ultimately, these case studies affirm the need for a paradigm shift from externally imposed models to locally driven, justice-oriented climate action.

5.1 Policy Recommendations

A holistic set of policy recommendations must be advanced to effectively address the multifaceted challenges of climate change in African contexts such as Kenya, South Africa, and Nigeria. These recommendations must be grounded in the region's socio-political realities while aiming to align national actions with global climate imperatives.

Firstly, strengthening the implementation of international climate treaties requires domesticating global agreements into actionable national policies. African governments must align their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) with sector-specific action plans that are time-bound, adequately funded, and transparently monitored. Establishing inter-ministerial climate implementation committees and improving legislative oversight are critical to translating treaty commitments into on-ground results. Moreover, enhancing cooperation with epistemic communities (Haas, 1992) can provide the technical expertise needed to operationalize treaty obligations effectively.

Secondly, enhancing political commitment and institutional capacity is essential. Governments should institutionalize climate governance frameworks independent of political cycles, ensuring continuity and long-term planning. This involves investing in human capital, improving climate literacy across government institutions, and creating specialized climate units within key ministries such as agriculture, finance, and infrastructure. In addition, regional cooperation bodies like the African Union must coordinate and harmonize policies and share best practices, particularly through initiatives such as the African Climate Change Policy Performance Index (ACT2025, 2023).

Thirdly, ensuring equity and inclusion in climate change management demands deliberate policies prioritizing marginalized communities' voices and needs, especially smallholder farmers, women, and indigenous peoples. Participatory governance models should be institutionalized at all levels, with local knowledge systems incorporated into climate adaptation strategies. Climate finance mechanisms must adopt pro-poor frameworks to ensure equitable access to adaptation resources. For instance, Kenya's devolved climate finance model offers a scalable example of locally responsive climate funding (AFSA, 2020).

Lastly, promoting African agencies in global climate negotiations involves reframing Africa not merely as a vulnerable continent but as a strategic actor with specific demands and innovative solutions. This entails coordinated African positions at forums like COP, supported by robust technical and legal negotiation teams. Enhancing transparency in climate finance pledges and advocating for historical accountability from high-emitting nations should remain central to African negotiation strategies. Regional blocs must also invest in research and policy think tanks that produce African-generated knowledge, thereby reducing dependence on external epistemologies (Biermann, 2007).

In conclusion, the effectiveness of climate responses in Africa depends on policy design, political will, institutional innovation, and inclusive governance. A shift from dependency frameworks (Amin, 1976; Cardoso & Faletto, 1979) toward self-determined climate strategies is critical for achieving ecological sustainability and social justice.

5.1 Conclusion

This study explored the politics of climate change management and its implications on the green revolution in Africa through country-specific case studies in Kenya, South Africa, and Nigeria. The analysis reveals that while these nations exhibit varying degrees of climate vulnerability and adaptive capacity, they share challenges such as weak treaty implementation, fragmented institutional frameworks, and insufficient inclusion of marginalized populations in climate governance. Furthermore, the study highlights the limitations of externally driven agricultural models, such as AGRA, which have often failed to deliver sustainable outcomes due to their top-down, technocratic approach and inadequate alignment with local realities (Bassermann & Urhahn, 2020; Wise, 2020).

Critically, the findings underscore the importance of context-sensitive, inclusive, and ecologically sound strategies for advancing a climate-resilient Green Revolution. While Kenya demonstrates progress through devolved climate finance and localized adaptation frameworks, South Africa's political economy grapples with historical inequalities and policy incoherence (Death, 2014; Masipa, 2017). However, Nigeria remains constrained by insecurity, underfunded institutions, and limited rural resilience despite its agricultural potential (Darou-nansam, 2025; Ndukwe & Ogbonnaya, 2023). These realities raise serious questions about the political feasibility of a truly transformative Green Revolution unless structural reforms and long-term investments are prioritized.

Nevertheless, the study suggests that a climate-resilient Green Revolution in Africa is politically feasible, driven by strong domestic leadership, integrated climate-agriculture strategies, and a commitment to social equity. Such transformation must move beyond donor dependency and be rooted in African agency, inclusive policy design, and robust public accountability mechanisms. Regional collaboration and the amplification of African voices in global negotiations are also vital to securing fair climate finance and equitable access to green technologies.

Future research should focus on longitudinal assessments of climate policy implementation at sub-national levels, the socio-economic impacts of locally driven adaptation initiatives, and the role of African civil society in shaping climate discourse. Moreover, there is a pressing need for empirical studies that evaluate the effectiveness of integrated agroecological models in enhancing food security and climate resilience across diverse African ecologies. By deepening our understanding of these dynamics, scholars and policymakers can better inform the design of sustainable, equitable, and climate-smart development pathways for the continent.

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