

## Failures of Nigeria's Neoliberal Deregulations

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### Abstract

Since the mid-1980s that neoliberal reforms were inaugurated in Africa, there has been a perpetuating elitization of political economy power in the various countries of the continent. The superimposition of these reforms on African political economies that have been overwhelmingly comprador has nonetheless shaped this trend. Nigeria typifies this African condition. This study notes that these deregulations have been alienating the people. It does so by testing the relationships between deregulations as the independent variable and several dependent variables including poverty, failures in electoral democracy, elitization of partisanship politics and authoritarianism in the public policy process.

Keywords: Africa; Economic Reforms; Deregulations; Poverty; Electoral Democracy; Partisanship; Public Policy.

### Introduction

Country-wide discussions and contentions of the policy thrust and implementations of neoliberal reforms in Nigeria as in the rest of Africa have been rife since the 1980s that these reforms were inaugurated. One interesting aspect of these have been the contention raised about the incongruence of these reforms with the advancement of national development most especially because over the years of policy implementations, there have been significant shortchanging of democracy in the content and operations of these reforms (see for instance Umezurike, 2010a&b; Nnoli, ed, 1993; Caffentzis, 2002; Ake, 2001; 2003; Nasong'o, 2004; Harrison, 2005). The fact that democracy is highly crucial for the advancement of national development has therefore created higher impetus for a scholarly revisit of the matter. This is so especially because of the manner in which the reforms have been complementing the other dysfunctions to the political economy of Nigeria (Umezurike, 2010a&b). Accordingly, the present effort is designed to explore the interface between these reforms as characterized by their core value in deregulations of the Nigerian political economy and a number of these dysfunctions including poverty and income inequalities, failures in electoral democracy, elitization of partisanship politics and authoritarianism in the public policy process in Nigeria; especially over the period of the country's Fourth Republic since 1999.

### Methodology.

Two general propositions have been prepared for testing in this study. They include:

- The orientation of economic reforms in Nigeria towards deregulation has resulted in the growth of poverty and income inequalities in the country.
- The orientation of these reforms towards deregulation has led to overall failures in electoral democracy, elitization of partisanship politics and growth in authoritarianism in the public policy process in the country.

The methodological plain thus depicts deregulations of the Nigerian political economy as the independent variable for the study. This is so because the most important aspects of the neoliberal reforms in Nigeria since 1986 have had an undercurrent in the deregulations of the Nigerian political economy. The major aspects of these reforms being referred to include:

- Privatization and Commercialization which had been inaugurated in 1988 and further reinvigorated since 1999 till date.
- Trade and Financial Liberalizations which have been enunciated since 1986 till date; with significant impetus for interest and exchange rate variations.
- Reform in Public Sector Management including the 1988 civil service reform and the current Due Process which came into being in 2001.
- Liberalization of the political environment which has resulted in the current registration of over sixty political parties in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.
- Poverty alleviation programme, packaged under the National Poverty Eradication Programme, NAPEP which had been hurriedly foisted in 2001 when Nigeria's neoliberal reforms became strongly challenged by growing poverty and income inequality. NAPEP has been acting both as a coordinative as well as interventionist programme for poverty alleviation but its support through debt relief by foreign creditors has been hinged on faithful commitment to deregulations.

In the analysis that has been carried out in this paper, some tabular presentations have been made. While the independent variable is the deregulations of the Nigerian political economy, the dependent variables have included: growth in poverty and income inequality in Nigeria; failures in electoral democracy in the country; elitization of partisanship politics in the country; and authoritarianism in the public policy process in Nigeria. The dependent or response variables have been generated from two sources. The first is the earlier works of the present author in which an illumination of the negative aspects of Nigeria's national development under the regime of deregulation has been made (Umezurike, 2009&2010a). A second which relates to the first above is an indepth observation of developments in the political economy of Nigeria over the years of neoliberal reforms. These efforts have no doubt been supplemented by written materials of others.

The paucity of data on all aspects of the study prevented the use of regression models to establish the correlation and linearity of the various aspects of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. These ought to have been provided in a scatter plot with only one outlier namely the poverty alleviation aspect. In the light of these constraints, the generalized propositions had been analyzed with tables and logical deductions.

The data for the study have been generated mainly from official documents. This particular source of data generation provided some spatiotemporal advantages. First, it made it possible for data that cover the entire country to be collected rather than undue limitations to certain sections of the country. Second, it provided the advantage of using data that cut across diverse historical periods. Invariably, the study benefits from a proper coverage of the

Nigerian society. The specific aspects of these data that have been utilized in analysis include:

- Data on the sectoral contributions to the GDP of Nigeria (at current prices) for the period of deregulation. Even though the data on the GDP values for a reasonable number of years are available, they are mostly unreliable. Accordingly, it is not possible to use the trends in these data to explain a distinction between the periods of deregulation and ‘non-deregulation’.
- Data on the structure of import and export of Nigeria including in particular the contributions of certain commodities such as petroleum resources to total exports.
- Data on elections and the electoral process including especially those of the current Fourth Republic. Here, the uses of tables and percentages have been made to facilitate analyses.
- Data on political parties and the party system including those that are registered and those that have won seats in the various elections. Here also, tables and percentages have been used to facilitate analyses.
- Data on the power relativity of the various arms of government in Nigeria including the Federal, State and Local Governments which have been used to explore the authoritarian manner of public policy. The skewness of power to the central government is regarded as evidence of this trend. But also relevant for this proof is the extent of declines in public sector employment during deregulation as evidence of shrinking of the state.

As have been noted above, data have been analyzed mainly with the use of tables and logical deductions. Again the paucity of data, a situation in which some years are not available led to the use of apt excerpts from key texts on the subject of study. This is not regarded as literature review but as an equally satisfactory means of scientific proof. Finally the remaining part of the study is made up of five sections. In the rest of the paper, the propositions are analyzed.

#### **Deregulation, Poverty and Income Inequality in Nigeria.**

In this section, it is submitted that bouts of deregulations of the Nigerian political economy have over the years been leading to the recompradorization of this political economy and thereby infesting poverty and income inequalities on the Nigerian population. The proofs for this take the following dimensions:

- First and foremost, these deregulations have been perpetuating a global divide in which the poverty proneness of Nigeria is being expanded by the continuous dependence on crude petroleum exports at the expense of enhanced agricultural productivity even when the latter has remained the primary economic activity in the country.

- Second, these deregulations have been limiting the social welfare roles of the Nigerian state and thereby perpetuating the country's low placing in the World Human Development Index.
- Third and finally, the deregulations have been fostering social privileges to the elites in Nigeria and by so doing have been expanding income inequalities in the country.

Table 1 below clearly illuminates the sectoral contributions to Nigeria's GDP at current prices for selected years.

**Table 1: Sectoral Contributions to Nigeria's GDP at Current Prices for Selected Years, 1980-2010 (N billion)**

Activity Sector	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010
Agriculture	10.0	24.4	84.3	619.8	1,192.9	4,773.2	10,273.7
Mining and Quarrying	15.0	13.0	86.9	794.4	2,191.3	5,682.2	9,854.3
1. Crude Petroleum	14.1	12.6	86.2	792.3	2,186.7	5,664.9	9,808.6
2. Others	0.9	0.4	0.7	2.1	4.6	17.3	45,657.0
Manufacturing	5.2	4.2	14.3	105.2	168.0	412.7	586.6
Utilities	0.3	0.3	1.2	1.9	2.2	29.4	70,543.1
Building and Construction	3.7	2.0	4.4	13.8	30.6	215.8	393.5
Transport	1.6	1.8	5.3	48.0	129.1	385.5	528.2
Communication as Telecommunication including Post since 2010	0.0	0.1	0.4	0.8	1.0	41.3	262.6
Wholesale and Retail Trade	9.6	12.4	35.8	273.9	527.5	1,868.3	4,667.7
Hotel and Restaurant	0.1	0.2	0.6	2.7	6.5	46.1	113.7
Finance and Insurance	0.7	1.4	11.6	20.4	43.8	130.8	507.5
Real Estate and Business Services	0.1	0.2	0.4	1.1	167.8	712.8	1,343.0
Housing	1.3	2.5	3.9	46.2			-
Community, Social and Personal Services; including public administration, education, health, broadcasting and others	-	0.6	0.9	11.5	41.4	126.3	604.3
Producers of	1.5	3.0	8.0	20.8	35.6	148.1	0.2

Government Services including private non-profit organizations as apply to 2010 and beyond.							
TOTAL	49.6	65.5	257.9	1,960.7	4,537.6	14,572.2	29,205.8

Sources: 1.CBN (2007), Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, P208

2. CBN(1997), Statistical Bulletin, 8(1):121 and 1995, 7(2):133

3. FOS and National Planning Office, Abuja in CBN (2004), Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, P147.

As table 1 above shows, Agricultural sector has been contributing enormously to national development, even though the sectors production character is still dominated by the peasantry. From a mere N10.0 billion contribution in 1980, sectoral contribution of Agriculture to the GDP rose to N84.0 billion in 1990. In 2005 and 2010, sectoral contributions of Agriculture rose from N4,773.2 billion to N10,273.7 billion respectively. The huge contributions of Agriculture to the GDP of Nigeria is not fortuitous. The sector is the primary occupation in Nigeria and indeed provides the highest volume of jobs especially for Nigeria's peasant population. The sector is characteristically underdeveloped underscoring a condition in which peasant producers are exploited by the more privileged classes. Too, peasant producers in the Agriculture sector are largely alienated from their products in the manner in which the Nigerian petty bourgeoisie has continued to define foreign market values and overall remunerations for their products. It has therefore been possible for these peasants' massive contributions to the GDP of Nigeria to go alongside high level poverty and income inequality in the country.

While peasant exploitation in agricultural productivity in Nigeria has been a strong evidence of Nigeria's comprador development, this has been quite massively supported by the equally heavy dependence on petroleum resources. As from the mid-1970s when oil boom had been experienced in a number of oil producing countries till date, crude petroleum in particular has been quite significant in Nigeria's revenue generation endeavours. For instance, table 1 above, shows that petroleum resources contributed N14.1 billion in 1980 and N86.2 billion in 1990. These rose to N5,664.9 billion and N9,808.6 billion in 2002 and 2010 respectively. What is instructive about the heavy contribution of petroleum is that foreign rather than local technology dominates the sector. Accordingly, there have been low linkages with the other sectors of the Nigerian economy.

There are three clear indications of the realities of recompradorialism in Nigeria's neoliberal conjuncture. The first is that in actual fact and inspite of the unreliability of data on the issue in Nigeria, poverty in Nigeria has been growing in tandem with the years of neoliberal reforms in the country. Put in another way, there has been congruence between deregulations and growth in the poverty rate in Nigeria. The second is that despite the high contributions of agriculture to Nigeria's GDP, its contribution to the country's export is still much lower. What is purveyed by this is that there has been limited revolutionalization of the productive base of agriculture which would necessitate its reliability as the core of Nigerian political economy. Even though peasant production has been enormous, the Nigerian state has mainly been exploiting rather than organizing peasant producers.

The last which is related to the second above is that Nigeria's export and overall economic exposure still revolves around crude petroleum, even though its mining is still built around foreign technology. Between 1980 and 1986 when neoliberal regime in Nigeria was inaugurated, the average poverty rate in the country had been 37.3%. But three years into Nigeria's Fourth Republic in which neoliberal reforms had fully been resumed (1999-2002), average poverty rate in the country stood at 65.5%. It was in due recognition of this that the Federal Government of Nigeria hurriedly embarked on a poverty eradication programme by introducing NAPEP in 2001. Also, the rate of unemployment in Nigeria has been above single digit since 2000. Indeed, this rate has been growing thus portraying a limited extent to which the Millennium Development Goal of halving poverty in the country by 2015 can be attained.

In addition to the above, Nigeria's export has depended heavily on crude petroleum sales even though its population is still highly skewed to agricultural productivity. In 1980 for instance, crude petroleum export was N9,252,874 million or 67.6% of total export at N13,687,409 million. In 1985, crude petroleum was N11,275,032 million or 96.2% of total export at N11,720,786 million. Indeed, since the Fourth Republic which began in 1999, the percentage contribution of crude petroleum to total export has even increased from the 1985 value. In 2005 for instance, crude petroleum export of Nigeria at N6,621,304 million was 99.7% of total export of the country.

Deregulations as already noted above have been limiting the social welfare of the Nigerian state and through this has been perpetuating the low placing of Nigeria in the World Human Development Index. Evidence of the declined social welfare of the Nigerian state can be discerned from the low performance of the country in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs as is already widely familiar were developed out of the eight chapters of the United Nations Millennium Declaration signed in September 2000. These eight goals formed the bedrock of Nigeria's National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) which lasted until 2007, but has more or less been resonated in differing planning mechanisms including the current Medium Term Fiscal Framework of the Federal Government of Nigeria.

In the 2010 Progress Report on the MDGs for sub-Saharan Africa including Nigeria (Umezurike, 2010b), there have been low performance; all of which cast doubts as to whether these goals are achievable in the targeted year 2015. In terms of eradicating extreme hunger and poverty, it has been noted that in all sub-Saharan Africa, "the progress is insufficient as there is still very high poverty...the overall rating of performance...in the various targets of this goal is only comparably low with countries of Western Asia" (Umezurike, 2010b: 15). There has equally been insufficient progress in target 1 of Goal 2 which is on universal primary schooling. As well, all of sub-Saharan Africa fares lowest in MDG performance on the improvement of Maternal Health. Indeed, it is noted that sub-Saharan Africa has the lowest ranking of all other regions of the world.

Invariably, the limited performance in the MDGs as evidence of the low social welfare of the Nigerian state under neoliberal deregulations are pointers to the following: first and foremost despite the ostentatious social empowerment orchestrated by the MDGs, deregulations in Africa are clearly in antagonism to social welfare and therefore can hardly be mutually reinforcing. Second, deregulations deny the domestic democratic framework for implementing social welfare even if such is generated gratuitously from external sources.

Third and finally, deregulations in Nigeria in particular have been parcelling power from the Nigerian people to the imperialist metropole and its collaborative Nigerian petty bourgeoisie. The low placing of Nigeria in the HDI is clearly elucidated in table 2 below.

**Table 2: Human Development Index by Regions and Groups.**

Rank	Region/Group/Country	HDI
High		
1	High Income OECD Countries	0.950
2	OECD Countries	0.925
3	Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS	0.814
4	Latin America and the Caribbean	0.810
Medium		
5	East Asia and the Pacific	0.762
-	World	0.747
6	Arab States	0.713
7	Developing Countries	0.688
8	South Asia	0.606
Low		
9	Sub-Saharan Africa	0.495
10	Least Developed Countries	0.480
11	Nigeria	0.499

Sources: Umezurike, C (2010: 50), *State and Economy in Nigeria: A Study of Democracy and Economic Reform in the Fourth Republic*, Enugu, SNAAP Press Ltd.

As table 2 above shows, the HDI of Nigeria at 0.499 falls under the category of low HDI across the world. The HDI of Nigeria however falls slightly above that of sub-Saharan Africa; but largely below that of High Income OECD countries at 0.950. As the table shows, all the other parts of the world have superior HDI than Nigeria. The World average of HDI is 0.747; which is largely better than the value for Nigeria.

The table above therefore shows that Nigeria is desperately poor when compared with the other parts of the World. This poverty has been historical and has underscored the character of contemporary global development in which Nigeria as most other African countries have been weathering through. These historical forces have included the atrocities of European colonization and neo-colonial development including also contemporary American global hegemony. Quite important to this trend is the fact that the Nigerian political economy had emerged under the spell of monopoly capitalism in which the prospectus for the development of social homes for capitalism had been massively negated.

Right through colonialism to the present, the Nigerian political economy has remained peripheral to those of the advanced countries. The policy of deregulations has been part and parcel of this imperialist thrust. The policies and programmes that deregulations have upheld have been geared towards opening up African societies to imperialist designs and desires. In the absence of a domestic bourgeois class, the working class has remained largely underdeveloped in Nigeria. The struggles of this class for emancipation and development have been largely undermined. In any case, the infesting of neoliberal reforms since the mid-1980s has led to a massive closure of Import Substitution Industries (ISIs) which had been expected to anchor the development of the working class in the country. Even the Nigerian

petty bourgeoisie which for the most part has fraternized with the metropolitan bourgeoisie experienced significant impairment with neoliberal reforms of deregulation especially at the earliest stages. Since Nigeria's post Military political rule (1999 to the present), this class through bouts of privatization exercises has been striving towards reasserting its privileges in the Nigerian society and has indeed resumed its fraternity with the metropole. The large swathes of peasant holdings have so far being exploited. Table 5 below underlines the trends in the rates of poverty and levels of unemployment in Nigeria over the periods 1980 and 2010. In this table, it is clearly shown that the regime of deregulations in Nigeria has witnessed a worsening of these conditions.

Ever since neoliberal deregulations were inaugurated, the Nigerian state has lost the rudiments of democratizing society in several respects. In the first place, the massive closure of Import Substitution Industries in the country and their replacement with heavy importation of industrial manufactures and even foods has brought about massive job losses. Second, the emerging private sector in Nigeria is still highly dependent on foreign technology thereby limiting the expectations of utilizing them for confronting poverty in the country. Third, Nigeria cannot be said to be ready for high scale deregulations as is being experienced currently especially because its industrial manufacturing sector is still largely underdeveloped and its agricultural sector has still been exploited rather than been revolutionalized; all of which have made their roles in poverty alleviation inadequate. Fourth, state divestiture has created further impetus for poverty and income inequality especially because the Nigerian state has remained the highest employer of labour in the country. Fifth and relatedly, foreign capitals (metropolitan bourgeoisie) alongside their local agents (the Nigerian petty bourgeoisie) have been the primary benefactors of the ongoing deregulations. The rampaging income inequalities that have been infested have largely been in response to this trend. Sixth and finally, the limitations on democracy on account of these realities by the Nigerian state have foreclosed the only available manner in which poverty and income inequalities in the country can be more adequately reversed. Invariably therefore, the National Poverty Eradication Programme which had been created to address the matter has not effectively done so over a decade of its establishment.

Third and finally, and as has been noted above, deregulations in Nigeria's neoliberal conjuncture have been elitizing economic privileges especially through the emphasis on privatization rather than commercialization of public enterprises in the country's comprador political economy. Table 5 below provides satisfactory indications of the trends in the poverty rate and levels of unemployment in Nigeria's neoliberal conjuncture.

It is important to note in the immediate that the failures in the development of national capital in Nigeria despite its high efficacy can be gleaned from the preference of privatization as against commercialization of public enterprises in the country. In the two sets of laws that had been enunciated for the exercise, both privatization and commercialization had been touted as the central objects. But at implementation, higher attention has been directed at privatization even when the already privatized industries have not justified the central policy objectives.

Indeed, "...the Privatization and Commercialization Decree of 1988 set up the Technical Committee on Privatization and Commercialization (TCPC) with a mandate to privatize a total of 111 public enterprises and commercialize 34 others...the TCPC was able to privatize 88 of this mandate" (Umezurike, 2010a:34). A reinvigoration of the exercises had been made

with the inauguration of the Fourth Republic popularly referred to as Nigeria's post-Military in 1999.

the elected civilian administration of President Obasanjo enacted the Public Enterprises (Privatization and Commercialization) Act. This created the National Council on Privatization under the Chairmanship of the Vice President of the Federal Republic. The Act also provided for the Bureau for Public Enterprises (BPE) to serve as the implementation organ for the exercises (Umezurike, 2010a: 32).

The manner in which the Obasanjo-led government like its predecessor emphasized outright privatization as against commercialization has been noted as follows, "in the Oil and Gas sector which is at the hub of the Nigerian political economy, while 24 enterprises had been scheduled for privatization, only 1 was for commercialization" (Umezurike, 2010a: 33).

In its wholistic character, the exercises of privatization and commercialization, trade and financial liberalizations and the other related macroeconomic policies in Nigeria's neoliberal regime have produced negative implications for the emergence of popular national state and by so doing negated the growth and development of democracy that are considered crucial for solving poverty and income inequality in the country. Some notable dimensions of this are worth mentioning here. First, the exercises have failed to provide an answer to why the Nigerian economy has lacked appropriate status for competition in the contemporary global market. For it is the absence of the bourgeoisie proper at the domestic scene that has been responsible. Second and relatedly, more than any other strategy, it is the instrumentalization of the Nigerian state as a democratic project that is capable of making the difference in a global environment dominated by a conglomerate of imperialist transnationals with effective support from the advanced countries and multilateral institutions including especially the Bretton Woods twins. Third, the low propensities of a national popular state undergirded by a national bourgeoisie has continued to reproduce a domestic political economy in which key global actors have been conducting unregulated exploitative roles. In the Telecommunications sector where successes in privatization are being touted, Nigeria has merely provided a bourgeoning market for their products. Numerous transnational concerns have infested the developments, while the local concerns have continued to depend on foreign technology for sustenance. The blossoming job market that has emerged has not been taken alongside large-scale capital flight that has equally been taking place. There is little evidence to show that this area of industrialization has also been developing domestic technology for telecommunications. Privileged jobs in this sector and in Nigeria's oil industries have also been contributing to low development of wage labour and income inequalities. Fourth and finally, ethnicity and other forms of identity crisis have been rife at the behest of low development of a popular national state in the country. For instance ethno-religious conflicts have been in the rampage currently.

Even though paucity of data has constrained more meaningful presentation of these realities, there is no doubt that deregulations of the Nigerian political economy have been at the core of growing income inequality. The Gini-coefficient index (which measures income and sometimes consumption inequalities through the utility of the Lorenz Curve with zero indicating absolute equality and hundred portraying absolute inequality), shows high values for income inequality in Nigeria. In 1986 and 1992, the Gini coefficient index for Nigeria had been 38.7 and 45.0 respectively. These indices have been rising over the years of neoliberal reforms in Nigeria. In 1996, the Gini-index rose to 46.5. This fell slightly to 43.7

in 2003 and 42.9 in 2004. However it rose again to 48.8 in 2010. Of course, Nigeria as most other African countries have been having high Gini-coefficient index largely due to the limitations on national development orchestrated by low democratic impetuses. Even, the Republic of South Africa has been encountering similar conditions of high Gini-index which in certainty has been as a result of the hangover of apartheid regime.

#### **Failures in Electoral Democracy under the Regime of Deregulation in Nigeria.**

Even though deregulation is expected to be accompanied by state divestiture from the economy, studies (including Keller and Pauly, 1997; Umezurike, 2010a&b amongst others), have shown that the state becomes even more empowered with policies of divestiture. The reality of Africa, Nigeria inclusive is that higher empowerment of the state has not translated into enhanced political empowerment of the people primarily because the state in Africa is largely alien to society. This reality provides the framework for understanding how current deregulations in Nigeria have been constraining electoral democracy in the country.

This is treated principally in the manner in which deregulations have facilitated only liberal democracy which has low feasibility in a comprador political economy as Nigeria. It is important to emphasize that it is the democratization of the Nigerian society rather than its deregulation that holds the efficacy for ennobling a capitalist free market that appears to be the desideratum of the ongoing orthodox economic reforms. It is democratization that could cut the links of contemporary global recompradorizational forces imposed on Nigeria. It is also democratization that can correct the domestic dysfunctions including in particular weak wage labour and its appropriate consciousness.

Historically, partisanship politics in Nigeria has projected two clear dimensions, namely movement towards one-party system and ethnic-orientation of the party system. While the former underscores the persistent militarization of society including the actual involvement of the military in governance; the latter has been the most auspicious inadequacy of petty bourgeoisie democratization. Indeed, ethnicity has had a very high absorbent value in Nigeria's democratic experiment.

Also limitations in partisanship politics have been compounded by the incapacitations of the electoral system in properly enhance democracy. For even though a total of four general elections have been held in the country in the Fourth Republic (in 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011) with the accompanying transfer of offices; their low democratic impetuses are still found in persisting elite consensus; electoral manipulations, especially through the judiciary; unbearable costs on the Electoral Management Bodies; heavy strains that these strangulating elections have provoked on popular psych; judicial subterfuges on very serious matters of official corruption, and overall alienation of the Nigerian people from the entire process. Table 3 below presents the increasing threat of one-partism in Nigeria's electoral practices despite political economy deregulations in the Fourth Republic.

**Table 3: The Threat of One-Party System in Nigeria's Fourth Republic as Depicted by the Dominance of the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP in Electoral Seats, 1999-2011.**

General Election Years	Total Registered Political Parties	Electoral Seats	No. Of Electoral Seats	PDP Controlled Seats	Percentage Control by the PDP
1999	3	Presidential	1	1	100
		Governorship	36	NA	NA
		Senate	109	59	54.1
		House of	360	NA	NA

		Representatives			
		State Houses of Assembly	990	NA	NA
2003	30	Presidential	1	1	100
		Governorship	36		
		Senate	109	76	69.7
		House of Representatives	360	NA	NA
		State Houses of Assembly	990	NA	NA
2007	50	Presidential	1	1	100
		Governorship	36	28	77.8
		Senate	109	87	79.8
		House of Representatives	360	261	72.5
		State Houses of Assembly	990	715	72.2
2011	62	Presidential	1	1	100
		Governorship	27*	19	70.4
		Senate	90*	58	64.4
		House of Representatives	NA	NA	NA
		State Houses of Assembly	NA	NA	NA

Source: The author with data generated from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) of Nigeria.

Table 3 above shows clearly that the PDP has been enjoying dominance of the electoral seats in the country to the point of constituting an affront to the current deregulations of the Nigerian political party system. For instance, it has maintained a clean sweep in the control of the Presidency for all of the Fourth Republic so far. Its control of the National Assembly comprising the Houses of Senate and House of Representatives is also overwhelming. For the Senate in the election years shown in the table above, its control is approximately 70% while that of the House of Representatives is also at the same range for 2007 for instance.

The dominance of the PDP at the federal seats of power is mostly at the core of the threat of one-party system in the country especially in view of high skewness of national resources to the central government in Nigeria. In particular, the Federal Government of Nigeria controls revenues from crude petroleum. Since 2011 General Elections, Governorship seats are controlled by the PDP by over 70% equally in a national dispensation in which there is a very high executive control of political governance. In any case, the overwhelming domination of Executive seats in all of these elections has created easy avenues for manipulating Legislative offices in particular to the advantage of the PDP.

The growing threat of one-partism in Nigeria has not been a representation of high efficacy in national integration as such. For in actuality, propitious national integration does not owe its core value in the party system as it does in the historical manner in which the emergence of the parties correspond to the historical struggles of the popular forces in society. The struggles to solve the ethnic phenomenon which appears to be part of the expectations of deregulated political parties requires above all a fundamental democratization of the Nigerian society. It is already obvious that what is in place at the moment still fosters ethnicity and ethnic politics in the country.

### **Deregulations and the Elicitization of Partisanship Politics in Nigeria.**

The above failures in electoral democracy in Nigeria are effectively complemented by the persisting elicitation of partisanship politics; all of which have been growing in tandem with the deregulations in the country. In other words, the alienation of the Nigerian people in electoral democracy noted above has meant that engagements in these elections and in the political parties are becoming highly restricted to a few elite sections of the Nigerian society. Deregulations have indeed enshrined some degrees of political apathy on the Nigerian society as can be evidenced in the Fourth Republic.

Political apathy in Nigeria's regime of deregulations is not fortuitous; given that the latter has been inauspiciously geared towards resolving an elite-centred problem in the country especially over the ownership and control of the superstructures of national development. Since independence in 1960, sections of the Nigerian petty bourgeoisie have been engaged in grim struggles over control of the commanding heights of the national economy. The attainment of national independence rather deepened these struggles as political power had to be effectively complemented by economic power.

Part of the global conjuncture that produced deregulations especially in such variants as privatization and commercialization; trade and financial liberalizations and their related macroeconomic policies also provoked issues of elite ownerships and control of Nigeria's domestic economy. The aggressive pursuit of these neoliberal reforms which has been discussed earlier in this paper has been responsible for the growing apathy and thus in the elicitation of partisanship politics in Nigeria especially since the Fourth Republic in 1999.

A depiction of this apathy is clear enough in the low voter turn-out in the various general elections in Nigeria under the regime of deregulations. This is aptly shown in table 4 below.

**Table 4: Elicitization of Partisanship Politics as illustrated by Growing Political Apathy (Low Voter Turnout) in Nigeria's General Elections under the Regime of Deregulations.**

General Election	Electoral Seat/Office	Total Registered Voters	Total Votes Cast	Invalid Votes	% of total votes cast to total registered voters
1999	Presidency	57,938,945	30,280,052	NA	52.3
	Governorship				
	Senate	57,983,945	24,385,247	NA	42.1
	House of Representatives	57,983,945	23,573,407	NA	40.7
	State Houses of Assembly	57,983,945			
2003	Presidency	60,823,022	42,018,735	2,538,246	69.1
	Governorship				
	Senate	60,823,022	29,995,171	955,064	49.3
	House of Representatives	60,823,022	30,385,270	1,153,200	50.0
	State Houses of Assembly	60,823,022			
2007	Presidency	61,567,036	35,397,517	NA	57.5
	Governorship	61,567,036			
	Senate	61,567,036			
	House of Representatives	61,567,036			
	State Houses of	61,567,036			

	Assembly				
2011	Presidency	73,527,040	39,469,454	1,259,506	53.7
	Governorship	73,527,040			
	Senate	73,527,040			
	House of Representatives	73,527,040			
	State Houses of Assembly	73,527,040			

Source: The author with data generated from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) of Nigeria

Even though the mean percentage of voters' turnout is on the average, the credibility of the data is highly dubious. But it is also important to note that this average rating has been influenced by high voter turnout in the Presidential elections for the various election years. In the 1999 and 2003 General Elections for instance, the turnouts for the Presidential Elections were 52.3% and 69.1% respectively. On the other hand, the turnouts for the same periods for the Senate and House of Representatives were 42.1% ; 40.7% and 49.3% and 50% respectively. As table 3 had earlier on revealed, the Presidential seat in Nigeria's Fourth Republic has been under the control of the PDP. In the absence of viable opposition political party, it is certain that figures have often been doctored by the PDP to give impressions of legitimate dominance. Historically, Presidential Elections in Nigeria have either been deadlocked or upheld clear dominance of the Party in control of the Federal Government.

The skewing of partisanship politics in Nigeria to the elite angle has remained quite dangerous for democratization. In the first place, it has been encouraging undue state meddlesomeness to the economic lives of the society even when this same state has lacked adequate democracy for doing so. Second, it has rendered the Nigerian state a perpetual property of a predatory class, namely the Nigerian petty bourgeoisie. Third, it has been encouraging extreme coercive activities of the Nigerian state with dire implications for human rights abuses. Fourth, it has been rendering this state incapable of resolving social conflicts and violence. Fifth, it has been ennobling rather than resolving the prospectuses of solving the ethnic problem in the country. Sixth, it has been perpetuating Nigeria's inferior roles in the contemporary global accumulation process. Seventh and finally, it has been undermining the propensities for igniting the productive base of the Nigerian domestic economy. In the overall, incapacitations of partisanship politics have become a recompradorizing factor in Nigeria.

#### **Deregulations of the Nigerian Political Economy and Growing Authoritarianism in the Public Policy Process.**

There are three principal indices of growing authoritarianism in the Nigerian public policy process that are considered in this section. These include:

- The weakening of planned development in Nigeria as a clear evidence of authoritarianism especially as this trend has resulted from the incapacity of the country's national development from coping with the global free market which spells deregulations.
- The growth in unemployment during deregulations has been a clear pointer of growing authoritarianism especially because the public sector in Nigeria which has

been divested under the regime of deregulations has still remained the greater employer of labour.

- The perpetuation of the American-style Presidential System instead of the erstwhile British-style Parliamentary System in Nigeria's deregulated political economy despite the fact that this political economy is characteristically comprador and heavily multicultural. The Presidential System has encouraged the skewing of power to the centre to the disadvantage of the lower tiers of government.

Even though development planning is ubiquitous in the defunct Socialist Economies, it had been adopted in a number of developing countries whose incapacitation in the global free market compelled them to what had been described as 'mixed economies'. Between 1962 and 1985, Nigeria operated four National Development Plans: 1962-68; 1970-74; 1975-80; and 1980-85 as the First, Second, Third and Fourth National Development Plans respectively.

With the introduction of Neoliberal Reforms (beginning with SAP) in 1986, Nigeria became unable to continue with these programmed medium-terms National Development Plans and instead introduced short-term National Rolling Plans: First National Rolling Plan, 1990-92; and the Second National Rolling Plan, 1993-95. Events of the Neoliberal conundrum have incapacitated these plans even when there have not been any major changes in the country's operations of a 'mixed economy'. Indeed, over the years of neoliberal reforms, some democratic impetuses that have accompanied these practices have been lost. In other words, the mobilizational impetus of governance underscored in these National Development Plans became significantly impaired; mostly as more viable options have not been introduced. For instance, even with the introduction of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), 2004-7, as the economic arrowhead of Nigeria's Fourth Republic, there have still been failures in igniting the required democratization of the public policy process in the country. As has been observed, the NEEDS invariably remained a strong evidence of the militarization of the Nigerian society even in the absence of actual military regimes so far in the Fourth Republic (Umezurike, 2010a).

The Nigerian state has indeed become more authoritarian than democratic under the spell of neoliberal deregulations. An important illustration of this is the growth in unemployment levels in Nigeria's neoliberal conjuncture. Up to this moment, the Nigerian private sector including the privatized enterprises has not taken up the gauntlet in terms of employing the burgeoning labour force in the country. Table 5 below presents some details of the trends in poverty rates and unemployment levels in Nigeria for some selected years. These two variables have also been key indicators of low development of human capital in the country; at the same time as human capital development have been key facilitators to the democratization of the public policy process.

**Table 5: Trends in the Poverty Rates and Unemployment Levels in Nigeria for Selected Years, 1980-2010.**

Year*	Poverty Rate (%)	Unemployment Levels**(indices)	Comments
1980	28.1	4.3	Neoliberal reform in Nigeria had not actually started at this time even though their expectations had begun
1985	46.3	4.3	Austerity measures which had been the most immediate precursor of neoliberal reforms had been taken place at this time
1991	43.5	NA	These are three years after the two-year span that SAP had been scheduled. The Third Republic had begun in 1989
1993	49.0	NA	This was a significant turning point for neoliberal reforms in Nigeria in that there was a near-collapse of the Nigerian political economy and a forced exit of the military regime that husbanded SAP in the country
1999	78.2	NA	This marked the inauguration of Nigeria's Fourth Republic stylishly tagged the post-Military era. The defunct SAP had been replaced by equally stringent neoliberal macroeconomic policies and programmes.
2002	58.2	13.6	Agonizing poverty and unemployment had compelled the Federal Government of Nigeria to initiate NAPEP, a poverty reduction programme. The efficacy of the latter has not been quite high.
2005	54.4	11.9	The third General Election in Nigeria's neoliberal regime had been becoming consolidated at this time. Both the poverty rate and levels of unemployment have still remained threatening
2010	50.6	21.1	A period of preparations for the Fourth General Election in which the threat of one-partism had begun to become more obvious. Even though poverty rate had declined slightly, the menace of unemployment had become heightened.

\*Efforts have been made to select years in which data are available. In addition, the selected years had been informed by a purposive sampling technique in which the era of pre-deregulation and deregulation periods are effectively represented.

\*\*Even though some calculations of poverty may have included the unemployment figures, the present effort chose to have the two together because of their mutual relevance for underscoring the analysis at hand.

As table 5 above clearly shows, both the poverty rates and levels of unemployment grew astronomically as soon as deregulations were inaugurated in the country since 1986. For instance, the table shows that the rate of poverty which was 28.1% in 1980 rose sharply to 46.5% in 1991 and again rose further to 78.2% in 1999. The indices of unemployment on the other hand rose from mere 4.3 % to 13.6% in 1980 and 2002 respectively. In 2010, the level of unemployment has grown extensively to 21.1%. These realities have continued to reveal the negative implications of neoliberal reforms for human capital development in Nigeria and in the overall to the asphyxiation of the democratic impetuses of the public policy process in the country.

Equally, a condensation of how deregulations have heightened the authoritarian thrust of the public policy process in Nigeria in some ominous ways derives from the continuation of the American-style presidential system of government which had been enunciated in the country's Constitution of 1979. This same constitutional type was also introduced in the abrogated Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in 1989. Indeed, between 1986 to 1999 when Nigeria's Fourth Republic came into being, Nigeria's Federal Constitution had been changed a total of three times; but what is most instructive with regard to authoritarianism in the public policy process is that even though these Constitutions have failed to properly act as guides to the democratization of the public policy process, they have

rather been recycled a number of times. These periods of Constitutionalism so to say have only been interspersed by actual military regimes in which the public policy process faced more ramified authoritarian thrusts.

Invariably, the public policy process in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria has been undermined first by the fact that it empowers the executive organs in Nigeria to the disadvantage of the judiciary and the legislature. And second, by the fact that it accumulates power at the central government to the disadvantage of the lower tier governments including the state and the local governments. There are some significant implications of these two above that are worth our attention here. First, the impairments of the powers of the judiciary and the legislature have effectively reduced the potency of the separation of powers and its relevance to the public policy processes in Nigeria. Indeed these have been at the hub of the lackadaisical conduct of the Nigerian legislature and the gimmickry of the judiciary already alluded to earlier in the paper.

In addition to the above, these trends have been at the core of why the public policy process in Nigeria have been mostly at the behest of the metropole including especially foreign creditor agencies and their allied multilateral agencies including the IMF/IBRD. In other words, while the obfuscating executive organs including the Presidents and the Governors have effectively represented the core values of the traditional petty bourgeoisie (the resilient authoritarian past), their persistent dependence on the metropole has been willy nilly. The umbilical links with the metropole have been expanding external dependence and undermining orthochtonous framework of the public policy process in Nigeria.

Also, these trends shown above have been undermining the efficacy of nascent frameworks for the public policy process including in particular the proficient expansion of Nigerian federalism in the State and Local Government systems in the country. Even though these institutions now exist in the country, their efficacies for expanding the democratic impetuses of the public policy process have continued to be low. When Nigeria became a republic in 1963, there had been only three regions and no definitely established local government system. But at the moment, there are a total of 36 State-tier governments (these states had replaced the erstwhile regions); and a total of 774 local governments in Nigeria. And yet the devolutions have had very low effects for the democratic impetuses of the public policy process in the country.

The overbearing role of the central government has been elaborated in Section 162 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as follows:

162(3) Any amount standing to the credit of Federation Account shall be distributed among the Federal and State Governments and the Local Government Councils in each State on such terms and in such manner as may be prescribed by the National Assembly.

162(4) Any amount standing to the credit of the States in the Federation Account shall be distributed among the States in such terms and in such manner as may be prescribed by the National Assembly.

162(5) The amount standing to the credit of the Local Government Councils in the Federation Account shall also be allocated to the State for the benefit of their Local Government Councils on such terms and in such manner as may be prescribed by the National Assembly.

It is clear that the domineering roles of the National Assembly and by implications of the Federal Government in the finances of the State and Local Government tiers in Nigeria underscores the top-heaviness of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria.

## Conclusion.

This paper has sustained the thesis that neoliberal reforms in Nigeria as in the rest of Africa have been shortchanging democracy, and in consequence distorting the configuration of social forces in the societies under consideration. In order to make proofs, the paper establishes that the various components of neoliberal reforms have deregulations as their common characteristic. Through the uses of tables and logical deductions, the paper sustained the two general propositions that had been stated. In the first place, it has been established that the orientation of neoliberal reforms in Nigeria towards deregulations of the domestic political economy of Nigeria has been leading to the growth of poverty and income inequality in the country.

The second general proposition on the other hand noted that the orientation of these neoliberal reforms towards deregulations have been leading to the failures of electoral democracy including also elitization of partisanship politics and authoritarian trends in the public policy process. In providing proofs to this proposition, two tables had been presented. In addition to the above, growing political apathy (deduced from low voters' turn-out in all the elections of Nigeria's Fourth Republic) has been used to further the proofs of elitization of partisanship politics in Nigeria's neoliberal conjuncture. Paucity of data on these elections and the unreliability of the election figures themselves posed significant challenges to analysis here. Nonetheless, it had been noted that the issues of political apathy in Nigeria is real.

Within the petty bourgeois governing circles in Nigeria, there has always been the fear of low cohesion of the Nigerian polity. High premium has historically been placed on national integration. The entrenchment of a presidential system had been consummated in the urge to foster national cohesion and integration. Even though federal institutions exist, this petty bourgeois paranoid clearly suggest that Nigerian federalism is not effectively practiced. This has received higher verve under the regime of deregulations where petty bourgeois fear of political disintegration has been most.

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