

Chapter 2

Work, Workers and Productivity in the Era of Globalisation: The Nigerian Experience

Abdulwaheed Omar & Dung Pam Sha

Introduction

The main purpose of this paper is to discuss the impact of globalisation on work patterns, workers and their unions, productivity of the workforce, and the general response of the Nigerian workers to the changes in the global environment. The arguments of the paper are as follows: first, since Nigeria is part of the global capitalist system, it has witnessed in varying degrees the presence of globalisation in the economy, society and politics. Second, global economic forces have compelled African States to aggressively implement economic reforms as a way of demonstrating their ability to fulfill global agenda of making profits. Third, the actions of both the State and private sector have implications for labour markets and labor relations in Nigeria. New structures at the work place have been instituted, public sector employment has declined and the informal sector has grown with evidence of deficits in decent work. The overall productivity of the economy has declined, with few areas experiencing limited growth in productivity.

Fourth, the State on her part has continued to implement anti-labour programmes including the dismantling of labour legislations and restructuring of labour unions. The Nigeria labour movement's responses have aimed at addressing both labour/management concerns and national economic and political issues.

The discussion has been done in the next four sections. Section two defines the key concepts used in this discussion i.e. globalisation, work and productivity. Section three outlines with examples, concrete manifestation of globalisation processes in Nigeria. Section four examines the impact of globalisation on work, workers, trade unions and productivity. Section five examines the response of labour to the neo-liberal programmes of globalisation in Nigeria. Section six concludes the discussion.

Globalisation, Work, Workers and Productivity: Conceptualisation

Globalisation is a process where finance capital expands beyond national borders, enveloping nation-states and markets, thus creating a capitalist world market (Palloix, 1979). It was Marx and Engels who in trying to describe this phenomenon, remarked in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, that in fulfilling the requirements of a constantly expanding market for its products, the bourgeoisie (the owner of finance capital) shows up everywhere on the entire surface of the globe, it nestles everywhere, settles everywhere, and establishes connection everywhere. (Ostenle, 1998: 2) As capital expands, it affects the social formation, which she nestles and settles in.

Globalisation has also been defined as: "a coalescence of varied transnational processes and domestic structures, allowing the economy, politics, culture, and ideology of one country to penetrate another. The chain of causality runs from the spatial reorganization of production to international trade

and to the integration of financial markets..." (Mittelman, 1997:3).

The International Labour Organisation sees globalisation as a phenomenal process of growing interdependence in the world where people are linked together economically and socially by trade, investments and governance. These links are powered by market liberalisation, and information, communication and transportation technologies under the guidance and protection of the national state. The global process has historically been driven by increased international trade; the growth of multinational corporations; the internationalisation of finance; and the application of new technologies in all these operations, especially computer and other information technologies. (www.ilo.org/labor/globalisation_process.htm).

In concrete terms, transnational corporations move their money, factories and products around the planet at ever more rapid rates of speed in search of cheaper labor and raw materials and governments willing to ignore or abandon consumer, labor and environmental protection laws.

Work: has been defined as "any physical or mental activities which transform materials into a more useful form, provide or distribute goods or services to one-self or others and /or improve human knowledge and understanding of the world" (Brown, 1984). In this definition, work can be mental (for example, thinking through the solution to a problem) or physical (for example, cutting down a tree or serving food to customers in a restaurant) or both mental and physical (for example, teaching a class of students). However, such work must result in change of some material or of the thinking subject. (Iyayi, 2008).

Work can also be defined "as the carrying out of tasks which enable people to make a living within the environment in which they find themselves" (Watson, 1987). This definition focuses on the type of work that gets paid for or that enable people meet their needs. However, not all

forms of work may be paid for or enable people to meet their needs. Typically, the slave was never paid for his labour and the work that he or she performed was not designed to meet his or her needs but those of others. In capitalist society, many people who work are paid wages that do enable them to meet their needs. Sometimes too, work may be performed to satisfy the individual doing it, rather than some external person or group. People who are artists often perform work of this kind. (Iyayi, 2008).

Work pattern can be permanent or temporary and are guided by regulations such as the time spent, the wages to be paid, the conditions under which the person performing such work and whether agreement on these terms is reached collectively by the worker and the employer. Before the aggressive onslaught by globalisation, the predominant pattern of work was permanent and wages and conditions of work were regulated. This is the aspect that globalisation has forcefully been changing.

Productivity: is the output per unit of labour performed by a worker within a particular period of time. It may change due to the amount of capital or machinery put at the service of workers, technological progress or managerial efficiency gains, or the current economic situation leading to higher or lower capacity utilization. Productivity is affected through trade, capital mobility and the internationalization of technology and Research and Development which can lead to a reallocation of production processes. Trade for instance, increases incentives to specialise in higher productivity sectors, produce economies of scale and encourages innovation. Inward and outward foreign direct investment implies opportunities to learn and adopt technologies and productivity-enhancing practices from abroad. At the same time, the internationalization of Research and Development supports domestic innovation and technological progress. Immigration may also help to increase the matching efficiency of labour markets (Stark

Jürgen, 2007). On the other hand, labour productivity can adversely be affected by forces of globalisation such as poor state response to decent work: rights to work, lower wages, poor conditions of service, right to unionize, etc.

Some Manifestations of Globalisation in Nigeria

Nigeria is a peripheral member of the world capitalist system and therefore she contributes to the growth and development of this global system of production and exchange. This implies that developments within the country would necessarily reflect global economic developments. For the purpose of this discussion, we will discuss as characteristics of globalisation in Nigeria, the increasing penetration of foreign direct investments (FDI), trade liberalisation and state reforms programmes that reflect current market ideologies such as privatization, and the growth of information communication technology.

(i) Foreign Direct Investments in Nigeria

The foreign direct investment as a global phenomenon has expanded over the years as transnational corporations have exported capital globally. The table below shows the increasing level of FDI into the country since 2001, the highest being in 2006. This is a sign that global capital is increasingly penetrating the Nigerian economy.

Table 2.1: Nigeria's Net Foreign Direct Investment inflow (US million Dollars)

Year	Africa	Nigeria	% of Africa
1980	392	-188.52	
1981	2,430	588	24.19
1995	5,119	1,079	21.07
1997	10,667	1,539	14.43
1998	8,928	1,051	11.77

1999	12,231	1,005	8.22
2000	489	930	10.96
2001	18,769	1,104	5.88
2002	10,998	1,281	11.65
2003	15,033	1,200	7.98
2004	-	2,127	-
2005	-	4,978	-
2006	-	13,956	-
2007	-	12,454	-

Source: UNCTAD Foreign Direct Investment Database, 2003

It is also clear that the mining sector, particularly the oil and gas has received more FDI, followed by the trading and business sector. This is followed by the manufacturing sector. The least are in transport and communication and in agriculture. This explains why FDI in Nigeria cannot generate higher levels of employment because it invests in the mining sector which is capital-intensive.

Table 2.2: Sectoral Composition of FDI, 1990-2001(%)

Year	Mining & Quarrying	Manufacturing	Agriculture	Transport & Communication	Building & Construction	Trading & Business	Misc. Services
1990-1994	22.9	43.7	2.3	1.7	5.7	8.3	15.4
1995-1999	43.5	23.6	0.9	0.4	1.8	4.5	25.3
2000-2001	30.7	18.9	0.6	0.4	2.0	25.8	21.5

Source: Central Bank Nigeria Statistical Bulletin (1990-2001)

The conventional argument of the neoliberal scholars is that foreign investment promotes growth and generates employment in developing countries. The counter argument is that FDI may generate growth, but this growth does not

translate to the generation of decent jobs in the developing countries. It is a known fact that workers across the globe are becoming more closely linked through common employers, or through the threat of factories relocating to areas where labour is docile and cheap (Bezuidenhout, 2000: 1). In the developing countries, TNCs use capital-intensive technologies in the extractive sectors and therefore don't generate employment. Those that have transferred their production facilities to the Third World don't respect decent work/labour standards.

(ii) Foreign Trade/Trade Liberalisation

Trade liberalisation is another globalisation strategy that promotes the sale of capitalist products around the globe. The World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the states in advance capitalism have pursued with vigour this agenda on behalf of the capitalist classes in their countries. The table below shows that Nigeria has opened her borders to facilitate trade liberalisation. The country is basically involved in the exports of crude oil and the imports of manufactured and assorted consumer goods have been on the increase as the table shows.

Table 2.3: Nigeria: Imports and Export 2005 -2007 (N billion)

	2005	2006	2007
CURRENT ACCOUNT	4,066.60	3,443.08	3,715.69
Goods	3,833.00	3,457.63	3,365.16
Export (fob)	7,246.54	7,324.69	8,126.00
Imports (c.f.)	(3,413.54)	(3,867.04)	(4,760.84)

Because of this liberalised trade policy, Nigeria has opened her market to imported goods from China. The table below shows that imports from China increased from 3.5 percent in 1996 to 13.0 percent of global import in 2005.

Table 2.4: Comparison of the World and China's Share of Nigeria's Import (US\$ Million)

S/N	Product name	1996		2000		2005		1996	2000	2005
		World	China	World	China	World	China	China's share of Nigeria's imports		
1	Food & live animals	885.9	3.5	1098.0	12.7	2140.6	29.8	0.4	1.2	1.4
2	Beverages & Tobacco	10.8	0.0	34.2	0.3	69.4	0.7	0.0	0.9	1.0
3	Crude oil/fuel	121.9	1.8	94.0	1.8	120.4	8.9	1.5	1.9	7.4
4	Mineral fuel/lubricants	70.9	0.0	100.8	0.3	2396.7	1.0	0.0	0.3	0.04
5	Animal/veg.oil / fat/wax	37.2	0.0	23.3	0.05	64.4	0.04	0.1	0.2	0.1
6	Chemicals/products	981.3	59.6	1176.5	46.3	2085.5	174.6	6.1	3.9	8.4
7	Manufactured goods	1031.5	30.7	1095.5	53.8	3297.8	566.0	3.0	4.9	17.2
8	Machinery/Equipment	1876.7	66.2	1955.1	98.1	6600.0	1229.7	3.5	5.0	18.6
9	Miscellaneous Manufactures	296.1	23.2	238.4	39.4	948.7	290.1	7.8	16.5	30.6
10	Commodities	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Total Imports	5312.1	185.1	5815.8	252.7	17723.5	2300.8	3.5	4.3	13.0

Source: World Integrated Trade Solutions (WITS) data 2007.

The classical and neo-classical economists argue that trade enables an economy to obtain the cheapest products on the world market, and may, in turn, reduce domestic prices through lower import prices. This has the advantage of increasing the real wealth of the importing economy. This further implies welfare gains because of lower consumer prices. It also means improved price competitiveness. The counter argument is that, in many African countries, the decline in employment has been as a result of increased competition from imported goods, making it extremely difficult for manufacturers in developing countries to face this competition and thus to have no options than to retrench labour in the private sector.

(iii) States withdrawal and prominence of the market

State withdrawal from the process of production and accumulation has been a dominant feature of globalisation. Globalisation favours free markets to dictate the direction of development for nations. Currently, globalisation processes witnessed in Nigeria is taking place via neo-liberal economic reform policies such as Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) or the various economic and political reform programmes. The neo-liberal strategy has reduced some of the space available for the labour movement to insist on including social concerns in policies and programmes (Bezuidenhout, 2000: 9-10). The privatisation programmes will be considered here.

Privatization: The Nigerian State has vigorously implemented a privatization programme of some state-owned enterprises, as well as deregulation of government activities. Between 1999 and 2006, about 116 enterprises were privatized, including various government enterprises operating in industries such as aluminum, telecommunications, petrochemical, insurance, and hotel. There has been the unbundling of the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) into 18 companies responsible for power generation, transmission, and distribution. Others include the concessioning of state-owned enterprises such as ports to private sector operators; the sale of 51 percent of its stake in the Hilton Hotel (in Abuja); the sale of the state-owned Nigeria Telecommunications Limited (NITEL); the deregulation of various economic sectors to encourage private sector participation, notably in telecommunications, power, and downstream petroleum sectors and the liberalisation of the telecom sector resulting in an increase in the number of telephone lines in the country from about 500,000 landlines in 2001 to over 32 million GSM lines at present.

Privatization has been seen by neo-liberal scholars as a strategy that has potentials of freeing private sector to participate in development and by allowing it to operate, the

economy will become competitive and prices of goods and services will be lowered and citizens will benefit. On the contrary however, privatization has potentials of destroying jobs and violating the labour standards as will be seen in the next section.

(iv) Information and Communication Technology

As noted earlier, globalisation has been facilitated by the development and introduction of information and communication technology into production and management processes. The use of IT for instance, has changed the way major companies do business. Technology and the software that comes with it also make it possible to trade previously untradable services. Nigeria being a dependent economy imports almost 100 percent of all its Information Technology (IT) equipment, and many firms supply, service, and maintain these imported equipment. Currently, the structure of the IT industry shows that vendors representing all the major global brands in ICT dominate the industry. Between 1999 and today, some of the leading brands have opened country offices alongside their vendors/distributors. Microsoft, Hewlett Packard, Samsung, Dell , CISCO, ORACLE, are among the leading brands with a Nigerian office. Nigerian-owned firms are now also growing in strength, but besides Zinox and Omatek, they are largely players in the distributive trade.

Worth noting too is the point that deregulation of the telecommunications sector by the Nigerian State has led to the introduction of major Global System of Mobile Communications (GSM), mobile phone providers such as MTN Nigeria, Celtel, Globacom and Mtel are key players. The table shows the phenomenal growth of the ICT sector in Nigeria with the number of lines, number of service providers (ISPs) and the teledensity in the country.

Table 2.5: The Nigerian Telecommunications Market 1999-2007

	1999	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
No of connected lines	450	702	850	1120	1223	1668	2449
No of connected digital mobile lines (million)	None	1.59	3.10	9.20	18.59	32.32	55.24
No of National Carriers	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
No of Operating ISPs	18	35	35	36	69	117	117
No of Active Licensed Fixed Line Operators	9	17	20	22	26	26	29
Number of Licensed Mobile Operators	1	4	4	4	4	4	4
Teledensity	0.73	1.89	3.35	8.50	16.27	24.18	41.21
Investments (US\$ million)	50	2100	4000	6000	7500	810	11500

Source: Nigerian Communications Commission (2007) quoted in *CBN Annual Report 2007*

State deregulation has also led to the issuance of licenses for fixed wireless networks, Internet services, VSAT (Very Small Aperture Satellite System) and telecommunication equipment services. The telecom boom has resulted in greater usage of Internet Technology, growth and availability of cyber cafés, increased Internet provision by Internet Service Providers and Power Telephone Operators, increased communications services (mobile telephony, e-mail), reduction of Internet costs, online information gathering and research, e-learning, Internet business opportunities, online advertising opportunities as well as developments in e-banking. These developments have fundamentally changed the landscape of work, labour's

contribution to production and the rights accorded to labour in the work environment.

On the positive side, the ICT revolution is leading to a transformation of production processes and the structure of employment by sector and occupation and the content and skill requirements of most jobs. The use of this technology has not only facilitated working across borders, it has also brought changes in work relations. More and more people are working at home or in call centres. Production techniques are also changing. Old systems for the mass production of standard products are being replaced by methods that allow shorter production runs of more differentiated products. Some of these changes can, of course, have positive effects for workers and consumers in the right policy framework (Stark Jürgen, 2007). It can be said that globalisation has increased employment in some sectors of the economy such as the IT sector. It has also improved communication for the IT literate worker who uses it to improve production and union organizing usually on the internet. Despite all these advantages, ICT has contributed to the saturation of the informal economy with consequences of lower incomes and with enterprise owners and workers who work under indecent work conditions.

Globalisation, Work, Trade Unions and Productivity

(a) Globalisation and World of Work

Neo-liberal economic practices have transformed the nature of work and work organisation. While work has become more heterogeneous and flexible, the working class has become more disaggregated. Flexibility according to OECD may take the form of:

- a) employers deciding how many employees they need at any given time. This is called external numerical flexibility;
- b) various forms of sub-contracting or putting-out of work, also known as externalization, casualisation of work and outsourcing
- c) working hours and shifts decided according to employers' needs, also known as internal numerical flexibility;
- d) job assignment and rotation according to employers' needs, called functional flexibility; and
- e) wages adjustment according to performance and productivity also called wage flexibility. (Cited in Monk, 1999: 4).

Flexibility is one measure that capital has adopted to effect these changes in order to maximise profits. In practice there has been continued anti worker restructuring of the workplace where public and private sector employers engage 'independent contractors' and labour brokers. This has enabled employers to reassert themselves through the 'discipline of dismissal' and the 'discipline of independent contracting'. In this sense, workers cannot argue about 'unfair dismissal' anymore because the employment relationship has been restructured in flexible commercial terms. Secondly, many public institutions and private enterprises have outsourced their security and office cleaning functions. Third, in the process of changing the nature of work, a phenomenon of feminisation of the labour force has occurred. More women now participate in the labour market and work under conditions of poor wages, non-negotiated conditions of service and high work intensity.

The implications of the flexible forms of work on the labour relations are many. Flexibility poses a challenge to social security arrangements as the outsourced or casualised labourer does not enjoy any; it leads to lack of continuity of

work since a worker could easily be laid-off; spans of work and unemployment alternate, as do weekly working hours; and defining the periods during which flex-workers are entitled to various benefits (e.g. to unemployment benefits), is becoming more difficult as the forms of work continue to multiply. Similarly, definitions of various forms of work become blurred as home workers resemble the self-employed, the self-employed resemble on-call workers, employees resemble entrepreneurs, etc. These new approaches to work shows that the 'market' has found ways of reasserting its power over workers and trying to get around direct employment relationships (Nadoo, 2003: 4). These approaches have fundamentally affected the employment levels in many countries.

(b) Globalisation, Workers and Trade Unions

Since globalisation has changed work patterns, workers and the trade union movement are directly affected. The task in this section is to demonstrate how neo-liberal globalisation has affected the worker and the Union.

- (i) Workers are laid-off from formal jobs in the public and private sector due to globalisation policies of downsizing and minimum government. The Nigeria State has implemented many policies since the early 1980s that have affected adversely the levels of employment and these include:
 - a) retrenchment in public sector in the 1980s and 1990s;
 - b) trade liberalisation and the collapse of the textile and manufacturing industries leading to retrenchment in the private sector in the 1980s and 1990s;
 - c) casualisation and outsourcing in the 1990s in the private sector;
 - d) Privatisation of state owned enterprises and rationalisation exercises;
 - e) introduction of ICT in the private sector like banks;

- f) outsourcing in some public sector departments like Universities;
- g) rationalisation due to civil service reforms in 2005/6 to date.

Table 2.6: Nigeria: Employment Statistics 2003 – 2007

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total Population	129,900,168	134,131,224	138,468,013	140,003,542	144,483,655.34
Total Labour Force	54,929,577	55,538,881	56,170,672	58,933,891	61,249,485
Total Employment ¹	46,800,000	48,124,440	49,486,362	50,886,826	52,326,923
Total Unemployment	8,129,577	7,414,441	6,684,310	8,047,065	8,922,562
Unemployment Rate (%) ²	14.8	13.4	11.9	13.7	14.6

Source: National Bureau for Statistics quoted in Central Bank of Nigeria (2007). *Annual Report 2007* pg. 9

These policies and programmes have increased the unemployment levels in the country. The table above does not capture the total levels of unemployment in the country, but it shows that the total unemployment is on the increase. The rate went down in 2005 with 11.9%, but increased by 2.7% between 2006 and 2007.

- (ii) Due to globalisation, workers are paid low wages and work under indecent conditions.

Maintaining low wage has been an element of the economic reform programme for sometime in the public and private sector in Nigeria. This has been seen as an anti-inflationary measure, which will enhance competitiveness and attract foreign investment. Because of this, real wages have declined; a huge gap between low-paid and higher-paid works exists, and the wages are too meager that Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) used to say: "...my take-home pay cannot take me home".

- (iii) Both public and private sector managers pay less or no attention to negotiated wages and conditions of service in the workplace. Similarly, outsourced or casualised workers do not negotiate for their wages and conditions of service.
- (iv) Similarly, outsourced or casualised workers are unprotected due to the absence of unions. Even when they see the need to put in place a union, managers resist and simply just sack the initiators.
- (v) The pension scheme in both the private and public sector has been liberalized in a manner that allows the state to partially hand-off. Serving workers in these sectors are to make direct contributions to the scheme, usually from the wages.
- (vi) The global recession is leading the state to **cut down on expenditure in the social sector** and this has severe implications for improvements in living conditions of the working class and citizens, including improvements in minimum wage of workers.
- (vii) The increase in Foreign Direct Investments and the use of foreign workers by foreign consultants or contractors in Nigeria has led to competition with domestic workers especially in the construction and oil industries.

Globalisation and Decent Work Deficit in Nigeria: Few Illustrations: The Oil and Gas Sector

The Oil and gas industry in Nigeria employs capital-intensive technology in production as is the case with other natural resource sector. This means that the sector generates small level of employment in situations where a “reserve army of labour” exists. It has also been observed that the oil

and gas companies handling outsourced jobs do in fact operate by using casual and part-time workers. When this happens these companies keep wages down for these categories of workers, sometimes below the level in the local labour market. It has been observed that foreign oil companies recruit foreign workers (even in manual and less technical fields) and bring them into the country. This contributes to the small number of workers in this sector. The decent work deficit noticed here is the fact that decent jobs are also lost because of the changing method of production which is capital-intensive. Casualised labour is used in production. Wages are small and the right to organize is violated as contracting firms resist the attempt by workers to organize.

The Textile Sector

The textile sector has suffered more of a problem triggered by the structural adjustment programme than by the adoption of the modern technology in the production in the sector. The adjustment programme promoted liberalisation of trade which saw the massive importation of cheap textiles from Europe and Asia. The nascent domestic textile industries faced strong competition from the outside and so had to give up. The collapse of the industries in the 1990s impacted heavily on the workers as they were retrenched.

The Services Sector

The service sector consists of both more formal private organized sector and those in the informal sector rendering all forms of service for wages. In both settings, workers' rights have adversely been affected. There has been noticeable and blatant denial of freedom of association for instance in hotels and restaurants and an increasing incidence of child labour. Many that work here spend long

hours at work and are not covered by any negotiated conditions of service.

The Banking Sector

The banking sector has been one of the beneficiaries of the ICT revolution. In 2005, the Central Bank of Nigeria gave Nigerian banks eighteen months to recapitalize the minimum paid-up capital for banks from N2 billion to N25 billion and at the end of the exercise only 25 banks met the requirement to continue operation. A major component and source of investment drive for the 25 recapitalized banks is the synchronization of their computer networks. All the banks now offer online transactions, Automatic Teller Machine (ATM) services and even online internet and mobile banking. Most of them have also migrated to new banking software platforms.

Again this development has significantly impacted on decent work and workers rights in the banking sector. First, is the reduction in employment rates in the sector. Second, there has been increasing use of casual and part-time workers. Third, wages are also low and in particular, the payment of casualised and part-time staff in a situation where these banks make huge profits. Workers rights in the sector are violated as there are restrictions on labour organizing in the workplace particularly the casualized and part-time workers. Their conditions of work are not negotiated and therefore remain poor.

The Informal Sector

The liberalisation of the telecom sector by the Nigerian State has resulted in an increase in the number of telephone lines in the country from about 500,000 landlines in 2001 to over 32 million GSM lines at present. Investments in the sector is estimated to be over US\$1 billion and the country is seen as one of those with the fastest growing teledensity in the

world after China (Okonjo-Iweala, Ngozi and Osafo-Kwaako, Philip, 2007). As noted above, these developments have implications for decent work and observance of workers' rights.

One common belief is that ICT has been able to generate substantial amount of employment through the use of mobile phone by many Nigerians to sustain a living. There are many call centers in villages and towns mostly operated by people between age 20-29 years (38%), mostly women with secondary/post secondary education in Nigeria. Some of these people run shops for the sale of Global System of Mobile (GSM) accessories as a major form of occupation, as a means of self-employment as well as a means of sustaining livelihood. Past studies have shown that over 2,000 persons are directly employed by GSM operators and an estimated 40,000 Nigerians are benefiting from indirect employment generated by GSM operators in Nigeria (Ndukwe, 2003 quoted in Obayelu A. Elijah and Ogunlade, I. 2006).

The type of employment offered to these self-employed hawkers of phones, recharge cards and phone accessories, is basically underemployment. The sector is saturated with these young men and women operating as informal sector operators, with the obvious implication that incomes earned is meager and cannot sustain their livelihood. This is a case of indecent work since the incomes generated "cannot take the individual operator home". What has worsened the situation is the perennial predicaments faced by the operators, which include: irregular power supply, lack of training opportunities in IT, lack of in-house IT experts, lack of vision and support by government, lack of technical information concerning specific and appropriate technologies. So when young people are faced with these titanic problems, certainly, they should be considered as operating at the margins.

Although, the operators in the GSM sector are many in number, they have not been able to exercise their right to freedom of association, which will be crucial for them to

raise other issues such as the right to adequate, safe working conditions and right to a clean and safe environment. They are confronted daily by the agencies of the state for occupying unapproved city space. It is also a fact that workers in the large telecommunication firms are not allowed to unionize or considerable obstacles are placed on the part of their unionisation.

(ii) Globalisation and Trade unions

The changes in global accumulation as discussed above have fundamentally affected trade unions in Nigeria as they risk losing power in economic, political and social terms. (Munk, 1999: 13) Because of the impact which neo-liberal policies have on work patterns and, therefore, on the worker, we have experienced the following:

- (i) A decline in the membership of public and private sector unions;
- (ii) A decline in the financial positions of the Unions because of the decline in membership;
- (iii) there are mounting organisational challenges necessitating cutbacks in union activities;
- (iv) Insufficient funding for important activities has led to the dependence on external funding which is also drying up;
- (v) The changing patterns of work has made trade union organising a difficult task to undertake; and
- (vi) Trade unions confront basic problems arising from the control which government and the private sector have over outsourced and casualised workers. According to Jentsch, (1989) quoted in Munk (1999: 15) these problems include:

- 1) a crisis of political organising into unions due to the differentiation of labour and the trends towards flexibility;
- 2) a crisis of workers' loyalty to the union, due to the ideological onslaught of employers;
- 3) a crisis of union representation, due to unions' difficulty in organising the new casual and part-time or contract workers who are defined by various labour laws as non-permanent workers.

What follows from this situation is that the revolutionary consciousness of the working class is greatly affected because first, the new reserve army of part-time and contracted workers knows only the language of wages and second, they are often afraid of employers who can dismiss them at anytime without a challenge from any quarters.

The State and the Labour Unions: A Case of Authoritarianism and Corporatism

Globalisation has also influenced the relationship between the state and labour unions. Some of the relations are defined by authoritarian orientations of the state at special moments and at other moments by their intention to incorporate labour unions in government activities. In demonstrating the case of authoritarianism, the Nigerian State has exhibited this pattern to extend its pedigree of maximum state control over labour for the purpose of disorganizing and weakening the labour movement. The regime of General Babangida for instance disbanded the leadership of the NLC in 1988 to eliminate the labour movement's opposition to structural adjustment programmes. The regime took some anti-labour stance which included:

- a. the support of a weak faction of labour to weaken the militancy of the NLC's;
- b. introduction of compulsory mediation and arbitration to arrest labour disputes and prevent workers from going on strike;
- c. prevention of independent, full-time officials of affiliates from holding NLC leadership positions; empowerment of the Minister of Labour to de-register unions that affiliate to any international trade union centre outside the ILO and the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU).

In 2005, the Nigerian State enacted another draconian law to deconstruct the NLC and prevent it from establishing comradely and strategic links with civil society, which had in the recent past, opposed effectively the implementation of the regimes' neo-liberal policies. The Trade Union Amendment Act 2005 provides that:

- (i) First, membership of a trade union by employee shall be voluntary and no employee shall be forced to join any trade union or be victimised for refusing to join.
- (ii) Second, an employer shall make deductions from the wages of every worker who is a member of any of the trade unions for the purpose of paying contributions to the trade union and as may prescribed by the Registrar of Trade Unions.
- (iii) Third, for the purpose of collective bargaining, all registered unions in the employment of an employer shall constitute an electoral college to elect members who will represent them in negotiations with the employer. This is same with tripartite bodies.
- (iv) Fourth, no person, trade union or employer shall take part in a strike or lockout or engage in any conduct in

contemplation or furtherance of a strike or lockout unless the person, trade union or employer is not engaged in the provision of essential services, or unless the strike or lockout concerns a dispute arising from a collective and fundamental breach of contract of employment or collective agreement on the part of the employee, trade union or employer, or a ballot has been conducted at which a simple majority of all registered members voted to go on strike.

- (v) Fifth, no person shall subject any other person to any kind of constraint or restriction of his personal freedom in the course of persuasion. In addition, no trade union or registered Federation of Trade Unions or any member shall in the course of any strike compel any person who is not a member of its union to join any strike. (National Assembly, 2005).

The Nigerian State has also demonstrated a sense of corporatism as it tried to incorporate labour into certain strategic decision frameworks either to gain legitimacy or to avoid opposition from it. Labour was invited to be a member of the privatisation board, a member of the constitution review committee, a member of the electoral reform committee etc. Labour has on several occasions been formally requested to contribute to debates on national issues.

We have tried in the introductory sections to show that there is a direct relation between globalisation and labour productivity. In Nigeria, we argue that labour productivity is declining in the public sector due to poor state response to decent work such as the rights to work, lower wages, poor conditions of service, right to unionise, etc. However, productivity has increased in the private sector due to increase in the intensity of work (working for longer hours) or in situations where few workers using technology, do more work in short period of time to meet targets. Farm

workers can be said to produce higher productivity despite poor conditions they are confronted with. Apart from the production of oil that tops the production of Gross Domestic Product, the next important sector is agriculture.

Labours' Responses to Globalisation

Labor has responded in numerous ways. The individual workers have responded to global neo-liberal policies by engaging in what has been called "multiple mode of social livelihood" to meet the basic needs which the economy can no longer support or which the State has been unwilling or weak to provide (Mustapha, 1992:190-191). The concept of multiple modes is used to explain the alternative processes of income generation by individuals, households, communities, public and private institutions during the period of adjustment. This process may be quasi-legal or non-legal. Because of the multiple ways of generating income, the groups mentioned above have moved to the informal sector, and have led to its expansion. In the first place, the programmes intensified the process of informalisation within the economy.

This is because conditions of work within the formal sector extensively deteriorated.

At the union levels, the major strategy the Nigerian labour movement has adopted has been the capturing of the informal sector as one method of building and strengthening the trade unions. In Nigeria, the NLC has embarked on planned mobilisation and unionization of one million un-unionised workers from the ranks of retrenched workers, outsourced, casualised and part-time workers.

Another strategy employed by the labour movements in Nigeria is the intensification of trade union education directed at improving working class consciousness. In Nigeria, trade union education programmes have also been designed and implemented at both local and national levels

in order to provide their members with skills to meet the challenges that confront the unions. Their involvement in African Workers Participation Development Programme (APADEP), the National Schools (Rain and Harmattan Schools), the State Level Schools, and the Study Circles are worth noting here. The NLC is working towards the establishment of a Labour College.

Another innovative strategy the trade union movement has made use of is its involvement in economic investments in order to widen their financial base, and maintain their relevance in the face of the onslaught by global capital. The NLC has mobilised resources to invest in productive enterprises. In the pursuit of this objective, the NLC has a Labour Mass Transport system which, apart from providing welfare for workers and citizens, raises small resources for its upkeep.

The NLC has put in place strategies aimed at mobilising women who have continued to gain entry into the private and public sector employment on some flexible terms, in order to strengthen their labour unions. Their mobilization into the trade union movement has become prominent in the recent past, as more of them have been encouraged to participate actively in its activities. Currently, the NLC and its affiliates have provided in their Constitutions, clauses for strict adherence to women representation in their executive boards and committees at the district, regional and national levels. The unions have gender polices which are aimed at promoting women's representation in all structures and activities and to advance the concerns of women in the trade union movement.

Strike actions have continued to be methods used by labour in engaging the state and capital over welfare and other national problems in Nigeria. However, labour is beginning to shift from the traditional method of independent trade union action in workplaces to constructing political alliances with civil society for

collective action to challenge global capital. This has been referred to as “social movement trade unionism”. This new strategy is based on the fact that the old terrain of work and workplace organisation has shifted as discussed above, and so the labour tactics too have to change. The NLC has at one point or the other established some loose alliances between academics and students and with civil society. Of recent, the NLC established a political relation with civil society; the Labour-Civil Society Coalition, in prosecuting its battles with the State and private employers (Olukoshi, 1998).

Working class internationalism has been an old strategy, but it is being revived to confront global capital. It is now an accepted reality by trade unions in Africa that any effective response to globalisation has to be through forging a coordinated and strategic alliance between organized labour groups in different countries of the world. African trade unions have realised that they stand to benefit from the alliances being forged at the international level between trade unions, environmental associations and human rights groups to ensure that the rights of workers everywhere are respected. This is what has been called “global social movement unionism” (Bezuidenhout, 2000: 1).

In conclusion, we have argued and tried to show that globalisation which has been witnessed in varying degrees has affected the Nigerian economy, society and politics. Similarly, it has affected work patterns, the Nigerian worker and his/her union, and the productivity of the workforce. Second, globalisation has made the Nigerian State to implement neo-liberal economic reforms as a way of demonstrating its ability to fulfill global agenda of making profits. Third, the actions of both the State and private sector have implications for labour markets and labor relations in Africa. Ownership relations have changed, new structures at the work place have been instituted, public sector employment has declined and the informal sector has grown with evidence of decent work deficit. The overall

productivity of the economy has declined, with few areas experiencing limited growth in productivity. Fourth, the State on her part has continued to implement anti-labour programmes including the dismantling of labour legislations and restructuring of labour unions. Labour responses are not restricted to labour/management concerns, but to national and international economic and political issues. We will urge Nigerians to support our: (i) call for more labour-friendly government policies; (ii) mobilization of one million unorganized workers into unions to enable them reap their benefits as citizens; (iii) construction of alliances with civil society; (iv) intensification of the education of members and leadership; and (v) call for the review of the national minimum wage and the general review of wages in the country.*

* Editors' Note: This book was in process when the new national minimum wage was introduced.

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