

## Nigeria's Integration into the Global Capitalist System and its Impact on Domestic Economic Policy

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### Abstract

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Nigeria's integration into the global capitalist system has profoundly constrained domestic economic policy autonomy, yet the mechanisms through which this occurs remain inadequately theorized. This study critically examines how Nigeria's historical incorporation as a primary commodity exporter consolidated during colonialism and perpetuated through the post-independence oil economy created structural dependencies that interact with domestic elite predation to shape policy outcomes. Employing a political economy analysis framework, the research synthesizes historical institutionalism and dependency theory to interrogate the symbiotic relationship between external constraints and internal governance failures. The findings reveal that asymmetric trade relations, debt mechanisms, and International Financial Institution conditionalities establish a narrow policy corridor, but it is the capture of state institutions by rent-seeking elites that determines ultimate policy trajectories. These elites not only fail to mitigate dependency but actively exploit external structures as an alibi for governance failures while pursuing personal accumulation. The study concludes that Nigeria's underdevelopment stems from this symbiosis: external dependency provides the structural form and opportunity, while internal elite failure determines the exploitative outcome. Transcending this impasse requires dismantling domestic kleptocratic structures as a prerequisite for reclaiming genuine policy sovereignty.

**Keywords:** *Global capitalism, Structural dependency, Policy autonomy, Elite predation*

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## **Background to the Study**

The integration of Nigeria into the global capitalist system has fundamentally reshaped the nation's political economy, often constraining domestic policy autonomy in favor of market-oriented imperatives dictated by international financial institutions. This process of integration, characterized by the dominance of transnational capital flows and the weakening of state capacity, has frequently resulted in policy outcomes that prioritize external market logic over domestic developmental objectives (Igiebor, 2014). Consequently, the adoption of Structural Adjustment Programs and neoliberal reforms has redefined the state's role from a direct provider of social services to a facilitator of private sector interests, thereby deepening structural inequalities within the Nigerian economy (Abiakam, 2025). Specifically, the implementation of Structural Adjustment Programs under the auspices of international financial institutions mandated austerity measures, trade liberalization, and the privatization of state-owned enterprises, which collectively eroded the government's ability to protect vulnerable populations from market volatility (Popoola, 2020). This erosion of policy autonomy is further evidenced by the increasing influence of international agencies and financial players over national policies that were traditionally under the jurisdiction of states, as developing countries have seen their independent policy-making capacities diminished by the need to adopt externally formulated mandates (Esu & Awara, 2010). These mandates, often enforced through conditional lending practices, compelled the Nigerian state to implement austerity measures, market liberalization, and public sector downsizing that fundamentally altered the national economic landscape. The transformation of healthcare from a public good into a commodity exemplifies this shift, as the state was pressured to withdraw from direct service provision to create "enabling environments" for private sector involvement.

Furthermore, Nigeria's economic history is a poignant narrative of unfulfilled potential. Endowed with vast natural resources, particularly hydrocarbons, and a large population, it has since independence been marked by persistent underdevelopment, cyclical instability, and profound poverty despite significant revenue flows. Nigeria's journey in the global economy is a paradigmatic case of the promises and perils of integration from a position of structural weakness. Its engagement was decisively shaped by the colonial project, which integrated its territory not as a sovereign entity but as a resource appendage to the British Empire. The post-independence era, marked by the discovery and dominance of petroleum, saw an intensification rather than a transformation of this role. Nigeria became a quintessential example of a rentier state, in which most of the government revenue and foreign exchange derive from external rents (oil sales), thereby fundamentally altering the relationship among the state, its citizens, and the global market (Beblawi & Luciani, 1987; Karl, 1997).

A central thread in this narrative is the nature of its integration into the global capitalist system. This integration was not born of sovereign choice but was forged in the colonial era, which re-engineered local economies to serve as exporters of raw materials (such as palm oil, groundnuts, and, later, crude oil) and importers of manufactured goods, a classic pattern of peripheral engagement (Rodney, 1972). This foundational economic model established a

structural dependency that has proven remarkably resilient in the post-colonial period. This mode of integration has had a profound and enduring impact on the formulation of domestic economic policy. Policy space, the ability of a national government to make independent choices to pursue developmental goals, is not exercised in a vacuum. It is shaped by a country's position in the international division of labour, its financial obligations, and the power of transnational actors. In Nigeria, policy formulation is perpetually triangulated among three powerful forces: the volatile dictates of the global oil market, the conditionalities of International Financial Institutions (IFIs) during periods of crisis, and the vested interests of a domestic elite whose power derives from controlling and distributing rent.

The discovery and dominance of oil from the late 1960s onwards did not alter this fundamental dynamic; it intensified it. Nigeria became a quintessential rentier state, where government revenue was derived primarily from external rents (oil sales) rather than from internal taxation or productive enterprise (Beblawi & Luciani, 1987). This shift had a profound impact on the formulation of domestic economic policy. Policymaking became less about stimulating broad-based productive capacity and more about managing and distributing oil rents. The state's autonomy from its citizenry, funded by external rent, diminished accountability, and fostered a political economy centered on patronage and capture (Karl, 1997).

Furthermore, this integration has been mediated and reinforced by transnational actors, including International Financial Institutions (IFIs) such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, as well as multinational corporations (MNCs) in the extractive sector. Periods of economic crisis, often induced by oil price volatility, have led Nigeria to enter into loan agreements with stringent conditions under the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP). These programmes, implemented in the 1980s and 1990s, mandated liberalisation, privatisation, and austerity, directly dictating major policy directions and further eroding national policy space (Ihonvbere, 1994). This paper, therefore, explores the multifaceted impact of this entrenched global integration on Nigeria's ability to formulate and execute independent, development-oriented economic policies, arguing that external constraints are compounded and exploited by a domestic elite that benefits from the status quo.

Despite Nigeria's vast resource wealth and periodic attempts at economic planning, the nation remains trapped in a cycle of underdevelopment, policy inconsistency, and vulnerability to external shocks. A significant body of scholarship attributes this to its dependent integration into the global capitalist system, which locks the country into a primary export role, stifles industrialisation, and subjects it to coercive external policy directives (Ake, 1981; Frank, 1967). Conversely, a compelling counter-narrative places primary blame on internal elite failure, systemic corruption, governance deficits, and a rent-seeking political class that prioritises personal enrichment over national development (Joseph, 1987; Khan, 2000).

This presents a critical problem: the precise interaction and relative weight of these two forces in crippling domestic economic policy formulation. Does Nigeria's peripheral position in the global economy *determine* a narrow range of ineffective policy options, or does a predatory domestic elite *choose* sub-optimal policies that perpetuate dependency for private gain? The problem is to critically examine how global integration, through channels such as oil dependence, IFI conditionality, and trade asymmetries, shapes, constrains, and is, in turn, manipulated within the domestic policymaking arena. Understanding this dynamic is essential to identifying the fundamental barriers to implementing transformative economic strategies in Nigeria. The objective of this paper is to critically analyse how Nigeria's specific mode of integration into the global capitalist system constrains and shapes domestic economic policy formulation, and to evaluate how this structural relationship is exploited or perpetuated by domestic elite interests.

### **Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative research design, utilizing a systematic review of secondary data sources to analyze the historical trajectory of Nigeria's economic integration and its subsequent impact on domestic policy formulation. Data was collected from peer-reviewed academic journals, policy reports from international financial institutions, and government documents to construct a comprehensive historical narrative of policy shifts from the 1980s to the present (Archibong et al., 2020). It utilizes a triangulated approach: (1) A historical-structural analysis of policy documents, IMF/World Bank reports, and economic history texts to trace the evolution of Nigeria's integration and external policy influences. (2) A thematic analysis of academic literature on Nigeria's political economy, coding for themes of elite behaviour, corruption, rent-seeking, and policy implementation failures. (3) A critical discourse analysis of scholarly debates to examine how arguments of dependency and elite failure are constructed and deployed. Sources include peer-reviewed journals, books, credible institutional reports (e.g., from the Central Bank of Nigeria and NEITI), and data from organisations such as the World Bank and UNCTAD, ensuring verifiability and analytical rigour.

### **Conceptual Review**

Theoretical perspectives on Nigeria's economic integration highlight the tension between national sovereignty and the conditionalities imposed by global financial institutions, with complex dependency theory illustrating how international organizations shape domestic policy processes through a dualism of benefits and constraints (Udalla, 2015). Scholars argue that while these institutions provide necessary capital and technical expertise, the accompanying policy conditionalities often restrict the state's ability to pursue independent developmental strategies, particularly in the social sector (Chukwuma & Abrahams, 2025). The economic downturn of the early 1980s, exacerbated by the collapse of global oil prices and domestic fiscal mismanagement, precipitated a severe crisis that compelled Nigeria to adopt Structural Adjustment Programs under the guidance of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. These neoliberal reforms focused on austerity, market liberalization, and public sector downsizing, fundamentally altering the healthcare landscape

by transforming healthcare from a public good into a commodity. Consistent with neoliberal orthodoxy, the state was urged to withdraw from direct service provision and instead foster "enabling environments" for private sector involvement. This shift led to a rapid expansion of the private healthcare sector, yet regulatory oversight remained limited, resulting in a fragmented system where services were largely unaffordable to the majority of the population. The deteriorating conditions in the public sector manifested in poor remuneration, lack of career development opportunities, and unsafe working environments, which triggered waves of brain drain as Nigerian healthcare professionals sought better prospects abroad. This mass migration of skilled personnel further crippled the health system's capacity to deliver essential services, leaving the country with a critical shortage of doctors and nurses to address the growing burden of disease. The failure to align policy goals with institutional capacities not only hindered progress toward equitable health outcomes but also paradoxically deepened the structural inequalities that the primary healthcare movement aimed to address.

### **Historical Integration and the Structural Dependency Framework**

Scholarship on Nigeria's economic history consistently highlights colonialism as the foundational moment of its dependent integration. Walter Rodney's *"How Europe Underdeveloped Africa"* (1972) posits that colonial structures deliberately dismantled indigenous industries to create captive markets and raw material sources. In Nigeria, this meant the suppression of nascent textile and manufacturing activities in favour of export-oriented agriculture (Forrest, 1995). The post-independence shifts to oil exacerbated this, creating a "mono-product" economy. Terisa Turner and Pade Badru argued that oil entrenched a "neo-colonial" relationship, with international oil companies and global markets dictating terms, making the state a passive rent-collector rather than an active economic manager (Turner, 1980; Badru, 1998). This dependency is seen as structurally limiting policy options, confining the state to managing rent distribution rather than fostering production.

### **IFIs, SAPs, and the Erosion of Policy Autonomy**

The literature on Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in Africa provides a stark view of direct external imposition on domestic policy. For Nigeria, the SAP of 1986 is a watershed. As documented by Ihonvbere (1994) and Olukoshi (1991), the programme, designed by the IMF/World Bank, mandated currency devaluation, trade liberalisation, removal of subsidies, and privatisation of state-owned enterprises. Critics argue these policies were ideologically driven, ignored local contexts, and deindustrialised Nigeria by exposing fragile industries to import competition while failing to stimulate non-oil exports (Adebayo, 1990). This period represents a direct suspension of national sovereignty over economic policy, whereby vital loans are conditioned on the adoption of a prescribed neoliberal toolkit (Biersteker, 1992).

### **Elite Capture, Rent-Seeking, and the Political Economy of Policy Failure**

In contrast to the dependency school, the "political settlement" and "rentier state" literature focuses on internal agency. Atul Kohli (2004) emphasises that states embedded in fragmented, personalistic political systems (like Nigeria's) are incapable of coherent, long-term industrial policy. Peter Ekeh's (1975) concept of the "two publics" explains how Nigerian

elites feel no civic obligation to the state, seeing it as a resource to plunder. Richard Joseph's (1987) "*prebendalism*" describes a system in which public offices are treated as prebends for personal gain, thereby making rational economic policy impossible. Mushtaq Khan's (2000) work on rent-seeking argues that, in contexts such as Nigeria, powerful elites create and maintain rents (e.g., import licenses or oil bloc allocations), thereby deliberately blocking policies that would foster competitive markets and broad-based growth. This literature suggests policy is formulated not for development, but to maximise and distribute rents to sustain a ruling coalition.

### **The Synthesis: Dependency as an Enabler for Elite Predation**

Recent scholarship attempts synthesis. Soala Ariweriokuma (2009) argues that the oil rentier state created by global integration serves as a "honey pot" that fuels elite corruption. Kalu (2020) posits a "*symbiotic dysfunction*" where external dependency and internal predation reinforce each other: IFI conditionalities that weaken the state create more opportunities for illicit gain, while elite looting justifies further external intervention and borrowing. This synthesis views domestic policy as a contested outcome in which global constraints meet and are filtered through the prism of domestic elite interests, often resulting in policies that serve neither global efficiency nor national development but rather private accumulation.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper is anchored in a critical synthesis of Dependency Theory and the Political Economy of Rentier States/Elite Capture.

Dependency Theory, particularly the work of Andre Gunder Frank (1967) and Samir Amin (1974), provides the macro-structural framework. It posits a hierarchical world-system divided into a "*core*" (industrialised, capital-exporting nations) and a "*periphery*" (underdeveloped, raw-material-exporting nations). The "*development of underdevelopment*" occurs because economic surplus is systematically extracted from the periphery via unequal exchange, reinforcing the core's dominance and the periphery's dependency. For Nigeria, this explains the persistence of a primary export economy, the entrapment in external debt, and the coercive influence of IFIs.

**Criticisms and Relevance:** Dependency theory is criticised for being economically deterministic, downplaying the agency of peripheral states and elites, and for offering vague prescriptions (Lall, 1975). Its relevance to this paper lies in its accurate description of the external constraints and historical origins of Nigeria's policy dilemma. It explains *why* Nigeria's policy menu appears limited, but it is insufficient alone. To address the agency gap, the framework incorporates theories of the Rentier State (Beblawi & Luciani, 1987) and Elite Capture. The rentier state theory argues that when a state derives substantial revenue from external rents (e.g., oil), it becomes independent of domestic taxation, thereby weakening the social contract and accountability. This fosters a politics of distribution rather than production. Elite capture theory (Khan, 2000; Joseph, 1987) explains how powerful groups subvert state institutions and policies for private benefit.

**Synthesis and Relevance:** The integrated framework posits that Nigeria's dependent integration (Dependency Theory) creates a rentier economy (Rentier State Theory), which in turn establishes the material conditions for systematic elite predation (Elite Capture Theory). The framework moves beyond a “*structure vs. agency*” debate to analyse how structure enables and shapes agency, and how agency, in turn, perpetuates structure. It is directly relevant for analysing how global oil markets (structure) create rents that Nigerian elites (agents) compete to capture, thereby formulating policies that protect rent flows over productive diversification.

### **Research Analysis & Critical Evaluation**

This analysis critically evaluates the evidence surrounding Nigeria's integration and its policy impacts, structured around the synthesized framework.

#### **1. The Reality and Limits of Structural Constraint**

There is undeniable evidence of structural constraint. Nigeria's export profile remains dominated by crude oil, which constituted 90.3% of total exports in 2022 (World Bank, 2023). This creates extreme vulnerability; the oil price collapse of 2014-2016 triggered a severe recession, forcing reactive, contractionary policies. Furthermore, the conditions imposed by IFIs have directly dictated policy. The 1986 SAP and the more recent conditions attached to World Bank budget support loans mandate specific reforms (World Bank, 2021). These are clear instances where the policy framework is externally shaped.

However, to attribute all policy failures to this is deterministic. Other commodity-dependent nations have used periods of high rents to invest in diversification (e.g., Indonesia under Suharto). Nigeria's failure to do so points to internal factors. The constraints are real, but they define a challenging context rather than an impossible one. The elite's consistent choice to consume rents rather than strategically invest them is the critical intervening variable.

#### **2. Elite Agency: The Primacy of Predation and Policy Distortion**

The evidence for elite-driven policy distortion is overwhelming. Nigeria's history is replete with policies designed for rent extraction. The Fuel Subsidy regime, for decades, has been a colossal source of rent, estimated to have cost \$74 billion between 2005-2021 (NEITI, 2022). It benefits a powerful cabal of importers and officials more than the populace. Policies around oil bloc allocations are notoriously opaque and politicised, used to reward patronage rather than attract efficient investment (Omeje, 2006).

Industrial and trade policies are systematically undermined. Policies aimed at supporting local rice production, for instance, are contradicted by rampant smuggling enabled by corrupt customs officials (Oladimeji, 2021). The Lagos-Ibadan railway project, while a needed infrastructure policy, has been marred by allegations of inflated contracts and kickbacks (Premium Times, 2023). This indicates that even when development-oriented policies are formulated, their implementation is reconfigured by elite interests for private gain. The problem is not merely a lack of good policies; rather, the political settlement ensures that any policy is subverted by rent-seeking.

### **3. The Symbiosis: How Dependency Enables and is Perpetuated by Elite Failure**

The critical synthesis is evident in the cycle of debt and corruption. Nigeria borrows externally (often from IFIs or through Eurobonds) to fund budget deficits exacerbated by massive revenue leakage due to corruption. For example, the alleged misuse of billions of dollars intended for arms procurement under the Goodluck Jonathan administration worsened security, crippled the economy, and increased borrowing needs (EFCC, 2016). The resulting debt service (\$5.2 billion in 2022; CBN, 2023) consumes revenue that could be allocated to capital expenditure, thereby perpetuating underdevelopment and dependence on future borrowing.

Furthermore, the elite's capital flight, estimated at over \$500 billion since independence (AJIF, 2022), directly reinforces dependency. Stolen wealth is stored in core economies (the UK, the USA, the UAE), financing development abroad while starving domestic development. The elite thus have a vested interest in maintaining a financial system integrated into global capitalism for the purpose of laundering and storing loot, not for productive investment. They are not compradors forced by the core, but active agents who use the global system to secure their illicit wealth while blaming "the West" or "global imbalances" for national failures.

### **4. Critical Evaluation of Explanatory Power**

While dependency theory correctly identifies the historical origin and ongoing pressure of an asymmetrical global system, its explanatory power for *contemporary, specific policy choices* is secondary. It provides the stage, but the elite agency writes the script. The evidence shows that, within the given constraints, more developmental choices were *possible* but were *not chosen* because they conflicted with the logic of rent distribution. For instance, the political will to seriously combat oil theft or remove the fuel subsidy was absent for decades because these were key rent-spigots. Therefore, the argument that dependency theory has become an "intellectual alibi" holds significant weight. It is frequently invoked by the political class to externalise blame, even though their actions are the primary drivers of policy failure.

This analysis demonstrated that Nigeria's integration into the global capitalist system, structured by colonialism and cemented by oil dependency, has imposed significant constraints on domestic economic policy formulation. These constraints manifest as reliance on primary commodities, vulnerability to external shocks, and conditionalities imposed by International Financial Institutions. However, a critical examination reveals that these external structures do not operate in a vacuum. They create a rentier economy that fuels systemic elite predation. Nigeria's political elite, operating within a logic of prebendalism and rent-seeking, consistently formulate, select, and implement policies that prioritise personal and factional accumulation over national development. They actively perpetuate dependency by sabotaging diversification efforts, engaging in massive capital flight, and using external borrowing to finance corruption-induced deficits. Thus, Nigeria's economic policy landscape is the product of a toxic symbiosis: global dependency creates the opportunity structure, and elite capture determines the exploitative outcome. The dominant explanatory factor for persistent policy failure is internal elite agency, which often instrumentalises the narrative of external dependency as a justification for its own malfeasance.

The findings demonstrate that Nigeria's integration into the global capitalist system precipitated a fundamental reorientation of domestic economic policy, wherein the adoption of Structural Adjustment Programs served as the primary mechanism for imposing neoliberal orthodoxy on the national economy. These programs, enforced through conditional lending by international financial institutions, mandated austerity measures, trade liberalization, and public sector downsizing that systematically eroded the state's capacity to regulate markets and protect social welfare. Consequently, the commercialization of the healthcare sector under these reforms led to a proliferation of private providers operating with minimal regulatory oversight, creating a fragmented system where quality services became increasingly unaffordable for the majority of the population. This commercialization was further compounded by a severe brain drain, as the declining conditions in the public sector prompted healthcare professionals to seek better opportunities abroad, thereby weakening the already fragile health infrastructure. By the end of the 1990s, these structural distortions had resulted in stagnating or worsening health indicators, including rising infant and maternal mortality rates, declining immunization coverage, and frequent outbreaks of preventable diseases.

### **Conclusion**

This study critically examined Nigeria's integration into the global capitalist system and its impact on the formulation of domestic economic policy, specifically investigating how historical structural dependencies interact with domestic political dynamics to shape policy outcomes. The findings demonstrate that Nigeria's underdevelopment is neither a straightforward product of external domination nor purely a consequence of internal governance failures, but rather emerges from a symbiotic relationship between these forces. The analysis reveals that while asymmetric trade relations, debt mechanisms, and International Financial Institution conditionalities establish a narrow policy corridor, it is the capture of state institutions by a rent-seeking elite that determines ultimate policy trajectories. Crucially, this elite not only fails to design policies capable of mitigating structural dependency but actively exploits external constraints as an alibi for governance failures while pursuing personal accumulation. The evidence compellingly shows that Nigeria is not merely dependent on an unequal global order; it is systematically mismanaged and plundered from within by a political class whose interests remain fundamentally antithetical to developmentalism.

Nigeria's protracted development crisis is not an inevitable consequence of its insertion into an unequal global order, nor is it merely a product of technical policy inadequacies. It is, fundamentally, a political outcome produced by a ruling class whose accumulation strategies depend on the perpetuation of dependent integration and the systematic plunder of public resources. The nation is not poor because it is dependent; it remains dependent because its elite profits from that condition. Breaking this cycle requires more than the familiar prescriptions of policy reform or the utopian hope for global economic restructuring. It demands a concrete, internal political struggle to dismantle the structures of elite capture and to build a state sufficiently autonomous from predatory interests to pursue a genuine

developmental agenda. The path to policy sovereignty in Nigeria passes not through international negotiations alone, but through the hard terrain of domestic accountability, institutional reconstruction, and the patient work of forging a state that serves its citizens rather than preys upon them. Until that political foundation is laid, no policy, however well-designed will deliver the transformation Nigerians deserve

### **Contribution to Knowledge**

This study makes three original contributions to the literature on political economy and development in Nigeria. First, it moves beyond deterministic dependency theory to theorize the *mediation* of external constraints by domestic elite agency, demonstrating that global structures provide the form and opportunity for underdevelopment while internal elite behaviour determines the exploitative outcome. Second, it reframes the policy autonomy debate by showing that the central barrier to transformative economic policy in Nigeria is not an inescapable global structure but a powerful domestic bloc whose material interests are served by perpetuating, rather than transcending, dependent integration. Third, it provides empirical grounding for the theoretical proposition that external dependency and internal predation operate as mutually reinforcing systems, with each providing legitimacy and cover for the other's excesses.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study acknowledges several limitations. First, its macro-level political economy approach, while necessary for examining structural dynamics, cannot capture the granular, everyday mechanisms through which elite predation operates at sectoral or local government levels. Second, the reliance on secondary data and existing scholarship, while appropriate for theoretical synthesis, means the study could not generate primary empirical evidence on contemporary policy formulation processes. Third, the analysis focuses predominantly on the oil sector as the primary site of rent-seeking, potentially understating the significance of emerging sectors such as telecommunications, fintech, and digital services where new forms of elite accumulation may be taking shape. Fourth, the study's critical orientation, while illuminating systemic failures, may understate the agency of reform-oriented actors within state institutions who struggle against predatory logics.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the empirical findings and theoretical insights generated, the following recommendations are directed to specific actors:

#### **For the National Assembly and Constitutional Reform Bodies:**

Establish constitutionally protected, independent agencies for core economic functions, including a National Infrastructure Commission and a Debt Management Office with enhanced operational autonomy. These institutions must be staffed through transparent, merit-based processes that insulate critical policy formulation and implementation from partisan pressures and patronage networks. Constitutional entrenchment is essential to prevent the erosion of institutional independence through ordinary legislative or executive action.

**For the Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) and Anti-Corruption Agencies:**

Mandate and technologically enforce the public, real-time disclosure of all government contracts, oil lifting records, and beneficiary ownership data for companies holding public licenses. Digital transparency platforms should be designed to enable civil society organizations and audit institutions to function as permanent public watchdogs over revenue flows, thereby raising the costs and risks of elite capture. Legislative frameworks must be strengthened to criminalize opaque ownership structures and impose severe penalties for non-disclosure.

**For the Executive Branch and Law Reform Commission:**

Reform the anti-corruption architecture to create a single, well-resourced, independently prosecuted agency with specialized focus on grand corruption and international asset recovery. The proliferation of multiple, under-resourced, and often competing anti-corruption agencies has fragmented enforcement and created opportunities for elite capture of the accountability apparatus itself. A consolidated agency with prosecutorial independence, technical capacity for financial investigation, and mandate for international cooperation would significantly enhance enforcement credibility.

**For the Federal Ministry of Finance and Joint Tax Board:**

Gradually reduce dependency on oil rents by expanding the tax base through a progressive, efficiently administered digital tax system. Broad-based taxation serves dual functions: it generates revenue for developmental investments and, more fundamentally, fosters a social contract between state and citizens. When citizens pay taxes, they acquire both the incentive and the moral authority to demand accountability for public expenditure. This fiscal transformation is essential to reorienting the state from a rentier, distributive logic toward a developmental, productive orientation.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

Future research should pursue comparative analysis of sectors beyond oil including telecommunications, banking, and digital services to examine whether emerging industries replicate or challenge established patterns of elite predation. Longitudinal studies tracking the career trajectories of political elites and their insertion into economic sectors would illuminate the revolving door between state power and private accumulation. Ethnographic research within state institutions could reveal the everyday practices through which policy formulation is distorted, including the informal networks, implicit understandings, and routine negotiations that shape outcomes. Finally, comparative research across African oil-producing states would illuminate whether Nigeria's particular configuration of dependency and predation is exceptional or indicative of broader regional patterns.

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