

GLOBALIZATION AND NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY: OPPORTUNITIES, CONSTRAINTS, AND STRATEGIC RESPONSES IN THE BUHARI ERA, 2015-2023

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of globalization on Nigeria's foreign policy from 2015 to 2023, an era marked by increasing global interconnection, changes in political relations, and shifting priorities among developing nations. Globalization refers to the enhanced interdependence among nations through advancements in technology, global trade, movement of capital, and diplomatic collaboration on a multilateral scale. As a key political and economic player in Africa, Nigeria's foreign policy during this timeframe was influenced more by outside global factors than by a sense of isolation. During the duration of this research, globalization affected Nigeria's international interactions through demands for economic openness, compliance with global standards, and reactions to cross-border security issues. While globalization offered avenues for greater multilateral collaboration, foreign investments, and a leadership role in West Africa, it also revealed Nigeria's weaknesses, such as reliance on foreign markets, diminished ability to make independent policy decisions, and complicated border security challenges. From 2015 to 2023, Nigeria faced challenges like global economic fluctuations, terrorism and insurgency, commitments to regional integration, and the rise of new global power dynamics, necessitating ongoing adjustments in its diplomatic approach and foreign policy focus. By utilizing secondary data sources such as academic articles, policy papers, and government reports, the study illustrates that globalization influenced not only the aims of Nigeria's foreign policy but also how it was structured and executed. The results highlight a dual effect characterized by enhanced global engagement coupled with increasing external limitations. The research concludes with suggestions for a more unified economic diplomacy approach, improved institutional capability, and proactive regional collaborations to leverage the advantages of globalization while protecting national sovereignty and pursuing long-term development objectives.

Keywords: Economic Diplomacy, Foreign Policy Adaptation Theory, Buhari Administration, Global Integration, African International Relations & Oil Dependency.

Introduction

Globalization is recognized as a crucial characteristic of today's international landscape. It is broadly interpreted as the growing interconnectivity among nations and societies in various areas such as economics, politics, social issues, and culture. The intensified flow of capital, technology, information, and individuals across borders has diminished the significance of traditional national borders and altered the nature of global interactions. Current academic discourse portrays globalization as a complex phenomenon that integrates economies, political systems, and cultures within an increasingly interconnected global framework (Steger, 2023; Labonté & Ruckert, 2019). Since it gained momentum in the late 20th century, globalization has continued to progress in the 21st century through advancements in technology, digital communication, global governance bodies, and changing geopolitical dynamics. As a result, countries are now more pressured to create foreign policies that address not only internal objectives but also external economic, political, and security challenges.

Nigeria, being the largest country in Africa by population and one of its most significant economies, has not remained unaffected by these global changes. Traditionally, Nigeria's foreign policy focused on Afrocentrism, unity among African nations, and leadership within the region. Nevertheless, globalization has increasingly compelled Nigeria to implement diplomatic approaches that are more focused on economic issues, security awareness, and responsiveness to global dynamics. Under the leadership of President Buhari from 2015 to 2023, Nigeria's foreign policy was shaped by a swiftly evolving global atmosphere marked by economic instability, shifting trade patterns, technological advancements, rising geopolitical tensions, and growing threats to security that cross borders. In this setting, globalization played a pivotal role in shaping Nigeria's international relations, strategic alliances, and commitments to global initiatives. The Buhari administration particularly prioritized economic diplomacy, collaboration against corruption, regional security efforts, and diversifying international relationships within its wider foreign policy objectives.

The Buhari period also aligned with significant domestic and global events that influenced Nigeria's diplomatic practices. Domestically, the administration faced challenges such as an economic downturn, dropping oil profits; insecurity linked to terrorism and criminal activities, as well as increased developmental demands. On the international front, Nigeria encountered heightened expectations to adjust to shifts in global trade, international finance, migration policies, and cooperative security agreements. Hence, globalization acted not just as a backdrop, but as a critical factor driving Nigeria's foreign policy agenda and strategic actions from 2015 to 2023.

Recent scholarly investigations have focused more on Nigeria's foreign policy concerning globalization and evolving global conditions. Folorunso, Duruji, and Chidozie (2024) looked into how globalization interacts with Nigeria's foreign policy through the lens of globalisation, while Oshewolo and colleagues (2024) evaluated the geographical and strategic factors influencing Nigeria's international relations. In a similar vein, Dauda and Morenikeji (2024) analyzed Nigeria's diplomatic function in West Africa during Buhari's time in office, particularly regarding regional security and political authority. More current research by Akakuru, Obiukwu, and Onwuharaonye (2025), Mohammed-Yinusa and others (2026), and Aneke (2026) assessed various aspects of Nigeria's foreign policy throughout the Buhari administration, focusing on economic diplomacy, counterterrorism efforts, and national growth. While these investigations offer valuable perspectives on Nigeria's international relations, most concentrate on individual policy areas, regional interactions, or specific diplomatic results. Moreover, previous research seldom utilizes perspectives on foreign policy adjustments to elucidate how Nigeria modified its external policies in response to economic instabilities driven by globalization, geopolitical rivalries, and cross-border security challenges during the Buhari years. There is a noticeable lack of thorough analysis regarding how

globalization, as a multifaceted force, influenced Nigeria's foreign policy direction, possibilities, limitations, and strategic responses throughout the Buhari administration from 2015 to 2023.

Academic discussions further indicate that globalization provides both advantages and limitations for developing nations. It encourages economic interconnectedness, technological progress, international collaboration, and access to global markets, but simultaneously subjects countries to external dependency, economic instability, unequal power dynamics, and international security threats (Rodrik, 2018; Stiglitz, 2018). For Nigeria, globalization opened new avenues for multilateral participation, foreign investments, and global cooperation; however, it also heightened issues of economic susceptibility, security challenges, and reliance on outside entities. Critics contend that the foreign policies of numerous developing nations increasingly reflect reactions to global pressures rather than a steadfast commitment to long-term national priorities.

In light of this context, this research aims to fill both the theoretical and empirical gaps by investigating how globalization has impacted Nigeria's foreign policy during the Buhari administration from 2015 to 2023. The study specifically explores the opportunities generated by globalization, the limitations it placed on Nigeria's foreign policy goals, and the strategic responses employed by the Buhari government in managing a more interconnected global landscape. This analysis is framed within relevant theoretical paradigms from foreign policy and globalization scholarship. The second section outlines the theoretical framework. The third section investigates the opportunities and limitations globalization presented for Nigeria's foreign policy. The fourth section scrutinizes the strategic approaches taken by the Buhari administration. The fifth section wraps up with significant findings and recommendations for policy.

Statement of the problem

Academic studies highlight the varied impacts of globalization on state behavior. While it offers opportunities for economic growth, international cooperation, and advancements in technology, it also makes countries, especially those that are developing, susceptible to market volatility, dependence, and increasing inequality. In the case of Nigeria, globalization has facilitated greater involvement in international governance, regional security partnerships, and economic diplomacy, while also heightening exposure to external economic disruptions, cross-border insecurity, and shifting global power dynamics. Traditionally, Nigeria's foreign policy was heavily influenced by Afrocentrism and ambitions for regional leadership; however, the rapid forces of globalization have driven a gradual transformation towards more economically focused and globally responsive diplomatic approaches.

Recent study has explored various aspects of Nigeria's foreign policy from 2015 to 2023, including regional security issues, economic diplomacy, and engagement in multilateral negotiations. For instance, Ogunnubi and Amao (2016) analyzed Nigeria's regional impact and leadership role in Africa, while newer studies by Folorunso, Duruji, and Chidozie (2024), Akakuru, Obiukwu, and Onwuharaonye (2025), and Mohammed-Yinusa et al. (2026) reviewed elements of Nigeria's foreign relations under current administrations. Nevertheless, these analyses tend to look at foreign policy results in a vacuum, giving little emphasis to how globalization, as a multifaceted phenomenon, has consistently influenced Nigeria's diplomatic actions, strategic decisions, and policy shifts during the years following 2015. Specifically, there is a lack of scholarly work applying modern perspectives on foreign policy adaptation to Nigeria's approaches to global economic fluctuations, changing geopolitical relationships, and cross-border security demands between 2015 and 2023.

This research aims to address this theoretical and empirical void by investigating how globalization has shaped Nigeria's foreign policy direction, diplomatic interactions, and strategic responses during the specified timeframe. The study assesses how well Nigeria

managed external global challenges alongside its internal national priorities in domains like economic diplomacy, security collaboration, and participation in multilateral forums. The second section introduces the theoretical framework. The third section delves into the significant globalization forces impacting Nigeria's foreign policy. The fourth section evaluates Nigeria's adaptive strategies and the resulting policy outcomes. The fifth section summarizes the key findings and their implications for policy.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. How has the influence of globalization affected Nigeria's approach to foreign policy choices and international interactions from 2015 to 2023?
- ii. In what situations have the pressures of globalization facilitated or hindered Nigeria's quest for national objectives within its foreign policy structure during the analyzed timeframe?
- iii. What accounts for the differences in Nigeria's ability to adapt in significant areas of foreign policy like economic diplomacy, security partnerships, and engagement with multiple countries between 2015 and 2023?

Conceptual Review

Conceptual of Globalization

Globalisation is a multifaceted concept that has received various interpretations from scholars, particularly concerning economic ties, political relationships, technological advancements, and cultural exchanges. Contemporary scholars in Nigeria largely view globalisation as a phenomenon that increases interactions among countries and communities, while also impacting local institutions, governance, and international policy actions. Rather than presenting isolated definitions, this section synthesizes academic perspectives to form a practical understanding of the concept as it relates to this study. Ugochukwu David Abasilim portrays globalisation as the increasing interlinking of national economies and political systems through trade, communication technologies, migration, and global cooperation, which reduces the separations that have historically kept nations apart (Abasilim, 2024). This viewpoint underscores the integrative and transnational character of global interactions.

In a related perspective, Samuel Sunday Idowu defines globalisation as an evolving process wherein countries become economically, politically, and culturally dependent on one another due to technological, communication, and organizational advancements (Idowu, 2016). His viewpoint spotlights the influence of technology on accelerating global integration. Conversely, Love Obiani Arugu argues that globalisation represents the expansion of capitalist market relations beyond national confines, fostering increased international cooperation while also generating unequal dependencies between wealthier and less developed nations (Arugu, 2012). This perspective prompts critical inquiries about whether globalisation's advantages are uniformly distributed among all countries.

Furthermore, Daniel Adetoritse Tonwe describes globalisation as a heightened level of global engagement where occurrences and decisions in one area greatly influence political and socio-economic situations in other places (Tonwe, 2009). This viewpoint emphasizes the reducing role of geographical boundaries in global interactions. Similarly, Nuhu Yaqub perceives globalisation as the integration of national political and economic frameworks into a broader international system orchestrated by global markets, multilateral bodies, and diplomatic efforts (Yaqub, 2004). His definition particularly highlights the implications of globalisation for state sovereignty and policy formulation.

A comprehensive examination of these interpretations reveals both commonalities and distinctions among scholarly opinions. While all scholars agree that globalisation involves increased connectivity and mutual dependence among nations, there are differences in their assessments of its consequences. Some regard globalisation as a means for economic growth

technological advancement, and international cooperation, while others highlight its potential to intensify inequality, erode state independence, and foster dependency in developing nations.

This study embraces a comprehensive perspective of globalisation as a process that broadens economic, political, technological, and cultural ties between countries, profoundly influencing domestic governance and foreign policy decisions. This working definition is considered most appropriate as it corresponds with the investigation of the interplay between globalisation and adjustments in foreign policy in developing nations.

Concept of Foreign Policy

Foreign policy is generally seen as the tactical approach employed by countries to navigate their relationships with other entities in the global arena to achieve national goals. Currently, ongoing discussions among academics debate whether foreign policy is mainly shaped by internal issues, leaders' viewpoints, the impact of globalization, or the demands of an altering international climate. Recent research from Nigeria increasingly perceives foreign policy as fluid, adaptable, and closely tied to worldwide political and economic changes. Eziho Ogele asserts that foreign policy encompasses the blend of diplomacy and international interactions that allow countries to exert influence, safeguard national interests, and improve their status on the global stage within an interconnected system (Ogele, 2025). His viewpoint particularly underscores the rising significance of soft power and national image in modern diplomatic efforts. In a similar vein, Nnamdi Okonkwo views foreign policy as the structured process through which nations deal with global political, economic, and security issues to protect national security and advance strategic goals (Okonkwo, 2024). This interpretation points out the connection between globalization and national security in the creation of foreign policy.

From a different angle, Emeka J Onyetube describes foreign policy as a unified external approach that aims to achieve diplomatic sway, economic partnerships, and strategic importance within the evolving landscape of international relations (Onyetube, 2025). His viewpoint reflects the rising participation of developing nations like Nigeria in new multilateral forums and cooperation between South countries. Similarly, Awofisayo Oladipupo Albert perceives foreign policy as a practical tool that governments use to negotiate, trade, and promote national goals on the global stage through diplomacy and strategic interactions (Albert & Baitei, 2024). This view supports the classical realist perception of foreign policy as a means for pursuing national interests.

A combination of these viewpoints highlights key areas of both agreement and disagreement. While all scholars concur that foreign policy is fundamentally crafted to further national objectives beyond a country's borders, distinctions arise in identifying the primary factors shaping foreign policy. Some researchers focus on national security and strategic goals, while others underline the increasing power of globalization, multilateral alliances, and soft power diplomacy. These discussions illustrate that understanding foreign policy in developing countries requires moving beyond a traditional state-centric viewpoint. Therefore, this study adopts a holistic view, seeing foreign policy as a strategic and flexible tool that nations utilize to pursue national interests while adapting to the chances and limitations posed by globalization and shifting global circumstances. This practical interpretation is deemed the most suitable as it aligns with the research's theoretical emphasis on adaptability and the changing landscape of international relations in today's global environment.

Economic Diplomacy:

Economic diplomacy has recently attracted increased academic focus in the study of Nigeria's foreign policy, especially amid globalization and the growing emphasis on economic goals in international relations. Instead of being seen as static, it is progressively recognized as a flexible mechanism of statecraft that connects diplomacy with a nation's economic success. Scholars in Nigeria present different yet complementary views on the idea, showcasing both

its strategic importance and its adapting application in developing countries. Initially, Albert and Baitei (2024) define economic diplomacy as the tactical application of diplomatic tools by a state to foster trade relations, draw in foreign investment, and obtain advantageous economic agreements within the global framework. Their definition underscores the practical aspect of diplomacy, portraying it as an extension of domestic economic strategies that aim to improve national development results.

In a similar vein, Onyetube (2025) expands on the definition by characterizing economic diplomacy as the combination of foreign policy with economic goals, in which states intentionally seek external interactions to boost market entry, enhance bilateral and multilateral economic collaboration, and strengthen their competitive status in the world economy. This viewpoint emphasizes the growing integration of diplomacy with economic globalization, especially for developing nations like Nigeria. Adding to this discussion, Ogele (2025) proposes that economic diplomacy should be viewed as a soft-power approach enabling countries to express national interests by utilizing trade discussions, global partnerships, and investment encouragement to promote both economic development and international sway. His interpretation brings forward an essential aspect of power dynamics, indicating that economic diplomacy involves not just development efforts but also positioning and influence on a global scale.

Moreover, Okonkwo (2024) characterizes economic diplomacy as a policy-driven framework through which governments react to global economic challenges by aligning their foreign policy choices with national economic goals like job creation, technological advancement, and financial steadiness. This perspective places stronger importance on the constraints imposed by globalization, suggesting that economic diplomacy is, in part, a response to external systemic influences rather than solely a proactive strategy.

A thorough comparison of these viewpoints reveals both similarities and subtle differences in the conception of economic diplomacy within Nigerian academic circles. All scholars concur that economic diplomacy connects foreign policy with economic aims, particularly concerning trade, investment, and developmental results. However, distinctions arise in focus: while Albert and Baitei (2024) and Onyetube (2025) emphasize its strategic and integrative aspects, Okonkwo (2024) accentuates its reactive quality to global economic conditions, and Ogele (2025) presents a framework tied to power relations and international influence. This study thus adopts a comprehensive definition, recognizing economic diplomacy as a strategic tool in foreign policy through which Nigeria pursues its national economic interests, particularly in expanding trade, attracting foreign investments, and integrating into the global economy while addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by globalization.

National Interest

The idea of national interest is crucial for understanding foreign policy, especially when analyzing how countries set their priorities in a more interconnected world. Recent academic work from Nigeria has evolved past strictly realist views, focusing instead on a more fluid and development-focused interpretation of national interest, particularly in the context of globalization, economic survival, and security challenges. Firstly, Okonkwo (2024) describes national interest as the sum of a nation's essential aims mainly security, economic well-being, and political autonomy that steer its actions on the global stage. This viewpoint highlights a state-focused perspective that underscores the importance of maintaining territorial integrity while pursuing strategic objectives in a competitive world.

On the other hand, Albert and Baitei (2024) view national interest as a changing and adaptable collection of priorities that allow nations to seek development, international collaboration, and economic growth in light of global interconnectedness. Their definition encourages a shift from conventional power dynamics to a more expansive approach centered

on development and cooperation, indicating that national interest is increasingly influenced by globalization and international economic conditions.

A comparative examination of these views indicates a significant conceptual transformation in Nigerian foreign policy studies. While Okonkwo (2024) adheres to a more conventional realist viewpoint that emphasizes security and autonomy, Albert and Baitei (2024) offer a more progressive, globalization-aware interpretation that integrates development, collaboration, and economic interconnectedness. The differences between these approaches mirror a wider discourse in international relations theory regarding whether national interest should be seen as a constant and security-oriented or as adaptable and influenced by global interdependence. Within the framework of this analysis, national interest is viewed not as an unchanging idea, but as a flexible, context-specific framework through which Nigeria navigates its survival, growth, and standing in a globalized environment. This perspective is particularly significant when considering the Buhari administration (2015–2023), as Nigeria's foreign policy reflects a delicate balance between traditional security issues and the new economic and diplomatic goals shaped by globalization.

Theoretical framework

This research relies on the Foreign Policy Adaptation Theory, which outlines how nations modify their international actions due to changes in the global environment, domestic influences, and structural shifts in political affairs worldwide. The foundational concepts emerged from early thinkers like James N. Rosenau (1966; 1971), Charles F. Hermann (1990), and K. J. Holsti (1970), but recent academic work has broadened this theory to include aspects like globalization, complexity, and varied responses from developing nations. Newer uses of adaptation theory highlight that changes in foreign policy are not consistent but happen at varying degrees, from small modifications to significant strategic shifts. Crucially, studied applications of this theory regarding Nigeria's foreign policy from 2015 to 2023 showcase its applicability in understanding how external factors like changing global power dynamics, economic challenges, and regional security issues impact state conduct (DOAJ, 2023). This research builds upon the growing body of literature while adding depth by specifically examining the differences in adaptation results across various sectors, focusing on economic diplomacy, security collaboration, and multilateral efforts.

From this theoretical viewpoint, foreign policy evolves continuously, responding to both external and internal influences. Nevertheless, adaptation is neither guaranteed nor uniform; instead, it relies on the capabilities of the state, the viewpoints of its leaders, and the severity of external pressures. According to the principles of Foreign Policy Adaptation Theory, this research posits that Nigeria will more swiftly modify its foreign policy in reaction to global economic disruptions, such as fluctuating oil prices and reduced foreign investment, leading to an increase in economic diplomacy efforts. It also anticipates that escalating local insecurity including terrorism and cross-border crime will prompt a closer alignment with security partnerships at both regional and international levels, particularly in multilateral contexts. Furthermore, changes in the competition for global power, especially among influential nations, are likely to affect Nigeria's diplomatic strategies regarding its relationships with Western and emerging world players.

During the period from 2015 to 2023, Nigeria's foreign policy exhibited various levels of adaptation that align with these hypotheses. In the area of economic diplomacy, Nigeria actively sought to diversify its strategies, attract foreign investments, and build trade partnerships as a response to global economic uncertainty. Regarding security cooperation, Nigeria enhanced its collaborative efforts with regional and international partners to tackle insurgencies and transnational challenges. In terms of multilateral engagement, Nigeria's involvement indicated efforts to stay relevant within global governance frameworks while adapting to evolving geopolitical situations. However, adaptation was not consistent across all

areas; economic diplomacy notably exhibited clearer changes compared to certain aspects of political diplomacy, indicating that adaptation is influenced by specific conditions rather than being a straightforward process.

Although previous research has utilized adaptation theory to assess Nigeria's foreign policy actions, this study broadens the existing literature by shifting focus from single-event analysis to a thorough comparison among various policy areas. It highlights differences in the intensity of adaptation rather than presuming uniform reactions, linking the results of adaptation explicitly to pressures from globalization and limitations arising from domestic capabilities.

Relationship Between Globalisation and the Nigeria Foreign Policy

Nigeria's foreign policy is greatly influenced by its integration into worldwide economic frameworks, especially its reliance on oil income, which exposes it to changes in global oil prices and market instability. This reliance affects the nation's diplomatic focus, particularly its dedication to economic diplomacy, which seeks to draw in foreign investments, broaden trade partnerships, and integrate more seamlessly into the international economy. Moreover, globalization has increased the variety of security issues that impact Nigeria's international relations. Challenges like international terrorism, cybercrime, and illegal financial activities necessitate greater collaboration with both regional and global allies. These challenges have led to Nigeria's ongoing involvement in multilateral organizations such as the United Nations and the African Union, where responses to common issues are coordinated collectively.

Discussion of Findings

Research and policy examinations consistently reveal that Nigeria's foreign policy from 2015 to 2023 has transitioned towards economic diplomacy as a fundamental organizing concept. This transition mirrors global trends emphasizing market competitiveness, access, and capital acquisition over solely political or ideological alignments (see, for example, policy briefs from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Author A, 2020; Author B, 2022). Data from diplomatic interactions indicate that Nigeria is increasingly framing its international relations around boosting trade, attracting foreign direct investments, and engaging in global supply chains. This is evident in its expanded outreach beyond its usual African partners to new economies in Asia and the Middle East, as well as renewed involvement in multilateral economic initiatives. Such changes bolster the view that globalization has reshaped foreign policy priorities towards a focus on economic practicality. This resonates with liberal institutionalist views, suggesting that nations in a globalized context are more inclined to cooperate for economic benefits. Conversely, another perspective warns that this economic focus might limit policy independence unless managed strategically (Author C, 2021). Nigeria's situation illustrates both elements: increased economic interconnectivity alongside a growing reliance on outside markets.

A further significant finding indicates that globalization has intensified Nigeria's participation in regional and global security cooperation mechanisms. The rise of cross-border challenges like terrorism, maritime piracy, arms smuggling, and insurgency has made it essential to coordinate responses that transcend national territories. Research on West African security governance (for instance, Author D, 2019; ECOWAS security documents, 2020-2023) highlights Nigeria's proactive engagement in collaborative military operations and peacekeeping efforts, especially within ECOWAS and the African Union (AU). These activities illustrate how globalization has blurred the lines between domestic and international security, driving Nigeria to adopt joint defense approaches. However, conflicting evidence exists regarding the effectiveness of these initiatives. While involvement in multilateral security arrangements has fostered improved coordination, some evaluations suggest that these systems are hampered by financial constraints, unequal distribution of responsibilities, and

political differences among member nations (Author E, 2022). This implies that while globalization enhances opportunities for security cooperation, it does not inherently fix structural inefficiencies. From a theoretical perspective, this aligns with the concepts of securitization and complex interdependence, highlighting that global interconnectedness raises common vulnerabilities, which in turn calls for joint action.

Another significant observation is the conflict between increased participation in multilateral frameworks and diminished policy independence. Nigeria's growing involvement in global entities such as the United Nations, World Trade Organization, and regional associations indicates an effort to maintain competitiveness and sway within international governance systems. However, existing literature points out that adherence to global norms and conditional frameworks has, in various instances, limited Nigeria's capacity to independently formulate and execute foreign policy objectives (Author F, 2021; IMF and World Bank conditionality reports, selected years). For example, expectations surrounding economic reforms linked to international funding and trade agreements can influence domestic policy in ways that do not always align with national developmental aspirations. This leads to a conceptual conflict between the assumptions grounded in sovereignty-focused realism and the limitations imposed by liberal institutionalism driven by globalization. Although Nigeria enhances its legitimacy and gains access to worldwide resources through collaboration with multiple nations, it also experiences pressure to align with external policy guidelines. Crucially, this doesn't indicate a complete erosion of independence; instead, the data points to a selective limitation of freedom. Nigeria continues to have control in areas that correspond with its strategic goals, especially in African diplomatic relations, while showing greater adherence in economic governance areas.

Challenges in Adapting to Globalization

In spite of the advantages of adaptation mentioned earlier, globalization has also imposed structural restrictions on Nigeria's foreign policy results. One major limitation is the susceptibility to external economic disturbances, primarily due to reliance on international commodity markets and foreign investments. Variations in oil prices and global financial uncertainties have directly affected Nigeria's negotiating strength and the flexibility of its policies. Moreover, there is evidence suggesting that local priorities are sometimes placed lower in importance compared to outside-driven initiatives, particularly in terms of economic reforms and governance conditions. This aligns with criticisms found in dependency-focused literature, which contend that globalization often perpetuates imbalanced power dynamics between wealthier and developing nations (Author G, 2020). Nonetheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that the evidence is not uniform. While specific policy areas show constraints, others reflect strategic adaptation and resilience. Nigeria's strategy of diversifying diplomacy by forming partnerships across various geopolitical regions can be seen as a way to reduce excessive reliance on any single global power.

Conclusion

Prior to 2015 and 2023, globalization greatly influenced the development of Nigeria's foreign policy, transforming it from a predominantly Africa-focused, politically inclined strategy to a more economically oriented and globally aware approach. This research expands on Foreign Policy Adaptation Theory by showing that although countries adjust to the pressures of globalization; developing nations like Nigeria do so within specific limits like reliance on commodities, weak institutions, and vulnerability to unstable global markets. It also illustrates that adaptation occurs in a non-linear and inconsistent manner, as outside pressures often exceed domestic institutional capabilities, resulting in partial or unsteady policy changes. This enhances adaptation theory by emphasizing the structural inequalities that exist between developed and developing nations in the international arena.

On a practical level, the results imply that Nigerian policymakers need to focus on strengthening institutions related to economic diplomacy and coordinating policies to fully leverage the advantages of globalization. The findings suggest that without better bureaucratic alignment and improved strategic planning skills, Nigeria could end up being more reactive than proactive in international relations. Therefore, enhancing economic diplomacy and minimizing susceptibility to external market fluctuations should be key priorities in policy development. Nonetheless, this research is limited due to its dependence on secondary sources, which restricts insights into ongoing decision-making processes and high-level strategic thinking. Furthermore, potential selection bias in the existing literature and the narrow time frame (2015–2023) might affect the applicability of the findings. These limitations imply that the causal relationships identified should be approached with care. Future studies should fill these gaps by utilizing primary data, especially through elite interviews with policymakers and diplomats involved in crafting foreign policy. Comparative analyses of Nigeria alongside other African nations that heavily rely on oil would also enhance understanding of how economic dependency influences adaptive foreign policy actions in the context of globalization.

Recommendations

1. The Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs ought to set up a Directorate for Economic Diplomacy and Investment Promotion by the fourth quarter of 2026. This body should be responsible for managing outreach for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and trade discussions among embassies and related ministries to enhance Nigeria's ability to draw in and oversee important foreign investment amid globalization challenges.
2. The Federal Government, in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), needs to establish a Foreign Policy Research and Analysis Unit by mid-2027. This unit should include experts in regional and global political economics to generate timely policy briefs on trends in globalization, ensuring that foreign policy choices are well-informed, proactive, and aligned with national interests.
3. The Federal Executive Council should create an Inter-Ministerial Global Engagement Task Force by the first quarter of 2027. This task force will unite the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Investment, and Finance to streamline Nigeria's involvement in significant international and regional institutions, aiming to bolster negotiation abilities and protect national economic and security concerns through ongoing engagement from 2027 to 2028.

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