

Perspective of the Working Class on Globalization and Nigeria's Foreign Policy 1999-2007

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ABSTRACT	ARTICLE DETAILS
This paper examines the perspective of the Nigeria's working class on globalization and foreign policy. Thus, the paper observed that globalization has greatly changed the perception and approach of Nigeria's foreign policy in the 21st century. Data for the study were gathered via the secondary sources and decision making and realist theories as theoretical tools for analysis. The findings reveals that, with the rapid expansion of foreign policy terrain, Nigeria's decision makers came to realize that there were new forces in the international system which was turning the world to global village. The globalization of world markets, the proliferation of international network and non-governmental organization (NGOs) and the rapid spread of global communication technology which were persistently undermining the power of state actor. Nigeria shifted the tunnel vision about African being its major concern, and defined relations in terms of gain and interest by maintaining friendship with countries that have historically shape global diplomacy while forging new alliance with emerging powers in the global economy arena. Accordingly, the paper recommended that, Nigeria must make concerted efforts to assemble experts in international relations for a robust foreign policy that is capable of presenting its domestic contradictions and engage in diplomatic persuasions especially in the areas of economy and security towards realizable, stable and prosperous Nigeria KEYWORDS: Working Class, Globalization, Foreign Policy, Nigeria	Published On: 17 September 2026 Available on: https://ijiissh.com/

INTRODUCTION

Globally, established institutions and structures through which policy decisions are processed are very fundamental in shaping the direction of decision making. It therefore follows that an explanation and understanding of public policy behaviour, including foreign policy behaviour must begin with and focuses on decision making structure and process (Akindele, 1990). In public policy analysis as asserted by Allison and Halperi in Akidele, (1990), an actor is concerned as a player whose interest and behaviour affect government decision and actions and his perception and preference are a function of both his individual characteristic and the position he occupies.

One central institution that provides for Nigerian foreign policy is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. According to Nurudeen and Mbada (2014), in the field of foreign policy, one institution that is statutorily established to play a major role in mutually-reinforcing foreign policy decision making and implementation process in Nigeria is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, complemented by its external arms called Mission Embassies or High Commission. Though, Ogunbadego cited in Nurudeen and Mbada (2014) emphasized the fact that Ministries and government departments whose functions impinge on external policies also play a critical role.

Over the years, more especially in the 21st century, international interaction among states witnessed tremendous changes. For Okechukwu (2013), over the past decades, global changes have unleashed pressure that renders the international policy environment far more turbulent and complex than ever before. These monumental changes that have occurred in the international system are the product of globalization. A number of scholars have allude the fact that globalization of world markets, the rise of transnational network and non-governmental organizations and the rapid spread of global communication technology are undermining the power of states. The inherent value of globalization such as the attribute of supra-nationalization of statehood has meant that state should put globalization as a deciding factor in formulating foreign policy (Hakem, 2025).

It is pertinent to note that Nigerian external relations are conditioned by many factors domestic and external. In the view of Harald and Margaret (1967) in Hakeem (2005), it is the operational environment that determined the psychological realm of decision making. In this context, foreign policy makers do not react to his environment as he perceive but response to the situation on ground as Stated by Abdullah that foreign policy is a dynamic process involving interaction between the domestic and external environment (Abdullahi, 2011).

It is against this background that, the paper examines the perspective, attitude and behaviour of the working class to globalization and foreign policy. In doing this, the paper is scope into section in such a manner we first undertook the introduction, section two focus on conceptual definition, three look at theoretical framework, four, highlight the historical perspective of Nigerian foreign policy, six dwell on globalization and foreign policy, seven stress on the perspective of decision makers to globalization in relations to country foreign policy and the final section, is conclusion and recommendations.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The twentieth century thus witnessed the emergence of global politics in the sense that the patterns of conflict and cooperation among states and international organizations extended across the world. The phenomenon of globalization completely altered the understanding of politics and of the nature of international political interaction. However, in the other hand Nigeria was enmeshed in a plethora of domestic contradiction such as military intervention in governance, corruption, unemployment, inexplicable diseases, infrastructural decayed, weak institution, bad governance etc. which are fundamental elements in the formulation and implementation of viable foreign policy. The complex and multifaceted changes occasioned by globalization brought about a growing recognition that the very parameter of international political life had changed. This major development changed the perception and objectives of the Nigeria's foreign policy to focused more on internal challenges that has beleaguer the country at the inception of democratic governance in 1999.

However, scholars have extensively viewed globalization in various dimensions; of political, economic, social and cultural but have fairly and considerably exploit how globalization changed the perception of the working class in Nigeria from Afro-centric foreign policy (African as a centre piece of Nigeria's foreign policy) to meet up with the reality of globalization. On this basis, the paper considered perspective of the working on globalization and foreign policy.

CONCEPTUAL DISCOURSE

Globalization: The concept of globalization cannot be punched into a unilateral definition; this is the case because different scholars have different opinion on what it represents. However, the ideological connotations depend on which aspects of the North/South divide that is been view from. For instance, view from the South may see it essentially as universalization of capitalism with attendant negative implication for developing economies; a view from the North sees it as the increasing integration of activities and practice of human societies around the world which holds prospect for their progress and advancement (Asobie, 2001 cited in Mohammad, 2013).

According to Scholte (2007) in Hakeem (2015), globalization is the "process whereby social relations acquire relatively distanceless and borderless qualities, so that human lives are increasingly played out in the world as a single place". It can be argued that social relation among countries and other actors such as international supra-nationalism has forced multilateral diplomacy among nation states to address common problems. Globalization refers to the process of the intensification of economic, political, social and cultural relations across international boundaries. It is principally aimed at the transcendental homogenization of political and socio-economic theory across the globe (Orga, 2012). Scholte (2005) argued that globalization is linked to the growth of 'supraterritorial' relations between people, a reconfiguration of social space in which territory matters less because an increasing range of connections have a 'transworld' or 'transborder' character. Globalization is characterized by widening and speedy economy, and it is defined as a spread of capitalism (Elkin in Ibrahim, 2013). Another dimension as given by Afigbo (2002, P.) conceptualized the phenomenon to mean:

...the contemporary form of that system of relationship between peoples and societies, which is perhaps as old as human history, in which those who find themselves advantage politically, socially and economically seek to impose themselves on all others around them.

This assertion was further illuminated when Goldstein in Orngu (2013) stressed that international influence is also gained by being the one to set agenda to form rule of behavior, to change how others see their interest. If state own value become widely shared among other states, it would easily influence others to follow it.

Though, globalization has been perceived differently by scholars, with much emphasis on activities across states border, this paper holds that, globalization is the integration of global economy through the activities of supra-national organizations to spread capitalism across the state borders. This facilitates the capitalist influence on the domestic activities of state that make up the international system more especially the Third world countries.

Foreign Policy: Foreign policy likewise has not universal conceptualization as it has been subjected to different interpretation based on scholarly perspectives, Olajide (1981), rightly observed that nobody has really formulated a universally acceptable definition of the concept and probably nobody will ever success in doing so. For Ola (1999), foreign policy is a fluid concept; it is fluid and elusive because it defies a universal acceptable definition. This is to imply that there are many interested scholars in the compass of international relations. Despite the fluidity of the concept of foreign policy, scholars have defined the concept with consensus on the centrality of national interest.

Abdullah, (2011) defined foreign policy as a strategy or planned course of action developed by decision makers of a state vis-à-vis other states or international entities aimed at achieving specific goals defined in terms of national interest. It is essentially the instrumentality by which states influence or seeks to influence the external world and attain objectives that are in consonance with their perceived national interest. Daugterly and Pfaitgraff (1971) viewed foreign policy as the formulation, implementation and evaluation of external choices within one country, viewed from perspective of that country it means external choices have to reflect the internal desired of the country pursuing the foreign policy. Frankel has viewed foreign policy in the light of decisions and actions, which involve exchanges between international actors. From this point of view, foreign policy is mainly the purview of state actors in the world politics. In his contribution, Rourke, defined foreign policy as the behaviour of state as they wage war on one another, manipulate for economic advantages and conduct diplomacy to gain political influence. (Orngu, 2013).

Okechukwu (2013) on his part maintained that all decisions in form of action or reaction dealing with such matter requiring cooperation and or active support of others across the borders of a given state for the attainment fall within the ambient of foreign policy simplistically defined. In a similar vein Akinboye and Ottoh (2005), conceived foreign policy as the type of policy that transcends the boundary of a given state. It is the type of action a state embarks upon in its interaction with other member-state in the international environment, in the process of showing to attain its objective and goals. Inferring various scholarly definition of foreign policy, we consider foreign policy as rational and conscious behavior of nation-state in its interaction with other state in the international environment. Such behavior towards the external milieu is always reflections of national interest of such state. The paper view foreign policy as a state plan of action or inaction designed to guide actor interactions with other actors in the international system for purpose of achieving national interest. Foreign policy may directed at mobilizing external resources for internal development

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There are various theories of international relations that are very significant in supporting the variables in this paper, but for the purpose of this paper we consider Decision Making Theory and the Realist theory as much more appropriate for this discourse.

Decision making theory was formulated by the Australian American sociology peter Bean M. (1971). The development of decision making theory was an important intellectual achievement on the first half of 19th century. It was the first time, principle statement of how a decision maker processes information before making a final choice.

The main assumption of this theory, Peter Bean stressed that, a decision maker possessed a utility function of determining time behaviour of state through choice of policy and the entire alternative among which choice could be made known and that the consequences of choosing each alternative could be ascertained. From this assertion, it is obvious that decision making is a fundamental task that requires skills to evaluate, judge and making choices.

Holsti (1977) is another scholar that conveyed on state behaviour been determined by decision makers. To him, when we say decision makers are defining purposes, choosing among course of action and making use of national capability to achieve objective in the name of state. International interactions are guided by decision which defined state behaviour and whenever a decision is taken, it relates to such factors as the existing political situation and the relevant actors means and goals. The decisions of each country are conducted by people in top official political positions. In this case, the decision maker's perception of the world determined state action or inaction which characterized its behaviour in the international system.

Based on the preceding assumption, decision making theory is important in this paper because it is the decision of policy makers in Nigeria that determine the behaviours, action or inactions of the state in its interaction within the international community. Decision concerning external relations of a state is basically the business of a constituted authority who acts on behalf of the state. In view of this Nigeria's decision maker's perception on globalization defined the changes course of our foreign policy objectives and actions. The major aim of this paradigm shift in the nation foreign policy is to maximize outcome in the system that is globalization driven.

Decision making theory has been criticized on the basic that decision makers are guided by emotion and personality characteristics, they do not engage in such systematic process and painstaking manner especially in the time of emergency or crisis situation. It is against this inadequacy that realist theory is employed to provide an in-depth analysis of the perspective of working class to globalization and foreign policy.

Realist Theory: Realist theory is one of the theories that provide a clear perceptive on the decision or behaviour of state in an international system. The proponents of realist theory are. Carr (1939), Morgenthau (1975) and Herz (1951). Realists put power at

the root of international politics and used it as a tool of analysis. Morgenthau foremost advocate of realist theory assert that power is the theoretical core of international politics as he rightly put it; all politics is a struggle for power (Kegle, & Withkopf, 1986 as Fatai & Mohammed, 2013), individuals state pursue selfish national interest that often times generates conflicts in the international system

The core assumption of realist perspective, realists viewed state as the unit of analysis because international system is divided into sovereign states. The state is personified by the statesman (the chief executive), the central organizing concept for analysis is national interest and power, and realist believed that every state pursuit her national interest defined in terms of power. This means states pursue those objectives which are within its power to achieve. This belief is a derivative of the Hobbesian conception of man in the state of nature. Realist argued that states are continually seeking to expand their power to consolidate the power, to utilizing their power and to demonstrate their power. Acquisition of power is necessary in the international system because it is the only guarantee for national security. Another basic element of realist is the assumption of rationality, this mean states are united and behave rationally with emphasis on stability order and peace as the supreme values in the international system.

According to Akinboye (2013), Nigeria as an actor in the international system exhibits the character of state that aspires to dominate others. It has maintained from inception the principles of sovereignty and nationalism which are decisive on the foreign policy. Indeed, there is every indication to accept that Nigeria's foreign policy is still fashioned to preserve Nigeria's dominance in West African region and African continent in general.

Application of the Theory

Realist theory is expedient in addressing the argument of this paper in the sense that it provides a clear explanation on the rationale behind the paradigm shift in the Nigeria foreign policy in the age of globalization and justification of the decision makers. Firstly, Nigeria is a state actor that interacts and engages in international politics in an anarchy international environment represented by the 'statesman' the chief executive or the decision makers. The major concern of the Nigeria international interactions is her national interest which is power to secure its territorial integrity, power to preserved order, peace and national security. This is made possible through the working classes who rationally cooperate with other states to project and realize the objectives of its foreign policy which is "national interest". It is the believed of this paper that if Nigeria can deal with its internal contradictions militating against development, it could confront the external environment driven by the phenomenon of globalization.

Historical Perspectives of the Nigerian Foreign Policy

Nigeria's foreign policy came to fore immediately after the independence on 1 October 1960, to herald how the country viewed and wishes to response to issues related to her external environment. In its relationships with the external world, Nigeria situates national interest as its core value, closely followed by African interest and subsequently the rest of the world toward ensuring global peace and harmony.

In this context, Lamido, (2005) assert that, Nigeria accords due recognition to the totality of Africa's needs and expectation in the formulation and implementation of the foreign policy. Though, it has been established by various scholars including Ofegbo as in Okechukwu (2013) that even after the independence Nigeria was never really free to choose her foreign policy. Britain continued to influence the pattern and character of Nigeria's relations. Never the less, it is indeed clear that despite the influence and challenges, Nigeria successive government right from Balewa era had outlined the fundamental principles of Nigeria foreign policy with multiple role of African milieu.

One pertinent aspect with the foreign policy of Nigeria which Lamido (2005) highlighted is, the consistency in the articulation of her foreign policy principles and objective from the early days of Nigeria independence. These become evidence in her role toward the establishment of (AOU) now (AU) and her commitment to the total liberation of Africa from colonialism and struggle against the apartheid regime in South Africa.

Apart from pursuing her foreign policy objectives and effort to achieved these objectives, Nigeria has remarkable consistent in adopting behavioural pattern guided by the principle which Aluko, (1981), opined that in 1960, these principles were the usual respect for sovereign equality non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, commitment to the promotion of African solidarity and security and support for non-alignment as well as world peace. The principles and objectives of Nigeria foreign policy as enshrined in chapter two section 19 of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended are:

- i Promotion and protection of national interest
- ii Promotion of international cooperation for the consolidation of Universal peace and mutual respect among all national and elimination of discrimination in all its manifestation
- iii Respect for international laws and treaty obligation as well as seeking for settlement of international disputes by negotiation, conciliation, arbitration, mediation and adjudication and
- v. Promotion of a just world economic order.

It is equally important to stress here that foreign policy makers must bear in mind that foreign policy objectives of any nation should be a dynamic process to accommodate the interplay of issues in this dynamic world.

Linkage Factors in Foreign Policy Formulation and Implementation

Nation states articulate and project their foreign policies to the international system to exploit resources so as to augment internal deficiency. For Ola (1999), foreign policy is a reflection of and linkage between internal policies and the environment. This means, for any foreign policy objective to be achieved the two determine factors must interplay with one another.

Okeke and Aniche (2014), linkage approach assumes that domestic politics and foreign policy are organically interconnected and that the totality of the domestic structure determines or conditions the characters of Nigeria foreign policy. In other words internal political environment shapes the outcomes of Nigeria foreign policy making as a result, the understanding of Nigeria external or foreign policy is a product of the dynamic interplay between the internal and external political setting of nation state (Idang, 1973; Phillip, 1973; Ainyemi, 1974; Asobie, 1980; Gambari, 1980; Aluko, 1981; Ifesinachi, 2001 cited in Okeke & Aniche 2014).

Thus, domestic factors like religion, culture, ethnicity, economy etc. are seen as considerable significance to foreign policy making. The idea of the linkage of interface between the domestic political structure and the external political arena gives room for an analysis that completely examines the extent to which interaction between the two can constitute a hindrance to the formulation of effective foreign policy thrust that encompasses all aspects of national interest.

From the preceding argument, Nigeria domestic political environment is one where the political class engages in electoral malpractices inform of elections rigging, thuggery and violence. Citizens are confronted with abject poverty, mass unemployment poor standards of living, low life expectancy, brazen corruption etc. in the human development index. These internal contradictions have affected the formulation and implementation of foreign policy (Okeke & Aniche, 2014). Equally confronted with the phenomenon of globalization where states and non-states actors activities cut across states boundaries.

Globalization and Nigeria's Foreign Policy Objective

Globalization is an indispensable variable in the formulation of foreign policy in the contemporary era. Understanding the indispensability of this concept, the world is developing into a globalizing society as a result of technological advancement economic development, social interaction and various developments in the international arena (Omotere 2010). These changes were more rapid in some areas such as in Europe through the establishment of the European Union (EU). In continent like Africa, cooperation and development are more slowly as a result of political instability, economic inconsistencies and many other vices that have come to be institutionalized in our politics.

The present configuration of the international system has been tailback to Nigeria; globalization has had its adverse implication on the nation's economy and in the conduct of its cross-border relations. Bearing his view on the turn of event in the international system, Jessop (2003) as in Hakeem (2015) talk about the spectacular change in the powers of state at the national scale as brought about by the impact of globalization, so individual states have to fend for itself. Rauben Abati as captured in Hakeem (2015) concurs with the necessity for Nigerian foreign policy to reflect the global dynamism as exhibited by globalization. He put it markedly that "we must abandon this turned vision about Africa being Nigeria main concern and define relations in terms of gain and interest. Obvious from this assertion that Afro-centric principle as one cardinal objective of Nigeria foreign policy does not reflect the then present reality of the international system.

Nigeria was caught in the system that contemporaneously characterized by a new phenomenon of globalization. Despite its huge natural resources endowments, there are distortions in the national economy as a result of its incorporation into the global economic relations. Omotere (2010) understand this scenario when he said that existing wide disparities between the developed and underdeveloped economies make globalization a tool for stultifying the industrialization process and by extension retarding the growth and development of underdeveloped economies. It is equally important to state that Nigeria cannot afford to be indifferent or be isolated from global economic interplay, this is because the forces in the international system is beyond her power and the major policies formulated in her foreign policy right from 1999 were influenced by the effects of globalization and its requirement and the need for the country to beginning active steps towards repositioning the entire country economy so as to be reckoned with in the international politics.

Working Class and Paradigm Shift in the Nigeria's Foreign Policy

Every government or regime in Nigeria maintains a vast bureaucratic administrative hierarchy for the planning and execution of policies. Foreign policy bureaucratic is used strictly to refer to those that deal directly with foreign policy processes in a country. In articulating foreign policy, actors are influenced by their behaviour, it is on this regard that behavioural approach in the study of foreign policy still remains relevant. For any foreign policy decision made, there are motives behind them. This is why Idang (1971) as in Akinboye (2013) eloquently and persuasively argued that foreign policy making reference is made to the personality and general disposition and value preference of decision maker.

Akiboy (2013) opined that formulating a good counteract foreign policy is therefore contingent upon how experts, bureaucrats, Ministries and agencies that are statutorily responsible for the formulation of foreign policy are able to articulate the issues before them and adequately and subsequently put up a comprehensive foreign policy taking into consideration the multifarious nature of the events that shape them, that is, the kind of policy that would find domestic ties to the international interest.

In a similar connection of international event, Akindele (1990) assert, we begin first by drawing attention to one conspicuous reality in the international system which is the increasingly expanding complex cobweb of international diplomatic game which all nations played. This situation is both the cause and effect of the rapidly expanding foreign policy terrain poses a problem and challenges to every country including Nigeria. In the case, tradition notion of state as the only actors in the international system become irrelevant as non-state actors as multinational cooperation emerges to be the determinant factors in the international community.

The foreign policy decision makers came to term with the international reality during the administration of Obasanjo which was the time the country shift away from concentration on Africa to global dimension became visible. Obasanjo redirected the nation foreign thrust to the centre stage of global politics. Okechukwu (2013), this change could easily be understood within the context of globalization which make makes it imperative for the nation foreign policy to positively respond to dominant global events. Also in this period, Asobie (2010) classified this a Nigeria diplomatic "Renaissance" it was the era Nigeria leaders came to realize that there were new forces in the international system which were turning the world into a "global village". This process undermined the power of states more especially the third world countries like Nigeria. Re-echoing Obasanjo's pronouncement, the former foreign affairs minister Lamido, argued that if the issue of contemporary international relations is economic in nature, "the doctrine of Africa being the centrepiece of Nigeria foreign policy become inappropriate. Nigeria foreign policy interests today extend beyond our concern for the well-being of our continent of Africa "(Lamido, in Agbu 2001 cited in Okechukwu 2013).

Since the inception of the new democratic era in 1999, a major trend is clearly discernible in the foreign policy. This is the desire to establish and maintain friendship with countries that have historically shape global diplomacy while forging new alliances with emerging powers in the global economic area. This trend reflects the country overall objective as envisioned in its vision 20-2020 document (Alao, 2011), for this reason, six major determinants have underline Nigeria foreign policy since 1999. These include the following:

- i. Removing the near pariah status that the country attained during the last phases of military rule
- ii. Remaining a key player in region on continental politics particularly in the light of increasing importance to the Gulf of Guinea.
- iii. ensuring that external relations assist in domestic economic development especially through strategic cooperation with traditional and emerging global economic actor
- iv. Bring about debt relief
- v. Obtaining assistance to consolidate democracy and
- vi. Improving the image of the country affected by negative press abroad.

The immediate task of the government after investiture was therefore, to reverse this status, the government embarked on a three pronged approach aimed at taming the country socio-political environment by pursuing veneration for human rights and the rule of law, fighting corruption and initiating high-profile state visit to major capital cities of countries in an effort to redeemed the country image in the face of the world.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper has been able to periscope the perspective of the Nigeria decision makers to globalization and foreign policy. It has been able to established that foreign policy formulation and implementations are functions saddled on to political class especially the Ministry of foreign affairs to project the nation beyond the shore of its territorial border. It also highlight the linkages between the domestic interest and foreign and emphasize that Nigeria has been consistent in its foreign policy objective right from Balewa time. However, the force of globalization change the perception and approaches of decision makers towards foreign policy, with less emphasis on the extant Afrocentric foreign policy objective to a new international reality defined in terms of gains and national interest by maintaining friendship and forging alliance with the emerging power that influence global economic diplomacy in the international system.

The paper advances some recommendations as thus:

Nigeria government must make concerted efforts to assemble experts in international relations for a robust foreign policy that is capable of presenting its domestic contradictions and engage in diplomatic persuasions especially in the areas of economy and security towards realizable, stable and prosperous Nigeria. Our foreign policy architecture should reflect the dynamism of the 21th century driven by the global economic interdependence, forging stronger ties with the major economy hegemon to reposition our economy.

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