



ARTICLE HISTORY

Received: 13-09-2026

Accepted: 24-10-2026

Published: 27-10-2026



Journal Access By QR

Journal homepage: <https://ssarpublishers.com/ssarjahss>

Abbreviated Key Title: SSAR J Arts Humanit Soc Sci

Volume 3, Issue 5, (Sep-Oct) 2026, Page 362-376 (Total PP.15)

E-mail: ssarpublishers@gmail.com

STATES' SOVEREIGNTY, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, GLOBAL MARKETS AND THE DYNAMICS OF THE POLICY PROCESS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: As Africa's most populous nation, Nigeria's engagement with entities like the United Nations and global markets carries profound domestic and regional implications. While these relationships offer pathways to economic growth and cooperation, they have also deepened economic disparities, distorted policy processes, and fueled social unrest. This paper explores the complex relationship between national sovereignty, international organizations, and global markets, using Nigeria as a case study. The objective of this research is to highlight the limited sovereignty that has enveloped the Nigerian nation largely due to globalization and prescribe how the nation can navigate this course. Grounded in realist international relations theory and employing content analysis of documentary evidence, the study argues that although international organizations and global markets have contributed to Nigeria's development, they have also undermined its sovereignty. The paper concludes that Nigeria must strategically navigate its global interactions to protect national autonomy and promote sustainable development. It calls for policies that priorities national interests, ensuring that international cooperation strengthens rather than weakens Nigeria's internal governance and long-term stability.

KEYWORDS: Sovereignty, Nigeria, globalization, international organizations, policy process, global markets.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is the most populous black nation-state (Pontianus and Oruonye, 2021, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d), consisting of a populace, a defined territory, government structures at all levels and more importantly, sovereignty. Sovereignty is the most important doctrine in establishing a state (Philpott, 2003). It is on this foundation that the state exercises inalienable power both internally and externally. The principle of sovereignty allows for the legal and political independence of the state. It is the fundamental basis of the states' autonomy. By this autonomy, the government and the citizens of a state are therefore predisposed to determining their structure, pride, fate, objectives, policies, and, in fact, their entire existence. As Hobbes (1651) stated in the Leviathan, "a commonwealth is said to be instituted, when a multitude of men do agree and

covenant, everyone with everyone, that to whatsoever man or assembly of men shall be given by the major part, the right to present the person for them all (that is to say, to be their representative), everyone, as well he that voted for it as he that voted against it, shall authorise all the actions and judgments of that man or assembly of men..., From this institution of a commonwealth are derived all the rights and faculties of him or them, on whom sovereign power is conferred by the consent of the people assembled". The idea of sovereignty was developed in the 16th century to restore order, stability and harmony in the medieval European states torn apart by anarchic, feudal and divisive authority struggles between the secular and the ecclesiastical powers (Okoli, 2003, p.20). The idea of the sovereignty of states is fascinating, even more

so, becoming an important discussion, as important as, of course, human rights.

Going further, developing countries often experience more severe constraints on their policy sovereignty due to globalization. For instance, in 2021, Nigeria's trade-to-GDP ratio was 22.58% (World Integrated Trade Solution, 2022), indicating substantial exposure to global market forces. Its KOF Globalization Index score stood at 53.49 in 2022, considerably below the global average of 61.23 (TheGlobalEconomy.com, 2024).

Furthermore, recent reports show that Nigeria's foreign direct investment inflows averaged about 1.2–1.3% of nominal GDP in 2024, indicating modest levels of foreign capital that are often linked with policy conditions (CEIC Data, 2024). Scholars have observed that such dependencies leave developing nations "more vulnerable to external pressures," while advanced economies tend to retain greater policy autonomy through strong institutions and policies (Gautam & Saxena, 2024; Salif, 2024). These empirical indicators support the thesis that globalization exerts a stronger negative impact on the sovereignty of developing countries like Nigeria than on developed states.

This highlights the challenge of policy formulation in Nigeria (and other developing countries). It underscores Nigeria's inability as a sovereign entity to determine its policies for the benefit of its commonwealth without first resorting to international markets and organizations. The Nigerian state has willingly joined international organizations like the United Nations (UN) to enhance its diplomatic influence, promote economic development, and, of course, contribute to global peace and security. However, the significant question is how membership of these international organizations influences or impacts Nigeria's ability to govern itself independently. Taking cognizance of the positive sides of globalization and, of course, the impressive roles that international organizations play in uniting the world, it is imperative to also establish the fact that Nigeria's membership of these organizations has significantly eroded the state of its sovereignty, reducing sovereignty to mere hoisting of flags and reciting of national anthem, whereas the country's leadership no longer has the wherewithal to pursue the good of the commonwealth, without first considering the stance of these organizations and the global market (Udalla, 2012 & Rosenje,

2023). The study sees the above scenario as problematic for the country. It aims, therefore, to draw the line on how Nigeria is expected to approach the global market pragmatically while maintaining the overall good of the people in a representative democracy.

Realist Theory of International Relations and Nigeria's Diplomatic Relations

Realism in international relations is a theoretical framework that views world politics as an enduring competition among self-interested states vying for power and positioning within an anarchic global system devoid of a centralized authority (Denevek, 2012). The underlying word here is power. Hence, realism highlights the interest of states in exerting power to cogently assert themselves in the international scene. Human beings are understood to be inherently egoistic. On this premise, therefore, it highlights this trait, which is also made manifest by state actions on the global stage. Realism (including neorealism) focuses on abiding patterns of interaction in an international system lacking a centralized political authority (Bell, 2024). Since there is no central government, Korab (2023) affirms that these factors contribute to a conflict-based paradigm of international relations, in which the key actors are the states, in which power and security become the main issues, and in which there is little place for ethical norms.

The lack of a systematic political administration in world politics is obvious and deliberate. However, the unsystematic, decentralized political administration by the United Nations Security Council made up of fifteen (15) members; five permanent members and ten non-permanent members have sparked a lot of debate in the past years, affirming the position of the realists on the anarchic operation in the international scene, eluding all democratic propositions on which the accord of modern political administration is instituted. The membership of the Security Council is one of the most debated aspects of the United Nations. The question of the composition of the Security Council has been examined both within the UN in various bodies and by outside organizations, scholars and researchers (Dag Hammarskjöld Library, 2023). An instance of this debate was reported by the United Nations Meetings Coverage and Press Releases (2022) noting that member States once again broadly agreed on the need to

modernize the 15-member body to maintain the relevance of the United Nations in the twenty-first century but diverged over the appropriate use of the Council's veto authority, especially in instances of mass atrocities. Georgia's representative said that unfolding events have made it clear that the Council is failing to live up to its *raison d'être* - the maintenance of international peace and security, with veto power reform particularly urgent. The veto is not a right, but rather a privilege unfairly granted to some Member States in violation of the United Nations Charter, the representative of Iran emphasised. He also noted that the majority of the Council's members are from Western nations. Hence, there is an urgent need to balance the value and power equation within the international polity.

The idea of an undemocratic setup and the veto principle of the permanent members affirm the realistic school of thought that cedes the idea of international politics to the states' Machiavellian quest for power and control, most especially as much as it serves the (national) interest of the state. Hence, survival of the fittest. It is important to note that the United Nations, since its inception in 1945, has established itself as a global assembly of states with a total membership of 193 states. The UN's Membership has grown from the original 51 Member States in 1945 to the current 193 Member States (United Nations, n.d). Hence, the organization is fitting for an analogy of a global institution that serves the interest of states, or as the realist submits, a special purpose vehicle that drives the interest of the Security Council of the United Nations, especially the interest of the permanent members.

For Nigeria, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reaffirms the interest of Nigeria in the following clear and concise statement: Our Core Values deal with issues of National Security, Survival, Territorial Integrity and Sovereignty as well as strengthening the International Mechanism for effective service delivery and enhancing revenue measures, distributions, Customer service, including increasing a greater economic content in the curriculum of the Nation's Foreign Services and Investment (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d). Furthermore, Nigeria's foreign policy also centres on the promotion of African integration and support for African unity. Mbara & Gopal (2020) observed that Nigeria's foreign policy has historically been

Afrocentric, with Africa being the centre-piece since the country's independence. This Afrocentric approach was initially driven by the need to support decolonisation and promote African unity. However, over time, this policy has faced scrutiny for not adequately addressing the welfare of Nigerian citizens and being more beneficial to the elite.

From a realistic point of view, Nigeria's national interest will always risk suppression in the face of stronger world powers. Nigeria is a regional power and enjoys significant political control across the African region. However, economic control is predicated on a strong GDP. A strong GDP is predicated on carefully and uniquely thought-out economic policies that take into consideration Nigeria's geographical and demographical peculiarities, and not just a universal World Bank or IMF illusive and penuriously thought-out policies that are not aimed at any significant course. As Mbara & Gopal pointed out, advancing the interests of the stronger states tends to favour the interests of just the wealthy. After all, the history of modern civilisation, as historical materialism suggests, has always been about class struggle, the bourgeois against the proletariat. This class struggle extends into the processes of globalization, as realism equally points out that the dynamics of the international arena revolve around states actively advancing their national interests and prioritising security. While idealism leans towards cooperation and ethical considerations, realism argues that states operate in a realm devoid of inherent justice, where ethical norms may not apply (Deneve, 2012).

Sovereignty and the Dynamics of the Policy Process in Nigeria.

Sovereignty entails hierarchy within a state as well as external autonomy for states. In any state, sovereignty is assigned to the person, body or institution that has the ultimate authority over other people, to command respect and coerce obedience to the state apparatus. In political theory, sovereignty is a substantive term designating supreme legitimate authority over some polity. In international law, sovereignty is the exercise of power by a state (Britannica, 2025). Sovereignty is the name given to the supreme will of the state, which finds expression in legally binding command. It connotes the state as a volitional entity or political person and designates that faculty which this

political person possesses of determining by its fiat what shall be the legal rights and legal duties which it will recognise and, if necessary, enforce. (Willoughby, 1913). Sovereignty is the traditional view of the supreme will of the state, characterised by coercive and absolute power. The coercive and absolute power exuded implies that the state shall, in any case, wield its authority to enforce obedience from internal and external elements of the state polity. The ability to exercise this authority determines the hallmark of any given state, setting the tone for whatever the state is or will become. Sovereignty is an important discourse in politics and international relations. A polity is recognized as a state when it is free of any internal or external prejudice and interference. However, the idea of globalization gives no credence to this fact, as the interconnectivity of states nonetheless provides a platform for policy incorporation among states. As the social contract theory postulates, and by the probity of integration into the global market, states cede their sovereignty in exchange for global peace, progress, relevance and participation. How this sovereignty is relinquished, willingly or unwillingly, remains a discourse of major concern.

In the context of the theory of realism in international politics, which is the crux of this study, it is important to note that, though states sacrifice their sovereignty on the altar of globalization, core policies of security and national interest should remain sacred to the supreme and collective will of the people. Realism presupposes a state-centred foreign policy despite the imposing complexities of globalization. In a democratic political dispensation as embodied in the constitution of the Nigerian state, the people should be at the centre of all (major) policy processes. There is a need to find a means between adapting to the global market structures and putting Nigeria first. The success of any political administration is determined by the prospects of the policies made and how well they are implemented. When alien economic, social, welfare or environmental policies are incessantly adopted for the sake of global alignment, hence putting national alignment behind, such policies do not make any significant impact on the general welfare of the people; therefore, it is bound to crash in the long run. An example of such a policy aimed at global alignment is the Paris Climate Treaty. The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international

treaty on climate change. It was adopted by 196 Parties (including Nigeria) at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris, France, on 12 December 2015. It entered into force on 4 November 2016. Its overarching goal is to hold “the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels” and pursue efforts “to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels”. However, in recent years, world leaders have stressed the need to limit global warming to 1.5°C by the end of this century. (United Nations Climate Change, n.d).

In 2012, the Federal Executive Council approved a comprehensive strategy policy on climate change: The Nigeria Climate Change Policy Response and Strategy (NCCPRS), the overarching objective of the policy is to promote low-carbon, high-growth economic development and build a climate-resilient society through the achievement of some outlined targets (Federal Ministry of Environment, Department of Climate Change, 2021). Even though climate change awareness has been a subject of discussion among policymakers in Nigeria since 2012, the climate treaty informed Nigeria’s climate change act, signed into law in 2021. While it is important to preserve our environment through this act, there are pertinent questions to be asked. Why is the subject of greenhouse gas emissions suddenly interpreted as a threat to life and the environment in the wake of industrialization in Africa, what is the rationale behind countries with unique economic, social, technological and financial needs adopting a common document that limits their tendency of self-determining how to tackle their energy challenges as it best suites their economic and developmental needs. Do the climate conditions across Nigeria (and Africa) somehow affect the entire world? If so, why not channel the zeal in advancing climate change actions to developing science and technology that exonerates one geographical region from the other? The policy dynamics in Nigeria should not be oblivious to imperialism and syncretism in global politics. Questions should be asked about what we are not gaining as a state if the greenhouse gas emission goes above two degrees Celsius, which is around the maximum threat projection of the Paris climate treaty. What is the opportunity cost in the long run? Is it enough to just sign a pact and follow it religiously, was Nigerian scientists and environmentalists involved in the

studies that projected global catastrophe with regards to carbon emissions in the near future, is the climate change actions a global plot to keep Africa dependent, since it is understood that Africa is energy sufficient in terms of coal, fuel and gas? If these questions are to be understood and critically analysed, while relegating bias or prejudice, then Nigeria can make progress in the quest to uphold its independence as a sovereign state. The Paris treaty and climate actions have been mentioned briefly here as a case study. However, the critical questions raised are to be, and can be translated to all other state policies that tend to align with a global policy, bearing in mind the sanctity of the sovereignty of the Nigerian state that should, in all circumstances, put the people, the security and the welfare of the Nigerian citizens first.

International Organizations, Global Markets and the Dynamics of Policy Process in Nigeria

Hanriender (1998) defines the international organization as an institutionalised arrangement among members of the international system to solve tasks which have evolved from systemic conditions. The organization therefore reflects the attributes, aspirations and preoccupations of its members. An international organization refers to an organization with a global presence, duly recognized by sovereign states, formed in an economic, political, social, health, or humanitarian alliance among states or individuals, in a bid to enhance global peace and development. They are basically of two types and are classified according to their structure and objectives. (1) International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs). These include international non-profit organizations and worldwide companies such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and Medicines and (2) International Governmental Organizations (IGO) that are made up primarily of sovereign States. Notable examples include the United Nations Organization (UN), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Police Organization (INTERPOL), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), African Union (AU), European Union (EU), etc. On the scope and operational methods of international organizations, McCormick (1999) observed that an intergovernmental organization (IGO) is composed of nation-states and it promotes voluntary co-operation and coordination among its members. Hence, decisions and agreements reached

in this type of organization, however, are not enforceable, and the members remain independent. He went on to further emphasise a crucial aspect of international governmental organizations that seems to have been repudiated by the stringent wave of globalization; thus, members (of intergovernmental organizations) do not surrender any power (or sovereignty) to it.

Though this could be the case of international organizations on paper, through the treaties establishing them, Buchanan and Koehane, (2006) disagree that this is the case today, as they constrain the choices facing societies, sometimes limit the exercise of sovereignty by democratic states, and impose burdens as well as confer benefits. For example, states must belong to the WTO in order to participate effectively in the world economy, yet WTO membership requires accepting a large number of quite intrusive rules, authoritatively applied by its dispute settlement system. This explains the relationship between Nigeria (as a sovereign state) and international organizations affiliated with the state. Nigeria's involvement in the global market and with international organizations like the ones mentioned above is a sort of union that has become indispensable. It is an alliance that is absolutely necessary for the continued political, social and economic existence of the country. Nigeria's development is predicated on its ability to forestall the negative impacts of globalization and adopt the realist school of thought, which subscribes to a pragmatic approach devoid of ethical sentiments but centred on an egoistic pursuit of national interest on the international stage.

Acknowledging the positive effects of international organizations in Nigeria, it is important to note that the developmental framework of the United Nations, encapsulated in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), provides a practical guide for achieving development that meets the global standard. In September 2000, leaders of 189 countries (including Nigeria) gathered at the United Nations headquarters and signed the historic Millennium Declaration, in which they committed to achieving a set of eight measurable goals that range from halving extreme poverty and hunger to promoting gender equality and reducing child mortality, by the target date of 2015. The MDGs were revolutionary in providing a common

language to reach global agreement. The 8 goals were realistic and easy to communicate, with a clear measurement/monitoring mechanism (Sustainable Development Goals Fund, n.d). In the interest of creating a new, people-centred development agenda, a global consultation was conducted widely, involving member states of the UN, the private sector, civil societies, academics, and indeed all stakeholders to craft another developmental framework, taking cognizance of the achievements of the MDGs and areas of improvement. The UN Secretary General presented a synthesis of the results of these consultation processes. In July 2014, the UN General Assembly Open Working Group (OWG) proposed a document containing 17 goals to be put forward for the General Assembly's approval in September 2015. This document set the ground for the new SDGs and the global development agenda spanning from 2015-2030 (SDGF, n.d). These frameworks provide a blueprint and scorecard to the ministries and agencies of government charged with policy formulation and implementation, therefore, enabling them to pursue policies in line with international development standards.

Another positive impact of international organizations is the fact that they have made globalization seamless and possible through improved interaction among states. International organizations play a pivotal role in the globalization process by providing a platform for cooperation and collaboration among nations. Articulating the importance of such interactions using ECOWAS as a case study, Ije, Ajiya and Wuyep (2019) observed that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), formed with the main objective of achieving economic harmonization and free trade relations among member states, has worked to promote regional stability, solidarity, and self-reliance, as well as coordinate national policies to facilitate trade and development in West Africa. Hence, such improved interactions reduce conflicts and improve trade relations among states, thereby allowing members to achieve their national objective interests of growth, development and

stability. Organizations like the World Trade Organization (WTO) help in reducing trade barriers, thus promoting international trade. Nigeria's labour force benefits from this reduced trade barrier as they can be able to trade their skills globally within a multifaceted workforce. On the implication to the economy, the Nigerian skilled workers earn their wages in dollars, thereby attracting massive foreign exchange that, in turn, provides stability to the naira. WTO and the likes create standardised regulations and dispute resolution mechanisms, making global trade smoother and more predictable.

Organizations such as the UN Human Rights Council work towards the protection of human rights and the promotion of social development. They address issues like gender equality, education, and healthcare, contributing to a more equitable global society. During the heat of the End SARS protest of 2020, Michelle Bachelet, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, was very critical of the government for the manner in which they approached the youths protesting against the police for gross violations of their fundamental human rights. In her statement, the high commissioner expressed the need for immediate, independent, transparent and thorough investigations "not just into last night's killings, but also into all the previous violations committed by security forces," She further emphasized that "Those appointed to carry out such investigations must not only be independent and impartial but must be widely perceived as such. And, where sufficient evidence already exists to warrant charges, immediate suspension of officers, including senior officers suspected of committing serious crimes, should take place long before the conclusion of such investigations" (United Nations, 2020). Addressing issues like this provides a check on the government, as sanctions can be applied in cases of non-adherence. It also restores confidence and hope for the people, knowing that their human rights are sacrosanct and must not be violated. The intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations play a vital role in globalization and the free global market.

Table 1: Some Positive Impacts of International Organizations

S/N	International Organization	Area of Impact	Key Programmes/Actions	Impact on Nigeria
1	United Nations (UN)	Development planning and governance	Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	Provided Nigeria with a developmental framework that aligns with global standards. Encouraged government ministries and agencies to adopt measurable targets.
2	UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC)	Human rights protection and social justice.	Monitoring human rights violations, e.g., intervention during EndSARS protests (2020)	Provided international oversight and pressured the government for accountability and justice in human rights cases.
3	International Labour Organization	Labour rights and employment standards	Support for decent work initiatives, anti-child labour campaigns, labour trafficking, etc.	Helped Nigeria align labour standards with international best practices.
4	World Health Organization (WHO)	Public health and disease control	COVID-19 pandemic response, Polio eradication campaign, malaria control programmes.	Provided technical support, medical supplies, and health system strengthening.
5	World Trade Organization (WTO)	Trade liberalisation and market access.	Reduction of trade barriers, standardisation of trade regulations.	Enhanced export diversification, global market participation (e.g., remote and hybrid job participation), and trade competitiveness.

However, the negative toll of these organizations is also obvious; the implications are quite glaring. Africa has refused to stand up and forge a new course that puts Africa and Africans first. Nigeria is a substantive figure in African geopolitics and, by extension, world politics. Due to its massive population, territorial landscape, rich human and material resources, Nigeria is potentially a force in the geopolitical frontiers of international politics. However, it might not be actualised if the state does not adopt realism as a guiding principle in confronting international politics. Hence, if Nigeria takes the backseat in the scheme of things, then Africa also remains in the background.

Addressing some of the negative toll of international organizations on Nigeria, it is important to note that intensified international trading affects the environment. International trade policies and globalization can lead to environmental

issues such as pollution and deforestation. The table below gives some empirical context to this claim.

According to Nayan (2007), “multinational companies wreak havoc on the global environment by moving operations to countries where environmental regulations are weak or nonexistent. A recent World Bank study shows that clearing forests to grow crops accounted for some 20 percent of global carbon emissions. The influx of foreign goods and services can also result in increased waste and environmental degradation”. According to Wikipedia (2025), the rising demand for certain products and global trade arrangements causes forest conversions, which ultimately leads to soil erosion. Disregard of ascribed value, lax forest management, and deficient environmental laws are some of the factors that lead to large-scale deforestation. A 2005 report by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

states that from 2010 to 2015, worldwide forest area decreased by 3.3 million ha per year (Sloan & Sayer 2015). During this five-year period, the biggest forest area loss occurred in the tropics, particularly in South America and Africa. Africa had the largest annual rate of net forest loss in 2010–2020, at 3.9 million ha, followed by South America, at 2.6 million ha. The rate of net forest loss has increased in Africa in each of the three decades since 1990 (Payn, et al., 2015). It has declined substantially in South America, however, to about half the rate in 2010–2020 compared with 2000–2010. The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) rates Nigeria as having the world's highest deforestation rate of primary forests, losing more than half of its primary forest in the last five years. It further stated that between 2000 and 2005, Nigeria lost 55.7 per cent of its primary forests, while in 2020, the country lost 97.8 kilohectares of natural forest. (Uwaegbulam, 2025).

These environmental statistics point to the inherent void in the policy process in Nigeria. It lays bare the fact that environmental policies that protect the people, the state, the landscape and waterways are weak or non-existent, hence the continued exploitation of the global market through the international organizations. The pressure on the ecological space, exacerbated by the international pressure, also significantly reduces Nigeria's foreign exchange and GDP, as a United Nations (2022) report confirms that the forest sector contributes about 2.5% to the Gross Domestic Product and provides employment for over 5 million people through the supply of timber and non-timber products.

There have been several reports of land and water pollution in the Niger Delta areas where multinational companies like Shell Plc have engaged in oil drilling that degenerates to decades of pollution from oil spills and gas flares which have killed off fish and other water resources, and have ruined the fertility of the soil, taking food crops into extinction and exacerbating food inflation and famine, not just in the Niger Delta, but in entire country. Indigenes of the area recount that "Oil is a curse". Jonah Gbemre, an activist from Iwhrekan, who has been battling Shell in the Nigerian courts to stop gas flaring since 2005, says: "The whole world is at risk now because what is bad in my community is what is wrong everywhere in the

world. If there are gas flares here, it will affect the whole world climate-wise. We are all suffering from climate change now. We are calling on international organizations to come to our aid and stop gas flaring and stop pollution of our environment, to bring the people into a better life standard because we cannot keep suffering here, it is dehumanizing" (ActionAid International, 2020). In recent years, both Nigerian and international courts have ruled for monetary compensation for communities in the Niger Delta area, affected by environmental pollution from oil and gas spillage. However, there is no amount of money that is commensurate with the value of life and property that have been lost and that are at risk of loss in the near future. There is a generational risk posed by ineffective government actions on environmental conservation. The effect of weak or nonexistent environmental reform policies gives credence to the actions and inactions of international organizations in promoting such global market practices by capitalist companies like Shell and the like that put profit before the good of the people and the environment, leaving devastating impacts of poverty, pollution, destruction and rights abuses to trail. Nigeria is a sovereign state that entrenches the fundamental human rights of its citizens in its constitution; these rights must be protected at all costs. The fundamental duty of a government is to provide welfare, protect the life and property of members of the state. Isn't it an irony that, as Jonah pointed out that "one of the biggest gas plants in Africa is hosted here (Niger Delta). But we don't have lights in our community, the only light we have is from gas flares, we don't have safe water to drink, no roads, no health centres, no social amenities and no jobs" (ActionAid International, 2020). Therefore, any international treaty or law or agreement that puts the life and welfare of the citizens of the country, or of future generations, into jeopardy, must, as a matter of emergency, be cancelled and detached from. The emphasis of the realist school of thought should not be a mere rhetoric for Nigeria's foreign relations and international engagement; it should be escalated at this point, that is, only when the world takes Nigeria seriously as a country. It is to assert your value and allow the world to follow or trail. In the first few hours of Trump's second term, he signed an order of America's exit from the Paris climate treaty, citing that "America have been continually

ripped". This is an example of a state playing the realist card because international politics is highly egocentric. Nigeria's policies should reflect the interests of Nigerians first, even as they key into globalization, which this study has referred to as indispensable.

Apart from the environmental impact of Nigeria's engagement with international organizations and the global market, the economic impact is even more devastating. International organizations have had a notable impact on the distribution of global funds, the establishment of eligibility criteria for aid recipients, and the evaluation of the effects of foreign aid (Rojík, et al., 2024). Economic dependency on international organizations has become a cankerworm in the system, and this requires immediate attention to de-escalate the already existing problem and avert an impending doom. There are several ways in which global markets and international organizations impact the economy and the states' treasuries, putting the concept of sovereignty in a questionable and jeopardised state. Several funds provided by international organizations, including the UN, the IMF, the World Bank, the WHO, etc. These funds come in loans and grants. The figures are so substantial that they can change the trajectory of any economy it is injected. Nigeria has become economically dependent on international aid and loans; hence, this dependency can hinder the country's ability to autonomously develop its economic policies and strategies. The reason is simple: these funds come with stringent measures; therefore, access to these funds equates to access to dine with the devil.

Rojík, et al. (2024), in an extensive empirical study of the impact of foreign aid on the Nigerian economy, concluded that these aids make lesser or no contribution to GDP. Official development assistance as a form of foreign aid and credit extensions, does not contribute to the progress of the Nigerian economy; it rather retards it. This suggests that these loans are not channelled to the right sectors of the economy and are misappropriated by

relevant authorities receiving such assistance, and it manifests the presence of ineffective economic policies. Fashina, et al., (2018) using the Medicine Model of study suggest that an increasing flow of foreign aid to Nigeria would, at the early stage, induce economic growth up to an optimal point. However, any additional foreign aid received beyond the optimal point will only affect the country's growth level negatively. Also, the empirical findings from the extended the model further indicate that economic growth in Nigeria would respond to human capital shock via education, while the effect of shock from aid is minimal. In another extensive empirical study on the impact of foreign loans on developing countries (with Ghana as a case study), Appiah-Konadu et al., (2016) submitted that labour, capital and government expenditure have positive impact on economic growth (in Ghana) in both the long run and the short run while aid and interest payment on external debt have negative impact on growth. This implies that aid, which is intended to promote economic development, ends up harming the economy (of Ghana) due to mainly corruption and high interest payments on aids that come in the form of loans. Examining the basis for this assertion, this study will go further to point to some realities about international loans and aid. Firstly, these loans come with stringent measures that negatively impact Nigeria's economic sovereignty. In the quest for development, Nigeria has often approached the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, also known as the World Bank, for loans and grants. These financial aids come with stringent obligations like policy reforms, austerity measures and structural adjustments that the country must fulfil to have access. The most recent of such policies is the floating of the naira. This came behind the removal of the fuel subsidies. The singular impact of these policies brought an unprecedented shock to the economy. The Naira went to an all-time low, as much as its purchasing power.

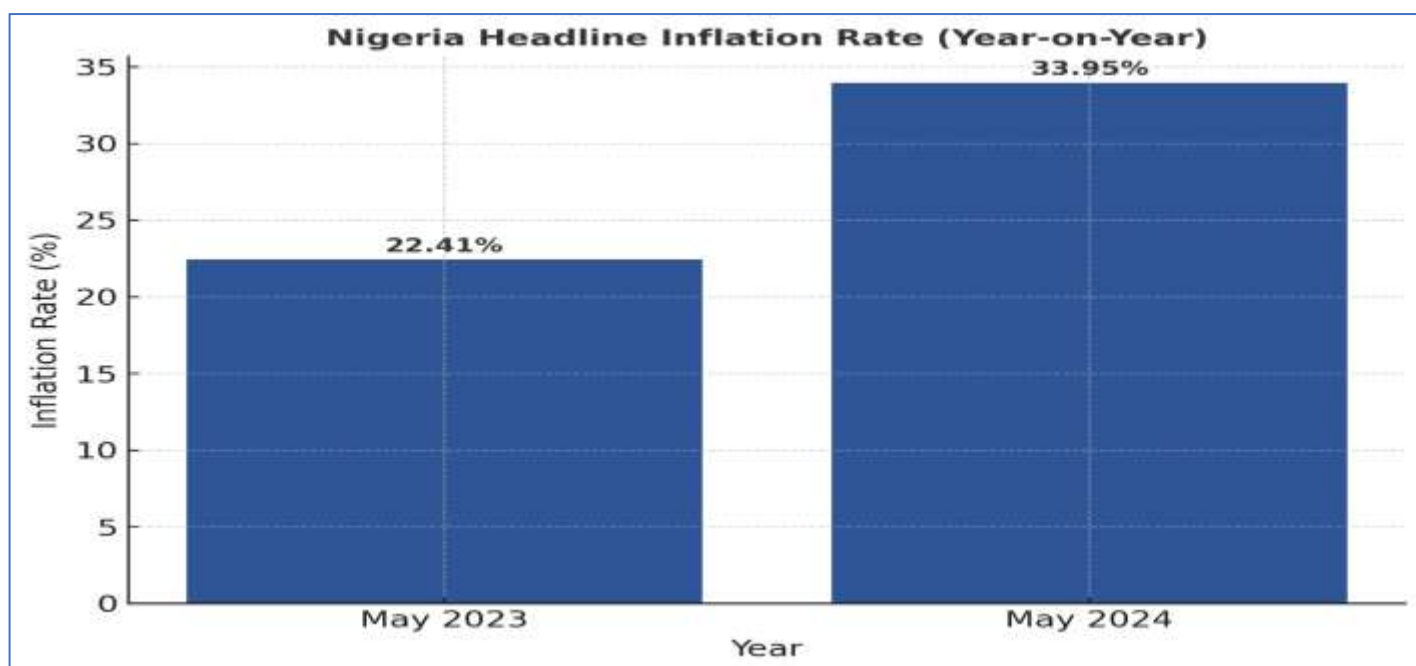


Figure 1: Showing Nigeria's headline inflation for two successive years. *Source: Author's design using available data from NBS.*

The figure above corroborates the National Bureau of Statistics (2024) reports that on a year-on-year basis, the headline inflation rate was 11.54% higher compared to the rate recorded in May 2023, which was 22.41%. This shows that the headline inflation rate (year-on-year basis) increased to 33.95% in May 2024 when compared to the same month in the preceding year (i.e., May 2023). This signifies worsening inflationary pressure within the period. Empirical evidence from Nigeria shows a clear and lasting link between currency depreciation and rising consumer prices. Zubair, et al. (2013) explained the scenario, thus: a large and fast exchange rate pass-through to domestic inflation would suggest that a free float that results in more depreciations than appreciation of the nominal exchange rate would be a threat to the central banks low (single digit) inflation targets hence explains the "fear of floating" that the central bank exhibits. Bada, et al. (2016) similarly observed that exchange rate changes strongly influence inflation trends in Nigeria. Recent studies, such as Oyadeyi, et al. (2024), reveal that large or sudden depreciations amplify this effect, especially under unstable economic conditions. These findings align with broader research by the World Bank (Ha, Kose, & Ohnsorge, 2019) and the IMF (2023), which confirm that developing economies experience

stronger exchange-rate pass-through during major currency adjustments. Altogether, this evidence highlights how IMF-backed devaluation policies often trigger inflationary pressures in countries like Nigeria. The Nigerian Economic Summit group went further to assert that the marginal increase in headline inflation can be attributed to currency devaluation, with the official exchange rate averaging N1483/\$ in May compared to N461/\$ in May 2023 and N1330/\$ in April 2024, along with rising imported food inflation (34.8 percent y/y) and higher energy costs.

A growing economy that is domiciled in oil production and consumption cannot devalue its currency and, at the same time, remove subsidies on fuel entirely. This is a catastrophic decision, but then it was sanctioned by the World Bank and the IMF. Encouraging such fiscal and monetary policies, Sienaert (2024), World Bank Lead Economist for Nigeria affirms that "recent reforms are starting to restore macroeconomic stability, GDP is projected to grow by 3.3% in 2024, rising to an annual average of 3.7% over 2025-2027; headline inflation is anticipated to peak at an average annual rate of 31.7% in 2024, largely driven by the previous depreciation of the naira and increased gasoline prices. Yet, in the medium term, staying the course with implementation of the current policy mix will reduce inflation, expected to fall to 14.3% by 2027 in the base case" (World Bank, 2024). However, these immediate projections were not even met in the year 2024. According to

reports on the CBN website, headline inflation as of January 2025 is at 34.8%, while the monetary policy rate remains at 27.5%. There are no signs of progress, even for the future, as the people are calling for a review of these policies. The World Bank comes in October 2024 to emphasise the need to hold on and stay on the course of these policies for the next ten to fifteen years. It becomes challenging because these policies and measures have been empirically proven to be detrimental to developmental indices. Hence, the effect is economic and social instability, policy distortions and an unimaginable debt service ratio. Households have been thrown into abject hunger and multi-dimensional poverty. Sovereignty is the ability of a state to self-govern and to self-determine. With the above analysis, it becomes unfortunately glaring that the government of Nigeria seems incapable of making decisions and formulating policies without the direct interference of international organizations, disguised as advisory but a sanction in actuality.

Apart from the stringent measures that come with international aid, loans and grants, it is also the perpetual indebtedness that comes with it. These loans are obtained basically in foreign currencies like the US dollars, euros and pounds. While on receiving, it presents prospects of prosperity, but for the debt servicing, it becomes a challenge, an uphill task. There is a hidden agenda that comes with such aids, which the government fails to understand, or probably understands, but, for selfish interest and corruption, has turned a blind eye. Arguments against globalization characterised it as identical to colonisation. Hence, the third phase, the second phase being neocolonialism. On this view, Western countries are employing globalization to extend and strengthen the fundamentally exploitative relations established between colonial powers and the

colonised over the past 400 years. When a loan is received, the country devalues its currency and tightens monetary policy that for a business to access loans, they will run into interest rates of double figures, over 25%. The country removes the fuel subsidy, which is the subsidy on production, since the economy is dependent on oil energy. Electricity is generated by fuel, industries and businesses need electricity for productivity, but now the subsidy on this productivity is cut out. Even by mathematical standards, the chances of survival of such entities are zero. Without enough oxygen in the form of support, in the form of progressive and feasible policies, in the form of a friendly business environment, how do micro and macro businesses increase output that in turn reflects on the economy, for the country to be able to service its debts within a reasonable ratio and capacity? Highlighting the commitment to meeting debt obligations, the projected amount for debt servicing (from Nigeria's 2024 budget) is 8.25 trillion naira, representing 45% of the expected total revenue (Datapro, n.d). The PUNCH also observed that the government would spend more on debt servicing than it would spend on paying the salaries and pensions of its workers (Punch Newspaper, 2024). This is an absurd reality, but just a tip of the consequential loans and grants received from international organizations. The argument above, by implication, submits that the entire cycle of international aid is designed to erode the state of sovereignty and technically drift it into slavery and dependence on a more powerful structure. When one is unable to repay their debt, which they are morally obligated to repay, they can be subjected to some egregious conditions which can be deemed to be morally right, since the master is bound to and deserves their credit. It automatically degenerates to a slave-master relationship.

Table 2: Some Negative Impacts of International Organizations

S/L	International Organization/Global System	Area of Impact	Key Programmes/Actions	Impact on Nigeria
1	World Bank & International Monetary Fund (IMF).	Economic sovereignty & policy autonomy.	Imposition of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), austerity measures, removal of fuel subsidies, and naira floating as loan conditionalities.	Economic instability, rising inflation, currency devaluation, mass poverty, and a weakened industrial base.

2	Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) / Global Trade System.	Deforestation & Climate Impact.	Promotion of agricultural exports and land use conversion.	Loss of biodiversity, soil erosion, carbon emissions, and climate vulnerability.
3	Multinational Corporations (e.g., Shell Plc, Chevron, Total).	Environment & Human Rights.	Exploitative oil drilling, gas flaring, and weak environmental compliance.	Deforestation, food insecurity, health hazards, and forced migration.
4	UN & International NGOs (Aid Dependency).	Economic Independence.	Provision of grants, loans, and foreign aid with implicit political influence.	Creates dependency syndrome, discouraging domestic innovation and productivity. Encouraging weak institutions, corruption, and loss of national initiative.

Findings and Conclusion

This study has so far been able to explain the dynamics of the policy process in Nigeria, drawing inferences from the realist theory of international relations, in the context of state sovereignty, international organizations and the global market. While it submits that the interrelation between the state, international organizations, as well as global markets has become indispensable, it also affirms that this relationship is more antagonistic than it is symbiotic. The realist school of thought in international relations posits that international politics is perpetually inclined to competition among states, and without a central authority, thereby extolling a Machiavellian tendency, and if not checked, will degenerate to the hypothetical state of nature. This is a major concern, especially among developing states like Nigeria, which will likely lose out and have their sovereignty extensively impeded since they do not have the political and economic might to sustain it in such a competition.

Recommendations

Given these developments, the following pertinent recommendations have been made below towards assertion of the state's sovereignty as it navigates the policy processes, taking into cognizance the influence and actions of the international organizations and global markets.

It is important to reemphasise that to compete internationally, a state must have substantial economic and political might. To command respect, Nigeria has to do everything possible to improve its economic structure. Nigeria is regarded as the giant

of Africa partly because of its role in peacekeeping within African states. In the past, Nigeria has employed both diplomatic and coercive measures in peacekeeping efforts. Nigeria is a founding member of the African Union. Nigeria did all these while also being an economic heavyweight in Africa and the entire globe by extension. Today, countries like South Africa and Egypt make the most out of their economy, thereby generating an important gross domestic product (GDP), relegating Nigeria to the background. The cultural diversity within Nigeria should drive the tourism sector. Concerted efforts should be put into developing a robust security architecture that gives foreigners nothing but a strong desire to visit.

The age of colonialism was an age of whitewashing. Africans were made to believe that their entire existence was, in fact, inferior to the Western existence. The culture, the tradition, the thoughts, science, philosophy, education, language, religion and of course the entire African civilisation were all watered down. Hence came the era of Western civilisation and, consequently, modernisation, which Nigerians now grapple with, and it might as well take another era to consistently determine or disconnect. Given this background, there should be enormous funding for education and research in Nigeria. Children should be subjected to a compulsory formal education where they learn logic, coding, critical thinking, economics, commerce, technical skills, history and arts. As a nation, we should be able to think for ourselves. We should be able to determine and predict our future. As Malcolm X asserts that "education is the

passport for the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today.”

All these policies can be formulated, but with corruption biting deep into the veins of Nigerian society, it is impossible to make any significant progress in protecting the sovereignty of the Nigerian state in the face of realism among nations. Therefore, it is important to imbibe virtue and morality in every aspect of society, starting from the families and communities. Concise policies should be made to promote and reward virtue, while a voracious punishment should be meted out on all forms of immorality, starting with details as little as appearance. A virtuous society is a prosperous society.

Finally, there should be an ideological and political reawakening of political leaders, which should enkindle a sense of pride in the potential of Nigeria yet to be harnessed. They should have a sense of patriotism, nationalism and pride anywhere they find themselves within and outside Nigeria. The attitude of the leaders says a lot about how the international community will respect and regard a state as large as Nigeria. Nigerian leaders should avoid medical and leisure tourism outside Nigeria. These should be backed by strong policies. All diplomatic and bilateral agreements should be made, putting the interest of Nigeria first. Aids and loans should be provided on fair, just and favourable terms. Hence, not all aids presented to Nigeria must be accepted. By setting our standards high enough and with towering esteem, Nigeria is bound to compete at the highest level in international politics. This is the time!

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