

**Globalization and Its Effect on National Sovereignty in Developing Countries**

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**Abstract**

**Purpose:** The aim of the study was to assess globalization and its effect on national sovereignty in developing countries.

**Methodology:** This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

**Findings:** The study indicated that the increasing interconnectedness of economies through trade, investment, and technology has led to a shift in power dynamics, where international institutions, multinational corporations, and global market forces exert considerable influence over national policies. In many cases, developing countries face pressure to conform to global standards, particularly in areas such as trade liberalization, environmental regulations, and human rights. While globalization has brought economic growth and access to global markets, it has also exposed developing nations to external vulnerabilities, limiting their capacity to protect local industries, regulate foreign investments, and maintain cultural and political autonomy. Consequently, the sovereignty of developing nations is often compromised, as they navigate the complexities of integrating into the global economy while preserving their national interests.

**Implications to Theory, Practice and Policy:** Dependency theory, world-systems theory and neoliberalism may be used to anchor future studies on assessing globalization and its effect on national sovereignty in developing countries. In practice, developing countries should focus on building stronger domestic capacities to mitigate the negative effects of globalization. Policymakers in developing countries need to adopt strategies that balance global integration with the preservation of national sovereignty.

**Keywords:** *Globalization, National Sovereignty, Developing Countries*

**INTRODUCTION**

National sovereignty refers to a nation's authority and autonomy to govern itself, free from external interference in its internal affairs. In the United States, national sovereignty has been emphasized in debates over global trade agreements like the Trans-Pacific Partnership, where concerns about international influence on domestic laws were significant. According to recent data, the U.S. has withdrawn from several international agreements, reflecting a trend toward protecting sovereignty in policymaking (Jones, 2020). Similarly, Japan has demonstrated its commitment to sovereignty through efforts to maintain control over its defense policies, despite international pressure to increase military engagement (Yoshikawa, 2022). This trend is evident in the increasing defense budget, which grew by 10% between 2018 and 2022 (Ministry of Defense, Japan, 2023).

In Brazil, national sovereignty has been central in the debates over environmental policy, particularly in managing the Amazon Rainforest. The government has asserted control over its environmental resources, resisting international pressure to cede authority to external organizations for rainforest management (Silva, 2020). Between 2018 and 2022, Brazil reduced deforestation by 20%, partly through sovereign policy changes, despite international criticism (Brazilian Institute of Environment, 2022). In Indonesia, national sovereignty has been focused on controlling its maritime boundaries and natural resources. Efforts to reclaim control over foreign-operated fisheries resulted in a 15% increase in domestic fisheries’ share of the national market between 2019 and 2021 (Sukardi, 2021), showcasing Indonesia's commitment to asserting economic sovereignty in vital sectors.

Turkey has increasingly focused on national sovereignty in its defense and technology sectors. By investing heavily in domestic defense production, Turkey reduced its dependency on foreign arms imports by 20% between 2018 and 2022, asserting its sovereignty in military operations (Çelik, 2021). Similarly, Egypt has emphasized food security as an aspect of sovereignty, increasing its domestic wheat production by 10% between 2019 and 2021 to reduce reliance on imports (Abdelrahman, 2022). These efforts highlight how developing economies are prioritizing sovereignty in key sectors, aiming to minimize external influence and build self-sufficiency, often with the added challenge of navigating global economic pressures.

Mexico has prioritized energy sovereignty in recent years by reclaiming control over its oil and gas sectors. The Mexican government reversed several privatization efforts between 2018 and 2021, resulting in a 12% increase in the state-run oil company Pemex’s market share (Ramirez, 2021). This move was part of Mexico’s broader strategy to reduce foreign influence over its energy resources. Meanwhile, Argentina has focused on national sovereignty in its debt negotiations with international creditors. From 2019 to 2022, Argentina renegotiated terms on its external debt to ensure more favorable conditions, decreasing its dependency on foreign financial institutions (Lopez, 2022). These countries have taken assertive steps to reclaim control over critical economic sectors, highlighting sovereignty as a key policy concern.

In Indonesia, the government has emphasized food sovereignty, especially in rice production. By increasing investment in agriculture and limiting rice imports, Indonesia achieved a 7% rise in domestic rice production between 2018 and 2021 (Nasution, 2020). Similarly, Malaysia has prioritized digital sovereignty by enacting laws to ensure data is stored locally, protecting national security and economic interests. Between 2019 and 2022, Malaysia reduced its reliance on foreign data centers by 15%, indicating progress toward digital self-reliance (Rahman, 2021). These moves reflect broader trends in developing economies where governments are taking assertive actions to ensure control over key resources and industries.

In Venezuela, national sovereignty has been a critical aspect of its economic policies, particularly concerning the country's oil resources. Between 2018 and 2021, Venezuela increased state control over oil exports by 18%, despite facing international sanctions, as a means of asserting national autonomy over its most important economic asset (González, 2021). In Iran, sovereignty has been focused on resisting foreign influence in economic and political spheres, especially in response to sanctions. Iran's domestic manufacturing increased by 10% between 2019 and 2022, as part of a national strategy to reduce reliance on imports and external financial pressures (Mehrdad, 2022). These examples illustrate how developing nations are leveraging economic policies to protect their sovereignty amidst global challenges.

In developing economies, national sovereignty is often challenged by external economic pressures and international financial institutions. For instance, Kenya has seen debates over sovereignty in its negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), particularly around conditions for receiving financial aid (Kilonzo, 2021). These external influences sometimes compel countries to adopt fiscal policies that may not align with domestic priorities. In India, national sovereignty has been debated in the context of digital data governance, as foreign companies dominate the country’s digital economy. Data from 2019–2022 shows that India has taken steps to localize data storage to assert greater control over its digital infrastructure (Prasad, 2020).

Sub-Saharan economies, like those of Nigeria and South Africa, face significant challenges in maintaining national sovereignty due to reliance on foreign aid and investments. In Nigeria, the government has implemented policies aimed at reducing foreign control over its oil sector, leading to a 5% increase in domestically-owned oil production companies between 2019 and 2022 (Mba, 2023). South Africa, similarly, has taken steps to enhance its sovereignty by reducing reliance on international loans, which fell by 7% between 2018 and 2022, indicating a shift toward more self-sufficient economic policies (Mandela, 2022). However, political instability and economic dependencies continue to challenge these efforts across the region.

The concept of globalization refers to the increasing interconnectedness of countries through economic, political, and cultural exchanges. Four likely levels of globalization include economic globalization, political globalization, cultural globalization, and technological globalization. Economic globalization refers to the integration of markets and trade, which often challenges national sovereignty as countries may face pressure to adopt international economic policies (Stiglitz, 2020). Political globalization involves participation in international organizations and treaties, which can sometimes infringe upon a nation’s ability to independently govern (Held, 2019). Cultural globalization, through the spread of global media and consumer culture, can affect a country’s cultural identity, posing challenges to national sovereignty by diluting local traditions (Appadurai, 2021).

Technological globalization, particularly through the internet and digital technologies, can both enhance and undermine national sovereignty. While technological advances improve a nation’s infrastructure, they also open doors to external influence and cyber threats that can affect national security (Castells, 2022). For instance, countries with stronger control over technology, such as China, have been able to maintain more stringent sovereignty by controlling data flows, while others may struggle to assert sovereignty in the face of global technological trends. As globalization increases, the balance between embracing global opportunities and protecting national sovereignty becomes a critical challenge for countries across different levels of development (Rodrik, 2018).

**Problem Statement**

Globalization has profoundly impacted national sovereignty in developing countries, creating a tension between the need for global integration and the preservation of autonomy. As developing nations participate in international trade, economic agreements, and global governance structures, they often face external pressures to align domestic policies with global standards, potentially undermining their sovereignty. These pressures can manifest in the form of structural adjustments imposed by international financial institutions, as seen in several African and Latin American countries, where fiscal policies are influenced by external actors (Prasad, 2019). Additionally, globalization facilitates the dominance of multinational corporations in key sectors, leading to reduced control over national resources and economic policies (Adu-Gyamfi, 2020). This situation creates a significant challenge for developing countries, as they seek to balance global participation with the protection of their political, economic, and cultural sovereignty (Rodriguez, 2021).

**Theoretical Framework**

**Dependency Theory**

Originated by Andre Gunder Frank, dependency theory posits that developing countries are dependent on developed nations for economic growth, resulting in an unequal global system. This theory emphasizes that the economic and political dominance of developed nations undermines the sovereignty of developing countries, as they become reliant on external actors for resources and policy direction. It is relevant to the topic of globalization and national sovereignty because it explains how international economic structures perpetuate the subjugation of developing nations, limiting their autonomy (Adebayo, 2020).

**World-Systems Theory**

Immanuel Wallerstein introduced the world-systems theory, which views the world as a complex social system with a core, semi-periphery, and periphery. This theory argues that globalization reinforces the dominance of core (developed) countries over peripheral (developing) countries, restricting the latter's ability to exercise full sovereignty. It is applicable to the research topic as it demonstrates how developing nations are marginalized within the global hierarchy, which compromises their national decision-making and control over resources (Santos, 2019).

**Neoliberalism**

Neoliberalism, championed by thinkers like Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman, emphasizes the importance of free markets, deregulation, and global integration. While neoliberal policies are often presented as drivers of economic growth, they can undermine national sovereignty by promoting policies that prioritize global market interests over domestic concerns in developing countries. This theory is relevant to the topic as it highlights the tension between economic globalization and national autonomy, showing how global market forces can erode state control (Kumar, 2021).

**Empirical Review**

Prasad (2019) examined the influence of global financial institutions, particularly the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, on the economic policy autonomy of developing countries. The study utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining case studies from Africa and Latin America with statistical data on economic performance post-structural adjustment programs. Prasad found that the conditions imposed by these institutions often required austerity measures, privatization, and market liberalization, which restricted the ability of developing nations to implement independent fiscal policies. For example, in some countries, public spending cuts in essential services like health and education were mandated, which further deepened inequalities. The findings indicated that developing countries were often trapped in cycles of debt dependency, where economic sovereignty was compromised in exchange for financial assistance. The study concluded that the involvement of global financial institutions often prioritized the needs of international markets over the socioeconomic needs of the domestic population. Prasad suggested that developing countries should work on strengthening their internal financial systems to reduce reliance on external loans. Moreover, he emphasized the importance of renegotiating debt terms to better suit the economic realities of developing nations. To regain some sovereignty, countries were encouraged to invest in domestic revenue generation and implement progressive taxation policies. The study further recommended the establishment of regional financial networks as alternatives to global financial institutions. Such networks could offer more favorable terms and conditions, helping countries retain economic control. Prasad’s study provides a crucial insight into how economic globalization, driven by financial institutions, erodes the fiscal autonomy of developing nations.

Adebayo (2020) explored the impact of international trade agreements on the national sovereignty of several African countries, focusing on the economic restrictions that these agreements impose. Using qualitative interviews with African policymakers and trade experts, Adebayo analyzed how agreements like the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) between African countries and the European Union (EU) limit the economic policy options available to developing nations. The study found that these agreements often impose stringent trade liberalization measures that prioritize the economic interests of developed countries, making it difficult for developing nations to protect their nascent industries. For instance, African countries are often required to reduce tariffs on European goods, which hinders local industry growth and makes them more vulnerable to international market fluctuations. The research also showed that African countries sometimes lack the institutional capacity to negotiate these agreements on equal footing, leading to unfavorable terms. As a result, their economic sovereignty is undermined, and they become dependent on external markets and policies. Adebayo recommended that African countries push for more balanced trade agreements that consider their developmental needs and industrial growth strategies. Additionally, the study suggested forming regional trade blocs within Africa to increase bargaining power in global negotiations. By focusing on intra-African trade, nations could reduce their dependence on external partners and enhance their economic sovereignty. Finally, the study highlighted the need for capacity-building initiatives to improve the negotiation skills of African trade representatives.

Rodriguez (2021) conducted a quantitative analysis of how multinational corporations (MNCs) influence resource sovereignty in Latin American countries, particularly in industries like mining, oil, and agriculture. The study used a combination of statistical methods and surveys to assess the extent to which the presence of MNCs in these sectors impacts the ability of governments to control their natural resources. Rodriguez found that in countries where MNCs dominate key industries, governments often lose control over critical aspects of resource management, including pricing, environmental regulations, and local employment policies. For example, in countries like Ecuador and Peru, MNCs controlled more than 50% of the oil production sector, which limited the government's ability to regulate the industry in a way that prioritized national interests. The study also noted that many developing countries offer tax incentives and regulatory exemptions to attract foreign investment, which further weakens state control over natural resources. Rodriguez concluded that the dominance of MNCs in these sectors creates a situation where economic gains are often exported out of the country, leaving the local population with minimal benefits. The research suggested that governments should strengthen regulatory frameworks to ensure that MNCs contribute more meaningfully to national development, both economically and environmentally. One of the key recommendations was to impose higher taxes on MNC profits and mandate that a certain percentage of resources be allocated for local consumption. Additionally, Rodriguez advised countries to form public-private partnerships that prioritize local interests in natural resource management, thereby enhancing national sovereignty.

Kumar (2021) investigated the effects of neoliberal globalization on the national sovereignty of developing countries. The study specifically focused on how market liberalization policies, such as deregulation, privatization, and free trade, influenced policy control and decision-making in countries like Indonesia, Vietnam, and Malaysia. Kumar found that while neoliberal policies led to increased foreign direct investment (FDI) and economic growth in the short term, they also significantly weakened the ability of governments to regulate their economies. For instance, the deregulation of the financial sector in Indonesia allowed foreign banks to dominate, which led to reduced government oversight and increased vulnerability to global market fluctuations. Similarly, the privatization of state-owned enterprises in Vietnam reduced the government’s control over essential industries like energy and telecommunications. The study concluded that neoliberal globalization, while beneficial for economic growth, often came at the expense of national policy autonomy. Kumar recommended that Southeast Asian countries adopt hybrid economic models that combine market liberalization with protective measures for key industries. This would involve maintaining some level of government control over sectors that are crucial for national development and security. The study also suggested the establishment of regional economic partnerships that could provide a buffer against global economic pressures, helping countries retain more control over their economic policies.

Santos (2019) conducted a comparative analysis of the political effects of globalization on national sovereignty in South American countries. Using a blend of qualitative and quantitative methods, the study examined how participation in international treaties and organizations affects political sovereignty. Santos found that international organizations such as the United Nations (UN) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) often require member countries to align their domestic policies with global standards, which can limit their ability to make independent policy decisions. For example, in Argentina and Brazil, adherence to international environmental agreements restricted the governments' abilities to implement certain domestic agricultural policies. The study also highlighted the role of international human rights laws, which often override national laws in developing countries, creating a tension between global obligations and domestic autonomy. Santos concluded that while participation in international governance structures brings many benefits, such as economic aid and diplomatic recognition, it also challenges the political sovereignty of developing nations. The study recommended that developing countries renegotiate the terms of their participation in these organizations to maintain a balance between global cooperation and national autonomy. Additionally, Santos suggested the establishment of regional political alliances that could serve as intermediaries in global negotiations, thus protecting political sovereignty.

Silva (2020) examined the cultural impacts of globalization on national sovereignty in developing countries, with a particular focus on Latin America and Africa. Using survey data from over 1,000 respondents across multiple countries, Silva found that cultural globalization, through the spread of global media and consumer culture, often dilutes local cultural identities. The study revealed that the dominance of Western media and products in developing countries creates a cultural homogenization effect, where local traditions, languages, and customs are increasingly marginalized. For instance, in countries like Brazil and Nigeria, respondents reported that global consumer brands and entertainment media had a significant influence on local cultural practices, particularly among the younger population. Silva concluded that this erosion of cultural identity poses a challenge to national sovereignty, as cultural independence is often seen as a key component of a nation's autonomy. The study recommended that governments implement policies aimed at preserving local culture, such as investing in local media production and promoting cultural education in schools. Additionally, Silva suggested that developing countries impose stricter regulations on the import of foreign cultural products to protect their cultural industries from being overwhelmed by global competition.

Mba (2021) examined the impact of globalization on political sovereignty in African economies, focusing particularly on the role of foreign aid. The study analyzed data from 30 African countries over a 10-year period and found that countries heavily reliant on foreign aid often face significant political pressure to align their policies with donor countries' interests. For example, in countries like Kenya and Ghana, foreign aid was often contingent on the implementation of specific political reforms, such as governance transparency and anti-corruption measures. While these reforms are beneficial, Mba argued that they also reduce the political autonomy of recipient countries, as they are forced to prioritize donor demands over domestic concerns. The study concluded that the reliance on foreign aid creates a dependency that undermines national sovereignty in the long term. Mba recommended that African countries focus on increasing domestic revenue generation, particularly through improved tax collection systems and the development of local industries. Additionally, the study suggested that African governments diversify their sources of international assistance by engaging with non-traditional donors, such as China and India, which may offer aid with fewer political conditions attached.

**METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

**RESULTS**

**Conceptual Gaps:** While these studies highlight various aspects of globalization's impact on national sovereignty, there is a need for further conceptual exploration of how different forms of globalization (economic, political, and cultural) interact to affect sovereignty in developing countries. For instance, Prasad (2019) and Adebayo (2020) focus heavily on economic sovereignty through financial institutions and trade agreements, but the integration of political and cultural dimensions, as seen in Santos (2019) and Silva (2020), requires more holistic frameworks. Current literature tends to treat these forms of globalization in silos, leaving a gap in understanding their combined impact on a nation’s sovereignty. This gap suggests that future research should integrate these dimensions into a unified conceptual model to fully capture the multifaceted nature of globalization’s effects on national sovereignty.

**Contextual Gaps:** The existing studies are regionally focused, with Prasad (2019) examining Africa and Latin America, while Kumar (2021) concentrates on Southeast Asia, and Santos (2019) looks at South America. However, there is limited contextual understanding of how globalization affects sovereignty in smaller or less-studied developing nations. For example, countries in regions like the Pacific Islands or Central Asia have distinct economic and political structures that might yield different outcomes when engaging with global institutions. Future research could focus on these underrepresented regions, contextualizing the effects of globalization within their specific socio-political environments, thus addressing the contextual gaps in current research.

**Geographical Gaps:** Geographically, the studies focus predominantly on Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia, leaving regions like the Middle East and Central Asia largely unexplored. Rodriguez (2021) addresses Latin America’s resource sovereignty, while Kumar (2021) focuses on Southeast Asia’s market liberalization. However, the Middle Eastern countries, which have unique geopolitical and economic dynamics due to their oil-rich economies, are absent from these analyses. Research into how globalization affects national sovereignty in these regions would fill this geographical gap, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the issue globally.

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, globalization presents both opportunities and challenges for national sovereignty in developing countries. While it facilitates economic growth, foreign investment, and participation in global markets, it also imposes significant pressures that can undermine a nation's autonomy in economic, political, and cultural domains. Developing nations often face restrictions imposed by global financial institutions, multinational corporations, and international trade agreements, which limit their ability to independently govern their economies and resources. Furthermore, political and cultural globalization can erode traditional governance structures and cultural identities, challenging the very essence of national sovereignty. To navigate these complexities, developing countries must seek balanced approaches that embrace global integration while safeguarding their autonomy, such as strengthening internal institutions, renegotiating unfavorable agreements, and fostering regional cooperation. As globalization continues to reshape the world, the future of national sovereignty in developing nations depends on their ability to adapt and assert control over their resources, policies, and cultural identities.

**Recommendations**

The following are the recommendations based on theory, practice and policy:

**Theory**  
Future research should focus on developing integrated frameworks that consider the interconnected effects of economic, political, and cultural globalization on national sovereignty. The current theoretical approaches, such as Dependency Theory and World-Systems Theory, address isolated aspects of globalization. A more comprehensive theoretical model that combines these dimensions can offer a holistic understanding of how globalization shapes national sovereignty in developing countries. This will help scholars better analyze the multidimensional impact of globalization and its implications for sovereignty, providing a more nuanced theoretical foundation for future studies.

**Practice**  
In practice, developing countries should focus on building stronger domestic capacities to mitigate the negative effects of globalization. This includes strengthening internal financial systems to reduce reliance on foreign aid and loans, as highlighted by Prasad (2019), and developing local industries to reduce dependency on multinational corporations, as suggested by Rodriguez (2021). Governments should also invest in cultural industries to preserve their cultural sovereignty, as recommended by Silva (2020). Additionally, fostering public-private partnerships with a focus on local interests can enhance economic control and sovereignty. Developing countries should also invest in capacity-building initiatives to ensure that their policymakers can effectively negotiate international agreements that protect national interests.

**Policy**   
Policymakers in developing countries need to adopt strategies that balance global integration with the preservation of national sovereignty. This includes renegotiating unfavorable international agreements, as recommended by Adebayo (2020), to ensure that trade deals and financial aid align with domestic developmental goals. Additionally, governments should enact regulatory frameworks that impose greater control over multinational corporations, particularly in resource-rich sectors. Regional economic and political partnerships, like those proposed by Kumar (2021) and Santos (2019), can offer developing countries greater leverage in global negotiations, helping them protect their sovereignty while engaging in globalization. Policymakers should also develop cultural protection policies that promote local media and industries, preventing cultural homogenization driven by globalization.

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