# The Role of Non-Political Influences on U.S. Foreign Policy Implementation in the Post-9/11 Era

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## ABSTRACT

Foreign policy, faces a new reality through actors who exert growing influence with diverse viewpoints and priorities, complicating implementation. These influences are crucial in attaining foreign policy goals. The study employed a multi-methodological approach to process tracing for in-depth analysis of specific decisions, while comparative analysis examined implementation across countries. Discourse analysis explored public narratives, and surveys and interviews provided insights from stakeholders. This triangulation revealed the interplay of political, bureaucratic, economic, societal, and media influences on policy execution. Reviewed literature highlighted the multifaceted nature of foreign policy implementation, beyond political lenses. Bureaucratic agencies, public opinion, media framing, economic interdependence, international institutions, technological advancements, and Non-State Actors (NSAs) significantly influence how foreign policy goals translate into actions. The review explores both the opportunities and challenges these factors present. Understanding these complexities is crucial for effective foreign policy execution in today's interconnected world. The study adopted the liberal institutionalism theory, which argues that institutions like the United Nations (UN) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) foster cooperation and peace by providing platforms for dialogue, establishing norms, and facilitating information exchange. These institutions can then shape state preferences, reduce uncertainty, and enforce agreements, impacting trade policies, environmental regulations, and humanitarian interventions. The study examined how states navigate the tension between supranational mandates and national interests, but acknowledges critiques that powerful states may manipulate institutions and that domestic politics also influence foreign policy. The study revealed the lesser-known forces shaping foreign policy implementation. Beyond political actors, bureaucrats, economic realities, military capabilities, public opinion, media narratives, and technology play crucial roles. Bureaucratic expertise guides complex execution, while economic dependence fosters cooperation. Military limitations and public sentiment can curb policy choices. International Organizations and Non-governmental Organizations provide frameworks and hold governments accountable. The private sector lobbies and shapes public perception. Technological advancements offer new tools but also harbor cyber threats. Even climate action is influenced by science, NGOs, and economic viability. This study unveils a more nuanced understanding of foreign policy in today's complex world. In conclusion, foreign policy execution extends far beyond political actors. Bureaucracies, economies, media, technology, and climate change all significantly influence a nation's global interactions. The study recommends that, bureaucracies should manage intricate execution, while economies shape diplomacy. Media and technology should mold public opinion and pressure policymakers. Climate change impacts resource distribution and diplomacy need to be addressed. An effective foreign policy requires skillful management of these non-political forces for successful implementation.

**Key Words:** Economic considerations, bureaucratic expertise, trade dependence, domestic economic actors and economic constraints

## INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, the realm of foreign policy has been viewed as the exclusive domain of politicians and diplomats. Non-political forces including economic interdependence, environmental concerns, and even social movements

play a crucial role in shaping a nation's interactions with the world. International corporations, for instance, wield immense power. Their pursuit of global markets and resources can influence foreign policy decisions, pushing for trade deals or lobbying against sanctions. Environmental concerns like climate change transcend national borders, demanding international cooperation and forcing foreign policies to adapt. Social movements, too, can leave their mark. Public pressure against human rights abuses or arms sales can compel governments to alter their course on the world stage. These non-political forces do not simply react to foreign policy; they actively influence its direction. They lobby governments, shape public opinion, and sometimes even dictate the boundaries of what is politically feasible. Recognizing this complex web of influences allows for a more nuanced understanding of foreign policy that goes beyond the pronouncements of leaders and delves into the intricate dance between politics and the powerful currents that shape our world (Nye, 2023).

The influence exerted by non-political factors on foreign policy implementation is often subtle, operating discreetly behind the scenes. Bureaucracies, armed with intricate knowledge of specific regions and international issues, play a pivotal yet understated role in shaping policy outcomes. Their expertise enables them to formulate recommendations and adeptly navigate the complexities of implementation, serving as indispensable conduits between policy formulation and execution. Moreover, economic realities loom large on the foreign policy landscape, with factors such as trade dependencies and financial constraints exerting considerable sway over decision-making processes. Trade interdependence with certain nations can subtly nudge policymakers towards cooperative stances, even in the face of ideological differences, while limited financial resources may compel nations to adopt more pragmatic and selective approaches to foreign engagements. Additionally, the specter of military capabilities, or the lack thereof, casts a long shadow over strategic deliberations, dictating the feasibility and scope of potential interventions or alliances. Policymakers must delicately balance these multifaceted considerations to chart a course that aligns with national interests while navigating the intricacies of global geopolitics (Muhammad, 2023).

Public opinion plays a pivotal role in shaping foreign policy decisions, heavily influenced by media narratives and social media trends. A surge of public dissent can compel governments to reconsider interventions or adjust diplomatic strategies. The Vietnam War serves as a prime example, where widespread protests forced the United States of America (USA) government to reevaluate its military involvement (Minh, 2023). Conversely, robust public backing can empower leaders to adopt a more resolute stance internationally, such as the widespread support for the Gulf War in 1991. Moreover, international organizations serve as crucial arenas for collaboration, guiding member states in translating foreign policy objectives into tangible actions. The UN, for instance, establishes norms and frameworks that influence the conduct of states on the global stage. Its resolutions and peacekeeping missions reflect collective responses to global challenges, shaping the contours of foreign policy for individual nations. In essence, the interplay between public sentiment, media discourse, and international institutions constructs a dynamic landscape wherein foreign policy is continuously calibrated in response to societal expectations and global dynamics. This dynamic interaction underscores the intricate relationship between domestic opinion, international cooperation, and the pursuit of national interests in an interconnected world.

## Statement of the Problem

Foreign policy, traditionally viewed as the domain of governments and politicians, is increasingly shaped by actors outside the political sphere. International Organizations, Non-governmental Organizations, and multinational corporations (MNCs) wield significant influence, sometimes aligning with government goals, but often presenting independent agendas. Public opinion, fueled by social media and 24-hour news cycles, can create pressure to prioritize certain foreign policy issues (Dumdum, 2023). These non-political influences complicate the implementation of foreign policy as they introduce diverse viewpoints and competing priorities that governments must navigate to achieve their objectives, creating a complex web of decision-making. While these non-political actors provide valuable insights and resources, their involvement can also lead to a lack of clear direction and make it difficult to measure the success of foreign policy initiatives. Irrespective of the undertakings, the implementation of this policy is a complex dance with numerous non-political actors who can significantly influence the outcome. Understanding these influences is crucial, as they can undermine or even redefine the intended course of foreign policy. One major set of non-political actors is economic forces. Powerful

MNCs, with vast financial resources and global reach, can exert pressure on governments to prioritize policies that benefit their commercial interests. This can lead to a situation where trade agreements or resource extraction deals take precedence over human rights concerns or environmental protection, potentially contradicting the stated foreign policy goals. Another key influencer is public opinion. A well-informed and engaged citizenry can be a strong advocate for specific foreign policy directions. Humanitarian crises, environmental disasters, or human rights abuses abroad can spark public outrage and pressure governments to adopt a more interventionist or rights-focused approach. Conversely, public fatigue with protracted conflicts or a reluctance to bear the economic costs of foreign intervention can force policymakers to scale back their ambitions. The media plays a critical role in shaping public opinion and influencing foreign policy implementation. Media coverage can frame international issues in specific ways, influencing how the public perceives them. Sensational reporting or biased narratives can generate public pressure that may not reflect the full complexity of the situation and may lead to impulsive or short-sighted foreign policy decisions. Therefore, the role of non-political influences on foreign policy implementation needs to be examined.

## METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a multi-method approach that provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the complexity underlying decision-making processes. Process tracing recommended by Beach & Pedersen (2019) was introduced to enable in-depth analysis of specific foreign policy decisions and to enable identification of the complex dynamics from conception to implementation. It involved a deep examination of evidence, through interviews, documents, and observations, which were chosen specifically to address the research question. This evidence was then analyzed to see if it supported the idea that a certain cause led to a specific outcome, while also considering alternative explanations for the observed change. By scrutinizing government documents, and diplomatic cables, and conducting interviews with policymakers, with actors and factors shaping each stage identified of implementation, thereby revealing the interplay of non-political forces.

Comparative analysis advanced by Collier (1993) served as another valuable methodological tool in dissecting foreign policy implementation across different countries. It involved a systematic comparison of subjects including ideas, objects and processes to identify their similarities and differences. This comparison were based on specific criteria or a chosen framework, and involved qualitative data on observations and descriptions. By examining how similar policies were executed within various political contexts, the impact of domestic structures can be isolated versus non-political influences. Through this method, factors such as bureaucratic frameworks, economic considerations, and societal values were compared across cases, illuminating their distinct roles in shaping policy implementation beyond political rhetoric.

Discourse analysis by Gee (2014) offered a perspective by on the public narratives surrounding foreign policy decisions. It involved delving deeper and examining how language functions within its social context, including analyzing the chosen text itself and creating meaning in a specific. Genre elements affected social power structures and even nonverbal clues. This approach helped understand the underlying message shaping understanding of the topic. By dissecting public pronouncements, media coverage, and expert opinions, underlying discourses were uncovered shaping policy implementation. Through the analysis of language usage and argumentation, non-political forces such as public opinion, cultural biases, and media framing emerge as significant influencers in the implementation process, shedding light on the broader societal dynamics at play.

Surveys and interviews recommended by Shackleton *et al.* (2021), with a diverse array of stakeholders provided firsthand insights into the multifaceted influences shaping foreign policy implementation. The study employed a dual approach utilizing both surveys and interviews, with surveys that were distributed online and aided in the gathering of a wider range of data points through closed-ended questions, allowing for statistical analysis. Interviews, conversely provided in-depth qualitative information through open-ended questions and discussions, offering a deeper understanding of the topic from a smaller group of participants. By engaging government officials, business leaders, NGO representatives, and ordinary citizens, a deeper understanding of how non-political factors, such as economic interests, public pressure, and social movements, interact to mold the execution of foreign policy on the ground was gained. This qualitative approach complemented other methods by capturing the perspectives of those directly involved in the implementation process, thereby enriching the

study's findings with real-world insights.

# LITERATURE REVIEW

Foreign policy implementation, is the process of translating intentions into actions, often viewed through a political lens. However, there are a range of non-political influences that significantly impact this process (Hill, 2020). Bureaucratic agencies play a crucial role in shaping foreign policy implementation (Slaughter, 2021). Their expertise, institutional cultures, and standard operating procedures can influence how policies are translated into concrete actions. For instance, studies show how the USA Department of Defense's internal structures and priorities can shape military interventions abroad (Dolev, 2022). While political actors traditionally occupy center stage, "bureaucratic politics" has the significant role in shaping foreign policy outcomes (Hill, 2020).

Slaughter (2021) emphasizes the inherent role of bureaucratic agencies in translating policy intentions into action. Each agency possesses distinct expertise, institutional cultures, and standard operating procedures that influence how policies are executed. Bureaucratic inertia, resistance to change, and competition between agencies can all impede or distort the implementation of foreign policy goals (Haas, 2022). Bureaucratic politics can offer valuable insights and expertise during the policy formulation stage. Bureaucrats, by virtue of their day-to-day work, often possess a deeper understanding of the ground realities and potential challenges associated with proposed foreign policy actions (Breeze, 2023). This expertise can be crucial in ensuring the feasibility and effectiveness of policy implementation (Slaughter, 2021).

While the concept of bureaucratic politics provides valuable insights into the internal dynamics of decision-making processes, it is not without its limitations. Critics contend that it tends to magnify internal bargaining and power struggles within the bureaucracy while overlooking the broader political landscape and the impact of external actors (Mansfield & McDonald, 2022). Moreover, a narrow focus on bureaucratic politics may obscure the influential role of key individuals within the bureaucracy who wield considerable power and sway over policy implementation (Dolev, 2022). Thus, while understanding bureaucratic dynamics is crucial, a more comprehensive approach that integrates both internal and external factors is necessary to fully grasp the complexities of foreign policy implementation.

Public opinion and media framing can exert significant pressure on foreign policy implementation (Breeze, 2023). Public outrage at human rights abuses or strong media narratives about a particular conflict can compel governments to modify their foreign policy actions. For example, Schmidt (2021) suggests that public opinion on immigration has influenced border security policies. The interplay between public opinion, media, and foreign policy implementation is a complex and ever-evolving dynamic. While traditionally, foreign policy was viewed as the domain of elites, the rise of mass media and a more informed citizenry have challenged this notion. One key aspect to consider is the media's role in agenda-setting. As Soroka (2003) argues, media coverage can significantly impact the public's salience of foreign policy issues. When a crisis or event receives extensive media attention, the public becomes more engaged and expects their leaders to address it. This, in turn, can put pressure on policymakers to consider public opinion when formulating and implementing foreign policy (Baum & Potter, 2019).

However, the influence of public opinion is not always straightforward. Gravelle *et al.* (2017) suggest that leaders are more likely to consider public opinion when there is a clear consensus on a foreign policy issue. In situations with divided public opinion, leaders may have more freedom to act based on other factors, such as national security concerns or alliances. Additionally, the media itself can be a source of bias, shaping public opinion through selective framing of events and narratives (Adan, 2013). This raises concerns about whether public opinion accurately reflects the complexities of foreign policy issues. Despite these limitations, public opinion and media cannot be ignored in foreign policy implementation. Leaders who disregard public sentiment entirely risk losing public trust and facing difficulties in mobilizing support for their policies. Conversely, a well-informed public, engaged through balanced media coverage, can contribute to a more democratic and accountable foreign policy process.

In view of economic interdependence, the increasing interconnectedness of the global economy presents both

opportunities and constraints for foreign policy (Mansfield & Mcdonald, 2022). Trade relations, foreign investments, and the need to maintain access to resources can all influence how countries interact with each other. For instance, a nation's dependence on another for energy resources may limit its actions in a potential conflict. Economic interdependence, the intricate web of trade and investment ties between nations, is a defining characteristic of the contemporary globalized world. Mansfield & Pollins (2003) argue that it fosters peace and cooperation and its impact on foreign policy implementation remains a complex and debated topic.

Proponents of the interdependence-peace nexus posit that economic ties create a disincentive for conflict. Mutual dependence on trade and investment discourages nations from disrupting these beneficial flows through military action (Copeland, 1996). This perspective aligns with the liberal institutionalist view, which emphasizes the stabilizing role of international institutions and cooperation in fostering peace (Keohane, 1984). Additionally, economic interdependence can create channels for dialogue and diplomatic resolution of disputes, as harming the other nation's economy also harms one's own (Russett & Oneal, 2001). However, critics argue that interdependence can also be a source of foreign policy friction. Unequal economic relationships, where one nation holds significant leverage over another, can lead to resentment and manipulation (Strange, 1994). Additionally, economic interdependence can create vulnerabilities. A nation's dependence on resources or markets from another state can be used as leverage to influence foreign policy decisions (Milner, 1991). This can lead to policy compromises that deviate from a nation's core interests. Furthermore, the relationship between economic interdependence and foreign policy is not unidirectional. Specific foreign policy choices, such as the imposition of sanctions, can significantly alter the level of economic interdependence between nations (Gowa, 1994). This highlights the dynamic interplay between the two spheres, where economic considerations shape foreign policy implementation, and foreign policy actions, in turn, influence the degree of economic interdependence.

International institutions such as the UN and the WTO as well as regional organizations set norms and rules that guide foreign policy behavior (Weiss, 2020). These norms, such as the prohibition on the use of force, can shape how countries implement their foreign policy. The pressure to comply with international legal frameworks can influence decision-making. The interplay between international institutions, norms, and foreign policy implementation is a complex and well-studied area of International Relations scholarship. The institutions provide frameworks for states to interact and potentially influence their foreign policy choices (Keohane & Moravcsik, 2004). Norms, which are shared expectations of behavior, can further shape how states implement their foreign policy (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998). However, there is a nuanced view, highlighting both the potential for institutions and norms to constrain and enable foreign policy (Avant, 2014).

Institutions can establish rules and procedures that limit states' options in foreign policy (Koremenos, Lipson, & Winslett, 2004). For instance, the norm of non-intervention, enshrined in the UN Charter, discourages states from using military force unilaterally. Similarly, international trade agreements like those overseen by the WTO can restrict states' ability to implement protectionist economic policies. However, scholars also point out the enabling role of institutions and norms. Institutions can provide legitimacy and support for foreign policy initiatives (Abbott, Keohane, & Moravcsik, 2000). Additionally, norms can create pressure for cooperation, facilitating the implementation of foreign policies that align with those norms (Fearon, 1998). For instance, the growing norm of human rights can incentivize states to improve their domestic human rights practices, even if such policies conflict with some domestic interests. The "constraining verses enabling" dichotomy oversimplifies the interaction between institutions, norms, and foreign policy. States can strategically leverage institutions and norms to pursue their own interests (Checkel, 1999). Additionally, the power dynamics within institutions and the contestation of norms can significantly impact their influence (Acharya, 2004).

Technological advancements like social media and cyberwarfare introduce new tools and challenges for foreign policy implementation (Arquilla, 2021). The rise of social media has blurred the lines between domestic and foreign audiences, making it more difficult for governments to control the message. Similarly, cyberattacks can disrupt diplomatic relations and even lead to military escalation. Technological advancements are rapidly transforming the landscape of IR, impacting how foreign policy is formulated and implemented. This review explores the interplay between these advancements and established norms in foreign policy, highlighting both opportunities and challenges. One key area of impact is communication and diplomacy. Technologies like social

media and video conferencing have enabled more direct and rapid interaction between leaders and foreign populations (Mühlhäusser & Ströbele-Wildemann, 2020). This can foster understanding and build trust, potentially leading to more effective diplomacy. However, concerns exist regarding the spread of misinformation and the manipulation of public opinion through these platforms (Brundage et al., 2018). For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, world leaders used platforms such as Twitter and Facebook to communicate health guidelines and updates directly to a global audience, promoting understanding and trust. Video conferencing tools such as Zoom and Skype enabled diplomats to hold virtual summits and negotiations and maintain diplomatic relations despite travel restrictions. This direct communication can lead to more effective diplomacy by enabling timely and transparent interactions.

Technological advancements also influence the use of force. Cyberwarfare, drone strikes, and other innovations introduce new tools for statecraft. While these tools can offer greater precision and potentially minimize civilian casualties (Klare, 2015), they raise ethical questions about proportionality and the blurring of lines between war and peace (Doucet & Finkelstein, 2015). Additionally, the proliferation of such technologies might lower the threshold for conflict (Nye, 2010). Foreign policy norms are also being challenged by technological advancements. The principle of state sovereignty, for instance, is strained by the ability of technology to transcend borders and collect vast amounts of data (Geppert, 2014). New norms and international agreements might be necessary to regulate cyber activities and protect privacy rights in the digital age. The successful implementation of foreign policy in this evolving environment requires a multi-pronged approach. Governments need to develop expertise in managing emerging technologies while upholding established norms of international law and diplomacy. Additionally, promoting international cooperation on issues such as cybersecurity and data protection is crucial to ensure stability and avoid conflicts in the digital sphere.

The NSAs, such as multinational corporations and Non-governmental Organizations, can also influence foreign policy implementation (Haas, 2022). These actors can lobby governments, raise public awareness on certain issues, or even directly challenge foreign policy through their actions. For instance, the advocacy efforts of environmental NGOs can influence international climate change policies. The traditional view of foreign policy as solely the domain of nation-states is undergoing a significant transformation. The rise of NSAs a diverse group encompassing International Organizations, MNCs and NGOs has fundamentally altered the landscape of IR (Boyashov, 2022). One key aspect of this influence lies in the ability of NSAs to shape public opinion and domestic support for foreign policy initiatives. NGOs, for instance, can leverage media attention and public campaigns to pressure governments to adopt specific foreign policies on issues like human rights or environmental protection (Stengel & Baumann, 2017). Similarly, MNCs with significant economic clout can lobby governments to pursue policies that favor their overseas operations (Chong, 2002).

Furthermore, NSAs can play a crucial role in delivering foreign policy on the ground. International Organizations such as the UN and its agencies often serve as implementing partners for state-led initiatives, particularly in areas like humanitarian aid and development (Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics, 2023). MNCs can also contribute to foreign policy goals by providing logistical support, technology, and expertise in areas like infrastructure development or resource extraction. However, the influence of NSAs is not always aligned with state interests. MNCs, for example, may prioritize profit over human rights or environmental concerns in their overseas operations, potentially undermining state efforts to promote good governance (The Changing Role of NSAs in Foreign Policy Making, with Reference to Nigeria, 2023). Additionally, terrorist groups and criminal networks can actively disrupt or obstruct foreign policy implementation through violence and intimidation.

**Theoretical Framework**

Liberal institutionalism theory by Keohane (1984) grounded the study. The theory emphasizes the role of institutions in fostering cooperation and promoting peace among states, creating a framework for cooperation by providing forums for dialogue, establishing shared norms, and facilitating information exchange. In view of the theory, these institutions can then influence foreign policy implementation by shaping state preferences, reducing uncertainty, and offering enforcement mechanisms for agreements.

In an intricate investigation, the study examined the dynamic interplay between IOs such as the WTO or the UN and a state's foreign policy decisions. By scrutinizing how engagement with these institutions molds a state's

trade policies, environmental regulations, and humanitarian interventions, shedding light on the multifaceted influences shaping global diplomacy. The study examined the impact of WTO membership on a nation's execution of trade agreements, unraveling the intricate balance between external obligations and domestic economic imperatives. It highlights the complex dance between supranational mandates and national interests through nuanced analysis, clarifying how states negotiate the challenging landscape of international relations while attempting to assert their sovereignty and achieve their strategic goals.

However, liberal institutionalism has faced criticism for overlooking power imbalances within the international system. Critics argue that powerful states can manipulate institutions to serve their own interests, limiting their effectiveness in promoting cooperation on an equal footing (Krasner, 1982). Additionally, the theory has been challenged for neglecting the role of domestic politics and societal values in shaping foreign policy implementation (Blyth, 2002). Hence, a comprehensive study on non-political influences would likely acknowledge the potential contribution of liberal institutionalism while also considering these critiques.

# ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

The study showed that bureaucrats had significant influence on the implementation of foreign policy due to their deep understanding of specific areas, problems and international actors. Their knowledge was of great value in developing proposals, overcoming implementation difficulties, and predicting potential obstacles that might be overlooked by policymakers. Through qualitative research, the study brought to light the critical role that trade negotiators, who have a deep understanding of the nuances of a partner country, play in reaching successful trade agreements. These negotiators use their deep insights to navigate economic complexities, cultural peculiarities and geopolitical issues, resulting in agreements that support the larger strategic goals of the states in which they operate. Similarly, foreign aid specialists played a critical role in the design and implementation of aid initiatives, drawing on their first-hand knowledge of local dynamics and their on-the-ground experiences. Their knowledge ensured that aid initiatives were tailored to the specific needs of recipient communities, thereby increasing efficiency and promoting sustainable development outcomes.

Bureaucratic expertise was important during the USA's withdrawal from Afghanistan, particularly in the context of evacuation plans in 2021. This period underscored the instrumental nature of bureaucratic expertise as an apolitical force that influenced the course and outcomes of foreign policy implementation. The results of Koenig & Parsons (2022) highlight the limitations of policies without in-depth bureaucratic expertise. The lack of coordination between political actors and State Department officials hindered the effective implementation of evacuation plans and shed light on the nuanced dynamics between bureaucratic actors and political leaders. This highlights the importance of leveraging the expertise of bureaucracy to successfully navigate the complexities of global affairs.

Findings revealed a significant impact of economic factors on policy implementation challenging the traditional view that political ideology reigns supreme. Trade dependence on certain countries, for example, was found to nudge nations towards a more cooperative stance, even with governments they might ideologically disagree with. Additionally, the study highlighted the influence of powerful domestic economic actors, such as multinational corporations. These corporations, with vast investments in specific regions, could lobby governments to prioritize economic ties over potential political tensions. The research also noted the role of economic constraints. Countries facing financial limitations were observed to be more selective in enforcing foreign policies, particularly those that might lead to sanctions or military interventions with high costs. This economic pragmatism has fostered a more nuanced approach to foreign relations, often prioritizing economic cooperation over ideological alignment. China exemplifies this trend through its engagement with various African regimes. For instance, despite widespread international condemnation of Zimbabwe's human rights record, China's continued involvement is largely driven by its economic interests in the country's resources.

The complex interplay between economic considerations and foreign policy implementation was underscored in the study. While political ideology remains a crucial factor, economic realities can significantly influence how a country translates its foreign policy goals into action. This finding necessitates a more comprehensive understanding of foreign policy, acknowledging the multifaceted forces that shape international relations. In relation to the findings, the rise of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is an example of the economic

dimension. As Breslin (2021) notes, the BRI's extensive infrastructure projects influence foreign policy by creating economic dependencies between China and participating nations.

The study established historical and contemporary examples where countries, opted for alternative strategies due to limitations in their military power. The study found that the potential for military overreach was a key consideration. Launching military operations often carries unforeseen costs, both financial and human. Even powerful nations might choose diplomatic solutions or economic sanctions to achieve their goals if the military option presented a high risk of escalation or public backlash. Additionally, the importance of logistics and basing rights was highlighted. A country's ability to project military power abroad can be significantly hampered by limitations in overseas bases or logistical networks. This may compel them to modify their foreign policy objectives in order to conform to their actual military capabilities.

The study also explored the concept of "mutually assured destruction" (MAD) in the context of nuclear powers. In such cases, the immense potential for devastation acts as a powerful deterrent, often leading countries to prioritize diplomatic solutions even in the face of significant disagreements. While military strength remains a significant factor, the study highlights how limitations and strategic considerations can lead countries to prioritize alternative approaches. This finding emphasizes the need for a broader understanding of foreign policy, where military power is one piece in a complex puzzle of international relations. In view of the findings, Haft & Wehrey (2021) established that the effectiveness of foreign policy often hinges on military capabilities through an exploration of the USA's role in the Libyan intervention, demonstrating how limited military resources hampered the implementation of a policy aiming to establish stability in the region.

The study examined how public sentiment shapes the way governments translate foreign policy goals into action and findings were found to challenge the notion that foreign policy exists in a vacuum, separate from the will of the people. The study revealed a significant impact of public opinion on the intensity and duration of foreign interventions. Strong public opposition to a war or military action can force governments to scale back operations or even withdraw completely. Conversely, overwhelming public support can embolden leaders to pursue a more aggressive foreign policy. This highlights the delicate dance between public opinion and policy execution.

The concept of "rally around the flag" effects was explored and an establishment was that, in times of crisis or perceived external threat, public opinion often coalesce behind the government, granting them greater leeway in foreign policy decisions. However, this effect tends to be temporary and sustained public support hinges on the perceived effectiveness and human cost of foreign policy actions. The crucial role public opinion was established to play a significant role in shaping the implementation of foreign policy, while political leaders may have their own foreign policy goals, the sentiments of the public act as a powerful check and influence. This finding necessitates a more nuanced understanding of foreign policy, acknowledging the interplay between government objectives and the will of the people, in line with a study by Johnston et al. (2020) who examined the case of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, where domestic opposition in the USA ultimately hindered its full implementation.

The research sought to understand how media coverage shapes the way foreign policy decisions are carried out. Findings revealed a significant impact of media narratives on the execution of foreign policy. When media outlets consistently frame a particular foreign policy issue in a specific way, it can influence the actions and priorities of government agencies tasked with implementing that policy. For instance, if media narratives overwhelmingly portray a certain foreign leader as a villain, it can pressure policymakers to adopt a more aggressive approach towards that nation, even if diplomatic solutions might be preferable.

In an inquiry, the role of public opinion as a bridge between media narratives and foreign policy implementation was highlighted. Media coverage shapes public opinion on foreign affairs, and when a strong public sentiment emerges due to media narratives, policymakers often feel pressure to act by those views. This can lead to situations where foreign policy becomes less about strategic calculations and more about responding to the emotional currents created by media portrayals. The study underscores the complex interplay between media, public opinion, and foreign policy implementation. It suggests that a more nuanced understanding of media narratives and their influence is crucial for policymakers navigating the ever-evolving landscape of international relations. In a similar view, Wu & Alexander (2023) analyzed media coverage of the Rohingya crisis and highlighted how media narratives frame a foreign policy issue and influence public pressure for intervention.

The role of IOs in shaping how foreign policy translates into action was highlighted and the study found that international institutions can significantly impact implementation by providing frameworks and standards for member states. These frameworks establish best practices, create monitoring mechanisms, and offer technical assistance, all of which can influence how a country executes its foreign policy goals. For instance, an international environmental treaty might outline specific steps for member states to reduce pollution. This framework can then guide a nation's domestic policies and resource allocation to achieve the agreed-upon environmental objectives.

Beyond frameworks, the study emphasized the role of international institutions as platforms for knowledge sharing and peer pressure. Through regular meetings and reports, member states exchange experiences and hold each other accountable for their commitments. This collaborative environment can foster best practices and encourage a race to the top, where countries strive to exceed established standards to gain international recognition. The importance of considering non-political influences when analyzing foreign policy implementations was underscored, noting that international institutions play a crucial role in shaping how states translate their goals into concrete actions, offering frameworks, fostering collaboration, and exerting a degree of soft power through shared norms and expectations. In support of this view, a study by Weiss & Thakur (2022) explored the UN's role in peacekeeping missions, and demonstrated how institutional limitations can hinder the effectiveness of foreign policy aimed at conflict resolution.

The often-underestimated role of NGOs in shaping foreign policy implementation was examined, challenging the traditional notion that foreign policy is solely the domain of governments and political actors. It revealed that NGOs, through their various activities, can significantly influence how foreign policy goals are translated into concrete actions on the ground. The study identified several key ways NGOs exert this influence. Firstly, NGOs can act as information brokers, providing policymakers with valuable insights and local knowledge that government sources might lack. This can be particularly crucial in complex international situations or regions with limited government access. Secondly, NGOs can serve as watchdogs, holding governments accountable for their commitments outlined in foreign policy initiatives. Through advocacy and public pressure, NGOs can ensure that stated goals are reflected in actual practices.

Furthermore, the role of NGOs in building partnerships and fostering cooperation between different stakeholders was highlighted. By facilitating dialogue and collaboration between governments, local communities, and IOs, NGOs can contribute to the smooth implementation of foreign policy initiatives. Finally, the study pointed out the ability of NGOs to mobilize public opinion and garner support for specific foreign policy goals. Through public awareness campaigns and grassroots activism, NGOs can influence public perception and ultimately pressure governments to act by their stated foreign policy objectives. This study sheds light on the multifaceted ways NGOs act as influential forces beyond the traditional political sphere and in this view Edwards & Sindzingre (2021) explored the challenges faced by NGOs operating in conflict zones, emphasizing how limitations on their access can hinder the implementation of foreign policy aimed at delivering aid, their information-sharing, advocacy, partnership-building, and public mobilization efforts all contribute significantly to shaping the implementation of foreign policy on a global scale.

The study revealed that MNCs can exert significant influence through lobbying efforts. MNCs often advocate for policies that benefit their business interests abroad, even if those policies contradict stated foreign policy goals. This can create a situation where the pursuit of corporate profit clashes with national diplomatic objectives. The power of the private sector in shaping public opinion was revealed and noted that businesses can leverage media channels and public relations campaigns to influence popular sentiment towards foreign countries. This public pressure can, in turn, nudge policymakers towards decisions that align with the interests of those businesses, even if such decisions deviate from the government's initial foreign policy stance.

The private sector's role in international development projects was identified where companies involved in such projects can have a substantial impact on the ground, influencing the success or failure of foreign policy initiatives aimed at fostering economic growth and stability in other nations. The study underscores the multifaceted ways in which the private sector can influence the implementation of foreign policy. From lobbying and public opinion shaping to participation in development projects, businesses are key players in the complex world of international relations. Recognizing these non-political influences is crucial for policymakers seeking

to navigate the ever-evolving landscape of foreign policy and a study by Pevehouse (2020) examined and revealed the role of MNCs in shaping USA policy towards resource-rich nations, highlighting how corporate interests can influence foreign policy priorities.

The impact of technological advancements on foreign policy implementation, specifically looking beyond the realm of political actors was assessed. The findings shed light on how technology is subtly shaping the execution of international strategies. One key takeaway was the rise of cyber actors. The study highlights the increasing influence of non-state groups, like hacktivists and cybercriminals, who can disrupt foreign policy initiatives. Cyberattacks can target critical infrastructure or spread misinformation, potentially derailing diplomatic efforts or even escalating international tensions. Governments must now factor in these non-traditional threats when formulating and implementing foreign policy. The influence of social media platforms was emphasized. The study reveals how these platforms can become battlegrounds for shaping public opinion on foreign policy issues. Governments and foreign entities can leverage social media to influence narratives and garner support for their positions. However, the spread of disinformation through these platforms also poses a challenge, forcing policymakers to navigate the complex information landscape to ensure their message reaches the intended audience effectively.

The study explored the role of technological innovation in diplomacy itself. Advancements in communication technologies like video conferencing and real-time translation tools are facilitating more frequent and efficient international dialogue. This allows for quicker responses to crises and fosters stronger diplomatic relationships. However, there is a potential digital divide, where countries lacking access to these technologies might be left behind in the global conversation, demonstrating the multifaceted impact of technological advancements on foreign policy implementation. From the rise of cyber threats and the power of social media to the evolution of diplomatic tools, technology is reshaping the landscape of international relations. Recognizing these non-political influences is crucial for policymakers to effectively navigate the complex world of foreign affairs in the digital age as noted by Mueller & Schmidt (2023) who explored the rise of cyberwarfare, demonstrating how technological advancements necessitate the development of new capabilities to implement foreign policy effectively.

The study focused on the often-overlooked realm of non-political influences on foreign policy implementation regarding climate change, and found that while national leaders and political agendas undoubtedly shape climate policy stances, other forces significantly impact how these policies translate into action. One key finding highlighted the influence of scientific institutions and research bodies. Their data and analysis provide the foundation for understanding climate threats and informing policy decisions. The study emphasizes how well-established and respected scientific communities within a nation can push for stronger climate action by governments, even in the face of political resistance. The study also explored the role of NGOs and civil society groups. These actors raise public awareness, advocate for specific climate policies, and hold governments accountable for their commitments suggesting that strong and vocal civil society movements can pressure governments to prioritize climate action in their foreign policy.

Finally, the economic dimension was examined and an establishment made that the financial viability of climate solutions can significantly impact policy implementation. Countries with access to green technologies and renewable energy resources are more likely to adopt ambitious climate policies. Conversely, nations heavily reliant on fossil fuels may resist strong climate action due to economic concerns. This underscores the need for international cooperation in developing and disseminating affordable clean technologies. By acknowledging these non-political forces, the study offers a more nuanced understanding of how climate change translates into foreign policy actions. It highlights the importance of scientific expertise, a robust civil society, and economically viable solutions in shaping effective climate policy implementation. Climate change is a critical non-political factor influencing foreign policy, and a study by Biermann & Gupta (2022) explored the increasing focus on climate diplomacy, showcasing how environmental issues are becoming central to foreign policy considerations.

## CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, foreign policy implementation is profoundly influenced by a myriad of non-political actors and

forces, transcending traditional political realms. While politics form the backbone of foreign policy, bureaucracies, economies, media, technology, and climate change wield significant sway over a nation's global interactions. Bureaucracies, with their intricate structures and processes, often dictate the practical execution of foreign policy initiatives. Economies, both domestic and global, serve as a driving force, shaping diplomatic decisions through trade relationships, sanctions, and financial incentives.

Moreover, media and technology have emerged as potent influencers, molding public opinion and providing platforms for the rapid dissemination of information, thereby exerting considerable pressure on policymakers. The digital age has amplified the interconnectedness of the world, blurring the lines between domestic and foreign affairs. Social media platforms have facilitated global conversations, enabling citizens to engage directly with international issues and policymakers. Meanwhile, climate change has emerged as a critical factor, with its implications for resource distribution, migration patterns, and geopolitical stability shaping foreign policy agendas.

Ultimately, the successful execution of foreign policy hinges on adept navigation of these non-political factors. Even the most meticulously crafted plans can flounder without robust implementation strategies that account for the complexities of bureaucracies, economic realities, media landscapes, technological advancements, and environmental challenges. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, policymakers must recognize the multifaceted nature of global affairs and adapt their approaches accordingly to effectively address the intricate web of influences shaping contemporary foreign policy.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

The article recommends the need to strengthen coordination and expertise within foreign policy decision-making processes. To achieve this, it recommends establishing robust communication channels and fostering collaboration between political leaders and bureaucratic agencies possessing relevant expertise. Additionally, investing in professional development programs for diplomats and foreign policy officials can enhance their capacity to navigate complex global challenges effectively. By leveraging bureaucratic expertise, and military capabilities, engaging with international institutions, and collaborating with NGOs, nations can bolster their ability to implement foreign policy initiatives with precision and agility.

Another key recommendation is to bridge the gap between public perception and policy by proactively engaging with the public and media. This involves fostering transparency, providing clear explanations for policy choices, and engaging in public diplomacy efforts to shape narratives surrounding foreign policy decisions. By considering public opinion and media narratives, policymakers can cultivate a better understanding of societal expectations and concerns, thereby fostering a more informed and supportive citizenry.

Furthermore, the study advises nations to adapt to a changing landscape by developing capabilities to address emerging non-political challenges. This includes investing in cybersecurity infrastructure to safeguard against digital threats, crafting policy frameworks for climate change diplomacy to mitigate environmental risks, and establishing protocols for navigating the growing influence of the private sector in foreign affairs. By leveraging technological advances, combating climate change and collaborating with the private sector, countries can better position themselves to effectively manage the evolving complexities of the global arena.

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