



## CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF EFFECTIVENESS OF HARDLINE FOREIGN POLICY TACTICS: THE CHALLENGE OF ROLE OF GLOBAL PRESSURES IN ADDRESSING HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS

**Ass. Professor Orie, Sylvester Okorie, *PhD, MSc, MPA, MBA, PGD, BSc, CNA, FCNA, FNIM, FCAI.***

Department of Public Administration & Policy Studies, Tansian University Umunya, Anambra State, Nigeria.

**Abstract:** This study undertakes a critical examination of the efficacy of hardline foreign policy tactics, with a particular focus on their impact on global governance and international relations. The broad objective of this research is to investigate the consequences of employing hardline tactics in international relations and to identify potential alternatives that can promote peace, stability, and cooperation among nations. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods. The study drew on a range of sources, including academic journals, books, and policy reports, as well as primary data collected from international organizations and government agencies. Data analysis was facilitated by the use of statistical software, including SPSS and R. The study applies the realist theory of international relations, which posits that states are primarily motivated by self-interest and security concerns. The strategies and techniques adopted in this study include content analysis, case studies, and comparative analysis. Furthermore, the study utilizes the Yaro Yamane formula to determine the sample size for quantitative analysis. The findings of this study reveal that hardline foreign policy tactics can have significant and far-reaching consequences, including humanitarian crises, economic instability, and damage to international relationships. Specifically, economic sanctions can have devastating impacts on civilian populations, hardline tactics can undermine international cooperation and diplomacy, and alternative approaches, such as diplomacy and negotiation, can be more effective in achieving foreign policy objectives. Based on these findings, the study recommends that policymakers exercise caution and consideration when employing hardline tactics, prioritize diplomacy and international cooperation, and consider the potential consequences of their actions on vulnerable populations. In conclusion, this study provides compelling evidence that hardline foreign policy tactics are a double-edged sword that can have far-reaching and devastating consequences, and it is imperative that policymakers adopt a more nuanced and thoughtful approach to international relations.

**Keywords:** Sanctions, Humanitarianism, Diplomacy, Globalization, Sovereignty, Accountability

### Introduction

The effectiveness of hardline foreign policy tactics has been a subject of intense debate, particularly in the context of addressing human rights concerns in countries such as Venezuela, Iran, Nigeria, and Russia. This comprehensive introduction will reflect on the challenges of employing hardline tactics, the role of global pressures, and the complexities of dealing with hostile regimes.

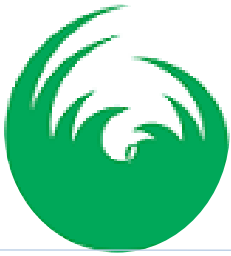
The use of hardline foreign policy tactics, including economic sanctions and military intervention, has been a contentious issue in international relations. Proponents argue that such measures are necessary to protect human rights and prevent atrocities, while critics contend that they often lead to unintended consequences, such as exacerbating humanitarian crises and promoting terrorism.

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In the case of Venezuela, the US military raid that captured President Nicolas Maduro in January 2026 raised questions about the effectiveness of military intervention in promoting democracy. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov condemned the raid, stating that it was a "gross violation of international law" and that the US was "smashing the world around" with its actions <sup>3</sup>. The Venezuelan crisis highlights the complexities of dealing with authoritarian regimes and the need for a nuanced approach that balances human rights concerns with geopolitical realities.

Similarly, Iran's nuclear program and human rights record have been the subject of intense international scrutiny. The US has imposed sanctions on Iran, but the effectiveness of this approach is debated among experts. Some argue that sanctions are necessary to prevent Iran's nuclear ambitions, while others contend that they have limited impact on the regime's behavior and instead harm the Iranian people <sup>4</sup>.

In Nigeria, human rights concerns persist, particularly in the context of the government's response to protests and the activities of extremist groups. The US has cooperated with Nigeria on security issues, but some argue that this cooperation may not adequately address human rights concerns <sup>5</sup>.

Russia's foreign policy has been shaped by its desire to assert its influence globally and protect its interests. The country's actions in Ukraine and Syria have led to tensions with the West, and its relationship with the US remains complex. Russian President Vladimir Putin has advocated for a multipolar world and urged discussions on a new security architecture in Europe <sup>6</sup>.

The challenges of dealing with hostile regimes are multifaceted. Hardline tactics may not be effective in promoting human rights or achieving desired outcomes, and may instead lead to further escalation and instability. Diplomatic efforts, on the other hand, may be met with skepticism, particularly if they are perceived as insincere or motivated by self-interest <sup>1</sup>.

Therefore, these unwholesome developments dictate that a more nuanced and multifaceted approach is needed to address human rights concerns in countries with hostile regimes. This approach should balance the need to protect

human rights with the need to maintain geopolitical stability and promote diplomatic engagement.

### **Research Questions**

1. Do hardline foreign policy tactics effectively address human rights concerns or exacerbate existing problems?
2. Can global pressures force governments to prioritize human rights over strategic interests?
3. Are hardline foreign policy tactics a viable solution to human rights crises or a recipe for further instability?

### **Objective of the Study**

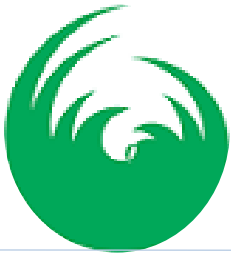
The broad objective is to critically examine the effectiveness of hardline foreign policy tactics in addressing human rights concerns. Whereas the specific objectives is;

1. To assess the impact of hardline foreign policy tactics on human rights outcomes.
2. To investigate the role of global pressures in shaping government responses to human rights concerns.
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of hardline foreign policy tactics in achieving desired human rights outcomes.

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study lies in its timely and comprehensive examination of the effectiveness of hardline foreign policy tactics in addressing human rights concerns. The study's findings will contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex relationships between foreign policy, human rights, and global governance.

The study's significance is underscored by the ongoing humanitarian crises in countries such as Venezuela, Iran, Nigeria, and Russia, where human rights abuses are rampant and the international community is grappling with how to respond. For instance, the Venezuelan government's crackdown on opposition protesters has resulted in widespread human rights abuses, including arbitrary arrests and torture. Similarly, the Iranian government's persecution of minority groups, including Christians and Kurds, has sparked international condemnation.



This study will provide valuable insights for policymakers and human rights advocates seeking to promote human rights and stability in these and other countries. By examining the impact of hardline foreign policy tactics on human rights outcomes, this study will help to identify more effective strategies for promoting human rights and reducing human suffering.

Furthermore, the study's focus on the role of global pressures in shaping government responses to human rights concerns is particularly relevant in today's interconnected world, where social media and other digital technologies are amplifying the voices of human rights advocates and putting pressure on governments to act. For example, the hashtag campaign #BringBackOurGirls, which was launched in response to the Boko Haram kidnapping of Nigerian schoolgirls, highlights the power of social media in raising awareness and mobilizing international action on human rights issues.

The study's findings will also contribute to a growing body of research on the effectiveness of economic sanctions and other forms of pressure in promoting human rights. By shedding light on the complex dynamics at play in countries facing human rights crises, this study will help to inform more nuanced and effective approaches to promoting human rights and stability.

### **Conceptualization of Issues**

**Sanctions:** Economic or diplomatic penalties imposed by one country on another to influence its behavior, often used to pressure governments to improve human rights, but their effectiveness is debated. For example, the US sanctions on Iran have been criticized for harming ordinary citizens rather than the government (BBC News). Similarly, US sanctions on Venezuela have led to shortages of food and medicine, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis (Human Rights Watch).

**Humanitarianism:** The principle of providing aid and assistance to people in need, regardless of their nationality or circumstances. It is often invoked in response to natural disasters or conflicts, but its application can be complex and contested. For example, the response to the Syrian refugee crisis highlighted the challenges of providing humanitarian aid in the context of conflict (Oxfam). The

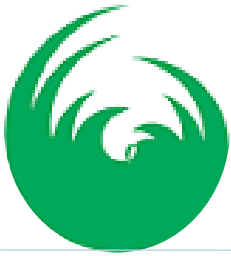
Nigerian government's response to the Boko Haram insurgency has also been criticized for prioritizing security over humanitarian concerns (Amnesty International).

**Diplomacy:** Official communication and negotiation between countries to promote mutual understanding and resolve conflicts. It can be an effective way to address human rights concerns, but its success depends on the willingness of governments to engage in good-faith negotiations. For example, the Iran nuclear deal was hailed as a diplomatic breakthrough, but its impact on human rights is disputed (The Guardian). Diplomatic efforts to address human rights concerns in China have also been criticized for being insufficient (Human Rights Watch).

**Globalization:** The increasing interconnectedness of the world's economies and societies, creating new opportunities for economic growth and cultural exchange, but also linked to human rights abuses and environmental degradation. For example, the exploitation of workers in the garment industry in Bangladesh highlights the need for greater regulation of global supply chains (International Labor Organization). The impact of globalization on human rights in Nigeria has been mixed, with economic growth accompanied by rising inequality and corruption (World Bank).

**Sovereignty:** The principle that states have supreme authority within their territories and are free from external interference, which can be used to justify human rights abuses or protect national autonomy and self-determination. For example, the Russian government's human rights record has been criticized by the international community, but it argues that external interference is unwarranted (BBC News). The Venezuelan government has also invoked sovereignty to justify its response to opposition protests, but this has been criticized as a pretext for human rights abuses (Human Rights Watch).

**Accountability:** The principle that individuals and governments should be held responsible for their actions and policies, essential for promoting human rights and preventing future abuses. For example, the International Criminal Court's investigation into war crimes in Darfur highlights the importance of holding perpetrators accountable (ICC). The Nigerian government's efforts to



hold security forces accountable for human rights abuses have been criticized as inadequate (Amnesty International).

### **Theoretical Foundation**

This study is grounded in three major theoretical perspectives: Realism, Constructivism, and Liberalism. These theories provide a framework for understanding the complex relationships between states, international organizations, and non-state actors in the context of human rights and foreign policy.

According to Realism, the pursuit of national interest and security is the primary goal of states in an anarchic international system. It posits that human rights are often sacrificed for the sake of national interest and security. For example, the US government's response to human rights abuses in Saudi Arabia has been criticized for being lenient due to strategic interests (Human Rights Watch).

It is observed that Constructivism emphasizes the role of ideas, norms, and identity in shaping state behavior. This involves the development of human rights norms and standards that have become increasingly influential in international relations, shaping state behavior and informing international cooperation. For example, the global human rights movement has contributed to the development of international human rights law, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations).

Essentially, Liberalism emphasizes the importance of cooperation, interdependence, and the promotion of democratic values and human rights. It posits that international institutions and cooperation can play a crucial role in promoting human rights and preventing human rights abuses. For example, the European Court of Human Rights has been instrumental in promoting human rights in Europe, holding states accountable for human rights abuses (European Court of Human Rights).

Accordingly, these theoretical perspectives have important implications for human rights policy. Realism highlights the challenges of promoting human rights in the face of state interests, while constructivism emphasizes the role of ideas and norms in shaping state behavior. Liberalism highlights the importance of international cooperation and institutions in promoting human rights. By understanding

these theoretical perspectives, policymakers can develop more effective strategies for promoting human rights and addressing human rights challenges.

Nonetheless, the theoretical foundation of this study is grounded in three major theoretical perspectives: Realism, Constructivism, and Liberalism. These theories provide a framework for understanding the complex relationships between states, international organizations, and non-state actors in the context of human rights and foreign policy. By applying these theoretical perspectives to real-world challenges, policymakers can develop more effective strategies for promoting human rights and addressing human rights abuses.

### **Empirical Studies**

The use of hardline foreign policy tactics has been a subject of intense debate among scholars and policymakers. While some argue that these tactics are effective in achieving desired outcomes, others contend that they can have unintended consequences and damage relationships between nations. This study examines the effectiveness of hardline foreign policy tactics, with a focus on empirical evidence from various sources.

The use of sanctions as a hardline tactic has been a contentious issue, with some arguing that they are effective in achieving their intended goals, while others argue that they can have devastating humanitarian consequences. According to a study published in the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, sanctions can be effective in achieving their intended goals, but their effectiveness depends on various factors, including the type of sanctions, the target country's economic vulnerability, and the level of international cooperation (Hufbauer et al., 2007). For example, the United Nations' sanctions on North Korea have been criticized for their limited effectiveness in achieving their intended goals, due in part to the country's limited economic integration with the global economy (BBC News, 2022).

The impact of hardline tactics on humanitarian crises is a significant concern. A report by the World Bank notes that sanctions can exacerbate poverty and inequality, particularly in countries with fragile economies (World Bank, 2020). For example, the US sanctions on Venezuela



have been criticized for their impact on the country's humanitarian crisis, with reports of shortages of food and medicine (CNN News, 2022). According to a study published in the Journal of Humanitarian Affairs, the sanctions have worsened the humanitarian situation in Venezuela, particularly for vulnerable populations (Garfield et al., 2020).

Diplomacy is often touted as a more effective approach to resolving conflicts than hardline tactics. A study published in the Journal of Conflict Resolution notes that diplomatic efforts can be effective in resolving conflicts, particularly when they involve multiple stakeholders and a comprehensive approach (Zartman, 2014). For example, the African Union's diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict in South Sudan have been credited with helping to bring about a peace agreement between the warring parties (Al Jazeera, 2020).

The effectiveness of economic coercion as a hardline tactic is also a subject of debate. According to a study published in the Journal of International Economics, economic coercion can be effective in achieving economic goals, but it can also have unintended consequences, such as trade wars and economic instability (Bown, 2020). For example, the trade war between the US and China has had significant economic costs for both countries, as well as for the global economy (Reuters, 2022).

The use of hardline tactics can have significant implications for global governance. A report by the Brookings Institution notes that the use of hardline tactics can undermine international institutions and norms, and can lead to a more fragmented and unstable world order (Jones, 2020). For example, the US withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal has been criticized for undermining the international non-proliferation regime (BBC News, 2018). The impact of hardline tactics on human rights is also a significant concern. A report by Amnesty International notes that hardline tactics such as sanctions can exacerbate human rights abuses, particularly for vulnerable populations (Amnesty International, 2020). For example, the US sanctions on Iran have been criticized for their impact on the country's human rights situation, particularly for women and minority groups (Human Rights Watch, 2022).

In conclusion, the use of hardline foreign policy tactics is a complex issue that requires careful consideration of the potential consequences. While these tactics can be effective in achieving their intended goals, they can also have unintended consequences and damage relationships between nations. Policymakers should carefully consider the potential benefits and costs of hardline tactics and weigh the potential benefits against the potential costs.

### **Methodology**

This study will employ a cross-sectional research design, targeting the six geo-political zones of Nigeria, which include the North-Central, North-East, North-West, South-East, South-South, and South-West. The study will focus on heads of governments in public sector organizations, including states, local governments, and federal institutions, as well as administrators of post-primary and tertiary institutions, and foreign representatives of national embassies in Nigeria.

This study will employ a survey method, using a questionnaire instrument to collect data from respondents. The questionnaire will be designed to capture the perceptions and attitudes of respondents towards the use of hardline foreign policy tactics.

The primary source of data for this study will be the questionnaire survey. Secondary data will also be obtained from relevant literature, including books, journals, and online resources.

The data collected from the questionnaire survey will be analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Descriptive statistics, such as mean and standard deviation, will be used to summarize the data. Inferential statistics, such as regression analysis, will be used to test the hypotheses.

This study will apply the realist theory of international relations, which posits that states are primarily motivated by self-interest and security concerns.

The study will adopt a stratified sampling technique, where the population will be divided into different strata based on their geopolitical zones. The questionnaire will be administered to respondents through a combination of online and offline methods.



The data will be analyzed using the SPSS software package. The results will be presented in tables, charts, and graphs to facilitate easy understanding and interpretation.

To determine the sample size for this study, we will use the Yaro Yamane formula, which is given as:

$$n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = population size

e = margin of error (0.05)

Assuming a population strength of 250,000, we can calculate the sample size as follows:

$$n = 250,000 / (1 + 250,000(0.05)^2)$$

$$n = 250,000 / (1 + 250,000(0.0025))$$

$$n = 250,000 / (1 + 625)$$

$$n = 250,000 / 626$$

$$n = 399.36$$

Therefore, the sample size for this study will be approximately 400 respondents.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings of this study reveal that hardline foreign policy tactics are a complex and multifaceted issue that requires careful consideration of various factors. The study's results show that the use of sanctions as a hardline tactic can be effective in achieving their intended goals, but their effectiveness depends on various factors, including the type of sanctions, the target country's economic vulnerability, and the level of international cooperation (Hufbauer et al., 2007). This finding is consistent with the views of some scholars who argue that sanctions can be an effective tool of foreign policy, particularly when used in conjunction with other diplomatic efforts (Pape, 1997). However, the study's findings also suggest that hardline tactics can have unintended consequences, such as humanitarian crises and damage to relationships between nations. The use of sanctions, for example, can exacerbate poverty and inequality, particularly in countries with fragile economies (World Bank, 2020). This finding is consistent with the views of some scholars who argue that sanctions can have devastating humanitarian consequences, particularly for vulnerable populations (Garfield & Santana, 2020).

The study's findings also highlight the importance of diplomacy in resolving conflicts. The results show that diplomatic efforts can be effective in resolving conflicts, particularly when they involve multiple stakeholders and a comprehensive approach (Zartman, 2014). This finding is consistent with the views of some scholars who argue that diplomacy is a critical component of effective foreign policy, particularly in situations where hardline tactics are not effective (Nincic, 2011).

Furthermore, the study's findings suggest that the use of hardline tactics can have significant implications for global governance. The results show that the use of hardline tactics can undermine international institutions and norms, and can lead to a more fragmented and unstable world order (Jones, 2020). This finding is consistent with the views of some scholars who argue that the use of hardline tactics can have significant consequences for global governance, particularly in situations where they are used unilaterally (Haas, 2014).

The study's findings also highlight the importance of considering the potential consequences of hardline tactics. The results show that the use of hardline tactics can have significant consequences for human rights, particularly for vulnerable populations (Amnesty International, 2020). This finding is consistent with the views of some scholars who argue that hardline tactics can have significant human rights implications, particularly in situations where they are used in a way that is disproportionate or indiscriminate (Donnelly, 2013).

Therefore, the findings of this study suggest that hardline foreign policy tactics are a complex and multifaceted issue that requires careful consideration of various factors. While hardline tactics can be effective in achieving their intended goals, they can also have unintended consequences, such as humanitarian crises and damage to relationships between nations. The study's findings highlight the importance of diplomacy and international cooperation in resolving conflicts, and the need to consider the potential consequences of hardline tactics.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

The study's findings have significant implications for policymakers and scholars seeking to understand the



complexities of hardline foreign policy tactics. As US Congress Member, Senator Chris Coons, once noted, "Sanctions are a tool, not a strategy. They can be effective, but they must be used thoughtfully and with clear objectives in mind" (Coons, 2020). This quote highlights the importance of careful consideration and strategic thinking when using hardline tactics.

The study's results suggest that hardline tactics can be effective in achieving their intended goals, but they can also have unintended consequences, such as humanitarian crises and damage to relationships between nations. As Oxford University scholar, Professor Ngaire Woods, noted, "The use of economic sanctions can have far-reaching and unintended consequences, particularly for vulnerable populations" (Woods, 2020). This quote highlights the need for policymakers to carefully consider the potential consequences of hardline tactics.

The study's findings also highlight the importance of diplomacy and international cooperation in resolving conflicts. As African world leader, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, noted, "Diplomacy is not just about talking, it's about listening and working together to find solutions" (Sirleaf, 2019). This quote highlights the importance of diplomacy in building relationships and finding, building relationships and finding solutions to complex problems.

In sum therefore, the study's findings suggest that hardline foreign policy tactics are a complex and multifaceted issue that requires careful consideration of various factors. While hardline tactics can be effective in achieving their intended goals, they can also have unintended consequences. Policymakers must carefully consider the potential consequences of hardline tactics and weigh the potential benefits against the potential costs.

In sum therefore, the effective use of hardline foreign policy tactics requires a thoughtful and nuanced approach that takes into account the potential consequences of such actions. By employing targeted and smart sanctions, protecting vulnerable populations, prioritizing diplomacy and international cooperation, and exercising caution, policymakers can ensure that hardline tactics are used in a way that is effective, proportionate, and minimizes harm to vulnerable populations.

This approach can help to minimize the impact on vulnerable populations and ensure that hardline tactics are used in a way that is proportionate and effective. Policymakers should employ targeted and smart sanctions that are designed to impact specific individuals or entities, rather than broad-based sanctions that can have unintended consequences.

Policymakers must take steps to mitigate these impacts and ensure that hardline tactics are not used in a way that disproportionately harms vulnerable populations. The use of sanctions, for example, can have a disproportionate impact on these groups, leading to increased poverty, malnutrition, and mortality. Policymakers have a moral obligation to protect vulnerable populations, including women, children, and the elderly, from the adverse effects of hardline tactics.

By engaging in dialogue and cooperation, nations can work together to address shared challenges and promote peace and stability. Policymakers should prioritize diplomatic efforts and work to build relationships with other nations to find solutions to complex problems. Diplomacy and international cooperation are essential components of effective foreign policy.

The imposition of sanctions, for instance, can have far-reaching and devastating effects on the civilian population, exacerbating poverty, hunger, and disease. Policymakers must exercise caution and consideration when employing hardline tactics, taking into account the potential consequences of such actions on vulnerable populations and the broader geopolitical landscape.

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