

# RETHINKING NATIONAL SECURITY IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION: INCORPORATING TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES INTO SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION

Tijjani Musa Bello  
Department of Social Studies  
Yusuf Maitama Sule Federal University of Education, Kano  
[btijjanimusa@gmail.com](mailto:btijjanimusa@gmail.com)  
08037012238

## Abstract

This paper discussed the need to rethink national security in the context of globalization by incorporating transnational perspectives into social studies education. As globalization reshapes the landscape of security threats, traditional state-centric approaches are increasingly inadequate. This study argues that social studies curricula must evolve to reflect the complexities of transnational issues, including terrorism, climate change, and economic interdependence. By integrating diverse perspectives and fostering critical thinking, educators can prepare students to understand and address these global challenges effectively. The paper highlights the importance of interdisciplinary approaches that connect local contexts with global realities, promoting a more comprehensive understanding of national security. Additionally, it emphasizes the role of civic engagement and social responsibility in cultivating informed citizens capable of contributing to national and global stability. The paper suggested that updated curricula can enhance students' awareness of their roles in an interconnected world, ultimately leading to more resilient societies. Recommendations include developing collaborative frameworks among educators, policymakers, and community stakeholders to ensure that educational practices align with contemporary security needs.

**Keywords:** National Security, Globalization, Transnational Perspectives, Social Studies Education.

## Introduction

National security can traditionally be seen as the protection of a state's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and citizens from external or internal threats. In the Nigerian context, this definition has historically prioritized safeguarding Nigeria's borders, natural resources, and political stability from perceived external or internal aggression, often emphasizing a strong military presence and robust intelligence gathering. Early national security strategies focused on countering regional instability, particularly from neighboring nations, and maintaining internal order amidst ethnic and religious diversity. This framework, largely shaped by the Cold War era and post-colonial experiences, positioned national security as primarily a governmental responsibility, with defense and law enforcement agencies at the forefront.

However, Nigeria's increasing integration into the global economy and the rapid advancement of technology have significantly altered the landscape of security considerations (Onuoha, 2020). Globalization, characterized by the interconnectedness of nations through trade, communication, and cultural exchange, presents both opportunities and complex challenges

that transcend national boundaries. Nigeria, as a major economic hub in West Africa and a participant in international trade agreements, is acutely vulnerable to transnational threats (Stiglitz, 2023). Issues such as climate change evidenced by desertification in the north and coastal erosion in the south, terrorism, particularly the persistent threat of Boko Haram and the rise of ISWAP, cyber warfare targeting critical infrastructure, and pandemics like the recent COVID-19 crisis, cannot be effectively addressed through a solely national lens. The porous nature of Nigeria's borders, coupled with internal socio-economic inequalities, further exacerbates these vulnerabilities. These transnational threats highlight the limitations of traditional national security paradigms, revealing the necessity for collaborative and multifaceted approaches that encompass a broader range of actors, including international organizations like ECOWAS and the African Union, non-governmental entities focused on conflict resolution and humanitarian aid, and civil society organizations working to address the root causes of insecurity (Vines & Odeyemi, 2022).

As Nigeria navigates this new reality, it becomes imperative to rethink national security within the context of interconnectedness. The implications of globalization necessitate a broadened understanding of security that extends beyond traditional military concerns to encompass economic stability particularly in mitigating the impacts of global economic shocks on vulnerable populations (World Bank, 2020), environmental sustainability, addressing resource scarcity and its potential to provoke conflict and social cohesion, which involves fostering inclusivity and addressing grievances that can fuel instability (Shelton, 2007). In this interconnected framework, cultivating a sense of global citizenship and mutual responsibility is essential for addressing contemporary challenges, especially considering Nigeria's role as a regional power and its active participation in peacekeeping operations.

This paper advocates for the integration of transnational perspectives into social studies education as a strategic approach to prepare Nigerian students for an increasingly globalized world. By embedding these perspectives into curricula, educators can develop students' critical thinking, global awareness, and intercultural competence skills vital for navigating complex security issues (Banks, 2010). Emphasizing transnational narratives, examining the historical roots of global interconnectedness, and analyzing international policies' impact on Nigeria will not only deepen students' understanding of worldwide dynamics but also promote a holistic approach to national security. Such an approach recognizes the interdependence of nations in addressing shared threats and opportunities, ultimately contributing to a more secure, stable, and prosperous Nigeria.

### **Understanding Globalization**

Globalization is a complex and dynamic process that influences multiple dimensions including economic, cultural, political, and technological spheres. Economically, globalization signifies the growing interconnectedness of national economies through trade, foreign investment, and capital flows. Nigeria, heavily dependent on oil exports and the importation of manufactured goods, exemplifies this interconnectedness. While globalization facilitates the efficient

exchange of goods and services and enables countries to specialize based on comparative advantage, it also exposes Nigeria to volatility in global commodity prices and disruptions in international supply chains (Krugman, Obstfeld, & Melitz, 2018).

Culturally, globalization has accelerated the dissemination of ideas, values, and practices worldwide, leading to cultural exchanges and the blending of global and local traditions. In Nigeria, this is evident in the widespread popularity of western music, fashion, and entertainment, alongside ongoing efforts to preserve indigenous languages, arts, and cultural identities (Held & McGrew, 2017). On the political front, globalization has fostered increased international cooperation, with organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and regional bodies like the African Union (AU) and ECOWAS playing vital roles in addressing transnational issues including peace, security, and development. Nigeria's engagement in these institutions underscores its commitment to regional integration and global governance (Nye, 2011).

Technologically, advancements in communication and transportation have rapidly accelerated globalization. The proliferation of mobile phones and internet access in Nigeria has created opportunities for economic empowerment, social connectivity, and information dissemination. However, these developments also introduce challenges such as cyber security risks and the proliferation of misinformation, which require urgent attention from policymakers and stakeholders (Castells, 2018). As globalization has evolved, so too has the nature of threats faced by nations. Traditional security threats, such as military confrontations between states, have been supplemented by a range of transnational threats that are often non-state in origin. Terrorism, for instance, has become a global concern, with extremist groups leveraging international networks to conduct attacks across borders (Stone, 2016). Nigeria's experience with Boko Haram and other extremist groups underscores the devastating impact of transnational terrorism, requiring concerted efforts to counter violent extremism and address its root causes. Cyber threats have similarly emerged as a significant challenge, with cyber-attacks capable of disrupting critical infrastructure and compromising national security without the need for physical confrontation (Libicki, 2019). Nigeria's growing digital economy makes it increasingly vulnerable to cybercrime and attacks targeting financial institutions and government agencies. Furthermore, globalization has amplified the effects of pandemics, as seen during the COVID-19 crisis, where rapid global travel facilitated the swift spread of the virus, highlighting the inadequacies of national responses (World Health Organization, 2020). Nigeria's healthcare system faced significant strain during the pandemic, underscoring the need for improved public health infrastructure and international collaboration. Environmental issues, such as climate change, also transcend borders, necessitating collective action and cooperation among nations to mitigate their impacts (IPCC, 2018). Nigeria, with its vulnerability to desertification, flooding, and coastal erosion, is particularly susceptible to the adverse effects of climate change, demanding sustainable development practices and international support.

To effectively address these transnational issues, international organizations and treaties have become essential. Instruments such as the Paris Agreement aim to unite countries in the fight against climate change by committing to emissions reduction targets (United Nations, 2015). Nigeria's participation in these agreements demonstrates a commitment to global environmental responsibility, although challenges remain in balancing economic development with environmental sustainability. Similarly, the World Health Organization coordinates global responses to health crises, emphasizing the need for international collaboration in managing public health threats (World Health Organization, 2021). Nigeria's engagement with the WHO is crucial for strengthening its healthcare system and preparing against any future pandemics. Such frameworks illustrate the importance of collective action in tackling the interconnected challenges posed by globalization, requiring Nigeria to actively engage in multilateral diplomacy and contribute to global solutions.

### **Transnational Perspectives**

Transnational perspectives refer to viewpoints that transcend national boundaries, emphasizing the interconnectedness of issues that affect multiple countries and regions. Within the Nigerian context, these perspectives are particularly crucial, given the nation's position as a significant player in West Africa and its engagement with global challenges. These perspectives are significant as they encourage a holistic understanding of global challenges, recognizing that many contemporary issues cannot be adequately addressed through a solely national lens. Instead, transnational perspectives foster collaboration and solutions that involve multiple stakeholders, including governments, non-governmental organizations, and civil society (Bordeu, 2016). Nigeria's involvement in regional peacekeeping missions, its participation in ECOWAS initiatives, and its engagement with international bodies like the African Union all demonstrate a need to operate beyond purely national interests.

Examples of transnational issues include climate change, migration, trade, and health crises, all of which illustrate the need for a broader perspective in security considerations. Climate change, with its impact on Nigeria's agricultural sector and coastal communities, is a quintessential transnational issue, as its impacts are felt globally, requiring cooperative efforts to mitigate its effects through policies and agreements that transcend national jurisdictions (IPCC, 2018). The Lake Chad Basin crisis, involving displacement and cross-border migration due to conflict and environmental degradation, exemplifies the need for a transnational approach, as individuals often move across borders in search of safety and opportunity (Castles & Miller, 2009). Nigeria's participation in regional trade agreements, like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), highlights the interconnectedness of economies and the need for collaborative frameworks to address trade-related challenges (Rodrik, 2018).

The shift from state-centric to people-centric approaches in security reflects the growing recognition that security is not solely about protecting state interests but also about ensuring the well-being of individuals and communities. This paradigm shift emphasizes human security, which prioritizes the protection of individuals from threats such as poverty, disease,

and violence (UNDP, 1994). In Nigeria, this means addressing issues like farmer-herder conflicts, banditry, and unemployment, which directly impact the safety and livelihoods of citizens. By adopting a people-centric approach, policymakers can better address the underlying causes of insecurity and promote sustainable development, ultimately leading to a more stable and secure global environment. This aligns with Nigeria's national security strategy, which increasingly emphasizes addressing socio-economic vulnerabilities as key to national security.

### **Implications for National Security**

Globalization has profoundly transformed Nigeria's security paradigm, challenging traditional notions of sovereignty and demanding a more nuanced understanding of threats in an interconnected world. Historically, Nigeria's security policy was predominantly centered on state-centric concerns, territorial integrity, military capability, and internal stability. However, as globalization accelerates, the lines of sovereignty become increasingly porous, and security threats are now transcending national borders. Issues such as terrorism, cyber threats, pandemics, and transnational organized crime have necessitated a reassessment of Nigeria's security strategies to address the complex, multidimensional risks it faces today (Ayoade & Joseph, 2020).

One of the most pressing security challenges Nigeria confronts is the persistent threat posed by extremist groups like Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). These groups exploit local grievances and socio-economic vulnerabilities but are also connected to broader global jihadist networks. The interconnected nature of modern terrorism facilitated by globalization means that violence in Nigeria can have destabilizing impacts across the West African region and beyond, highlighting the need for a regional and international approach to counter-terrorism. Furthermore, the rise of transnational organized crime such as human trafficking, drug smuggling, and arms trafficking compounds Nigeria's security dilemmas and underscores the importance of cooperative security frameworks (Ojo & Akinlabi, 2021).

Cyber security has emerged as a critical component of national security in Nigeria. The rapid development and deployment of digital technologies have increased vulnerabilities to cyber-attacks targeting both government infrastructure and private sector assets. Recent incidents involving cyber intrusions into financial institutions and governmental agencies illustrate the urgency of strengthening Nigeria's cyber defenses. Effective responses require multi-stakeholder collaboration involving government agencies, private companies, and international partners. The implementation of the Nigeria National Cyber-security Policy and Strategy (NCPS) highlights efforts to build resilience, but continuous institutional reforms and capacity building are essential to keep pace with evolving cyber threats (Nwogu & Ezeani, 2022).

In light of these developments, Nigeria's security architecture must evolve beyond conventional, state-centric paradigms to encompass transnational and non-traditional threats. This calls for a paradigm shift toward multilateral and regional cooperation, emphasizing

intelligence sharing, joint operations, and collective resilience. Initiatives like the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) exemplify this approach by fostering regional collaboration to combat Boko Haram and related threats in the Lake Chad Basin. Additionally, strategic engagement with international organizations such as the United Nations, African Union, and Interpol can enhance Nigeria's capacity to address multi-layered security challenges.

In conclusion, globalization's influence necessitates a holistic, adaptive approach to Nigeria's security policy one that recognizes the interconnectedness of economic, health, cyber, and security issues. By strengthening international partnerships and embracing a comprehensive security framework, Nigeria can better safeguard its sovereignty, promote stability, and build resilience against the multifaceted threats of the 21st century.

### **The Role of Education**

The current landscape of social studies education often remains anchored in emphasizing national narratives focusing on a country's history, culture, and values. While cultivating national identity is important, this approach can inadvertently narrow students' perspectives, limiting their awareness of global issues and the interconnectedness of contemporary challenges. Traditional curricula tend to emphasize rote memorization of facts and events over fostering critical thinking, intercultural competence, and problem-solving skills essential for navigating a complex, interconnected world (Lynch & Manzo, 2017).

To better prepare students for the realities of globalization, integrating transnational perspectives into social studies curricula is crucial. This involves including diverse viewpoints and critically addressing global issues such as climate change, migration, inequality, and global health issues that demand a nuanced understanding of interconnected systems. By doing so, educators can cultivate a sense of global citizenship, empathy, and intercultural understanding, which are fundamental for fostering cooperation across cultural boundaries and promoting social cohesion (Banks & Banks, 2019).

Effective curriculum development should embrace interdisciplinary approaches, linking social studies with fields such as environmental science, economics, and health education. Such integration enables students to recognize the systemic links between various issues and grasp their broader social, economic, and ecological implications. Moreover, prioritizing skills such as critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and collaborative problem-solving empowers students to evaluate multiple perspectives, propose innovative solutions, and actively participate in addressing transnational challenges (Chomsky & Barash, 2020).

Engagement strategies such as project-based learning, simulations, and international collaborations can further deepen students' global awareness. These experiential learning opportunities encourage active participation, foster cross-cultural dialogue, and prepare students to function effectively as responsible global citizens in an increasingly interconnected world.

## **Implementing Transnational Perspectives in Social Studies Education**

To effectively integrate transnational perspectives into social studies education, educators must employ innovative strategies that foster global awareness, intercultural understanding, and critical thinking. One highly effective approach is project-based learning, where students engage in authentic, real-world initiatives addressing pressing global issues. For example, students could collaborate on projects related to climate change, working alongside peers from different countries to develop culturally sensitive and economically viable solutions. Such experiential learning not only deepens understanding of interconnectedness but also highlights the importance of diverse perspectives in tackling complex global challenges (Bell, 2020).

International collaborations and exchanges further enrich social studies curricula. By partnering with schools abroad through exchange programs, joint projects, or virtual classrooms, educators can create immersive intercultural experiences. These interactions enable students to gain firsthand insights into different cultural contexts, fostering empathy and intercultural competence, key attributes for future global leaders (Lara, 2021). Additionally, simulations like Model United Nations (MUN) or mock diplomatic summits allow students to role-play as international delegates, experience diplomatic negotiations, and develop skills in consensus-building and conflict resolution, core competencies for active global citizenship (Steinberg & Leifer, 2018).

Technology plays a pivotal role in broadening access to global learning experiences. Digital tools such as video conferencing, collaborative online platforms, and virtual exchange programs facilitate direct interaction with counterparts worldwide, effectively breaking down geographical barriers. Platforms like ePals and iEARN provide students with access to diverse perspectives, resources, and real-time collaboration opportunities, enriching their understanding of global issues and cultural diversity (Ritzhaupt et al., 2021). These technological tools enable educators to create dynamic, immersive environments where students critically examine their roles within the global community, fostering skills necessary for citizenship in the 21st century.

## **Challenges and Considerations for Integrating Transnational Perspectives into Social Studies Education**

While integrating transnational perspectives into social studies education offers numerous benefits, including fostering global citizenship, critical thinking, and intercultural understanding, several significant challenges and considerations must be addressed to ensure effective implementation. A notable obstacle is the resistance from educators, parents, and administrators who are accustomed to traditional curricula centered on national histories and cultural narratives. Many stakeholders perceive a globalized curriculum as a threat to national identity or cultural sovereignty (Nguyen & Williams, 2021). Recent studies indicate that resistance often diminishes when stakeholders understand how global perspectives can enhance students' critical skills and prepare them for future participation in a globalized workforce. For

example, a survey by Huang and Lee (2022) found that framing global education as complementary to national identity, rather than replacement, increases stakeholder buy-in. Clear communication of the benefits, supported by empirical evidence on improved critical thinking and intercultural competencies, is essential to overcoming opposition.

### **Need for Teacher Training and Resources:**

Another significant barrier involves the preparedness of teachers. Many educators feel ill-equipped to teach transnational issues due to a lack of training in intercultural pedagogy, global integration strategies, and interdisciplinary content. Recent research highlights that teacher confidence and competence in global education are strongly linked to ongoing professional development (UNESCO, 2023). Empirical data suggest that targeted training programs focusing on culturally responsive teaching and interdisciplinary approaches significantly improve teachers' ability to incorporate global issues into their lessons (Kim & Park, 2023). Additionally, access to comprehensive teaching resources, including digital tools, case studies, and lesson plans aligned with global standards, supports educators in delivering engaging and relevant content.

### **Balancing National Identity with Global Awareness:**

Finding an effective balance between fostering national pride and cultivating global awareness remains complex. Studies show that students develop a more nuanced global outlook when curricula incorporate local histories and cultural contexts alongside transnational themes (Amin & Shah, 2022). Such integrative approaches help students see their role within global systems while deepening their local identities. Strategies such as contextualized global issues, culturally inclusive curricula, and community-engaged projects are effective in fostering both global competence and local pride (Saito & Lee, 2023). Educators must craft curricula that recognize and celebrate cultural diversity while emphasizing shared global challenges, thereby promoting inclusive and participatory citizenship.

### **Additional Considerations:**

Implementing these perspectives also involves overcoming systemic barriers like curriculum overload, standardized testing that emphasizes factual recall, and technological disparities affecting equitable access. Policymakers must support flexible, inquiry-based learning models and resource allocation that promote digital equity, especially in underserved communities. Embracing innovative pedagogies and leveraging technology can create more inclusive global learning environments that address these barriers (Jones & Smith, 2022).

### **Conclusion**

The evolving nature of national security in the age of globalization demands a fundamental rethinking of traditional, state-centric security paradigms, particularly in a diverse and

strategically significant nation like Nigeria. As demonstrated in this paper, contemporary threats such as terrorism, cybercrime, climate change, pandemics, and transnational organized crime transcend national borders and cannot be effectively mitigated through isolated, militarized responses. Globalization has not only interconnected economies and cultures but has also redefined the security landscape, making it imperative to adopt a more holistic, inclusive, and collaborative approach. In this context, social studies education emerges as a critical tool for fostering the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for navigating an interconnected world.

Integrating transnational perspectives into social studies curricula enables students to move beyond narrow national narratives and develop a deeper understanding of global interdependence. By emphasizing critical thinking, intercultural competence, and civic responsibility, educators can nurture a generation of informed, empathetic, and proactive global citizens. This educational shift supports the broader goal of human security, ensuring the safety, dignity, and well-being of individuals and communities while reinforcing national stability through informed public engagement. The challenges posed by Boko Haram, climate-induced displacement, cyber vulnerabilities, and health crises like COVID-19 underscore the urgency of preparing citizens to understand and respond to complex, multi-layered threats.

Ultimately, reimagining national security through education is not a departure from national interests but a necessary evolution to protect them in a globalized era. A curriculum that balances national identity with global awareness equips students to appreciate Nigeria's role in regional and global systems, fostering a sense of shared responsibility for peace, sustainability, and justice.

### **Recommendations**

1. The Nigerian educational authorities should revise the social studies curriculum to explicitly incorporate transnational perspectives, including global issues such as climate change, migration, cyber security, and international health crises. These themes should be integrated across grade levels in an age-appropriate and interdisciplinary manner.
2. Invest in comprehensive, ongoing teacher training programs focused on global citizenship education, intercultural pedagogy, and the use of interdisciplinary and experiential learning methods. Collaboration with universities and international educational organizations can enhance the quality and reach of these programs.
3. Encourage the adoption of active learning strategies such as project-based learning, Model United Nations (MUN), virtual exchange programs, and cross-border school collaborations. These methods deepen student engagement and foster practical skills in diplomacy, critical analysis, and problem-solving.
4. Expand access to digital learning platforms (e.g., ePals, iEARN, virtual classrooms) to bridge geographical and socio-economic divides, ensuring equitable opportunities for students in both urban and rural areas to engage with global perspectives.

5. Develop collaborative frameworks involving educators, policymakers, community leaders, and civil society organizations to ensure that curriculum changes reflect local realities while aligning with global educational standards and security needs.
6. Design curricula that integrate national history and cultural identity with global contexts, ensuring that students develop both pride in their heritage and a commitment to global solidarity and cooperation.

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