

Geopolitics as a Driver of Global Supply Chain Redesign: The Influence of Nationalism, Populism and Protectionism

By

Geraldine Gough

Research Supervisor:
Prof. P.J. Byrne

A Thesis Submitted to Dublin City University Business School in Partial
Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
June 2026

DECLARATION

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Doctor of Philosophy is entirely my own work and that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original and have conformed to the regulations on the use and declaration of Generative AI and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

.

Signed: Geraldine Gough

ID No.: 13212850

Date: 26th June 2026

Reporting of Generative AI Tool use in Research Thesis

Tools: Clearly indicate the tool name and model (or version) you used and the date(s) of use. If you used a tool multiple times, provide the range of dates over which the tool was used and the model/versions used.	Microsoft Copilot used between 01st September 2025 and 17th January 2026
Outputs: Specify what tool outputs were generated and used by you and for what purpose.	I used Copilot to support non interpretive aspects of thesis preparation. The tool was used for clarity enhancement, structural suggestions, reference formatting guidance and technical document assistance. All analytical thinking, argument development and research conclusions were generated by the author. The tool produced text-based suggestions that I reviewed and applied selectively. These outputs supported: • Language and clarity: improving grammar, sentence flow, readability, removing repetition and enhancing academic tone. • Structural refinement: proposing ways to reorganise paragraphs, improve section flow and check coherence across chapters. • Reference formatting: guidance on formatting citation lists to Harvard or APA style, alphabetising references and checking consistency between in-text and end-of-document citations. • Technical support: help resolving Word formatting issues, table-of-contents layout and data tables in Excel.
Prompts: Provide a record of the prompts you used here or link to an appendix where the prompts used are listed.	Prompts used focused on requesting assistance with: • Clarifying or tightening specific paragraphs • Improving academic tone • Reorganising sections for logic and flow • Checking consistency in referencing style • Troubleshooting Word or Excel formatting issues
Iterations: Provide some commentary on the number and type of iterations. This can be linked to your report on prompts and outputs above.	Iterations were minimal, however where multiple refinements were requested on the same passage or formatting task. Iterations primarily addressed: Re-checking tone after edits Comparing alternative structural options Verifying reference formatting consistency Re-running document formatting adjustments Iterations remained editorial rather than conceptual; no AI suggestions influenced the analytical content of the thesis.

Critical Reflection: If Gen AI tools have been used minimally, a very brief critical reflection on its role in the research submitted for examination can be included here. Otherwise, specify the parts of the thesis where critical reflection on the use and role of Gen AI tools is included.	MS Co-pilot was used minimally and only for polishing, presentation and administrative tasks. AI did not generate research ideas, conduct analysis or contribute to the interpretation of findings. The role was limited to enhancing clarity, structure, formatting accuracy and document readability.
--	--

Acknowledgments

I would like to begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Professor PJ Byrne, whose support, flexibility and knowledgeable guidance have been central to the completion of this research. His operational expertise and supply chain background provided an invaluable sounding board throughout the PhD journey. He consistently demonstrated belief in both the research and in me, particularly during moments when my own confidence wavered and encouraged me to recognise the broader contribution of this study. He challenged my interpretations, posed new perspectives and pushed me to engage deeply with the findings. From our very first conversation, his role in shaping this research has been instrumental and I am deeply appreciative of his mentorship.

I would also like to thank the wider DCU community for the support, guidance and knowledge shared throughout this process. From DCU Business School support staff to the graduate training programmes, the University combined academic rigor with a supportive and approachable culture, making the PhD journey both academically enriching and personally rewarding. In particular, I would like to acknowledge Dr James Byrne for his role, time and contributions as Independent Panel Member during the postgraduate assessment process. I am also grateful to Professor Maura McAdam for delivering an insightful Research Methods module and for the critical learning she shared in relation to research design and interpretation. Her continued academic contributions have remained a guiding reference throughout this research and have shaped how I engage with academic inquiry and make sense of complex organisational phenomena.

I am grateful to my employer, Owens & Minor, for the support and flexibility extended to me in undertaking this research. My professional experience and career path influenced my interest in this topic and my roles within the organisation afforded me a unique vantage point from which to explore geopolitical risk in global supply chains. These experiences enabled me to build a strong professional network and develop a practical understanding that informed the direction and relevance of this study.

My sincere thanks are extended to all of the interview participants who generously contributed their time and insights. Without their willingness to share experiences and perspectives, this research would not have been possible. I greatly valued the richness and depth they brought to

the study. The timing of this research is of particular significance, undertaken during a period of unprecedented geopolitical disruption, the perspectives captured reflect a unique moment in supply chain history informed by geo-political turbulence. I remain deeply grateful for the trust and openness shown by participants and for the opportunity to document these important industry narratives, which I hope will serve as building blocks for future understanding of geopolitics within global operations.

Finally, I wish to thank my husband, children and extended family for their patience, encouragement and unwavering support throughout this journey. From my PhD interview at DCU in March 2020, just before COVID-19 reshaped everyday life, through to the completion of this thesis, our family has grown, we created our home together and our lives have evolved in ways that ran in parallel with this research and truly shaped the experience of undertaking this research.

It is often said that it takes a village to raise a family; completing a PhD requires a very special village indeed. I am excited for the next chapter this doctorate brings, both personally and professionally. Given the timeliness of this research, I am committed to continuing to build on these insights in ways that contribute meaningfully to both theory and practice.

Table of Contents

Declaration.....	i
Acknowledgements.....	ii
List of Tables.....	i
List of Figures	i
Abstract	iii
1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Contributions of the Study	4
1.3 Aims and Objectives of the Research	5
1.4 Research Question Development	6
1.5 Research Approach and Methodology	7
1.6 Thesis Structure.....	7
2. Context.....	9
2.1 Introduction	9
2.2 Practical Background	11
2.2.1 Globalisation's Expansion and its Limits.....	11
2.2.2 Populism, Nationalism and Protectionism.....	12
2.2.3 Emerging Trends in Global Trade and Supply Chains.....	13
2.3 Supply Chain Theory	14
2.3.1 Evolution of Supply Chain Theory.....	14
2.3.2 Economic Foundations and Globalisation.....	14
2.3.3 Risk, Vulnerability and Disruption.....	15
2.3.4 From Resilience to Viability.....	16
2.3.5 Relational and Governance Perspectives.....	16
2.3.6 Geopolitics and Structural Reconfiguration	17
2.4 Theoretical Background	17
2.4.1 Introduction	17
2.4.2 Economic Theory	18
2.4.3 Dynamic Capabilities Theory.....	18
2.4.4 Institutional Theory	19
2.4.5 Paradox Theory.....	20
2.4.6 Theoretical Framework.....	20
2.4.7 Theoretical Contribution.....	20
2.5 Research Positioning and Contribution.....	21

2.5.1 Introduction	21
2.5.2 Limitations of Existing Theory.....	21
2.5.3 Conceptual Reframing of Supply Chains	22
2.5.4 Conceptual Perspective of this Study	22
2.5.5 Research Contribution	23
2.6 Conclusion.....	23
3. Literature Review Chapter	25
3.1 Introduction	25
3.2 Systematic Literature Review Process	25
3.2.1 PRISMA Alignment and Reporting Standards.....	26
3.2.2 Phase I – Question Formulation and Planning	28
3.2.3 Phase II – Locating Studies	29
3.2.4 Phase III – Screening and Evaluation.....	30
3.2.5 Phase IV – Analysis and Synthesis	35
3.2.6 Phase V – Results Reporting	37
3.3 Systematic Literature Review Findings	38
3.3.1 Global Supply Chain / Global Value Chain	39
3.3.2 Supply Chain Design / Redesign / Configuration	42
3.3.3 Risk, Uncertainty and Complexity	45
3.3.4 International Trade	47
3.3.5 Globalisation and Reverse Globalisation	49
3.3.6 Geo-political Factors	52
3.3.7 Protectionism and Nationalist Movement	54
3.3.8 Populism	57
3.3.9 Tariffs, Trade Agreements and Trade Wars	60
3.3.9 Additional Thematic Areas.....	62
3.4 Recent Advances in the Literature (2023–2025).....	65
3.5 Synthesis and Discussion	66
3.5.1 Insights and Evolution of Themes	68
3.5.2 Methodological Characteristics of the Literature	70
3.5.3 Literature Findings Mapped to CIMO.....	73
3.5.4 Gaps in Existing Literature.....	74
3.5.5 A New Landscape for Global Trade.....	75
3.5.6 Multi level Impacts.....	76
3.5.7 Updated Research Statement	77

3.6 Conclusion.....	79
4. Research Methodology	80
4.1 Introduction	80
4.2 Research Philosophy and Approach.....	81
4.2.1. Ontological Perspective.....	81
4.2.2 Epistemological Perspective.....	82
4.2.3 Research Approach.....	82
4.2.4 Alternative Methodological Positioning - Consideration of Abductive Logic.....	83
4.2.5 Phenomenological Foundations.....	84
4.2.6 Researcher Reflection.....	85
4.3 Research Design.....	85
4.3.1 Overview of the Design.....	86
4.3.2 Rationale for a Sequential Design	86
4.3.3 Integration Between Phases.....	87
4.3.4 Research Methods Alignment	88
4.3.5 Limitations of the Design	89
4.4 Qualitative Research Study	90
4.4.1 Rationale for Method Selection.....	90
4.4.2 Sampling Strategy and Participant Profile.....	91
4.4.3 Unit of Analysis.....	94
4.4.4 Managing Confirmation Bias and Social Desirability Bias.....	95
4.4.5 Interview Design and Protocol	97
4.4.6 Data Collection - Interview Process	101
4.4.7 Role of the Researcher.....	102
4.4.8 Ethical Considerations in Data Collection.....	102
4.5 Adapting the Research to an Evolving Global Context	103
4.5.1 Pulse Surveys.....	103
4.5.2 Updated Systematic Literature Review	104
4.5.3 Methodological Justification	104
4.5.4 Integration with Findings and Discussion	105
4.6. Data Analysis and Coding.....	105
4.6.1 Analytical Objectives	106
4.6.2 Analytical Framework and Process	106
4.6.3 Triangulation	113
4.6.4 Data Management and Transparency	114

4.6.5 Emergent Themes	114
4.6.6 Reflexivity in Analysis	114
4.7 Reliability, Validity, Ethics	115
4.7.1 Credibility	115
4.7.2 Dependability	116
4.7.3 Generalisation and Transferability	117
4.7.4 Confirmability	118
4.7.5 Ethical Integrity	118
4.7.6 Research Integrity / Validity	119
4.8. Conclusion	120
5. Research Findings	122
5.1 Introduction	122
5.2. Geopolitical Risk: Strategic and Tactical Impacts on Supply Chains	124
5.2.1 Tactical Impacts: Disruption	124
5.2.2 Strategic Impacts: Supply Chain Realignment	125
5.3 Populism	127
5.3.1 Populist Rhetoric and Organisational Reaction	127
5.3.2 Media Narratives and Public Perception	129
5.3.3 Country of Origin and Perceived Values	130
5.3.4 National Narratives and Tariff Misconceptions	130
5.3.5 Country Contexts and Political Dimension	131
5.4 Nationalism	132
5.5.1 Are Supply Chains Moving Toward a Nationalist Footprint?	132
5.5.2 Perceptions vs. Practice	136
5.5 Protectionism	138
5.5.1 What Does Protectionism Look Like?	139
5.5.2 Trade War Impact on Supply Chain	140
5.6 Organisation	141
5.6.1 Mandates and the Myth of Nearshoring	142
5.6.2. Emerging Risk Monitoring Functions	143
5.7 Supply Chain Decision Making	144
5.7.1 Decision Making Factors: Cost, Reliability and Availability	145
5.7.2 Supply Chain Location Decisions	146
5.8 Supply Chain Redesign	147
5.8.1 Supply Chain Strategies for Managing Geopolitical Risk	148

5.9 Outcomes.....	149
5.9.1 Displacement of Trade and the Emergence of Southeast Asia.....	150
5.9.2 Reconfiguration of Supply Strategies: Dual Sourcing and Inventory Management	150
5.9.3 Nearshoring, Friendshoring and ‘Lip Service’ Strategies	151
5.9.4 The Role of Government, Cyclical Patterns and Long Term Direction.....	152
5.10 Emerging Themes	153
5.10.1 Organisational Responses: Dedicated Geopolitical Monitoring Functions.....	153
5.10.2 Post-Covid Expectations versus Structural Reality	154
5.10.3 Cybersecurity and Geopolitical Exposure	155
5.10.4 Evolving perceptions on China.....	155
5.11 Sectoral Variation in Geopolitical Supply Chain Responses	156
5.12 Pulse Survey Analysis: Evolving Perspectives on Supply Chain Reconfiguration ...	157
5.12.1 Transition and Change.....	158
5.12.2 Drivers of Change.....	158
5.12.3 Reinforcing the Research.....	159
5.13 Conclusion.....	160
6. Discussions and Conclusions.....	162
6.1 Introduction	162
6.2 The Evolution from Emergent to Reality	162
6.3 Reinforcing the Research Findings	164
6.5 Advancing Perspective on Geopolitical Disruption and Supply Chain Redesign	166
6.5.1 Mapping Findings to the CIMO Framework.....	166
6.5.2 A Model for Geopolitical Disruption and Supply Chain Redesign.....	168
6.6. Implications for Theory and Practice	170
6.6.1 Extending supply chain resilience theory by embedding geopolitical risk	171
6.6.2 Challenging efficiency driven assumptions underpinning globalisation theory ...	172
6.6.3 Bridging macro political forces with micro-organisation decision making	172
6.6.4 Reframing risk and uncertainty in supply chain decision making theory	173
6.6.5 Implications for Practice.....	174
6.6.6 Strategic Implications	176
6.6.7 Operational Implications	178
6.6.8 Governance Implications.....	179
6.7 Limitations and Opportunities for Further Research.....	181
6.7.1 Limitations.....	181

6.7.2 Opportunities for Future Research	182
6.8 Conclusions	184
Reference List.....	187
Appendix A – CIMO Framework	202
Appendix B - PRISMA Checklist	203
Appendix C – Systematic Literature Review Protocol.....	210
Appendix D – Literature Review Coding	215
Appendix E – Systematic Literature Review Full Paper List.....	216
Appendix F – Invitation to Interview.....	223
Appendix G – Informed Consent and Plain Language Statement.....	224
Appendix H – Pulse Survey.....	226
Appendix I – Pulse Survey Results.....	227
Appendix J – Ethics Approval.....	236
Appendix K – Theoretical Contribution Mapping	237

List of Tables

Table 3.1 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria Applied During the Systematic Literature Review.....	31
Table 3.2 Quality Appraisal Criteria Applied During Study Selection.....	34
Table 3.3 Thematic Trends in the Literature.....	39
Table 3.4 Papers by Authors and Method.....	72
Table 3.5 Mapping SLR Themes to CIMO.....	74
Table 3.6 Gaps in Existing Literature.....	75
Table 4.1 Research Methods Alignment.....	89
Table 4.2 Participant Profile.....	93
Table 4.3 Organisation and Industry Representation.....	94
Table 4.4 Populism Keyword Identification.....	99
Table 4.5 Interview Guide.....	100
Table 4.6 Example Initial Coding from Interview Transcripts.....	108
Table 4.7 Category Development Example.....	109
Table 4.8 Theme Development Example.....	110
Table 4.9 Mapping Final Themes to the CIMO Framework.....	111
Table 4.10 Example of Thematic Codes Mapped to High Level Themes.....	112
Table 5.1 Supply Chain Movement Towards Nationalist Footprint.....	134
Table 5.2 Supply Chain Movement Towards Nationalist Footprint – Participant Comments.....	135
Table 6.1 Implications for Practice.....	175

List of Figures

Fig 3.1 Systematic Literature Review PRISMA Flow Diagram.....	37
Fig 3.2 Conceptual Model based on Literature Review Findings.....	68
Fig 3.3 Total Publications per Theme.....	70
Fig 4.1 Initial Coding Tree.....	107
Fig 6.1 Evolution of Populism as a factor influencing Supply Chain Decision Making.....	164
Fig 6.2 Mapping Findings to the CIMO Framework.....	168
Fig 6.3 Geopolitical Disruption and Supply Chain Redesign.....	170

Geopolitics as a Driver of Global Supply Chain Redesign: The Influence of Nationalism, Populism and Protectionism

Geraldine Gough

Abstract

Title: Geopolitics as a Driver of Global Supply Chain Redesign: The Influence of Nationalism, Populism and Protectionism

Name: Geraldine Gough

Objective: This study examines how geopolitical ideologies, specifically populism, nationalism and protectionism influence global supply chain design and sourcing decision making. It seeks to understand how these political forces, traditionally viewed as macro level contextual factors, are increasingly shaping organisational behaviour, supplier strategies and supply network design.

Method: An interpretivist qualitative research design was adopted, oriented toward theoretical extension. The study commenced with a systematic literature review structured using a CIMO framework to identify and synthesise emerging themes linking geopolitical ideologies to global supply chain redesign. Insights from the literature review informed the development of the research question and guided the design of the empirical study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 22 senior supply chain and sourcing professionals across multiple industries and geographic regions. Interview data was analysed thematically to uncover how populism, nationalism and protectionism manifested in organisational decision making. To capture temporal change and validate evolving sentiment, a follow-up pulse survey was conducted in July 2025 to assess shifts in perceptions and organisational responses following significant geopolitical and trade policy developments.

Findings: The findings reveal that geopolitical ideologies are no longer peripheral influences but are actively shaping supply chain strategy. Participants described increasing pressure to diversify away from politically sensitive regions, particularly China, despite on-going operational dependence. Nationalism and protectionism were observed to drive localisation rhetoric and regulatory compliance pressures, while populism influenced decision-making indirectly through political narratives, reputational risk and market access concerns. Several organisations reported the introduction of dedicated geopolitical risk monitoring functions, signalling the formalisation of political risk within supply chain governance. The pulse survey confirmed a marked shift between 2024 and 2025, demonstrating heightened urgency and

tangible supply chain reassessment, with initiatives previously characterised as rhetorical or “*lip service*” evolving into practical strategic responses following tariff escalation and geopolitical instability.

Contribution This research contributes to theory by repositioning geopolitics as an embedded and structuring force within global supply chain design rather than a distant contextual influence. The study shows that geopolitical pressures are not episodic shocks but persistent drivers that alter managerial logic, prioritisation frameworks and supply network configuration over time. The findings contribute to theory by evidencing a shift from cost efficiency dominated supply chain models toward risk adjusted value frameworks. Organisations increasingly incorporate resilience, continuity and political exposure into supplier selection and sourcing strategy, reinforcing the need to view supply chains as politically sensitive systems influenced by institutional and ideological forces.

From a practical perspective, the study provides new insight into how organisations operationalise geopolitical awareness. It identifies the emergence of dedicated geopolitical monitoring capabilities within organisations, expanded supplier diversification and qualification activities and the growing integration of predictive analytics and AI-enabled governance tools to detect and manage geopolitical risk. The research further illustrates how leadership teams need to embed geopolitical oversight into corporate governance and align organisational strategies accordingly.

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Over the past three decades, global supply chains have been shaped by an era of accelerated globalisation characterised by trade liberalisation, declining tariff barriers and the fragmentation of production across national borders (Gereffi, 1994; Lamming, 1996; Porter, 1985;). The emergence of global value chains enabled organisations to geographically disaggregate production and coordinate activities across multiple locations, driven primarily by cost efficiency, scale economies and access to specialised capabilities (; Christopher and Towill, 2001; Gereffi et al., 2005). Within purchasing and supply management theory, this period was associated with a transition from transactional sourcing towards integrated supply networks, supported by advances in logistics, technological information systems and global supplier management (Lamming et al., 2000; van Weele, 2002).

Across both international business and operations management literatures, this globalisation paradigm was underpinned by an implicit assumption of political stability and predictability. National governments and sovereign states were largely conceptualised as facilitators of trade liberalisation rather than as active or disruptive actors in supply chain configuration (Ghemawat, 2017; Kobrin, 2017). As a result the dominant theoretical framework that emerged focused on efficiency, optimisation and competitive advantage, while political risk and state intervention were treated as external variables rather than as structural determinants of supply chain design (Christopher and Towill, 2001; Porter, 1985).

The global financial crisis of 2008 represented an early inflection point in this trajectory. Although globalisation did not immediately reverse, academics increasingly questioned the sustainability of a system characterised by deep international interdependence and efficiency maximisation (Ghemawat, 2017; Rodrik, 2011). Some empirical evidence pointed to a slowdown in global trade growth, a re-emergence of industrial policy and increased state intervention in strategic sectors (Alvstam et al.; 2019, Lund et al., 2019;). Despite these signals, supply chain management research largely continued to frame political developments as

contextual disturbances rather than as indicators of a more fundamental reconfiguration of global production systems (Seuring et al., 2021).

From the mid-2010s onwards, geopolitical dynamics became increasingly difficult to dismiss. Events such as the Brexit referendum, escalating trade tensions between the United States and China and the emergence of protectionist rhetoric challenged assumptions that global trade rules would continue to deepen and stabilise (Kobrin, 2020; Witt, 2019). A growing body of research began to acknowledge the influence of political risk, trade policy uncertainty and national strategic interests on organisation behaviour and location decisions (Chae et al., 2019. Ghemawat, 2017). However, this literature remained fragmented across disciplines, with limited integration between international political economy, international business and supply chain management.

Several academics explicitly highlighted this gap. Wang et al. (2016) argued that the role of governments in shaping global supply chains remained under-theorised within the operations management literature. Chae et al. (2019) noted that despite the increasing prevalence of tariffs and trade-restrictive measures, their effects on the emergence and evolution of global supply networks had received limited empirical attention. Similarly, Dong and Kouvelis (2020) called for research capable of capturing how complex, interconnected supply networks respond to sustained trade policy change, rather than short-term disruption. These calls underscored the need for this empirical research that could bridge macro level geopolitical developments and organisational level decision-making.

The period from 2020 onwards represented a further accelerated deviation from earlier trends. The COVID-19 pandemic, followed by renewed trade tensions, sanctions and tariff regimes and large-scale geopolitical conflict, exposed the vulnerability of globally extended supply chains and intensified political scrutiny of cross-border dependencies (Hameri and Hintsa, 2009; MacCarthy et al., 2016). In practice, organisations were compelled to reassess long-established sourcing strategies, reconsider geographic concentration of supply and respond to heightened regulatory, reputational and societal pressures. While academic output expanded rapidly during this period, much of the literature remained retrospective or reliant on secondary data, limiting insight into how decision-makers experienced and interpreted geopolitical change as it unfolded (Seuring et al., 2021, Witt, 2019).

It is within this evolving and increasingly volatile context that the timeliness and originality of this study originate. This research was initiated at a point when geopolitical influence on supply chains was emerging but not yet universally acknowledged as a structural constraint. The early empirical insights, gathered from semi-structured interviews, captured a phase of ambiguity and uncertainty in executive strategy, in which geopolitical developments were frequently framed as disruptions to be mitigated through short-term responses. As global trade conditions continued to escalate and political intervention intensified, a marked shift in practitioner perspectives became evident. To capture this evolution, a supplementary pulse survey was conducted in 2025, enabling the study to document significant changes in how geopolitical forces were perceived, prioritised and operationalised within organisational decision-making.

This temporal dimension constitutes a central contribution of the research. Rather than offering a static snapshot of geopolitical disruption, the study provides insight into how organisational interpretations evolved from early uncertainty to broader acceptance of geopolitics as a persistent and structural feature of the global supply chain environment. In doing so, the research responds directly to prior calls for empirically grounded work capable of bridging theory and practice and for methodological approaches sensitive to the dynamic and path-dependent nature of global trade change.

Against this backdrop, the study addresses a critical gap in existing literature. While research on globalisation, trade policy and supply chain risk has expanded considerably, there remains limited integration between geopolitical analysis and supply chain design theory. Recent political and economic research has demonstrated that populism emerges as a response to economic displacement associated with globalisation shocks, with these ideological shifts subsequently translating into protectionist policy, institutional instability and regulatory intervention affecting organisations (Rodrik, 2021). Further conceptual work distinguishes populism as a cyclical political mechanism progressing from societal demand to policy supply and political persistence (Benczes and Szabó, 2022), yet limited research has examined how these dynamics permeate organisational level operational systems such as global supply chains. International business theory has also begun to recognise that populist environments impose new pressures on corporations, requiring alignment with regime narratives and the fulfilment of emerging corporate political obligations that extend beyond traditional market logic (Hartwell and Devinney, 2024). However, existing supply chain frameworks struggle to

account for decision making shaped by political legitimacy, regulatory alignment and societal pressure under sustained uncertainty (Kobrin, 2017; Rodrik, 2018).

Recent contributions have begun to formalise geopolitical disruption as a more distinct domain within the supply chain literature. Adopting a novel perspective, Golgeci et al. (2025) propose a sociopolitical view of supply chains, moving beyond transactional drivers such as tariffs to conceptualise supply-footprint diversification as a response to interacting political, social and cultural forces that embed supply chains within broader societal systems. In parallel, a recent systematic literature review identifies Brexit, the US–China trade war, COVID-19 and the Russia–Ukraine conflict as core drivers of supply-chain reconfiguration and highlights the growing importance of mitigation responses (Bednarski et al., 2025). These perspectives highlight the growing recognition of geopolitics as a structural force in supply-chain design. This research therefore positions geopolitics not as peripheral contextual variables, but as increasingly central determinants of global supply chain structure, governance and strategic intent.

1.2 Contributions of the Study

The originality of this study lies not only in its substantive focus on geopolitics and global supply chains, but in its explicit incorporation of timing as an analytical lens. Unlike much of the existing literature, which relies on retrospective analysis or static empirical snapshots, this research captures how organisational interpretations of geopolitical forces evolved during the research period itself. Early empirical data reflect a phase of ambiguity and uncertainty, while subsequent data, including a pulse survey conducted in 2025, reveal a marked shift towards the standardisation of geopolitics as a persistent and structural constraint on supply chain design.

By documenting this progression, the study provides rare insight into executive decision making under conditions of geopolitical volatility. Methodologically, it demonstrates the value of combining systematic literature review techniques with interpretivist, phenomenological inquiry and adaptive empirical design (Denyer and Tranfield, 2009; Seuring et al., 2021). Theoretically, it advances supply chain management theory by challenging efficiency driven assumptions inherited from globalisation theory and by highlighting political legitimacy and economic alignment as enduring determinants of supply network configuration. In doing so, the research responds directly to prior calls for cross-disciplinary, empirically grounded work

capable of explaining how global supply chains are reshaped as geopolitical forces intensify over time.

1.3 Aims and Objectives of the Research

The overarching aim of this research is to understand how geopolitical forces are reshaping global trade and in turn, influencing the design and governance of global supply chains over time. This aim responds directly to growing recognition within international business and supply chain management theory that political and institutional forces are no longer peripheral to global production systems, but increasingly shape strategic and operational decision-making (Kobrin, 2017; Rodrik, 2018; Witt, 2019).

In contrast to studies that conceptualise geopolitics as an isolated or peripheral disruption, this research examines how political forces become progressively embedded within organisational decision-making and supply chain strategy. The study therefore adopts a dynamic perspective, recognising that both the external environment and managerial interpretations evolve as geopolitical pressures intensify, consistent with calls for time-sensitive supply chain research (MacCarthy et al., 2016; Seuring et al., 2021).

The study pursues several objectives. To synthesise and critically evaluate existing academic literature on globalisation, geopolitics and global supply chain design through a systematic literature review, drawing on established review methodologies leveraging the literature review frameworks provided by Denyer and Tranfield (2009). The research also seeks to examine how geopolitical forces are conceptualised within the supply chain management literature and to identify theoretical gaps and limitations. Likewise, the study explores how senior decision-makers interpret and respond to geopolitical developments across different phases of escalation, addressing calls for empirically grounded insight into managerial decision-making under political uncertainty. The research analyses how these interpretations translate into changes in sourcing strategies, supplier relationships and supply chain configuration, contributing to understanding of adaptive supply network design. A final and critical objective of the study is to contribute empirically grounded insights that advance theory at the intersection of geopolitics and supply chain management.

1.4 Research Question Development

The research questions were developed iteratively through engagement with both the academic literature and the evolving empirical context. Given the emergent and under-theorised nature of geopolitics as a determinant of supply chain design, the Context Intervention Mechanism Outcome (CIMO) framework was adopted as a structuring device to support conceptual clarity and coherence (Colicchia and Strozzi, 2012; Denyer and Tranfield, 2009). The CIMO Framework can be found in Appendix A.

Within this study, the context is defined as global supply chains operating under conditions of increasing geopolitical uncertainty. The intervention relates to changes in global trade dynamics, including reduced trade openness, tariff escalation and increased nation / state intervention. The mechanisms of interest are geopolitical forces, such as nationalism, protectionism and political legitimacy concerns, through which trade policy changes are transmitted into organisational decision making. The outcome concerns the reconfiguration and redesign of global supply networks. This framing aligns with calls for research designs that explicitly link macro level political change with organisation level and supply chain level outcomes, as called out as opportunities for further research by Wang et al. (2016) and Dong and Kouvelis (2020).

The application of CIMO enabled the research to maintain a consistent central research question while remaining sensitive to changes in the external environment over the course of the study. This was particularly important given the emergent nature of the research, in which practitioner interpretations evolved as geopolitical pressures intensified, reflecting arguments that supply chain phenomena must be examined as dynamic rather than static processes (MacCarthy et al., 2016; Seuring et al., 2021). The central research question guiding the study is:

How and to what extent are geopolitical factors reshaping and influencing global supply chain design?

Supporting sub-questions examine how organisations interpret geopolitical risk, how these interpretations influence strategic and operational decisions and how supply chain structures adapt over time. This framing ensured continuity across the systematic literature review, qualitative interviews and the pulse survey conducted in 2025 (Colicchia and Strozzi, 2012).

1.5 Research Approach and Methodology

This study adopts an interpretivist epistemological stance and a subjectivist ontological position, recognising that geopolitical phenomena and organisational responses are socially constructed and interpreted through human experience. Such a stance is well suited to research contexts characterised by ambiguity, complexity and evolving meaning and is widely adopted in qualitative supply chain and organisational research (Saunders et al., 2009; Seuring et al., 2021). Given the limited existing theory at the intersection of geopolitics and supply chain management, an inductive research approach was selected. Inductive approaches are particularly appropriate where phenomena are emergent and under-theorised, enabling theory development grounded in empirical observation rather than hypothesis testing (Eisenhardt et al., 2016). A sequential and adaptive research design was employed. The first phase comprised a systematic literature review conducted in accordance with established protocols, providing a rigorous synthesis of existing knowledge and identifying key gaps (Denyer and Tranfield, 2009). This phase informed the development of the research questions and empirical instruments. The second phase consisted of qualitative empirical research using semi-structured interviews with senior supply chain practitioners. A phenomenological orientation was adopted to capture lived experience and managerial decision making, enabling deep exploration of how geopolitical developments were perceived and operationalised within organisations.

As geopolitical conditions continued to evolve during the research period, a supplementary pulse survey was conducted in 2025. This adaptive extension of the empirical design strengthened the temporal validity of the study and enabled the capture of shifts in interpretation and prioritisation as geopolitical pressures intensified (MacCarthy et al., 2016).

1.6 Thesis Structure

This thesis is structured into six chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the research, establishing the rationale, aims, research questions, methodological approach and originality of the study. Chapter 2 establishes the theoretical and historical foundation for the thesis by situating the research at the intersection of supply chain design and geopolitical influence. Chapter 3 presents the systematic literature review, synthesising academic research on globalisation,

geopolitics and global supply chain design. The chapter identifies dominant themes, theoretical limitations and opportunities for further research, consistent with best practice in evidence based management research. Chapter 4 outlines the research methodology, detailing the philosophical foundations, research design, data collection methods, analytical procedures and ethical considerations. Chapter 5 presents the empirical findings derived from qualitative interviews and the 2025 pulse survey. Findings are organised thematically and grounded exclusively in primary data, reflecting interpretivist principles of analytical depth and rigour. Chapter 6 discusses the findings in relation to existing literature, integrating empirical insights with theory to demonstrate how geopolitics has evolved from a peripheral consideration to a structural determinant of supply chain design. Chapter 5 concludes the thesis by summarising the key contributions, outlining theoretical and practical implications, acknowledging limitations and proposing directions for future research.

2. Context

2.1 Introduction

This research is situated within the field of Supply Chain Management and more specifically within the domains of global supply chain design and supply chain risk. These areas have traditionally focused on the optimisation of cost, efficiency and service, alongside more recent emphases on resilience and risk mitigation. While this body of literature has evolved significantly in response to increasing uncertainty, it has largely conceptualised disruption as episodic and external to the core design logic of supply chains. In parallel, the growing influence of Geopolitics has begun to receive attention within both academic and practitioner discourse. Trade tensions, protectionist policies, sanctions and broader geopolitical instability have introduced new forms of uncertainty that directly affect sourcing decisions, network configuration and supplier selection. However, despite this increased recognition, geopolitics is most often framed as a contextual or exogenous risk factor to be mitigated rather than as a fundamental determinant of how supply chains are designed and structured.

This thesis addresses this gap by repositioning geopolitical forces as central to supply chain decision-making. It argues that geopolitics is no longer peripheral to supply chain management, but instead operates as a structural influence that shapes the configuration and evolution of global supply networks. In doing so, the research moves beyond a reactive framing of disruption and instead conceptualises supply chain design as inherently embedded within a dynamic and politically influenced global environment.

The contribution of this research, therefore, is not to shift the field away from supply chain management, but to extend its analytical boundaries. By integrating geopolitical considerations into the core logic of supply chain design, this study bridges an important gap between established supply chain theory and the evolving realities of global trade and political economy. This positioning enables a more comprehensive understanding of how organisations respond to uncertainty, not only through operational adjustments but through strategic reconfiguration of their supply base and network structures.

To support this positioning, the research draws on several complementary theoretical perspectives, including Transaction Cost Economics (TCE), Global Value Chain (GVC) theory, Dynamic Capabilities, Institutional Theory and Paradox Theory. A Transaction Cost Economics lens provides insight into how organisations evaluate governance structures, sourcing decisions and supply chain configurations under conditions of increasing uncertainty and risk. Global Value Chain theory contributes an understanding of how geopolitical shifts influence the organisation and geography of production networks across international markets. A dynamic capabilities lens provides a foundation for understanding how organisations sense, respond to and reconfigure supply chains in the face of geopolitical change. In parallel, institutional theory offers insight into how external political, regulatory and societal pressures shape organisational behaviour and strategic decision-making. Together, these perspectives support the argument that supply chain design is not solely an economic or operational exercise, but one that is increasingly shaped by institutional and geopolitical forces.

Accordingly, this research is positioned at the intersection of supply chain design and geopolitical influence, advancing the field by demonstrating how these forces interact to shape contemporary supply chain strategies. This positioning provides the foundation for the systematic literature review that follows, which examines the extent to which existing research has engaged with these dynamics and identifies the gaps that this study seeks to address.

This chapter is organised as follows. Section 2.2 outlines the practical and historical background underpinning the study, including the evolution of globalisation and the emergence of geopolitical disruption as a critical influence on global trade and supply chains. Section 2.3 examines the evolution of supply chain theory, tracing the development from traditional logistics and efficiency based perspectives toward resilience, viability and adaptive supply chain models. Section 2.4 develops the theoretical framework underpinning the study through the integration of Transaction Cost Economics, Global Value Chain theory, Dynamic Capabilities, Institutional Theory, relational perspectives and Paradox Theory. Section 2.5 positions the research within the existing literature and articulates the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the study. Finally, Section 2.6 concludes the chapter by summarising the key theoretical insights and establishing the foundation for the empirical analysis that follows.

2.2 Practical Background

The purpose of this section is to establish the historical, political and economic backdrop that underpins this literature review. The events summarised below, from the acceleration of globalisation in the late twentieth century through to the renewed protectionist turn of the 2020s, frame the changing dynamics of global supply chains and international trade. These developments provide the rationale for reassessing global value chain (GVC) theory and practice in the context of ongoing geopolitical uncertainty.

Key Timeline of Events:

- 1990 – Acceleration of the most recent globalisation “wave”.
- 2008 – Global financial crisis and global recession.
- 2012 – Initial US challenge to Huawei’s technology practices.
- 2016 – Brexit referendum in the UK.
- 2016 – Election of Donald Trump, signalling a nationalist US agenda.
- 2017 – US ban on Huawei trade.
- 2018 – Escalation of US–China tensions into a trade war.
- 2020 – COVID-19 pandemic causes severe global supply chain disruption.
- 2022 – Russia invades Ukraine, triggering energy and agricultural supply shocks.
- 2024 – Donald Trump re-elected, renewing protectionist rhetoric and tariffs.

2.2.1 Globalisation’s Expansion and its Limits

Advances in technology, communication and transportation underpinned the most recent wave of globalisation. Post–World War II reconstruction, the third industrial revolution and the rise of the internet laid foundations for liberalised trade and deeply interconnected supply networks (Kobrin, 2017). The 1980s and 1990s brought free trade agreements and the creation of trading blocs such as NAFTA and the EU single market, enabling organisations to transcend borders, accelerate foreign direct investment and specialise production (Rodrik, 2021). Eastern economies, most notably China, emerged as manufacturing hubs for Western markets (Bremmer, 2014). While these shifts spurred economic growth and consumer benefits in developed economies, they also hollowed out some domestic industries. Low-cost textile production in Asia, for instance, rendered US and European producers uncompetitive. Nevertheless, multinational corporations enjoyed cost savings and Western consumers

embraced cheap imported goods, reinforcing the prevailing belief that globalisation equalled prosperity.

The 2008 global financial crisis marked a rupture. As Bremmer (2014) and Kobrin (2017) note, the crisis, widely considered the worst since the Great Depression, exposed vulnerabilities in extended global supply chains and undermined public trust in global financial institutions. For organisations, long and fragmented supply bases suddenly looked fragile; for consumers, unemployment and austerity reduced enthusiasm for consumerism; and for governments, implementing austerity budgets provoked anger. The assumption that internationalisation guaranteed success began to fade, replaced by risk aversion and renewed interest in domestic stability.

2.2.2 Populism, Nationalism and Protectionism

In the years following 2008, populist and nationalist movements reshaped global politics. Brexit (2016) questioned the value of the European Union and free movement, while Donald Trump's 2016 victory initiated a nationalist "America First" agenda (Kobrin, 2017; Rodrik, 2018). Trump's first administration withdrew from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, renegotiated NAFTA into the USMCA and imposed Section 301 tariffs on China, sparking a full trade war (Alvstam et al.; 2019; Politi and Sevastopulo, 2019; Shang and Shen, 2021). Protectionist measures also targeted long standing partners such as Canada and Mexico.

Trump's re-election in 2024 has further reinforced this trajectory, with renewed tariff proposals on Chinese imports, questioning multilateral agreements and calls to reshape US commitments to global institutions. Similar nationalist or protectionist policies have gained momentum elsewhere, under leaders like Vladimir Putin (Russia), Viktor Orbán (Hungary), Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (Turkey) and Jair Bolsonaro's allies in Brazil (Meyer, 2017). These developments confirm that the forces driving Brexit and the first Trump presidency are not isolated incidents but part of a broader structural global shift.

The COVID-19 pandemic (2020–2022) delivered a shock that exposed the fragility of global supply chains. Factory closures, port congestion, semiconductor shortages and sudden demand surges underscored the risks of lean, extended networks optimised solely for cost. organisations began prioritising resilience, diversification and regionalisation, concepts that now dominate

both academic and industry discourse. Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 created additional instability, disrupting energy supplies, agricultural exports and transportation corridors. Sanctions and countermeasures added complexity to trade flows, reinforcing the connection between geopolitics and supply chain security.

Meanwhile, China has sustained robust growth and sought to expand its global influence through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). BRI investments in infrastructure across Asia, Europe and Africa aim to integrate China into global supply networks more deeply via extended infrastructure links. Academics such as Beeson (2018) and Thürer et al. (2020) note that BRI is both an economic development strategy and a geopolitical tool. By 2025, BRI had entered a consolidation phase, facing financing challenges and increasing scrutiny, yet it continues to shift global trade routes and governance norms. Western nations have responded with "friend-shoring" and de-risking strategies to reduce dependence on Chinese production, signalling a gradual movement toward regionalisation and selective decoupling.

2.2.3 Emerging Trends in Global Trade and Supply Chains

In addition to these geopolitical shifts, sustainability and environmentally friendly supply chain practices, ESG compliance and digitalisation have become critical. The World Trade Organisation (WTO) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) warn of an increasing fragmentation of the global economy, as Nation States pursue domestic priorities over multilateral cooperation (Stokols and Kollar, 2025). Together, these forces suggest that supply chain strategy is no longer a purely operational decision but a complex balancing act involving politics, ethics and resilience.

These developments highlight the need for a comprehensive re-examination of the academic literature on global supply chains and value chains. The optimism, open markets and liberalisation of the 1990s have given way to a volatile environment shaped by pandemics, wars, protectionism and great power rivalry. The systematic literature review that follows examines how academics have documented and interpreted these changes, providing insight into the evolving design, governance and risk management of global supply chains in an increasingly fragmented world.

2.3 Supply Chain Theory

2.3.1 Evolution of Supply Chain Theory

The origins of supply chain management can be traced to early work in logistics and physical distribution, where activities such as transportation and warehousing were managed as discrete operational functions. Drucker's characterisation of distribution as the "dark continent" of the economy highlighted the limited visibility and strategic neglect of these activities, marking an early recognition of their importance within organisational performance (Drucker, 1962). Subsequent developments in logistics emphasised integration across functions and organisations. Bowersox and colleagues advanced the concept of coordinated logistics systems, linking material and information flows across the firm. This shift toward integration was further strengthened by the introduction of systems thinking (Bowersox, Closs and Cooper, 2010). Forrester's work on industrial dynamics conceptualised supply chains as interconnected systems governed by feedback loops and delays, demonstrating how local decision-making could generate amplified effects across networks, later formalised as the bullwhip effect (Forrester, 2013). These early contributions established supply chains as dynamic and interconnected systems; however, they remained primarily focused on operational coordination and did not fully address how such systems are structured and governed across organisational boundaries.

2.3.2 Economic Foundations and Globalisation

The structural configuration of supply chains is more directly explained through economic theories of the firm. Coase (1937) introduced the concept of transaction costs to explain why organisations internalise certain activities, a perspective later formalised by Williamson through Transaction Cost Economics (TCE). TCE posits that organisations select governance structures ranging from market based transactions to hierarchical control based on considerations of uncertainty, asset specificity and opportunism (Coase, 1937; Williamson, 1996). This framework provides a strong explanation for the expansion of outsourcing and global sourcing strategies, which enabled organisations to optimise cost by externalising production. However, TCE assumes relatively stable environments and prioritises efficiency, limiting its explanatory power under conditions of sustained disruption. Global Value Chain (GVC) theory extends this economic logic by examining how production is organised across geographically dispersed networks. Gereffi, Humphrey and Sturgeon (2005) identify

governance structures within GVCs ranging from market to hierarchical coordination determined by transaction complexity, codifiability and supplier capability. Unlike supply chain theory, which focuses on the management of flows, GVC theory provides a structural and governance oriented perspective, analysing how power and value are distributed across global production systems.

More recent GVC research highlights that these structures are not static. Global value chains account for a significant proportion of global trade but are increasingly subject to reconfiguration due to external shocks, including trade policy changes and geopolitical tensions (Gereffi, Posthuma and Rossi, 2021). Importantly, trade policy does not eliminate GVCs but reshapes them, driving organisations to adapt through supplier diversification, location shifts and network redesign (Gereffi, Li and Lee, 2021). Together, TCE and GVC theory explain the rise of globally dispersed, efficiency driven supply chains. However, both perspectives are rooted in assumptions of stability and do not fully account for sustained structural disruption.

2.3.3 Risk, Vulnerability and Disruption

The expansion of global supply chains introduced increasing complexity and interdependence, which in turn heightened exposure to risk. Supply Chain Risk Management (SCRM) literature demonstrates that efficiency driven strategies such as outsourcing and global sourcing increase vulnerability to disruption (Tang, 2006). A key contribution of this literature is the distinction between micro level risks, originating within the supply chain and macro level risks arising from external forces such as geopolitical instability (Ho et al, 2015). This distinction is particularly relevant in the context of this study, as it positions geopolitical forces as systemic risks that extend beyond organisation level control. Operational dynamics further amplify these vulnerabilities. The bullwhip effect demonstrates how demand variability can propagate upstream, increasing inefficiencies and instability across supply networks (Lee, Padmanabhan and Whang, 1997). Similarly, research on disruption severity highlights how network complexity, density and interdependence influence the scale and impact of disruptions. However, traditional SCRM frameworks conceptualise disruption as episodic and external, assuming that supply chains can return to equilibrium following disruption. This assumption is increasingly challenged in the context of persistent geopolitical uncertainty.

2.3.4 From Resilience to Viability

In response to growing disruption, research attention shifted toward resilience. Sheffi and Rice (2005) conceptualise resilience as the ability of supply chains to prepare for, respond to and recover from disruption, emphasising redundancy and flexibility as key mechanisms (Sheffi and Rice, 2005). While resilience provides important insights, it remains grounded in the assumption that supply chains can return to a pre-disruption state. This assumption is increasingly unrealistic in the context of ongoing geopolitical and economic instability.

More recent developments extend this perspective through the concept of viability. Ivanov and Dolgui (2020) argue that supply chains must be understood as systems capable of surviving and functioning under continuously changing conditions, rather than simply recovering from isolated disruptions (Ivanov and Dolgui 2020). This perspective shifts the focus from recovery to sustained adaptation, recognising that supply chains operate within interconnected and evolving systems. This transition aligns with Dynamic Capabilities theory, which explains how organisations adapt through sensing, seizing and reconfiguring resources and capabilities (Brusset and Teller, 2017). Within supply chains, this involves not only internal adaptation but also coordination across network partners, highlighting the importance of inter-organisational capabilities.

2.3.5 Relational and Governance Perspectives

While economic and structural theories explain how supply chains are configured, relational and governance perspectives could also be adopted to explain how they function in practice. Social capital theory emphasises the role of trust, shared norms and network connections in facilitating coordination and performance across supply chain relationships (Son, Kocabasoglu-Hillmer and Roden 2016). Similarly, embeddedness perspectives highlight how organisations are embedded within networks of relationships that influence information flows, resource access and adaptive capacity Lee, Roden and Son, 2025). These relational mechanisms become particularly important under conditions of disruption, where formal governance mechanisms may be insufficient. Governance theory further distinguishes between contractual and relational mechanisms. While contracts provide formal coordination, they are inherently incomplete due to bounded rationality (Williamson, 1996). Relational governance based on trust and reciprocity enables greater flexibility and responsiveness under uncertainty (Lee, Son and Roden, 2023). Power dynamics also influence supply chain behaviour. The use of coercive

power may undermine relationships, whereas reward based power can enhance cooperation, highlighting the importance of behavioural factors in supply chain adaptation.

2.3.6 Geopolitics and Structural Reconfiguration

The evolution of supply chain theory highlights a potential gap. While existing perspectives explain how supply chains are designed and how they respond to disruption, they do not fully account for the role of sustained and prolonged geopolitical forces in driving structural transformation. Geopolitical developments including trade restrictions, sanctions and industrial policy introduce persistent constraints that reshape supply chain design. These forces operate not as episodic risks but as structural determinants of how supply chains are configured. Institutional theory provides a framework for understanding this shift, emphasising how external pressures influence organisational behaviour and decision-making (Kauppi, 2013). Under such conditions, organisations must balance economic efficiency with political and regulatory considerations, leading to strategies such as regionalisation, diversification and supply chain redesign. This transition reflects a broader shift in supply chain theory from static, efficiency driven models toward dynamic, adaptive systems shaped by the interaction of economic, institutional and relational forces. The following section builds on this foundation to develop an integrated theoretical framework for understanding supply chain reconfiguration under geopolitical disruption.

2.4 Theoretical Background

2.4.1 Introduction

Building on the evolution of supply chain theory outlined in the preceding section, this research adopts a multi-theoretical perspective to explain how supply chains are structured, governed and reconfigured under conditions of geopolitical disruption. While existing literature provides robust explanations for efficiency driven globalisation and supply chain optimisation, it remains limited in its ability to explain sustained structural transformation driven by geopolitical forces. To address this limitation, this study integrates Transaction Cost Economics (TCE), Global Value Chain (GVC) theory, Dynamic Capabilities, Institutional Theory and Paradox Theory. These perspectives are not treated as discrete or competing lenses, but as complementary components of an integrated framework. Collectively, they enable

supply chains to be understood as economically structured, institutionally influenced, relationally embedded and dynamically adaptive systems.

2.4.2 Economic Theory

Transaction Cost Economics provides the foundational explanation for how supply chains are initially configured. Organisations determine the boundaries of the organisation and the allocation of activities based on transaction costs, uncertainty and asset specificity, selecting governance structures that minimise cost and mitigate opportunism (Coase, 1937), (Williamson, 1996). This framework explains the expansion of outsourcing and global sourcing strategies that underpin modern supply chains. However, TCE is inherently efficiency oriented and assumes relatively stable institutional environments. While it recognises bounded rationality and incomplete contracts, it does not fully explain how governance structures evolve under sustained external disruption. Global Value Chain theory extends this economic perspective by examining how production is organised across globally dispersed networks. Governance structures within GVCs are shaped by transaction complexity, codifiability and supplier capabilities, determining how power and coordination are distributed across actors (Gereffi, Humphrey and Sturgeon, 2005). Unlike supply chain theory, which focuses on operational coordination, GVC theory provides a structural lens, explaining how global production systems are configured and controlled. More recent GVC literature highlights that these structures are increasingly subject to reconfiguration in response to external pressures. Trade policy interventions and geopolitical tensions do not dismantle global value chains but reshape them, driving organisations to adjust sourcing strategies, relocate production and redesign networks (Gereffi, Lim and Lee, 2021). Together, TCE and GVC theory explain how supply chains are economically structured and globally distributed. However, both perspectives are limited in their ability to explain how supply chains adapt dynamically under sustained geopolitical pressure.

2.4.3 Dynamic Capabilities Theory

Dynamic Capabilities theory provides a critical extension by explaining how organisations respond to changing environments. Rather than focusing on static efficiency, this perspective emphasises the processes through which organisations sense changes, seize opportunities and reconfigure resources. Within a supply chain context, this translates into the ability to redesign supply networks, shift sourcing strategies and reallocate resources in response to disruption.

This aligns closely with the concept of supply chain viability, which emphasises the capacity of supply chains to survive and function under continuously changing conditions (Ivanov and Dolgui, 2020). This perspective represents a shift from optimisation to adaptation. However, while Dynamic Capabilities explains how organisations reconfigure supply chains, it does not fully explain why such reconfiguration occurs, particularly in relation to external geopolitical pressures.

While the resource based perspective explains how organisations derive advantage from valuable, rare and difficult to imitate assets, it is inherently static and does not fully account for how such advantages are renewed over time. Teece, Pisano and Shuen (1997) introduce the concept of dynamic capabilities to address this limitation, defining them as the firm's ability to integrate, build and reconfigure internal and external competences in response to changing environments. This perspective shifts the focus from asset ownership to the processes through which organisations adapt, innovate and respond to environmental change. Competitive advantage is not derived solely from resource allocations, but from the organisational and managerial processes including innovation and responsiveness that enable organisations to optimise and reconfigure these resources (Teece and Pisano, 1994).

However, while Dynamic Capabilities theory explains how organisations adapt, it remains primarily focused on internal organisational processes. It does not fully account for the external institutional pressures that drive such adaptation. In the context of this research, geopolitical forces act as a critical trigger for capability deployment and supply chain reconfiguration. As such, Dynamic Capabilities must be understood in conjunction with Institutional Theory to fully explain the observed structural transformation of supply chains.

2.4.4 Institutional Theory

Institutional Theory provides the necessary external dimension to explain why supply chains are reconfigured. organisations are influenced not only by economic efficiency but also by regulatory, political and societal pressures. These pressures act as coercive forces that shape organisational behaviour and strategic decision-making (Kauppi, 2013). In the context of this research, geopolitical developments including tariffs, sanctions, trade restrictions and industrial policy function as institutional pressures that directly influence supply chain design. These forces alter the economic logic underpinning sourcing decisions, requiring organisations to consider political alignment, regulatory compliance and strategic risk alongside cost efficiency.

This perspective is central to the thesis, as it reframes geopolitics from a contextual or exogenous risk factor to a structural driver of supply chain configuration. It explains why organisations are increasingly adopting strategies such as regionalisation, diversification and “friend-shoring” in response to sustained geopolitical uncertainty.

2.4.5 Paradox Theory

Paradox Theory provides an integrative lens for understanding the competing demands inherent in supply chain decision-making. Rather than viewing trade-offs as problems to be resolved, this perspective recognises them as persistent and interdependent tensions. In the context of this study, key tensions include efficiency versus resilience, globalisation versus localisation and cost optimisation versus risk mitigation. These tensions are intensified under geopolitical disruption, where organisations must balance economic and political considerations simultaneously (Kocabasoglu-Hillmer et al. 2023). This perspective aligns closely with the empirical findings of this research, which highlight that supply chain decisions are rarely linear or optimal, but instead involve ongoing negotiation between competing priorities.

2.4.6 Theoretical Framework

Drawing these perspectives together, this research conceptualises supply chains as multi-dimensional systems shaped by the interaction of economic, institutional, relational and adaptive forces. Transaction Cost Economics and Global Value Chain theory explain how supply chains are structured and governed. Dynamic Capabilities theory explains how they are reconfigured in response to change. Institutional Theory explains why such reconfiguration occurs, particularly under geopolitical pressure. Relational and governance perspectives explain how organisations coordinate and respond within networks, while Paradox Theory captures the tensions that characterise decision-making in this environment. Collectively, this framework positions geopolitics as a central driver of supply chain design rather than a peripheral source of risk and conceptualises supply chains as dynamic, politically influenced systems undergoing continuous structural reconfiguration.

2.4.7 Theoretical Contribution

This research contributes to supply chain theory by integrating multiple theoretical perspectives to explain the structural reconfiguration of supply chains under geopolitical pressure. While

existing literature has largely treated geopolitics as a source of risk, this study positions it as a primary driver of supply chain design. In doing so, it extends traditional efficiency based models by incorporating institutional and relational dimensions, providing a more comprehensive understanding of supply chains as adaptive systems operating within complex and evolving geopolitical environments. This integrated perspective advances the field by bridging the gap between supply chain management, global value chain theory and broader institutional and organisational theory.

2.5 Research Positioning and Contribution

2.5.1 Introduction

Building on the theory outlined in Section 2.4, this section positions the study within the existing literature and articulates its central contribution. While prior research provides important insights into supply chain design, governance and adaptation, it remains limited in explaining the sustained structural transformation observed under geopolitical disruption. This study addresses this gap by advancing a conceptual reframing of supply chains as dynamic systems continuously reconfigured in response to geopolitical forces.

2.5.2 Limitations of Existing Theory

Despite theoretical development, existing supply chain literature remains fragmented in its ability to explain contemporary supply chain behaviour, in particular prolonged exposure to geo-political risk. Economic and structural perspectives, including Transaction Cost Economics and Global Value Chain theory, provide strong explanations for how supply chains are initially configured, but remain largely static and efficiency driven. Risk and resilience literature advances understanding of disruption and vulnerability, yet continues to conceptualise disruption as episodic and assumes a return to equilibrium. More recent perspectives, such as Dynamic Capabilities and supply chain viability, introduce a focus on adaptation, but remain primarily firm-centric and underplay the role of external institutional pressures. Institutional theory, while effective in explaining the influence of geopolitical forces, offers limited insight into how organisations operationalise these pressures within complex supply chain networks. Similarly, relational and governance perspectives highlight the importance of inter-organisational relationships but are often considered in isolation from broader structural and institutional dynamics. Collectively, these limitations suggest that

existing theory does not fully capture the complexity of supply chains operating under persistent geopolitical pressure.

2.5.3 Conceptual Reframing of Supply Chains

In response to these limitations, this research proposes a reframing of supply chains. Rather than viewing supply chains as systems optimised for efficiency and periodically disrupted by external shocks, this study conceptualises them as dynamic systems undergoing continuous structural reconfiguration. Within this perspective, geopolitical developments are not treated as exogenous risks, but as embedded and persistent drivers of change. This shift moves beyond static equilibrium models toward an understanding of supply chains as evolving networks shaped by the interaction of economic, institutional and relational forces. This reframing aligns with the concept of supply chain viability, which emphasises the capacity of systems to adapt and function under continuously changing conditions. However, this study extends beyond viability by explicitly incorporating the role of geopolitical pressures and inter-organisational dynamics in shaping supply chain transformation.

2.5.4 Conceptual Perspective of this Study

Based on the synthesis of theoretical perspectives, this study advances an integrated conceptual view of supply chains as economically structured, institutionally influenced, relationally embedded and dynamically reconfigured systems operating under persistent tensions.

Within this framework:

- Transaction Cost Economics and Global Value Chain theory explain how supply chains are initially structured and governed, but remain largely static and efficiency-focused, offering limited insight into how these structures evolve under sustained geopolitical disruption.
- Dynamic Capabilities explain how organisations reconfigure supply chains in response to changing conditions; however, they underplay external geopolitical pressures and inter-organisational constraints that shape and limit this adaptation.

- Institutional Theory explains why such reconfiguration occurs, particularly under geopolitical pressure; however, it offers limited insight into how organisations operationalise these changes within complex supply chain networks.
- Paradox Theory explains the tensions inherent in balancing competing objectives such as efficiency and resilience; however, it provides limited guidance on how these tensions are practically managed over time.

Together, these perspectives can provide a comprehensive explanation of supply chain behaviour, capturing both structural and behavioural dimensions while highlighting the gaps that this research addresses.

2.5.5 Research Contribution

This study contributes to supply chain theory by integrating economic, institutional and behavioural perspectives to explain the structural reconfiguration of supply chains under geopolitical pressure. Specifically, it advances existing literature in three ways. First, it extends traditional efficiency driven models by demonstrating that supply chains are not static systems but are continuously reshaped by external geopolitical forces. Second, it positions geopolitics as a central driver of supply chain design, rather than a peripheral source of risk. Third, it develops an integrated framework that explains not only how supply chains are structured and adapted, but also why these changes occur and how they are enacted within inter-organisational networks.

In doing so, the study provides a more comprehensive and realistic understanding of contemporary supply chains as dynamic, politically influenced systems operating under conditions of persistent uncertainty. The theoretical framework developed in this chapter provides the foundation for the empirical analysis that follows. It guides the interpretation of findings by linking theoretical perspectives to observed supply chain behaviours, enabling a deeper understanding of how organisations respond to geopolitical disruption in practice.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has established the conceptual foundations of the study by tracing the evolution of supply chain theory and developing an integrated theoretical framework for understanding supply chain behaviour under geopolitical disruption. It highlights the limitations of traditional efficiency driven perspectives, which assume stability and treat disruption as episodic and contrasts these with more recent approaches that emphasise adaptation and system-wide

viability. By integrating Transaction Cost Economics, Global Value Chain theory, Dynamic Capabilities, Institutional Theory and relational perspectives, the chapter advances a multi-theoretical view of supply chains as economically structured, institutionally influenced and relationally embedded systems. A key contribution is the reframing of geopolitics as a structural driver of supply chain design, rather than a peripheral source of risk, reflecting a shift from optimisation toward ongoing reconfiguration. The resulting conceptual framework provides a coherent lens for analysing how organisations respond to sustained geopolitical pressures. It establishes a clear theoretical grounding and identifies a gap in existing literature, forming the foundation for the empirical analysis that follows.

3. Literature Review Chapter

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to critically examine the academic literature addressing the evolving nature of globalisation, the influence of geo-political factors and the resulting implications for global supply chains. Global supply networks, once viewed as stable and cost-efficient, are now being reshaped by political disruption, economic realignment and shifting societal expectations. To investigate these dynamics systematically, a structured systematic literature review was conducted following the application of a CIMO framework, enabling a rigorous, transparent and replicable approach to identifying and analysing relevant literature.

This review synthesises contributions spanning three decades, from the acceleration of globalisation in the late twentieth century to the disruptions of the 2020s, including Brexit, the US–China trade war, COVID-19, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the resurgence of protectionist policies worldwide. Fourteen key themes emerged, ranging from Global Value Chains (GVCs), globalisation and reverse globalisation and supply chain redesign, to emergent factors such as populism, nationalism and protectionism. The analysis highlights not only well established ideas but also areas where the academic literature remains fragmented or underdeveloped, revealing substantive theoretical gaps and a limited body of primary research.

This chapter has two primary objectives: first, to provide a comprehensive synthesis of current knowledge on the intersection of geopolitics and global supply chains; and second, to establish a robust foundation for the qualitative research study presented later in this thesis. By situating the empirical analysis within the context of existing academic literature, this review ensures that the subsequent research is both theoretically informed and practically relevant.

3.2 Systematic Literature Review Process

The first phase of this study comprised a systematic literature review (SLR) designed to establish a structured and transparent foundation for understanding the intersection between geo-political and global supply chain dynamics. A systematic review was considered essential

due to the fragmented and interdisciplinary nature of the literature in this emerging field. The process was undertaken with the objective of identifying, evaluating, synthesising existing evidence in order to (1) define the scope of the research, (2) inform the development of the empirical phase, (3) position the study within the broader academic discourse.

Consistent with the guidance of Tranfield, Denyer and Smart (2003) and the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses for Protocols (PRISMA - P) framework (Moher et al., 2015), the review followed a transparent and replicable methodology. The review process was structured around five key phases adapted from Wong et al. (2012):

- Question formulation and planning,
- Locating studies,
- Screening and evaluation,
- Analysis and synthesis,
- Results reporting.

Each phase was rigorously documented to ensure methodological integrity and to minimise bias throughout the process.

3.2.1 PRISMA Alignment and Reporting Standards

This systematic literature review was conducted in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses for Protocols (PRISMA-P) framework (Moher et al., 2015), adapted appropriately for management and supply chain research. The PRISMA approach was selected to enhance methodological transparency, replicability, rigour and consistency throughout the review process. While PRISMA originated within medical and health sciences research, its structured and transparent reporting framework has increasingly been adopted across management, operations and interdisciplinary research domains where complex and fragmented bodies of literature require systematic synthesis. The PRISMA checklist can be found in Appendix B.

The review process followed the four core PRISMA principles of identification, screening, eligibility and inclusion. During the identification stage, records were retrieved through structured database searches conducted across Scopus, Emerald Insight and Business Source Complete (EBSCO), selected due to their breadth of coverage and relevance to supply chain

and international business research. Additional studies were identified through backward and forward citation tracking (snowballing), consistent with the recommendations of Webster and Watson (2002), to ensure that influential and foundational studies not captured through keyword searches were included within the review process.

Following identification, all retrieved records were exported into Excel to facilitate systematic organisation and version control. Duplicate records were identified and removed prior to screening. The screening phase involved a manual review of titles and abstracts against predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria developed during the protocol design stage. These criteria were established prior to commencing the review in order to minimise selection bias and ensure consistency throughout the screening process.

The eligibility stage involved detailed full-text review of papers deemed potentially relevant during abstract screening. Studies were evaluated based on their substantive relevance to the research questions, specifically their contribution to understanding the relationship between geopolitical dynamics and global supply chain design, configuration, governance or restructuring. While the review was anchored within the supply chain management discipline, interdisciplinary contributions from international business, political economy, economic geography and trade policy were included where they provided direct relevance to the research objectives. Consequently, inclusion was determined based on conceptual and empirical relevance to the phenomenon under investigation rather than solely on disciplinary classification. This interdisciplinary inclusion approach reflects the inherently cross-disciplinary nature of geopolitical supply chain disruption, where trade policy, political economy, international business and institutional dynamics interact directly with supply chain configuration and governance decisions

A structured quality appraisal process was applied during full-text evaluation to assess both methodological rigour and relevance to the research objectives. Papers were assessed using a relevance based appraisal framework informed by the CIMO logic underpinning the study. Studies were categorised according to their contribution to understanding the contextual, mechanistic and outcome dimensions of geopolitical influence on supply chain structures. This process enabled differentiation between high, medium and lower relevance studies while maintaining transparency and consistency in paper selection.

In recognition of the evolving and interdisciplinary nature of the subject area, the review also incorporated selected grey literature, including industry reports, policy publications and practitioner materials. The review of grey literature was considered necessary due to the rapidly developing nature of geopolitical disruption and global trade policy, where significant contemporary developments may not yet be fully reflected within peer-reviewed academic publications. However, grey literature findings were documented and considered separately from the core peer-reviewed academic analysis in order to preserve methodological transparency and maintain academic rigour.

Consistent with PRISMA reporting standards, the review process was fully documented through a PRISMA flow diagram illustrating the number of records identified, screened, excluded and included at each stage of the review process. The use of predefined protocols, transparent reporting procedures and systematic appraisal mechanisms contributed to reducing bias and enhancing the credibility, traceability and reproducibility of the review findings.

3.2.2 Phase I – Question Formulation and Planning

The review initially began with a broad scan of academic and industry sources (e.g., International Journal of Production Economics, Harvard Business Review, DHL Global Connectedness Index) to clarify gaps at the intersection of geopolitics and supply chains. This pre-assessment informed the planning process and the systematic literature review by providing a solid and reputable base developing the knowledge required to build out the literature review study. The planning stage was central to defining the focus and boundaries of the review. Drawing upon CIMO logic (Context–Intervention–Mechanism–Outcome) as proposed by Denyer and Tranfield (2009), the researcher developed a structured framework to refine the scope and construct the central research questions. The CIMO framework was selected for its practical utility in structuring applied management research and its successful use in comparable studies within supply chain management (Colicchia and Strozzi, 2012; Pilbeam et al., 2012).

Applying CIMO logic enabled the researcher to conceptualise the phenomenon as follows:

- Context (C): Global supply chains and international trade networks
- Intervention (I): Geo-political strategies (e.g., tariffs, protectionism, trade policy shifts)

- Mechanism (M): Organisational responses and strategic adaptations within supply chains
- Outcome (O): Redesign or reconfiguration of supply networks

This structured logic informed the research statements that guided the review:

Within global supply chains (C), reductions in global trade and reverse globalisation (I), influenced by geo-political strategies (M), are resulting in the restructuring of supply networks (O).

A redesign of global supply chains (O) is underway as geo-political influences (M) reduce global trade (I).

These propositions provided a clear focus for identifying relevant literature and developing the review protocol. The objectives of the SLR were therefore twofold:

- To understand how and to what extent, geo-political strategies are affecting global trade.
- To examine how global supply chains are responding to these shifts in global trade patterns.

3.2.3 Phase II – Locating Studies

A PRISMA-P compliant protocol (Moher et al., 2015), available in Appendix C, set the search parameters. The databases selected were Scopus, Emerald and Business Source Complete and were chosen for breadth and relevance to supply chain theory. Searches were originally limited to 2005–2023 (but later extended to 2025) and English language to capture post-financial crisis shifts through recent geopolitical disruptions. Search strings were combined from CIMO refined terms.

(global supply chain OR supply network) AND (globali* OR reverse globali*)
 AND (geo-economics OR geo-politics OR global trade)
 AND (design OR redesign OR configuration OR reconfiguration)

Following the definition of the research questions and parameters, a systematic search was undertaken across multiple academic databases to ensure comprehensive coverage. The databases selected were Scopus, Emerald Insight, Business Source Complete (EBSCO), chosen for their extensive indexing of peer, reviewed journals and established use within the field of supply chain management research.

Search strings were constructed based on the refined CIMO framework, using Boolean operators to capture variations of key terms such as global supply chain, reverse globalisation, geo-politics, global trade, design, configuration, reconfiguration. Searches were limited to English, language publications between 2005 and 2025, a timeframe selected to capture developments following the 2008 global financial crisis, widely considered a turning point in global trade dynamics. In line with best practice in systematic review methodology, an initial scoping search was undertaken using the proposed search terms on literature published prior to 2005. The absence of relevant results supported the selection of 2005 as a justified and transparent starting point for the review period.

To strengthen validity, both backward and forward citation reviews were performed, as recommended by Webster and Watson (2002). This ensured that seminal papers were identified even if they did not appear in the initial keyword search results. All retrieved publications were recorded and managed using Mendeley referencing software, enabling consistent documentation and version control.

3.2.4 Phase III – Screening and Evaluation

After removing 13 duplicates, 4,843 papers were screened at title/abstract level. 4,599 were excluded as out of scope or low relevance, leaving 244 full texts for detailed review. A second researcher cross-checked inclusion/exclusion decisions. Quality appraisal balanced external validity (literary quality) and internal validity (methodological rigor) using a custom CIMO-grounded scale. 48 studies met all criteria for inclusion. Grey literature was logged separately to preserve transparency without diluting peer-review rigor. Backward and forward citation chasing supplemented database queries. All records were exported to Excel with 4,768 initial results and 88 additional items from snowballing.

The screening and evaluation process involved several stages to ensure the relevance and quality of included studies. Initial results were exported into Excel and duplicates were removed. Titles and abstracts were then screened manually against predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria required that papers directly addressed the relationship between global trade and supply chain design, configuration, governance or management, with reference to geopolitical, geo-economic or institutional influences. While the review was anchored within the supply chain management discipline, interdisciplinary studies from international business, political economy, economic geography, international trade and public policy were included where they contributed directly to understanding the geopolitical drivers shaping global supply chain structures and strategic reconfiguration. The unit of inclusion was therefore not disciplinary origin, but substantive relevance to the research question and contribution to understanding geopolitical influence on global supply networks. Exclusion criteria eliminated papers outside the supply chain management discipline, those unrelated to global trade, or those focusing solely on internal operations without external geopolitical context. Recognising that the topic is emergent and interdisciplinary, the search was intentionally inclusive of both peer, reviewed and grey literature, incorporating industry and policy publications to capture evolving practical insights (Saunders et al., 2009).

Table 3.1 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria Applied During the Systematic Literature Review

Criteria Category	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria	Rationale
Subject Relevance	Studies addressing global supply chains, global value chains, international trade, supply chain design, redesign, configuration or governance	Studies unrelated to supply chain structures, international trade or global network configuration	Ensured direct alignment with the research objectives and CIMO framework
Geopolitical Relevance	Studies examining geopolitical, geo-economic,	Studies lacking substantive discussion of	Maintained focus on geopolitical disruption as the

	institutional, regulatory or trade-policy influences on supply chains	geopolitical, geo-economic or external trade influences	central phenomenon under investigation
Disciplinary Scope	Supply chain management, international business, political economy, economic geography, trade policy and related interdisciplinary studies where directly relevant to the research questions	Studies with no substantive relevance to global trade restructuring or supply network implications	Recognised the inherently interdisciplinary nature of geopolitical supply chain disruption
Unit of Analysis	Studies examining organisations, industries, sectors, global value chains, national trade systems or international production networks	Studies focused solely on internal operational processes without external/global context	Ensured relevance to multi level supply chain restructuring
Publication Type	Peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, industry reports, policy papers and selected grey literature	Opinion pieces, news articles and non-analytical publications lacking methodological or conceptual contribution	Allowed inclusion of emerging contemporary developments while preserving analytical rigour

Language	English language publications	Non-English publications	Ensured consistency and feasibility of analysis
Time Period	Publications between 2005–2023	Publications prior to 2005	Captured developments following the 2008 financial crisis and subsequent geopolitical shifts
Methodological Scope	Qualitative, quantitative, conceptual, empirical and review based studies	Publications lacking sufficient methodological or conceptual detail	Reflected the fragmented and emerging nature of the field
Quality and Relevance Appraisal	Studies demonstrating conceptual, theoretical or empirical contribution to the research questions	Studies assessed as low relevance or lacking substantive contribution to the phenomenon under investigation	Supported transparent and systematic study selection

The inclusion and exclusion criteria listed in Table 3.1 were intentionally designed to balance methodological rigour with sufficient openness to capture the interdisciplinary and evolving nature of geopolitical supply chain research. Rather than restricting inclusion solely to papers originating within the supply chain management discipline, studies were assessed based on their substantive relevance to the research questions and their contribution to understanding how geopolitical forces influence global supply chain structures, governance and redesign decisions. This approach ensured that important contributions from adjacent disciplines such as international business, political economy and economic geography were appropriately incorporated within the review. To minimise researcher bias, the final list of selected papers

was reviewed by a second academic researcher. Differences in opinion were discussed and resolved to reach a consensus.

The quality appraisal process, outlined in Table 3.2 below, was designed to assess both methodological rigour and substantive relevance to the research objectives. Consistent with the interdisciplinary nature of the study, papers were not evaluated solely on disciplinary origin or methodological approach, but on their contribution to understanding the relationship between geopolitical dynamics and global supply chain structures. Studies were reviewed using the criteria outlined above and were subsequently categorised as high, medium or lower relevance based on their overall contribution to the research questions. No study was excluded solely on the basis of methodological orientation, as the emerging and fragmented nature of the field required the inclusion of conceptual, empirical, qualitative and quantitative contributions. However, the quality appraisal process informed the weighting of studies during the synthesis stage, with higher relevance and methodologically robust studies contributing more significantly to the analytical interpretation and conceptual development of the review findings. This process enhanced transparency, consistency and methodological rigour throughout the screening and evaluation stages of the systematic literature review.

Table 3.2 Quality Appraisal Criteria Applied During Study Selection

Criteria	Assessment Focus	Evaluation Considerations
Relevance to Research Question	Alignment with the core research objectives	Extent to which the study addressed geopolitical or geo-economic influence on global supply chains
Supply Chain Relevance	Connection to supply chain design, configuration, governance or restructuring	Explicit discussion of GVCs, supply network redesign, sourcing, trade or operational implications
Geopolitical Relevance	Treatment of geopolitical, geo-economic or institutional dynamics	Discussion of tariffs, protectionism, nationalism, trade policy, geopolitical risk or deglobalisation

Methodological Clarity	Transparency and robustness of the research design	Clarity of methodology, data sources, analytical approach and research limitations
Empirical Contribution	Strength and use of evidence	Use of primary data, case studies, modelling, quantitative evidence or practitioner insights
Theoretical Contribution	Conceptual or theoretical insight	Contribution to theory development, conceptual framing or interdisciplinary understanding
Contemporary Relevance	Relevance to evolving global trade dynamics	Applicability to recent geopolitical and supply chain developments
Interdisciplinary Contribution	Contribution from adjacent disciplines relevant to the study	Insights from international business, political economy, economic geography or trade policy

3.2.5 Phase IV – Analysis and Synthesis

Analysis and synthesis were undertaken using a concept, centric approach, as recommended by Webster and Watson (2002), to allow findings to be categorised according to key concepts rather than by author or chronology. This approach was particularly suited to an emerging research field where themes are diverse and not yet theoretically consolidated. Thematic analysis provides a flexible yet systematic method for identifying, analysing and interpreting patterns of meaning across qualitative data. An inductive coding process was employed, allowing themes to emerge from the data rather than being imposed. This approach recognises the active role of the researcher in theme development and interpretation, aligning with the study's interpretivist and phenomenological foundations.

Each paper was coded under both descriptive and thematic categories. Descriptive coding captured metadata such as author, year, journal, method. Thematic coding identified recurring concepts aligned to the CIMO framework and any emergent themes identified during analysis.

The main thematic categories included:

- Global Supply Chain / Global Value Chain
- Globalisation / Reverse Globalisation
- Geo-politics
- Supply Chain Design / Redesign / Configuration
- International Trade,
- Tariffs
- Protectionism
- Populism
- Risk

Each study was assigned a relevance rating (high, medium, or low) based on the extent to which it directly addressed the research questions. Cross, comparison of results enabled the identification of both dominant and under, researched areas, highlighting the scarcity of empirical work connecting geopolitical forces to supply chain design decisions. The detailed study coding framework, relevance classifications and quality appraisal records applied during the systematic literature review are provided in Appendix D,

The process followed Whitemore and Knafl's (2005) five, step method for qualitative data analysis, data reduction, data display, comparison, conclusion drawing, verification, ensuring systematic handling of the data. Conceptual matrices were developed to display findings across themes, enabling the researcher to identify trends, contradictions, theoretical gaps. Data from included studies were coded under descriptive categories (relevance, unit of analysis, methods, journal, year, author). Bibliometric values (validated against the Excel counts) supported descriptive trends.

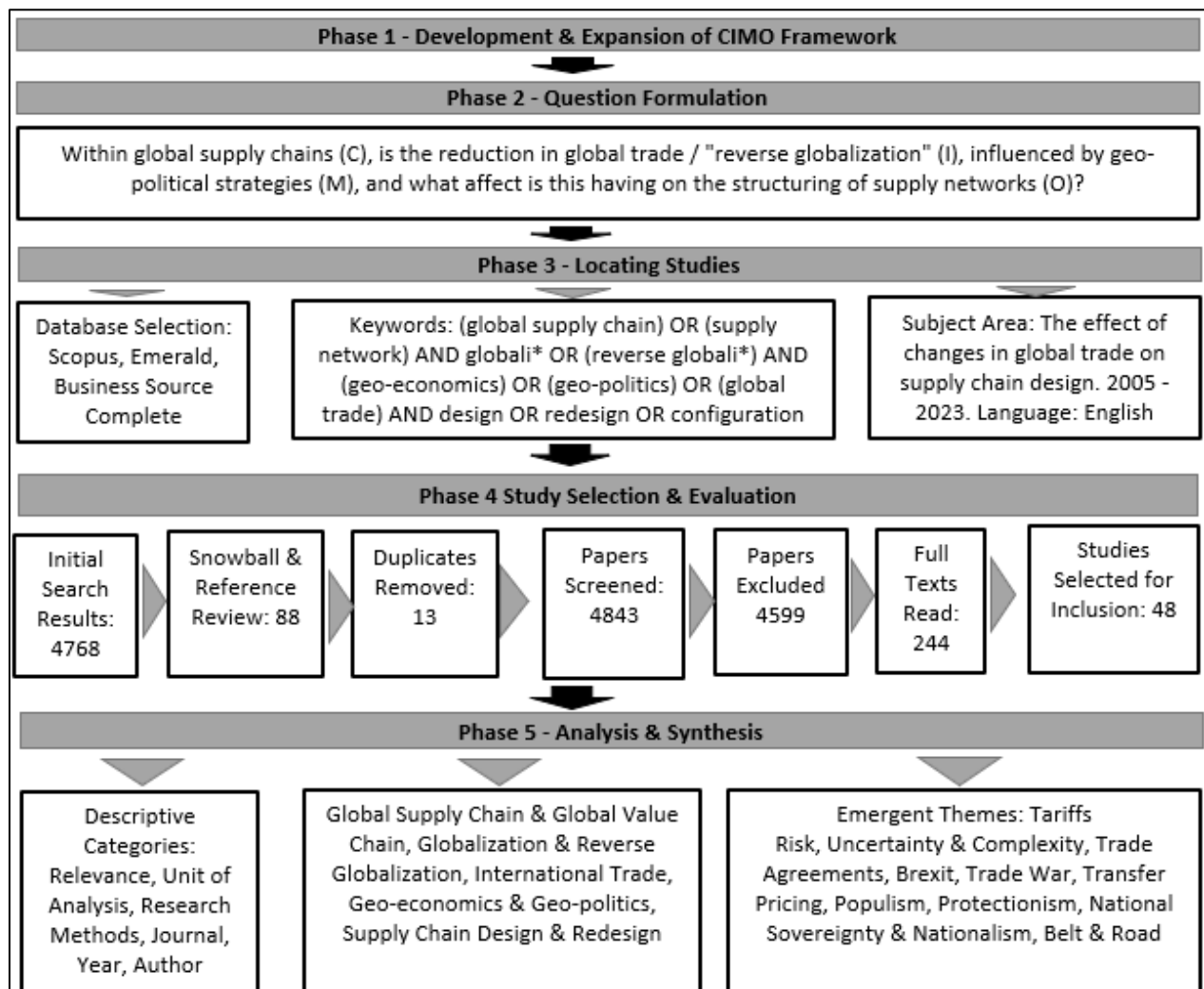
The thematic synthesis grouped findings under:

Core themes: Global Supply Chain and Value Chain, Globalisation and Reverse Globalisation, International Trade, Geo-politics, Supply-Chain Design and Redesign.

Emergent themes: Tariffs, Risk/Uncertainty/Complexity, Trade Agreements, Brexit, Trade War, Transfer Pricing, Populism, Protectionism, Nationalism, Belt and Road.

PRISMA flow diagrams, tables and figures were used to present results, highlight gaps and link themes back to the overarching research questions.

Fig 3.1 Systematic Literature Review



3.2.6 Phase V – Results Reporting

Findings were synthesised into a structured narrative that integrated both descriptive and thematic analyses. This phase produced a comprehensive overview of how geopolitics has been represented in the literature on global supply chains, while also identifying significant limitations within the current body of research.

Three major conclusions emerged:

- The literature evidences increasing recognition of geopolitical influences on supply chain decisions, but with limited empirical grounding.
- The field remains conceptually fragmented, with many studies addressing elements of the problem (e.g., trade policy, risk or localisation) but rarely integrating them into a cohesive framework.
- There is a clear need for primary, practitioner, based research to provide experiential insight and validate the theoretical assumptions emerging from the academic discourse.

These conclusions directly informed the design of the empirical phase of this study, the qualitative interviews, which aimed to explore these phenomena through the lived experiences of global supply chain practitioners. The systematic literature review established a structured foundation for the research, combining methodological rigour with practical orientation. Guided by CIMO logic and implemented through a PRISMA, aligned protocol, the review ensured transparency, replicability, objectivity. It not only mapped the existing body of knowledge but also revealed critical gaps that shaped the subsequent qualitative phase, ensuring a coherent transition from theoretical synthesis to experiential exploration.

3.3 Systematic Literature Review Findings

This section presents the findings of the systematic literature review, analyses the dominant themes, publication trends and substantive insights emerging from the analysed studies. The discussion is organised thematically, reflecting how the academic focus has evolved across core areas of global supply chain research in response to geopolitical disruption. A full table of all papers included in the systematic review can be found in Appendix E.

Table 3.3 presents the thematic analysis of the systematic literature review and illustrates the evolution and frequency of key themes across the review period from 2005 to 2023. While each theme is explored and critically discussed individually within the subsequent sections of this chapter, the table provides a consolidated longitudinal view of how academic attention toward specific geopolitical and supply chain concepts evolved over time. In particular, the table highlights the increasing prominence of themes such as geo-politics, protectionism,

nationalism, risk and reverse globalisation following major geopolitical disruptions, including trade tensions and broader shifts in global supply chain strategy. This thematic mapping supports the analytical synthesis of the literature by demonstrating both the emergence and intensification of research focus across the review period.

Table 3.3 Thematic Trends in the Literature

Global Value Chain Publication Frequency																							
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total			
High	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	1	8			
Med	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	3	0	4	3	0	1	2	0	2	0	19			
Low	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	10			
Supply Chain Design Publication Frequency																							
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total			
High	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	7			
Med	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	0	3	0	0	1	2	0	2	0	13			
Low	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	7			
Geo-politics Publication Frequency																							
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total			
High	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	2	0	0	1	7			
Med	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	0	3	3	2	2	2	0	0	0	17			
Low	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	4			
Protectionism / Nationalism Publication Frequency																							
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total			
High	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	3			
Med	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	6			
Low	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Populism Publication Frequency																							
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total			
High	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2			
Med	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2			
Low	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1			
Globalisation & Reverse Globalisation																							
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total			
High	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	5			
Med	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	8			
Low	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2			
Reverse Globalisation Publication Frequency																							
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total			
High	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	3			
Med	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	3	0	6			
Low	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Risk and Uncertainty Publication Frequency																							
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total			
High	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1			
Med	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	2	2	0	1	0	10			
Low	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1			

3.3.1 Global Supply Chain / Global Value Chain

In this study, the terms Global Value Chain (GVC) and global supply chain are used interchangeably. Both refer to the network of activities that create value across multiple actors, manufacturers, intermediaries, distributors and customers, within a globally connected supply system. This theme is broad and overlaps with other sections. While the terms “supply chain” and “global value chain” are often used interchangeably in practice, they represent distinct but

complementary theoretical perspectives. Supply chain theory is primarily concerned with the management of flows materials, information and finances across networks of organisations, with a focus on efficiency, coordination and performance. In contrast, Global Value Chain (GVC) theory adopts a broader structural and institutional perspective, examining how production is organised and governed across geographically dispersed networks and how power and value are distributed among actors. In this study, these perspectives are not treated as synonymous but as analytically complementary. GVC theory is used to explain the structural configuration of global production systems, including governance and power dynamics, while supply chain theory provides insight into the operational mechanisms through which organisations manage, coordinate and reconfigure these networks. This distinction is particularly important in the context of geopolitical disruption, where structural shifts in global value chains necessitate corresponding changes in supply chain management practices.

GVC emerged as the most frequent theme in the SLR dataset. High relevance papers increased notably in 2019–2020, reflecting growing academic focus on globalisation shifts, geopolitics, tariffs, Brexit, populism and protectionism. About 57% of papers address GVC configuration, particularly specialisation, location strategy and regional or market specific approaches. Supply chains have evolved from simple host–home models to complex, strategically aligned networks (Beugelsdijk, Pedersen and Petersen, 2009). Activities are increasingly segmented and located for maximum advantage (Porter, 1985). Alvstam, Ivarsson and Peterson (2019) argue that modern value chains are built on specialisation and geographical diversification, moving away from mass production. Yet others, Yang (2014), Sturgeon et al. (2009), Corbett (2008), observe restructuring towards proximity to end markets. Sturgeon et al. (2009) highlight automotive industry regional structures, balancing specialised components with local assembly. Alvstam et al. (2019) also describe dispersed GVCs as “mini-replicas” with high coordination costs and low economies of scale. Global value chains have become increasingly complex and geographically fragmented, creating deeper interdependencies between organisations, suppliers and national economies (Seppälä, Kenney and Ali-Yrkkö, 2014).

Around 20% of papers note regionalisation trends, shifting networks to more devolved footprints (Bremmer, 2014; Gereffi, 2014; Yang, 2014). Ellram, Tate and Peterson (2013) find location choices shaped by trade policies, subsidies, risk and total opportunity, not cost alone. Wang, Gao and Mukhopadhyay (2016) emphasise balancing production and shipping costs, with tax benefits as a factor. MacCarthy et al. (2016) add cultural and language linkages as

considerations. Alvstam et al. (2019) use Zhejiang Geely Holding's acquisitions to illustrate how ownership shifts from advanced to emerging economies reshape global footprints, influenced more by home-country support than host policies. Roughly 32% of papers centre on a single country. Studies on China dominate: Yang (2014) links contract manufacturing to inland relocation and regional production; Sun and Grimes (2016) show China's ICT industry as a critical assembler but limited in innovation, constrained by foreign IP. Pickles and Smith (2011) document textile delocalisation post-MFA, noting UK decline but eastern/central Europe resilience through full-service provision. Gereffi (2014) and Hameri and Hintsa (2009) foresee emerging economies, especially China, gaining influence as both producers and consumers.

Cost considerations remain central but insufficient alone. Pickles and Smith (2011) stress proximity to markets and holistic solutions. MacCarthy et al. (2016) show a shift from low-cost, high-volume models to high-value, customisable products enabled by innovation. Sturgeon et al. (2009) find similar trends across industries. Corbett (2008) highlights widespread low-cost country sourcing by 2000 and the need for adaptive infrastructure. Hameri and Hintsa (2009) note expanding geographic sourcing scopes, while MacCarthy et al. (2016) advocate considering sustainability, risk and flexibility alongside price. Gereffi (2014) predicts governance shifts as power moves from global buyers to domestic producers in emerging economies. Yang (2014) and Alvstam et al. (2019) echo this, emphasising the growing strength of emerging-market multinationals. Hameri and Hintsa (2009) link rising transparency demands to public concerns over environment, security and ethics. Sturgeon and Gereffi (2009) call for better metrics to locate value creation and profit flows. Beugelsdijk et al. (2009) and Corbett (2008) suggest inter- and intra-firm sales analysis, while Hendry et al. (2018) stress measurement's role in resilience (e.g., Brexit).

Simangunsong, Hendry and Stevenson (2011) cite societal issues as supply chain uncertainties. Gereffi (2014) links GVC evolution to economic upgrading in emerging economies. Customs compliance appears in ~30% of papers as a driver of change (Hameri and Hintsa, 2009), with Miled and Fiore (2018) highlighting Authorised Economic Operators' critical role. Paperless transactions, integrated reporting and stronger security standards were anticipated (Hameri and Hintsa, 2009). Technology acts both as an enabler and a risk. MacCarthy et al. (2016) show its direct and indirect impacts across industries. Alvstam et al. (2019) link technological advances to self-driving cars and M&A integration. Buckley and Hashai (2020) warn that IP restrictions

threaten competitive advantage. Simangunsong et al. (2012) flag IT vulnerabilities, viruses, breaches, misuse, as GVC risks. Hameri and Hintsa (2009) identify the internet and e-commerce as the most significant positive trade drivers.

Hameri and Hintsa (2009) and Gereffi (2011) predict increased skills requirements and service provider roles. Hendry et al. (2019), Gereffi (2014) and Yang (2014) emphasise collaboration among suppliers, customers and intermediaries. Miled and Fiore (2014) extend this to customs operators. Consolidation in logistics is expected (Hameri and Hintsa, 2009), alongside greater centralisation of supply chain management for oversight. Alvstam et al. (2019) note emerging-economy MNCs gain advantage through home-country political support. Sturgeon et al. (2019) show political pressure shapes regional automotive GVCs. Bremmer (2014) describes guarded globalisation, with developing nations protecting local interests. Buckley and Hashai (2020) and Roscoe et al. (2020) highlight protectionism's effects on IP transfer, border delays and added costs. Over half of the papers (52%) link GVC changes to globalisation shifts. While Hameri and Hintsa (2009) once anticipated increasing globalisation, more recent studies (e.g., Bremmer 2014; Meyer 2017; Witt 2019;) observe deglobalisation and regionalism, reducing efficiency and reshaping networks. Gereffi (2014) points to emerging economies as both markets and power centres, while Yang (2014) underscores GVC perspectives for analysing fragmented global production.

The literature depicts a dynamic GVC landscape: networks are reconfiguring around specialisation, proximity, or regional strategies; sourcing is evolving beyond cost to include risk, sustainability and flexibility; governance and measurement are critical for transparency and resilience; technology both drives innovation and exposes IP/security risks; political pressures and shifting globalisation trends are reshaping opportunities and constraints. These factors collectively set the context for this study's focus on supply chain redesign and geopolitical influences.

3.3.2 Supply Chain Design / Redesign / Configuration

Building on the previous discussion of global supply chains, this section reviews literature on the mechanics of supply chain design and redesign. Sharifi, Ismail and Reid (2006) define supply chains as collaborative connections delivering value to customers, requiring some level of planning whether pre-designed or emergent. Hasani, Zegordi and Nikbakhsh (2015) note

increasing complexity due to globalisation and offshoring. Hammami and Frein (2014) distinguish design (creating a network) from redesign (reorganising an existing one). Here, both terms refer to structuring networks to meet objectives. While supply chain design research spans 2005–2025, 40% of papers appeared in 2019–2025 and 86% of the most relevant studies fall in this period, suggesting rising interest in redesign amid recent geopolitical and economic shifts. The literature consistently highlights interdependence within supply networks. Dong and Kouvelis (2020) identify interconnectedness as a modelling challenge and future research opportunity. Kobrin (2017) warns that events such as Brexit and populism threaten these interdependencies. Chae et al. (2017) note that tariff changes can benefit operations in one market while negatively affecting upstream inputs or downstream processes elsewhere.

Many studies propose models or simulations for testing redesign hypotheses. Dong and Kouvelis (2020) criticise single-firm microeconomic models, advocating operational network models that account for tariffs, transshipment costs and multi-market operations. They suggest flexibility in product offerings and competitive positioning to address tariff uncertainty. MacCarthy et al. (2016) recommend either market-led or cost-led approaches, often aligned with segmentation strategy. Hasani, Zegordi and Nikbakhsh (2015) develop an optimisation model for a medical device supply chain considering transfer pricing, exchange rates, taxes and tariffs, while Nakamura et al. (2019) provide a comprehensive review of network design models (1989–2020) and demonstrate restructuring in response to Brexit scenarios.

Overall, models must be tailored to specific network conditions; no universal approach exists.

Approximately 44% of papers examine design/redesign as a response to external shocks. Hammami and Frein (2014) stress that redesign decisions differ because a network already exists, often triggered by new markets, mergers, or offshoring. Chae et al. (2019) link tariff changes to both tactical cost impacts and strategic redesign needs, proposing severity and timing assessments to guide responses. Dong and Kouvelis (2020) find US Section 232/301 tariffs sometimes prompted organisation relocations, undermining protectionist aims and identify tariff uncertainty and switching costs as potential delays in redesign. Gulotty and Li (2020) argue that implementation delays can benefit organisations by allowing planning. Nakamura et al. (2019) show Brexit scenarios typically required network restructuring to avoid tariffs, while UK entry into the TPP offered favourable outcomes. Hendry et al. (2019) recommend horizontal and vertical collaboration for geopolitical change management and Roscoe et al. (2020) note organisation size influences responses, with multinationals planning

worst-case scenarios earlier. Supply chain configuration decisions are increasingly influenced by the need to balance cost efficiency with resilience and disruption mitigation considerations (Hammami and Frein, 2014).

Politics plays a critical role, Gereffi (2014) links political agendas to export-led development strategies; Witt (2019) highlights political stability as essential to global trade; and Thüerer (2020) cites China's Belt and Road initiative as a catalyst for both new networks and redesigned routes. Buckley and Hashai (2019) warn that borders and IP restrictions can constrain network reorganisation, while Shapovalova (2016) underscores the need for integrated logistics technologies in expanded trade contexts. According to Basu and Ray (2022), geopolitical tensions, intellectual property concerns and post-pandemic supply chain vulnerabilities have accelerated organisational consideration of regional diversification and alternative sourcing geographies across Asia.

Across the literature, supply chain redesign increasingly emerges as a response not only to operational disruption, but to sustained geopolitical uncertainty and institutional volatility. Earlier resilience literature primarily focused on recovery from temporary disruption events, whereas more recent research conceptualises resilience as an ongoing strategic capability embedded within long-term supply chain design. This reflects a broader transition from efficiency-dominated globalisation models toward risk-adjusted and geopolitically informed supply chain strategies, where continuity, political exposure and strategic autonomy become increasingly important determinants of organisational decision-making.

Cost remains central, but the literature urges broader evaluation. Chae et al. (2017) advocate total cost of ownership, warning that reacting to tariff uncertainty can increase complexity. Dong and Kouvelis (2020) propose cost thresholds to determine optimal configurations but acknowledge unmodelled factors like finished goods pricing. Beugelsdijk et al. (2009) use inter- and intra-firm sales to analyse cross-border activity, though their stable sample limits generalisability. Ellram, Tate and Peterson (2013) stress weighing risk and proximity alongside financial viability. Pickles and Smith (2011) and Seppälä, Kenney and Ali-Yrkkö (2014) highlight how labour, transportation and processing costs, as well as transfer pricing, influence decisions. Wang, Gao and Mukhopadhyay (2016) show advantageous tax regimes can offset higher production costs. Supply chain design and redesign are shaped by costs, external shocks and politics. Responses vary by network, as demonstrated by divergent Brexit strategies. While

cost and financial viability are key, proximity to markets, facility location, governance and technology integration are equally critical. Interconnected global networks amplify complexity when responding to tariffs or geopolitical change, factors explored further in later sections.

3.3.3 Risk, Uncertainty and Complexity

The literature widely agrees that global trade disruptions heighten supply chain risk and complexity (Bekkers, 2019; Buckley and Hashai, 2020; Carataş and Spătariu, 2019). Sreedevi and Saranga (2017) note that risk is inevitable: innovation is essential for competitiveness, but it introduces uncertainty. Kwak et al. (2018) emphasise that in international networks, many risks originate externally, this study's primary focus. This section examines the types of risks and complexities linked to international trade, their sources and strategies proposed for mitigation.

Risk-related publications remained flat until 2018 but rose sharply in 2019–2025, with 55% of papers published in these years. These studies often intersect with geopolitics, globalisation, tariffs, Brexit, trade agreements and supply chain design, underscoring their interconnected nature.

Simangunsong et al. (2011) classify risk broadly: internal organisational, external supply chain and external environmental uncertainty. They further identify 14 sources of uncertainty, including political, macroeconomic and social issues, but not global trade directly. Kobrin (2017) links rising anti-globalisation sentiment and populism to instability for multinationals. Roscoe et al. (2020) show that Brexit disrupted pharmaceutical supply flows at borders, increasing costs via tariffs and non-tariff barriers. Bekkers (2019) and Hendry et al. (2019) similarly note that trade policy changes and constitutional shifts disrupt supply networks and demand organisational resilience. Hendry et al. (2019) argue such events can also foster government–industry collaboration to strengthen competitiveness. Thürer et al. (2020) warn that initiatives like China's Belt and Road may destabilise political relations, while Shi, Hoskisson and Zhang (2016) highlight risks for state-owned enterprises expanding abroad. Zajak (2017) points to external governments coercing organisations to align with political agendas. Chae et al. (2019), Pratavia et al. (2020), Gereffi (2014) and Carataş and Spătariu (2019) emphasise risks from tariffs, customs duties and trade barriers. Pickles and Smith (2011) show that low-cost production shifts can threaten but also enhance traditional manufacturing,

using UK and Eastern Europe as examples. Handfield, Graham and Burns (2020) highlight how large-scale global disruption exposed structural vulnerabilities within highly lean and geographically concentrated supply chains. More recent research increasingly positions geopolitical uncertainty as a long-term strategic consideration influencing supply chain redesign and regional diversification decisions (Qin et al., 2023).

Several authors propose mitigation approaches. Simangunsong, Hendry and Stevenson (2012) suggest supply chain redesign, altering locations, supply bases, outsourcing, infrastructure, or governance, as a risk response. Thürer et al. (2020) find resilience-building strategies dominate the literature. Roscoe et al. (2020) identify four approaches to geopolitical uncertainty: passive, reactive, proactive and wait-and-see, often deployed simultaneously or adaptively. Prativiera et al. (2020) advocate global postponement strategies, using “where” and “what” axes to map responses. Gulotty and Li (2020) argue that exclusion from preferential trade agreements rarely creates severe risk, as organisations often have preparation time.

Chae et al. (2019) link tariff severity and timing uncertainty to supply base adjustments, moderated by geographical scope, spend and supply risk. Simangunsong et al. (2011) present a model aligning 21 management strategies to specific sources of uncertainty. Hendry et al. (2019) describe organisational responses in three phases: assess opportunities and threats, implement actions and transform to strengthen resilience. Buckley and Hashai (2020) highlight intellectual property as a vulnerability: restrictions on cross-border IP transfer can constrain innovation, knowledge exchange and technological advancement. The growing complexity of global supply chains has also increased organisational reliance on data driven decision making and integrated information systems to support coordination and risk management (Hasani et al., 2015).

Supply chain risk, particularly in global trade, stems from politics, government actions, tariffs and IP restrictions. Recent events like Brexit and trade wars have amplified uncertainty, forcing networks to reconsider strategies and design. The sharp increase in risk-focused publications in 2019–2020 mirrors rising geopolitical tensions. The literature consistently emphasises planning and timing as critical to mitigating risks and maintaining supply chain resilience.

3.3.4 International Trade

International trade encompasses a wide range of cross-border activities. In the literature, it is addressed at multiple levels: organisational outsourcing of non-core tasks (Ellram, Tate and Petersen, 2013); transactions along value chains (Miled and Fiore, 2014); societal perceptions of outsourcing (Mansfield and Mutz, 2013); shifts in world order (Bremmer, 2014); and macro level indicators and policies (Bekkers, 2019; Carataş and Spătariu, 2019). For this study, international trade is defined as cross-border transactions at all levels, whether between organisations in the same group or between businesses and consumers.

Shapovalova (2016) describes international trade as the full range of economic, financial and labour movements beyond borders. While related, international trade is treated here as distinct from globalisation: trade refers to the transactions themselves, whereas globalisation describes the processes enabling them. Seventy-five percent of papers on international trade were published from 2014 onward, with 75% of highly relevant papers appearing after 2017. This concentration in recent years highlights growing interest linked to geopolitical and economic shifts.

Trade agreements are central to GVC evolution. Alvstam, Ivarsson and Peterson (2019) trace early GVC development to US offshoring in the 1960s, enabled by tariff exemptions. Bekkers (2019) examines how events such as Brexit and US tariffs alter trade dynamics, modelling future policy scenarios and identifying five macro level variables most affected: GDP segmentation, manufacturing share of GDP, national welfare, trade balances and foreign value added in output. The literature shows GVCs and international trade are interdependent. Bekkers (2019) predicts shifts in GVC participation under US isolation scenarios. Miled and Fiore (2014) note increasing compliance and logistics demands within value chains. Sturgeon and Gereffi (2009) emphasise understanding linkages, power distribution and institutional roles to measure value chains and aggregate trade. Yang (2014) highlights how consolidation among developing-country suppliers shifts bargaining power away from lead organisations. Gereffi (2011; 2014) underscores GVC analysis as essential for explaining global trade, differentiating between governance-focused (“top-down”) and upgrading-focused (“bottom-up”) approaches. Hameri and Hintsa (2009) and Alvstam et al. (2019) note that emerging-economy multinationals, supported by home governments, are reshaping GVCs and trade patterns.

Ellram, Tate and Peterson (2013) further highlight how complex multinational location decisions directly influence trade flows.

Bekkers (2019) uses trade-to-income elasticity to assess policy impacts on trade growth. Carataş and Spătariu (2019) argue that protectionist measures reshape trade structures without necessarily reducing trade volumes. Sturgeon and Gereffi (2009) call for updated GVC-aligned metrics beyond traditional statistics, while Seppälä, Kenney and Ali-Yrkkö (2014) advocate invoice level data for realistic value-add tracking. Current trade data gaps, e.g., excluding services, are noted (Sturgeon and Gereffi, 2009). Most studies rely on secondary data. Carataş and Spătariu (2019) use IMF GDP data to illustrate the US–China trade war. Bekkers (2019) draws on WTO, GTAP, UN, IMF and OECD data for forecasts. Sturgeon and Gereffi (2009) use UN COMTRADE but emphasise the need for more granular measures linking trade flows to value creation.

Bekkers (2019) simulates five trade-policy scenarios centred on US actions, finding that US global trade share falls under isolation or trade war, though its GDP share may rise relative to others. Manufacturing shares shift modestly unless tariffs increase significantly, while China and the EU are disproportionately affected by breakdowns in cooperation. These findings align with Carataş and Spătariu's (2019) view of volatile superpower relationships. International trade complexity is rising. Miled and Fiore (2014) emphasise AEOs' expanding compliance role. Shapovalova (2016) highlights longer supply routes, IT demands and logistical challenges. Kobrin (2017) and Roscoe et al. (2020) show how technology-enabled interdependence complicates withdrawal or restructuring (e.g., Brexit impacts on pharmaceuticals). Buckley and Hashai (2020) flag IP transfer restrictions as a major complexity. Osarenkhoe (2009) observes that even organisations entering markets rapidly face the same complexities as gradual entrants. Shi, Hoskisson and Zhang (2016) and Zajak (2017) link trade relationships to geopolitical dynamics and societal pressures. Wang, Gao and Mukhopadhyay (2016) add that offshoring decisions can have local political consequences.

The US and China dominate regional studies. Gereffi (2011) compares China and Mexico's industrial upgrading within GVCs, attributing China's success to scale, labour rates and governance structures. Bekkers (2019) highlights the US, EU and China as primary trade blocs. Carataş and Spătariu (2019) explore emerging challenges in inter-country relations. Thürer et al. (2020) project China's Belt and Road as a transformative initiative reshaping regional links

and challenging US dominance. Sun and Grimes (2016) show China's ICT growth reflects outsourcing of low-value tasks rather than movement into higher-value GVC segments. Mansfield and Mutz (2013) analyse US attitudes toward outsourcing, finding distributional consequences akin to trade's broader effects. Baccini, Pinto and Weymouth (2017) and Gulotty and Li (2020) confirm preferential trade agreements boost trade but argue organisations outside agreements can adapt to maintain volumes. Pickles and Smith (2011) illustrate regionalisation trends in Europe's textile industry, showing relocation is not purely a "race to the bottom".

Post-2008, global trade volume and structure have shifted significantly (Bekkers, 2019; Bremmer, 2014; Carataş and Spătariu, 2019; Kobrin, 2017; Meyer, 2017; Rodrik, 2018). Trade wars, Brexit and new tariff regimes (Hendry et al., 2019; Nakamura et al., 2019; Roscoe et al., 2020) continue to shape trade dynamics, highlighting the influence of politics, agreements and economic strategy. International trade cannot be separated from GVC dynamics. Openness (Witt, 2019), robust GVC participation and accurate measurement are critical to understanding modern trade. The literature calls for improved metrics beyond GDP to capture value creation within global networks. The dominance of US- and China-focused studies reflects their outsized influence on global trade patterns, while recent volatility underscores the need for adaptive strategies and resilient supply chains.

3.3.5 Globalisation and Reverse Globalisation

Globalisation, closely linked to international trade, refers to the interconnectedness and interdependence of actors across geographies (Archibugi and Iammarino, 2002). Recent literature identifies a slowdown or reversal of globalisation trends, described as de-globalisation, anti-globalisation, or regionalisation (Bremmer, 2014; Buckley and Hashai, 2020; Kobrin, 2017; Witt, 2019). Buckley and Ghuari (2003) define globalisation as a deliberate strategy by multinationals to optimise costs and market reach. Vahlne, Ivarsson and Johanson (2011) distinguish internationalisation (national to multinational) from globalisation (multinational to global strategy). For this study, international trade is treated as transaction based activity, while globalisation is the enabling process.

60% of globalisation-focused papers were published after 2016, over half of which were deemed highly relevant, indicating heightened academic attention following recent geopolitical and economic shifts. Kobrin (2017) identifies two globalisation waves: the first from the late

1800s to WWI and the second from the 1990s to 2008, which integrated sovereign nations into an interdependent economy. Post-2008, growth in trade and FDI slowed but did not cease. Kobrin (2017), Meyer (2017) and Buckley and Hashai (2020) view globalisation as cyclical. Witt (2019) attributes de-globalisation to populism, weakening institutions and China's rise as a geostrategic competitor. Bremmer (2017) observes that after 2008, governments increasingly protected local interests rather than pursuing global expansion. While economic openness may decline, Witt (2019) predicts technological advances will continue to support integration, even as political will lags.

Rodrik (2018) links events like Brexit, the Trump presidency and rising protectionism to a shift from borderless markets. Buckley and Hashai (2020) highlight how anti-globalisation restricts technology and IP transfer, increasing costs and favouring domestic production. Mansfield and Mutz (2013) find attitudes toward outsourcing align more with nationalism than economic efficiency. Witt (2019) uses World Bank, IMF and KOF Index data to confirm weakening interdependence, while Bremmer (2017) frames current trends as “guarded globalisation” marked by selective engagement. Yang (2014) attributes some domestic orientation to power shifts within global production networks rather than reduced globalisation itself.

Gygli, Haelg and Sturm (2018) argue that single openness metrics (e.g., trade/GDP) are insufficient. They advocate composite indices, citing the KOF Globalisation Index for its breadth and historical depth. Other studies reference IMF, World Bank, OECD, WTO and UN COMTRADE data (Carataş and Spătariu, 2019; Gereffi, 2011; Meyer, 2017; Sturgeon and Gereffi, 2009). Gygli et al. also distinguish *de facto* globalisation (actual flows) from *de jure* globalisation (policies enabling flows).

At the societal level, Gereffi (2014) links globalisation to economic upgrading and improved outcomes, while Meyer (2017) highlights growing inequality and uneven benefits, primarily favouring Europe and North America. At the national level, Rodrik (2018) argues trade liberalisation yields limited net gains, while Meyer (2017) maintains specialisation increases productivity but warns of sovereignty conflicts. Gereffi (2014) and Bremmer (2014) note shifting power dynamics as China emerges as a key driver of global trends. Witt (2019) observes the US's declining hegemonic role amid rising competition. At the industry level, Sturgeon et al. (2009) and Kobrin (2017) emphasise deeply integrated supply networks, noting

that reversing these ties would be costly. Chae et al. (2019) and Dong and Kouvelis (2020) show tariffs and protectionism increasing supply chain complexity.

Technology is both an enabler and constraint (Bremmer, 2017; Kobrin, 2017; Meyer, 2017). Buckley and Hashai (2020) warn that disrupted globalisation threatens free trade agreements and supply networks. Intellectual property (Bremmer, 2017; Buckley and Hashai, 2020) emerges as a critical vulnerability, with restrictions undermining multinationals' competitive advantage. Stable political environments foster globalisation (Kobrin, 2017), while instability, populism and protectionism trigger retrenchment. Witt (2019) and Bremmer (2017) stress that governments' protectionist policies and state capitalism reshape global trade dynamics. Gygli et al. (2018) highlight *de jure* globalisation, policies that facilitate flows, as key to sustaining economic openness.

Buckley and Hashai (2020) and Kobrin (2017) tie anti-globalisation sentiment to populist movements, while Rodrik (2018) argues that inequality and borderless profits fuel populist backlash. Mansfield and Mutz (2013) confirm public scepticism toward globalisation influences trade politics.

Earlier predictions of unending globalisation (Hameri and Hintsa, 2009) are now challenged. Kobrin (2017) outlines potential futures ranging from moderate retrenchment to severe anti-globalisation. Bekkers (2019) models scenarios from trade wars to regional isolation. Witt (2019) foresees a bipolar global economy dominated by the US and China, with multinationals' decisions provoking public opposition. Buckley and Hashai (2020) predict reduced overseas operations if anti-globalisation trends persist. Meyer (2017) calls for balancing global benefits with societal equity and integrating politics into business research. Globalisation trends are shifting amid nationalism, protectionism, populism and geopolitical change. While some see guarded globalisation or cyclical adjustments, others warn of a structural retreat. Technology continues to enable integration, but political and societal pressures challenge interconnected systems. GVCs remain central to understanding globalisation and the future depends on managing interdependencies and geopolitical relations.

3.3.6 Geo-political Factors

Political factors influence both GVC structures and global trade. Wigell and Vihma (2016) redefine geo-economics beyond geography based economics to include the use of economic power to achieve geostrategic goals, either to incentivise or disincentivise actions. By contrast, geo-politics is more overt and traditionally associated with military power and direct confrontation. Given their interdependence, geo-economic and geo-political factors are considered together here. Greater than 90% of papers on this theme were published between 2016–2025, reflecting its growing relevance.

Kobrin (2017) describes 1990–2008 globalisation as a transformative integration of nations, now disrupted by political and economic conflicts. Shi et al. (2016) note that organisations prefer stable political relations when entering host countries. Simangunsong et al. (2011) link politics, policy and macroeconomics to uncertainty and instability in trade. Roscoe et al. (2020) show Brexit disrupting pharmaceutical supply chains by impeding information and material flows, raising tariff and non-tariff costs. Rodrik (2018) cites Brexit, Trump and populism as evidence of an inflection point in global order. Even earlier, Ellram, Tate and Peterson (2013) warned of political risks (e.g., US elections) affecting trade. The increasing interconnectedness of global supply networks has also heightened organisational exposure to geopolitical and economic disruption across multiple regions and actors (Caceres and Ear, 2012).

Kobrin (2017) attributes the slowdown in globalisation and trade to social, political and economic factors, citing Brexit and US trade barriers as destabilising forces. Ellram et al. (2013) similarly flag political instability as a key location factor. MacCarthy et al. (2016) note that political cooperation can enhance supply chains, while instability can harm them. Bremmer (2014) links national security concerns, such as cyber risks, to protectionist shifts. Luo (2022) further argues that contemporary “techno-nationalism” reflects a new form of geopolitical competition in which technological capability, national security and economic policy become increasingly interconnected. Within this perspective, global supply chains are no longer viewed solely through an efficiency lens, but also as instruments of strategic state power and geopolitical influence.

Witt (2019) argues that the end of US hegemony and China’s rise underpin today’s turbulence and anti-globalisation trends. Carataş and Spătariu (2019) identify US–China tensions, tariffs

and trade wars as disruptive forces. Gereffi (2014) connects the breakdown of US dominance to shifting political power centres. Bremmer (2017) observes China's growing influence in setting norms, while Cáceres and Ear (2012) document China's resource strategies bolstering its global position. Beeson (2018) suggests the Belt and Road initiative will further elevate China's importance. Gulotty and Li (2020) view the TPP as a US attempt to counterbalance China. Ellram et al. (2013) caution that policy uncertainty may hinder future globalisation.

Nakamura, Yamada and Tan (2019) show how Brexit and TPP dynamics directly affect supply chain design. Alvstam, Ivarsson and Peterson (2019) highlight political interventions, such as trade liberalisation, shaping GVC structures. MacCarthy et al. (2016) emphasise the interdependence of economics, regulation and supply chain evolution. Zajak (2017) describes multinationals' politicisation: beyond compliance, they now set standards and face pressure from activist networks influencing corporate politics. Gereffi (2014) notes that current politics is reshaping GVC geography and governance.

Governments critically shape trade (Bekkers, 2019; Pickles and Smith, 2011). Recent geopolitical tensions have increasingly blurred the boundaries between economic policy and national security objectives, contributing to new forms of state intervention within global trade systems (Gulotty and Li, 2020). Bremmer (2014) shows governments sometimes protect local organisations instead of courting foreign investment. Sturgeon et al. (2019) reveal that automotive organisations regionalise operations to avoid political backlash. Alvstam et al. (2019) stress that home governments nurture organisations' global competitiveness but may also impose political agendas misaligned with corporate goals. Bremmer (2017) warns that emerging-market organisations with state backing challenge Western competitors. Shapovalova (2016) links geopolitical factors to the formation of trading blocs and tariff regimes. Zajak (2017) argues that powerful multinationals can influence governments, while Bremmer (2014) contrasts state capitalism's political objectives with free-market economic goals. Shi et al. (2016) find that host perceptions of state ownership, illustrated by US opposition to Huawei, can provoke resistance. Hendry et al. (2019) note Brexit as an opportunity for industry–government collaboration. Baccini, Pinto and Weymouth (2017) find multinationals often drive political support for trade policies due to the economic–political power nexus. Beyond trade rivalry, the intersection of climate risk and geopolitical instability has also been identified as a compounding threat to global economic stability (Qin et al., 2023).

Collectively, the literature demonstrates a significant shift in how geopolitical dynamics are conceptualised within supply chain management and international business research. Earlier literature largely treated geopolitical events as episodic external disruptions that interrupted otherwise stable systems of global trade. However more recently, academics increasingly position geopolitical instability as a persistent and structuring condition influencing long-term supply chain configuration, sourcing strategy and organisational governance. This evolution reflects a broader movement away from assumptions of political neutrality within globalisation theory toward recognition that supply chains are deeply embedded within geopolitical, institutional and ideological systems. Despite this growing recognition, the literature remains fragmented across disciplines, with limited integration between geopolitical theory and operational supply chain decision-making.

Geo-politics profoundly shapes global trade and supply chains. Political stability supports economic cooperation, while instability fuels uncertainty and disruption. Much of the literature frames the US–China rivalry as central to current tensions. organisations must navigate tariffs and shifting supply bases tactically while aligning long-term strategies with national and geopolitical dynamics. If globalisation is cyclical, improved relations may eventually stabilise these forces, but current conditions suggest ongoing volatility.

3.3.7 Protectionism and Nationalist Movement

As discussed in the previous sections on geo-political factors and anti-globalisation sentiment, there is growing evidence of a protectionist and nationalist movement. This section examines how these themes appear in the literature. Protectionism is closely linked to government policy and its influence on globalisation trends. Meyer (2017) highlights increased electoral support for political parties with explicit protectionist or nationalist agendas, attributing this rise to social movements by people who perceive themselves as disadvantaged by globalisation. Witt (2019) offers a complementary perspective, suggesting that individual self-interest within nations generates political pressures opposing globalisation, aligning with populist movements and current public opinion. Discontent with open capitalist economies, inequality and dissatisfaction with existing governments are all feeding anti-globalisation sentiment. While populism is explored more fully in the following section, it is important to recognise its reciprocal relationship with nationalism in this context.

Many authors note the rise of protectionist policies designed to defend national sovereignty in response to the power of multinationals, oligopolistic markets and societal unease about inequality. This section first reviews publication frequency, then considers nationalist political strategies, explores the link between nationalism and protectionist measures and concludes with overall observations. The volume of papers on protectionism and nationalism is generally low but shows a notable spike in 2016–2017, with 58% of papers from those years. (add 2025 Update) This increase correlates with major political events such as Brexit and the election of Donald Trump.

Shi et al. (2016) observe that nationalist objectives at governmental or societal levels can obstruct globalisation and limit organisations' ability to internationalise. They add that countries with lower levels of nationalist politics present fewer barriers to foreign investors. Alvstam, Ivarsson and Peterson (2019) similarly note that slower economic growth and protectionist trade policies are straining relationships between governments and businesses and placing pressure on the GVC model.

Mansfield and Mutz (2013) investigate American attitudes toward outsourcing, finding that perceptions of foreign trade are influenced less by the activity itself than by ethnocentrism, nationalism and anti-foreign sentiment. They demonstrate that Americans with stronger national superiority sentiments are more likely to oppose outsourcing. Zajak (2017) adds that negative publicity and poor corporate social responsibility by multinationals have contributed to anti-capitalist sentiment and thus anti-globalisation movements. Dong and Kouvelis (2020) note conflicts of interest between international business and domestic priorities, which can foster nationalist divides. Buckley and Hashai (2020) argue that scepticism toward globalisation generates fear among the public, translating into political support for nationalist policies. Meyer (2017) concurs, citing public dissatisfaction with existing economic structures as a driver of nationalist and protectionist politics.

Mansfield and Mutz (2013) also link attitudes toward international trade to perceived threats to national prosperity, domestic employment and immigration concerns. Kobrin (2017) observes that during the Brexit campaign, globalisation was strongly associated with open borders and immigration, fuelling nationalist sentiment. Together with Buckley and Hashai (2019) and Rodrik (2018), Kobrin suggests these narratives propelled populist politics supporting nationalist agendas and protectionist measures. Kobrin (2017) further argues that

by 2016, the transnational political-economic system forged between 1989 and 2008 was jeopardised by US protectionism and the Brexit challenge to EU unity. Shi, Hoskisson and Zhang (2016), writing in the same period, had already identified nationalist politics as an emerging factor influencing multinationals' location decisions.

Chae et al. (2019) cite tariffs as protectionist tools designed to strengthen domestic markets at the expense of global supply chains. Dong and Kouvelis (2020) highlight the imposition of Section 232 and Section 301 tariffs by the US as clear examples of protectionism. Both studies caution, however, that due to the complexity of modern supply chains, such measures may inadvertently harm domestic enterprises. Bremmer (2014) points to state capitalism in emerging markets such as Russia, India and Brazil, where governments adopt nationalist strategies to control wealth through public-sector and politically influenced organisations. Witt (2019) links these strategies to liberalist perspectives that question whether national prosperity and international trade can coexist sustainably.

Meyer (2017) identifies four specific areas where international trade may conflict with national sovereignty: consumer protection, environmental and social responsibility, the balance of power between governments and multinationals and national security. Shapovalova (2016), however, suggests regionalisation can complement globalisation by facilitating foreign trade through structured economic cooperation, viewing both phenomena as complementary rather than mutually exclusive. Recent literature suggests that geopolitical tensions have evolved beyond traditional tariff disputes toward broader forms of techno-nationalism and technological decoupling (Luo, 2022). This development has significant implications for multinational enterprises operating across highly interconnected global supply networks.

While Shapovalova (2016) supports globalisation's advantages, she also underscores the importance of preserving national identity and economic independence, warning that geopolitical instability may compromise national security. Carataş and Spătariu (2019) argue that although recent protectionist measures could alter global trade structures, they will not necessarily affect overall trade volumes. Carataş and Spătariu (2019) also examine President Trump's "America First" and "Make America Great Again" campaigns as examples of protectionist policies. They describe the US withdrawal from the TPP and tariff impositions as deliberate strategies to stimulate the domestic economy and curb imports. However, they

conclude these measures are likely to harm the US economy by increasing business and consumer costs and by further straining US–China relations.

The literature further suggests that protectionism and nationalist policy agendas are no longer isolated political phenomena, but increasingly operate as mechanisms reshaping global trade structures and organisational sourcing behaviour. While earlier studies frequently examined tariffs and trade barriers primarily through an economic lens, contemporary research increasingly highlights the broader political and strategic dimensions of protectionist intervention, including technological sovereignty, economic security and domestic political legitimacy. This has contributed to growing organisational emphasis on diversification, regionalisation and supply chain resilience, although evidence remains mixed regarding the extent to which organisations are genuinely restructuring global operations versus adopting symbolic or partial adaptation strategies.

The literature consistently identifies rising nationalism and protectionism as key forces reshaping global trade. These forces manifest both in government policy and public opinion. Events like Brexit and the Trump election are cited as emblematic of this shift. Academics differ on causality: some argue that anti-establishment sentiment fuels protectionism, while others suggest that protectionist policies feed populist movements. Regardless of sequence, the reciprocal relationship between public sentiment and government action is clear. A nationalist agenda now influences trade decisions and supply chain strategies, demanding that governments and organisations find ways to safeguard national prosperity while maintaining the benefits of international trade. These findings provide a natural bridge to the next section on populism, which is closely intertwined with nationalism and protectionism.

3.3.8 Populism

Populism is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon. Devinney and Hartwell (2017) highlight its definitional challenges, offering a framework that spans four paradigms, structural, economic, ideological and political-institutional. This broad definition acknowledges that populism is not a single, uniform movement but one that can emerge through multiple, interrelated channels. By situating populism across these paradigms, Devinney and Hartwell (2017) avoid a narrow interpretation that would reduce populism solely to anti-establishment, anti-elitist, or anti-globalisation tendencies. Instead, they allow for an understanding of

populism as a diverse set of movements and sentiments influenced by overlapping societal, economic and political forces. This section first examines the publication frequency of populism-related research, then explores the development of populist rhetoric in the literature, followed by a discussion of factors that appear to influence this rhetoric. A concluding summary reflects on the implications of populism for globalisation, trade and supply chains.

The volume of populism-focused research is relatively small but telling. Of the five papers identified, 80% were published between 2017 and 2019. This timing aligns closely with major political events, particularly the Brexit referendum and the election of Donald Trump in 2016, that many academics link to the resurgence of populist movements. The concentration of recent publications suggests that populism is increasingly viewed as a critical factor shaping international trade and globalisation debates.

Populism has become a significant theme within the literature, closely connected to discussions of geo-politics, geo-economics and nationalism. In the context of current globalisation trends, Rodrik (2018) observes that populism manifests in multiple ways but shares a common thread: an anti-establishment orientation characterised by “people versus the elite” narratives and scepticism toward globalisation. Rodrik (2018) also highlights that populism cuts across the political spectrum. Left-wing populism, for instance, has emerged in parts of Latin America, while right-wing populism has gained ground in Europe. This breadth underscores populism’s flexibility as a political strategy and its ability to mobilise discontent across diverse societies. Meyer (2017) supports this view, pointing to examples such as Russia, the United States and the Philippines where traditional political systems have been challenged or displaced by populist or nationalist alternatives. These examples illustrate that populism is not confined to one ideological stance or geography, it reflects a broader global shift in political engagement, distrust of elites and resistance to established governance structures.

Rodrik (2018) argues that several elements linked to globalisation have contributed directly to the populist surge. Among these are technological advances that have enabled global integration but also widened inequality; the rise of winner-takes-all capitalism, which concentrates economic benefits among a small group of actors; and transformations in governance and labour norms that have undermined traditional protections for workers. Together, these shifts have created fertile ground for populist narratives that question the fairness and sustainability of the global economic system. Mansfield and Mutz (2013) provide

further insight by examining American attitudes toward outsourcing and international trade. Their study reveals that public opinion is shaped less by an understanding of the economic mechanisms behind trade than by subjective factors, such as views on foreign governments, organisations and peoples. The authors find that negative attitudes toward outsourcing are most pronounced among individuals with strong nationalist leanings, ethnocentrism, or anti-foreign sentiment. In such cases, support for outsourcing is often interpreted as anti-national or unpatriotic, suggesting that populist rhetoric can thrive on perceptions of national superiority and external threat rather than objective economic reasoning.

Rodrik (2018) and Meyer (2017) both connect populism's rise to protectionist policies and anti-globalisation sentiment, tracing these trends back to public dissatisfaction with globalisation's perceived inequities. Meyer (2017) adds that tensions between domestic governments and multinational enterprises, particularly when global corporate strategies appear misaligned with national interests, have reinforced public suspicion of globalisation. This conflict between domestic priorities and global economic integration strengthens the appeal of populist platforms promising to "take back control" or reassert national sovereignty.

Although the number of studies explicitly addressing populism remains limited, their contributions are both relevant and timely. The most significant works, Rodrik (2018), Kobrin (2017), Witt (2019) and Meyer (2017) reflect the contemporary urgency of the topic. Mansfield and Mutz (2013), while earlier, provides important evidence of underlying public sentiment in the United States before the Trump era, showing that populist attitudes toward trade and foreign engagement were already present.

The literature collectively suggests that populism is an emerging and influential movement shaped by multiple factors: societal discontent with existing political and economic systems, perceived disparities in the benefits of globalisation and anti-establishment beliefs. The Brexit vote and Trump's election are repeatedly cited as watershed events that crystallised this populist momentum. Moreover, populism is deeply intertwined with nationalism, protectionism and anti-globalisation sentiment, forces that, as previous sections have shown, are reshaping global supply chains and trade relationships. Whether populism is primarily a symptom of inequality and global economic change, or a driver of policy shifts that could further fragment the global trading system, remains debated. However, it is clear that

populism's influence on politics and trade is significant and its trajectory will be critical in shaping the future of global economic cooperation.

3.3.9 Tariffs, Trade Agreements and Trade Wars

Tariffs, trade agreements and trade wars are interlinked mechanisms shaping modern global trade. Tariffs, customs duties levied at borders, serve as tools for controlling trade flows and protecting domestic industries (Gallezot and Aussilloux, 2008). Trade agreements, by contrast, aim to lower or remove such barriers to encourage economic cooperation (Kohl, Brakman and Garretsen, 2016). When these tools are used in competition between major economies, tensions can escalate into trade wars, as evidenced by the US–China conflict beginning in 2018. Together, these factors influence global supply chains, organisational strategies and macroeconomic stability. All tariff-related papers were published from 2017–2020, with nearly one-third appearing in 2019–2020, reflecting heightened interest following the escalation of the US–China Trade War. Similarly, 60% of papers on trade agreements were published in 2019–2020, suggesting their perceived importance as mitigation tools during rising trade tensions. Trade war publications began in 2017 and peaked in 2019, correlating with political developments such as Brexit and US protectionist policies under the Trump administration.

Tariffs have long been used as protectionist measures, but the literature highlights their disruptive effects on globally integrated supply chains. Chae et al. (2019) cite WTO findings on the severity of tariffs, noting that while they may temporarily benefit domestic markets, they disadvantage import-reliant organisations through higher costs. Dong and Kouvelis (2020) argue that tariffs are often ineffective in a globalised economy because supply chains can relocate or restructure. The US's Section 232 and 301 tariffs, intended to protect domestic industries, led instead to plant closures and relocations abroad. Carataş and Spătariu (2019) further highlight that consumers ultimately bear these costs, reducing societal welfare. Kobrin (2017) references Donald Trump's claims that free trade agreements harm US workers but counters with historical evidence: the Smoot-Hawley Tariff of 1930, a protectionist measure, is widely believed to have deepened the Great Depression. This example underscores the potential for tariffs to destabilise economies rather than protect them.

Chae et al. (2019) detail corporate responses to tariff changes, citing Harley-Davidson, Nissan, GM and Whirlpool as organisations redesigning supply chains to mitigate import costs.

Sturgeon et al. (2019) show that while tariffs influence automotive industry regionalisation, their long-term structural impact remains limited. Roscoe et al. (2020) emphasise that tariffs represent a significant source of disruption and cost increases for global networks. Chae et al. (2019) also quantify tariff impacts through severity, timing and geographical scope, noting that *ad valorem* rates, duration and the number of countries affected determine overall disruption.

Dong and Kouvelis (2020) propose operational network models rather than single-firm microeconomic approaches to analyse tariffs, while Nakamura, Yamada and Tan (2019) use Brexit scenarios to model tariff exposure risks. Bekkers (2019) incorporates tariffs into simulations of global trade policy shifts, highlighting their central role. Buckley and Hashai (2020) note the benefits of harmonised tariffs within the EU, while Gulotty and Li (2020) observe that organisations often anticipate tariffs and prepare strategies in advance.

Trade agreements and common trading areas aim to counterbalance tariffs by fostering cooperation and lowering trade barriers. Shapovalova (2016) argues that globalisation has intensified the formation of economic unions, while Baccini (2017) states that agreements stimulate production, output and growth. Carataş and Spătariu (2019) highlight their diplomatic value, enabling partnerships even between historically strained nations. Gulotty and Li (2020) find that exclusion from agreements, such as China's absence from the TPP, does not necessarily harm organisations if they can adapt strategically. Shapovalova (2016) adds that geopolitical factors, resources and socio-economic sustainability influence the organisation of trading zones, while Nakamura, Yamada and Tan (2019) show that UK engagement in agreements like the TPP would have mitigated Brexit-related risks. In practice, Gulotty and Li (2020) stress the importance of compliance capacity, while Baccini (2017) notes potential downsides such as wage inflation and reduced profits despite lower production costs. Trade agreements can also have mixed effects on societies: increased competition can suppress consumer prices but strain domestic employment. Bekkers (2019) highlights the US withdrawal from the TPP as a pivotal moment reshaping trade relations.

The US–China Trade War represents the most significant modern case of tariff escalation. Kobrin (2017) predicted that protectionist measures by the US and Brexit's fallout could trigger a global Trade War. Shang and Shen (2021) trace its origins to China's forced technology transfer policies and the US's refusal to comply, which led to Section 301 tariffs and retaliatory measures. The conflict began with a 2012 Huawei ban and intensified through successive

sanctions and tariffs. Carataş and Spătariu (2019) show that the Trade War reshaped global markets, reducing US–China trade while increasing US engagement with Canada and Mexico. Kobrin (2017) warns that prolonged trade wars threaten the stability of global institutions like the WTO, IMF and World Bank. Roscoe et al. (2020) note that such conflicts heighten uncertainty for supply chains, while Bekkers (2019) models scenarios ranging from regional isolation to a full-scale Trade War, finding that China would bear the greatest burden while the US might suffer least.

Collectively, tariffs, trade agreements and trade wars shape global economic dynamics and supply chain strategies. Tariffs, while intended to protect domestic industries, often backfire due to complex supply chain interdependencies. Trade agreements can mitigate these disruptions but may generate uneven benefits or political backlash. Trade wars, escalations of tariff disputes, introduce systemic risks, destabilising markets and eroding trust in global institutions. The literature suggests that governments and organisations must navigate these tools carefully: tariffs should consider global supply dynamics; trade agreements should balance liberalisation with domestic protections; and trade conflicts must be managed diplomatically to avoid widespread economic fallout. These insights are crucial for understanding the broader forces influencing global supply chain design and risk management.

3.3.9 Additional Thematic Areas

While the preceding sections focus on dominant themes such as globalisation, geo-politics, tariffs and trade agreements, several additional factors appear within the literature as important, though less frequently discussed, influences on global supply chains: Brexit, China’s Belt and Road Initiative and transfer pricing strategies. These topics reveal the breadth of external forces, political, infrastructural and financial, that shape supply chain design and resilience.

Brexit

On 23 June 2016, the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union, an event known as Brexit, sending political and economic shockwaves across Europe and beyond (Colantone and Staing, 2018). Five studies published since 2017 reference Brexit, framing it both as a manifestation of populist and nationalist sentiment and as a direct disruptor of supply networks. The first Brexit-related paper appeared in 2017, with others concentrated in 2019–2020, reflecting escalating uncertainty during negotiation periods.

Roscoe et al. (2020), Nakamura, Yamada and Tan (2019) and Hendry et al. (2019) model Brexit's organisational and supply chain impacts. Roscoe et al. (2020) focus on the pharmaceutical industry, proposing four uncertainty-management strategies, passive, reactive, proactive and wait-and-see, emphasising their fluidity as conditions evolve. Nakamura, Yamada and Tan (2019) test three post-Brexit scenarios using sensitivity analysis, finding that tariffs resulting from Brexit would raise costs for UK organisations and global networks. They identify UK integration into the TPP as the only scenario that avoids major restructuring. Hendry et al. (2019), using the agri-food sector, stress collaboration between government and supply chain partners to build resilience, arguing that adaptability and partnership are key to maintaining competitiveness.

The studies are context specific, Roscoe et al. (2020) limit their focus to pharmaceuticals, while Hendry et al. (2019) examine agri-food chains and do not account for all macroeconomic variables, such as exchange rate fluctuations or freight costs. Nonetheless, Brexit is widely cited as evidence of populism's influence on global trade (Kobrin, 2017) and as a potential threat to free-trade stability (Bekkers, 2019).

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) emerges in the literature as a transformative force with global economic and political implications. Beeson (2018) and Thürer et al. (2020) argue that if BRI achieves its goals, China's geopolitical and economic influence will be significantly enhanced. Cáceres and Ear (2012) describe China's strategic shift from domestic growth to global expansion through resource and energy management, an approach that underpins BRI's infrastructure investments.

BRI is often discussed in relation to geopolitical instability. Thürer et al. (2020) caution that BRI could disrupt existing political relationships and trigger future instability as China's expanding influence challenges established power structures. Roscoe et al. (2020) and Gereffi (2014) similarly note that BRI reshapes the geography and governance of global value chains by reorienting trade flows and logistics hubs. Shapovalova (2016) adds that while globalisation and regionalisation are complementary phenomena, projects like BRI reflect an evolving form of regionalisation, using infrastructure to integrate economies while advancing national strategic goals. Collectively, these perspectives suggest that BRI is not merely an infrastructure

program but a strategic economic instrument reshaping trade routes, governance norms and competitive dynamics.

Transfer Pricing

Transfer pricing, how multinational organisations allocate value creation and profits across borders, appears in three papers from 2014–2016 as a less frequent but important theme. Seppälä, Kenney and Ali-Yrkkö (2014) argue that transfer pricing strategies provide realistic insights into supply chain operations and value distribution. They find that multinationals leverage transfer pricing to optimise profit allocation and location based advantages, particularly as increasing volumes of work-in-progress goods cross borders within corporate networks. Transfer pricing has emerged as a mechanism through which supply chain redesign decisions interact with financial and tax considerations (Hammami and Frein, 2014; Seppälä, Kenney and Ali-Yrkkö., 2014).

Hammami and Frein (2014) examine transfer pricing within supply chain redesign, noting that most prior studies focus only on initial design. They argue that redesign, often triggered by market expansion, acquisitions, or offshoring, requires distinct approaches and that ignoring transfer pricing undermines accurate modelling. Wang, Gao and Mukhopadhyay (2016) also highlight tax and transfer pricing as critical to offshoring decisions, balancing low production costs against shipping expenses and tariffs. They recognise that local laws, currency fluctuations and transportation risks are secondary but still influential. Hendry et al. (2019) echo the importance of government engagement, suggesting organisations collaborate with policymakers when designing supply networks influenced by transfer pricing rules.

Though less prominent than other themes, Brexit, BRI and transfer pricing collectively illuminate key dimensions of global supply chain complexity: Brexit underscores how populism and nationalist movements can abruptly disrupt established trade agreements and supply chains. BRI highlights the intersection of infrastructure development, economic strategy and geopolitical competition. Transfer pricing demonstrates that financial mechanisms and tax policies shape supply chain configuration as much as physical flows or market demand. These themes, while secondary in frequency, are pivotal for understanding the nuanced, interconnected environment in which global supply chains operate. They illustrate that supply chain resilience depends not only on operational efficiency but also on anticipating political, economic and regulatory shifts that may alter trade patterns and value creation across borders.

3.4 Recent Advances in the Literature (2023–2025)

The original systematic literature review for this study covered contributions from 2005 to 2023, assessing how geopolitical influences were emerging within the global supply chain management literature. As already outlined, the review found early indicators of political ideology shaping supply chain decisions but revealed that the academic field had yet to treat such forces as central drivers. At the time, mainstream literature remained focused on operational risk, resilience and integration. Political risk was discussed broadly, often as part of environmental turbulence, while explorations of trade barriers, reshoring, or economic nationalism tended to be reactive and case specific. There was little conceptual cohesion regarding how populism, nationalist trade agendas, or protectionist frameworks actively reshape sourcing strategies, value chain design, or risk management practices.

Since then, global events have advanced rapidly. The combined effects of COVID-19, the US–China trade war, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and rising political polarisation in Western democracies have moved geopolitics from the periphery to the centre of supply chain strategy. Political ideology, once treated as an external factor, is now widely recognised as a structural force in supply chain design and decision-making. Populist and nationalist agendas increasingly drive tariffs and trade barriers, influence supplier location choices and introduce reputational and compliance risks that organisations can no longer ignore.

To capture these shifts, an updated review of the literature was conducted in August 2025, focusing on work published from 2023 through mid-2025. This literature review was conducted according to the parameters of the original literature review protocol, leveraging the same search terms and databases, while updating the search time frame from 2023 to August 2025. The results show a decisive pivot: major journals, including a 2025 special issue of the *International Journal of Operations and Production Management*, now foreground geopolitical risk, sociopolitical context and ideologically driven disruption as core themes in global supply chain management. What was identified in the first-stage review as an emergent and underexplored topic had since been strongly validated and expanded upon.

The second stage review identifies several new contributions. Golgeci et al. (2025) propose a sociopolitical view of supply chain management, arguing that political decisions, cultural

narratives and social movements directly shape global supply chain structures and resilience. They highlight the relocation of manufacturing and sourcing away from China toward Vietnam, India and Mexico, driven not only by cost but by political and reputational considerations. Zhu et al. (2024) confirm that organisations actively reduce concentration in politically volatile countries and embed geopolitical risk into strategic sourcing. Day et al. (2024) provide a typology of foreign organisations responses in China, “China+1” diversification versus “In-China-for-China” localisation, demonstrating differentiated supply chain strategies under geopolitical uncertainty. Charpin (2024) uses quantitative methods to show that political divergence between nations directly influences sourcing patterns and supplier networks.

Emerging sectors reinforce these patterns. Duong et al. (2023) and Bhamra et al. (2024) highlight that healthcare and critical minerals supply chains increasingly depend on geopolitical alignment and ethical considerations. Paulraj et al. (2024) go further, identifying populism and state fragility as critical variables influencing supply base concentration and procurement strategy, linking political ideology directly to sourcing decisions. Classic theories are also being revisited: Witt et al. (2023) and Meyer et al. (2023) show that protectionist shifts and institutional constraints are challenging liberal trade norms, while Gereffi et al. (2022) frame COVID-19 and the US–China trade war as catalysts for a broader retreat from globalisation.

The updated literature reveals a clear consensus: geopolitics is no longer external to supply chain strategy but a defining determinant of its architecture. Within this framework, ideologically driven movements, particularly populism, nationalism and protectionism, are not merely influencing trade policy but are actively reshaping the design, resilience and ethical dimensions of global supply chains. These findings validate the foundation of this thesis and reinforce its relevance at a moment of fundamental transformation in the field.

3.5 Synthesis and Discussion

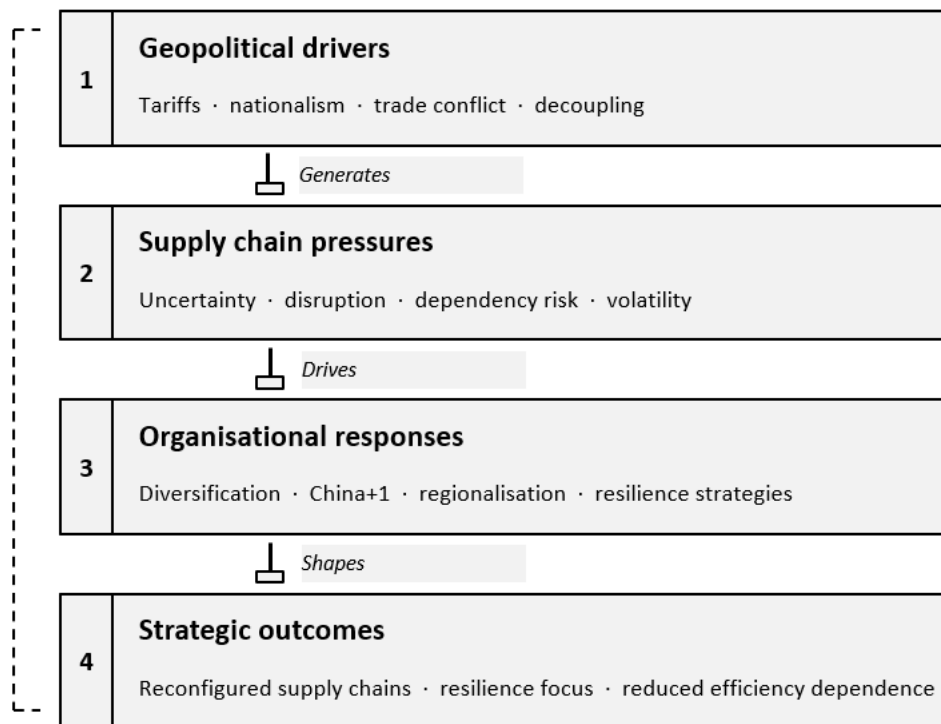
This systematic review set out to determine whether trends in globalisation are shifting, to assess the role of geo-political forces in these changes and to explore the implications for global

supply networks. Fourteen themes were identified and coded using the CIMO framework, providing a lens through which to interpret how the literature has evolved. This synthesis first discusses the evolution and overlap of themes, highlights emergent patterns and considers the region specific nature of much of the research. It then examined the impacts of changing globalisation trends at societal, organisational, national, global and supply network levels, before drawing overall conclusions and updating the research statement.

Figure 3.2 presents the conceptual framework emerging from the systematic literature review and illustrates the interconnected relationship between geopolitical disruption and contemporary supply chain strategy. The framework synthesises the dominant themes identified across the literature and demonstrates how external geopolitical drivers, including tariffs, nationalism, trade conflict and economic decoupling, generate increasing levels of uncertainty, disruption, volatility and dependency risk within global supply chains. The literature consistently indicates that these pressures have driven organisations to reassess traditional efficiency oriented supply chain models and adopt a range of strategic responses aimed at enhancing resilience and reducing exposure to geopolitical instability. Common organisational responses identified across the literature include supplier diversification, China+1 strategies, regionalisation and broader resilience-focused supply chain redesign initiatives.

The framework further demonstrates that these responses collectively contribute to wider strategic outcomes, including the reconfiguration of global supply networks, an increased organisational focus on resilience and continuity and a reduced dependence on highly globalised efficiency driven operating models. The conceptual framework therefore provides an integrative synthesis of the literature review findings and establishes a theoretical foundation for the empirical investigation undertaken within this study. In addition, the framework aligns conceptually with the CIMO structure underpinning this research. Geopolitical drivers represent the contextual conditions influencing supply chain environments, while organisational responses reflect the interventions and mechanisms through which organisations attempt to mitigate geopolitical risk. The resulting strategic outcomes illustrate the evolving configuration of global supply chains under conditions of persistent geopolitical uncertainty.

Fig 3.2 Conceptual Model based on Literature Review Findings



3.5.1 Insights and Evolution of Themes

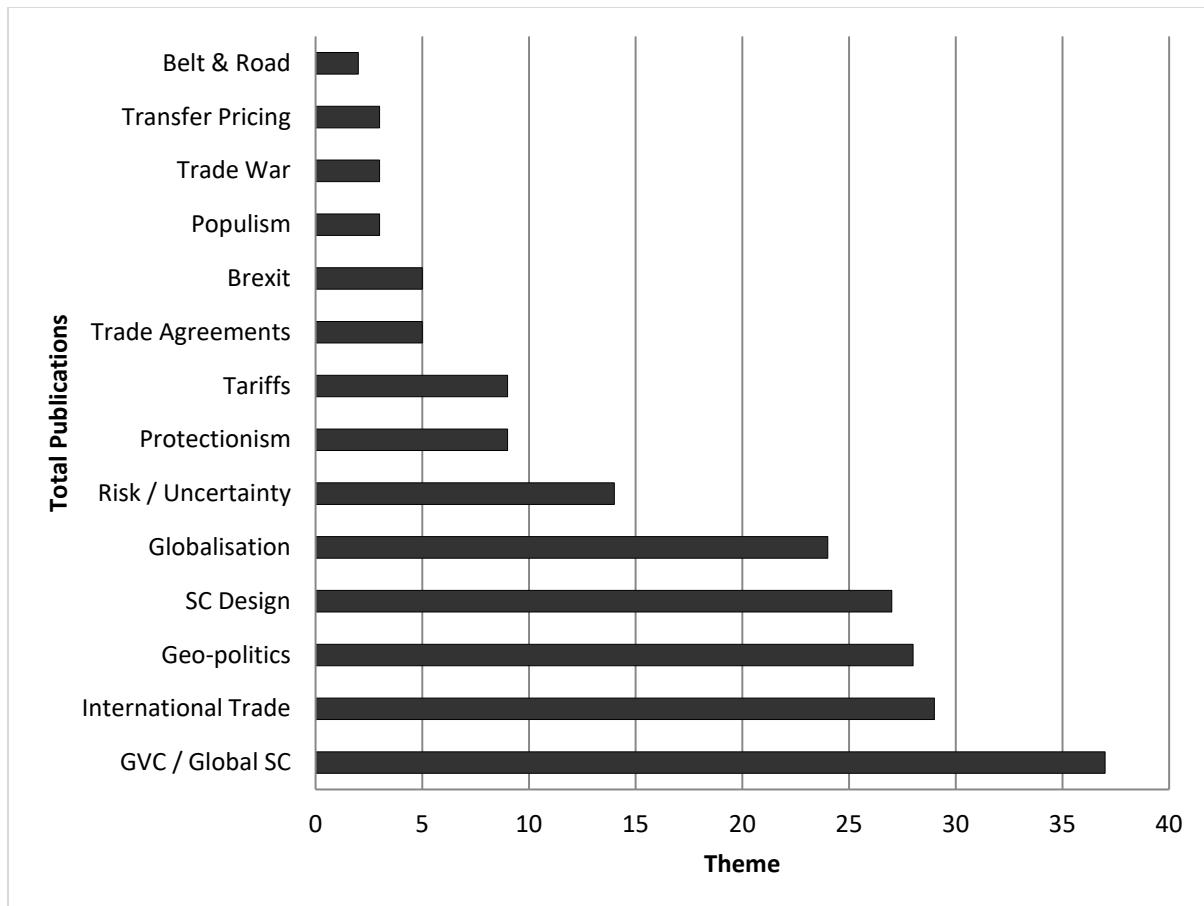
Bibliometric analysis revealed methodological gaps: 30% of papers are narrative or opinion based and 20% rely on secondary data, signalling limited primary evidence in this field. The chronology of publications shows a marked clustering of highly relevant work: seven of nine key papers (78%) appeared in 2019–2025, coinciding with trade tensions, Brexit negotiations and increasing discourse on de-globalisation. Publication frequency for Global Value Chains (GVCs), globalisation, supply chain design and international trade themes remained steady through the early 2010s but spiked in 2019–2025. Emergent themes, geo-politics/geo-economics, populism, nationalism, Brexit, trade wars, tariffs and Belt and Road emerged later in the timeline, mirroring real-world political and economic disruptions. This suggests that the literature is not only documenting supply chain strategy but also responding directly to geopolitical disruption. Populism and nationalism are particularly influential. They cut across GVC, globalisation, international trade and geo-politics discussions, serving as catalysts for protectionist policies and shifts in governance. Tariffs and trade agreements, while traditionally treated as operational levers, are reinterpreted as instruments of political strategy, especially in the context of the US–China trade war. The Belt and Road Initiative introduces a geo-economic

dimension, repositioning China as both a market and a shaper of global supply chain architecture.

Figure 3.3 illustrates the frequency and prominence of the major themes identified across the systematic literature review. The analysis demonstrates that the literature remains heavily concentrated around global value chains, international trade and supply chain design, reflecting the historical emphasis on globally integrated and efficiency oriented supply chain models. However, the increasing prominence of themes including geopolitics, risk and uncertainty, protectionism and tariffs highlights a clear shift within the literature toward the strategic implications of geopolitical disruption.

The comparatively lower frequency of themes such as populism, trade wars, Brexit and Belt and Road suggests that these areas remain emerging but increasingly important areas of academic attention. Collectively, the thematic distribution demonstrates the evolution of the literature from a predominantly globalisation-focused perspective toward a broader recognition of geopolitical risk as a critical determinant of supply chain strategy, resilience and organisational decision-making.

Fig 3.3 Total Publications per Theme



**More than 1 theme as identified within many publications*

3.5.2 Methodological Characteristics of the Literature

Table 3.4 provides an overview of the methodological characteristics of the studies included within the systematic literature review. The analysis demonstrates a diverse but uneven methodological landscape across the literature examining geopolitical risk, globalisation and supply chain management. The findings indicate that qualitative research approaches dominate the field, with the majority of studies adopting conceptual discussions, narrative analysis, literature reviews, or interview based methodologies. In particular, narrative discussion and theoretical review approaches were frequently utilised to explore the strategic and macro level implications of geopolitical disruption, protectionism, nationalism and global supply chain restructuring. This reflects the emerging and highly contextual nature of the field, where researchers often seek to interpret complex geopolitical phenomena rather than test highly structured causal relationships.

Quantitative studies were comparatively less common, although several papers employed survey based analysis, secondary data analysis and empirical modelling techniques to examine supply chain resilience, trade disruption and global production network dynamics. Mixed-method approaches were limited within the reviewed literature, suggesting that the integration of qualitative strategic interpretation with quantitative operational analysis remains relatively underdeveloped. The review also identified relatively low utilisation of simulation, process tracing and case study methodologies. While a number of studies explored supply chain adaptation and resilience strategies conceptually, fewer studies provided longitudinal or deeply operationalised empirical investigations into how organisations practically redesign supply chains in response to geopolitical pressures. This highlights a notable gap between strategic geopolitical discourse and detailed organisational implementation research.

From a relevance perspective, a significant proportion of the reviewed studies were categorised as “High” relevance due to their direct engagement with geopolitical risk, global trade disruption, supply chain redesign, or resilience strategy. However, a substantial number of studies were assessed as “Medium” relevance, reflecting the broader challenge that much of the existing supply chain literature addresses geopolitical issues indirectly rather than positioning geopolitics as a central explanatory construct. The chronological distribution of the literature also demonstrates increasing academic attention toward geopolitical risk in the post-2016 period, particularly following major global events such as Brexit, the US–China trade war, the COVID-19 pandemic and the escalation of economic nationalism and regionalisation strategies. More recent studies increasingly recognise geopolitical uncertainty as a structural and enduring influence on global supply chain design rather than a temporary external disruption.

Overall, the methodological analysis highlights that the literature remains fragmented across disciplines, theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches. The findings reinforce the need for further empirically grounded and theoretically integrated research examining how geopolitical forces influence long-term supply chain strategy, organisational decision-making and global network configuration.

Table 3.4 Papers by Authors and Method

Publication Year	Author	Relevance	Qualitative	Quantitative	Mixed	Interview	Literature Review	Narrative - Theoretical Review	Narrative - Discussion	Process Tracing	Case Study	Survey	Secondary Data Analysis	Simulation
2023	Witt et al (2023)	High	X						X					
2022	Basu & Ray (2022)	Med	X						X					
2022	Duong et al (2022)	Med		X								X		
2022	Luo (2022)	Med	X					X						
2020	Dong & Kouvelis (2020)	High	X					X						
2020	Nakamura, Yamada,& Tan (2020)	High			X		X							X
2020	Roscoe et al (2020)	High	X			X					X			
2020	Buckley & Hashai (2020)	Med	X					X						
2020	Gulotty & Li (2020)	Med			X	X						X		
2020	Prataviera et al (2020)	Low	X				X							
2020	Thürer et al (2020)	Low	X				X							
2019	Alvstam, Ivarsson & Petersen (2019)	High	X								X			
2019	Carataş & Spătariu (2019)	High	X						X					
2019	Chae et al (2019)	High		X									X	
2019	Witt (2019)	High		X									X	
2019	Bekkers (2019)	Med		X										X
2019	Hendry et al (2019)	Med	X								X			
2018	Beeson (2018)	Med	X				X							
2018	Gygli, Haelg, & Sturm (2018)	Med		X									X	
2018	Rodrik (2018)	Low	X						X					
2017	Kobrin (2017)	High	X					X						
2017	Baccini, Pinto & Weymouth (2017)	Med		X									X	
2017	Meyer (2017)	Med	X						X					
2017	Zajak (2017)	Med	X			X				X				
2016	MacCarthy et al (2016)	Med	X						X					
2016	Shapovalova (2016)	Med	X						X					
2016	Shi, Hoskisson & Zhang (2016)	Med	X					X						
2016	Wang, Gao & Mukhopadhyay (2016)	Med	X				X							
2016	Sun & Grimes (2016)	Low		X									X	
2015	Hasani, Zegordi & Nikbakhsh (2015)	Low		X										X
2014	Bremmer (2014)	Med	X						X					
2014	Gereffi (2014)	Med	X						X					
2014	Yang (2014)	Med	X						X					
2014	Hammami & Frein (2014)	Low	X				X							
2014	Miled & Fiore (2014)	Low	X			X	X							
2014	Seppälä, Kenney & Ali-Yrkkö (2014)	Low	X								X			
2013	Ellram, Tate & Petersen (2013)	Med		X								X		
2013	Mansfield & Mutz (2013)	Med		X								X		
2012	Simangunsong, Hendry, & Stevenson (2012)	Med	X				X							
2012	Caceres & Ear (2012)	Low	X						X					
2011	Gereffi (2011)	Med			X		X						X	
2011	Pickles & Smith (2011)	Med		X									X	
2009	Hameri & Hintsa (2009)	High			X	X	X					X		
2009	Beugelsdijk, Pedersen & Petersen (2009)	Low		X									X	
2009	Osarenkhoe (2009)	Low			X	X						X		
2009	Sturgeon & Gereffi (2009)	Low	X						X					
2009	Sturgeon et al (2009)	Low		X									X	
2008	Corbett (2008)	Low			X	X						X		

3.5.3 Literature Findings Mapped to CIMO

Table 3.5 maps the dominant themes emerging from the systematic literature review against the CIMO framework (Context–Intervention–Mechanism–Outcome), providing a structured analytical lens through which the literature can be synthesised and interpreted. The framework enables the review findings to move beyond descriptive thematic categorisation toward a more integrated explanation of how geopolitical forces influence organisational supply chain behaviour and strategic transformation. The mapping demonstrates that geopolitical disruption functions not merely as an external environmental condition, but increasingly as a structural determinant of supply chain design and organisational decision-making. Across the literature, themes including protectionism, nationalism and geopolitical risk were consistently associated with escalating trade instability, dependency concerns, regulatory uncertainty and growing fragmentation within global supply networks. These contextual pressures were found to challenge traditional efficiency driven globalisation models and increase organisational exposure to geopolitical volatility.

The literature further illustrates how organisations respond to these contextual pressures through a range of strategic interventions, including tariff mitigation strategies, reshoring and regionalisation initiatives, enhanced supplier governance and increased geopolitical risk monitoring capabilities. These interventions subsequently activate organisational mechanisms such as supply chain redesign, supplier diversification, network reconfiguration and adaptive strategic decision-making processes. The outcomes identified across the literature demonstrate a clear shift toward resilience oriented supply chain models characterised by regionalisation, reduced dependency on concentrated sourcing geographies, increased redundancy and greater strategic flexibility. Importantly, the findings suggest that resilience is increasingly being reframed not solely as an operational capability, but as a geopolitical response mechanism embedded within long-term supply chain strategy.

The CIMO mapping therefore provides an important conceptual synthesis of the literature by illustrating the interconnected and dynamic relationship between geopolitical disruption, organisational intervention, strategic adaptation and evolving supply chain outcomes. Furthermore, the framework establishes the analytical foundation for the empirical phase of this research by informing the development of the interview structure, thematic coding process

and interpretation of participant experiences relating to geopolitical risk and global supply chain design.

Table 3.5 Mapping SLR Themes to CIMO

Literature Theme	Context	Intervention	Mechanism	Outcome
Protectionism	Global trade instability	Tariffs	Supply chain redesign	Regionalisation
Nationalism	Country dependency concerns	Reshoring	Supplier diversification	Reduced dependency
Geopolitical Risk	Persistent uncertainty	Risk monitoring	Strategic adaptation	Resilience

3.5.4 Gaps in Existing Literature

Table 3.6 summarises the principal gaps identified across the systematic literature review and highlights several important limitations within the existing body of knowledge. First, much of the literature remains conceptual or theoretical in nature, with comparatively limited empirical research capturing the lived experiences and strategic perspectives of supply chain practitioners operating within geopolitically volatile environments. Second, while geopolitical disruption has increasingly been discussed within the broader supply chain management literature, much of the existing research focuses predominantly on manufacturing or general supply chain contexts, with relatively limited attention given specifically to the healthcare sector despite its critical dependence on globally dispersed supply networks.

The review also identified a limited integration of geopolitics within established supply chain management theory, with geopolitical factors often treated as external environmental variables rather than embedded strategic determinants of supply chain design and decision-making. Finally, the literature remains heavily influenced by short-term crisis events, with limited longitudinal understanding of how geopolitical pressures evolve over time and reshape

organisational strategy on a sustained basis. Collectively, these gaps reinforce the need for empirically grounded, sector specific and longitudinally informed research examining the relationship between geopolitics and global supply chain strategy, thereby supporting the rationale and contribution of the present study.

Table 3.6 Gaps in Existing Literature

Gap Identified	Evidence from Literature
Limited empirical interview based studies	Majority conceptual/theoretical
Limited healthcare specific focus	Most studies manufacturing/general SCM
Limited integration of geopolitics into SCM theory	Treated as external context
Limited longitudinal understanding	Short-term crisis focus dominates

3.5.5 A New Landscape for Global Trade

Many studies adopt a regional or country focus, most frequently analysing the US–China relationship. This is unsurprising given China’s central manufacturing role and its geopolitical rivalry with the US. Brexit-focused studies highlight Europe’s vulnerability to nationalist politics. Emerging markets are also discussed: while offering cost advantages and growing consumer bases, they present political and regulatory risks that complicate network design decisions.

The literature agrees that globalisation is changing, though early academics debated its depth and permanence, this literature review has confirmed its increasing importance and relevance. Some frame the current moment as a cyclical slowdown, while others suggest a structural transformation. Events such as the 2008 financial crisis, Brexit, the Trump presidency and the US–China trade war, combined with COVID-19 disruptions and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, are viewed as inflection points. These developments indicate that interconnected supply networks are vulnerable to political shocks, protectionist measures and shifting alliances. Whether globalisation will rebound or settle into a more regionalised pattern is uncertain, but a full return to isolated national economies is considered improbable due to entrenched interdependencies. Recent literature increasingly recognises that geopolitical tensions are

reshaping global supply chain structures beyond traditional efficiency considerations. Luo (2022) highlights the emergence of techno-nationalism, where technological capability, national security and geopolitical strategy become deeply interconnected, contributing to decoupling pressures within global trade systems. In parallel, Basu and Ray (2022) identify the growing adoption of “China-plus-one” diversification strategies as organisations seek to reduce overdependence on concentrated manufacturing locations and improve geopolitical resilience.

3.5.6 Multi level Impacts

Globalisation’s benefits are uneven. Gereffi (2014) highlights economic upgrading and improved outcomes for some societies, yet other authors emphasise widening inequality. Outsourcing and offshoring have heightened employment concerns in developed economies, fuelling populist campaigns that promise to “bring jobs home”. Brexit and Trump-era rhetoric reveal how discontent with globalisation becomes a political force.

Multinationals, once celebrated as globalisation’s success stories, are now often targets of public frustration. They face increasing scrutiny over intellectual property (IP), data security and the ethical implications of offshoring. The literature points to rising expectations for organisations to engage governments proactively, diversify supply bases and build resilience against political risk. Global expansion is no longer a default growth strategy; instead, companies are weighing cost advantages against geopolitical exposure.

Governments act both as facilitators and gatekeepers of globalisation. They can attract investment through supportive policies or repel it with protectionist measures. Studies emphasise the complexity of balancing domestic priorities with international commitments, with examples ranging from the UK’s post-Brexit trade negotiations to the US’s use of tariffs to influence supply chains.

The US–China rivalry dominates global discourse. Trade tensions that began with intellectual property disputes escalated into tariffs and retaliatory measures, reshaping supply routes and partner relationships worldwide. Brexit raised broader questions about the durability of supranational unions. Only a limited number of studies model the global ramifications of these disruptions, but those that do highlight potential supply chain realignments and fragmentation of global governance structures.

Supply networks must now consider political risk alongside cost and efficiency. Government policy influences location decisions, tariff exposure and IP protection. The literature underscores that technology, once primarily a driver of integration, is also a vulnerability: IP restrictions and cybersecurity threats have become key risk factors. Since 2008, supply chain strategy has shifted from pure cost optimisation to balancing resilience, flexibility and geopolitical awareness.

Overall, the literature reviewed within this chapter indicates that global supply chains are undergoing a broader conceptual and structural transition. The dominant assumptions underpinning earlier globalisation models, particularly those centred on efficiency optimisation, comparative advantage and political stability, are increasingly challenged by geopolitical fragmentation, economic nationalism and rising institutional uncertainty. While contemporary literature increasingly acknowledges these developments, much of the existing research remains reactive, fragmented or focused on discrete geopolitical events rather than examining how geopolitical forces structurally reshape managerial logic and supply chain design over time. Consequently, there remains a need for empirically grounded research capable of examining how organisations interpret, operationalise and respond to geopolitical disruption as an enduring condition rather than a temporary anomaly.

3.5.7 Updated Research Statement

These findings indicate that while the literature broadly agrees on the direction of change in global trade and supply chain structures, it remains theoretically fragmented and empirically underdeveloped. Much of the existing research focuses on describing observed disruptions rather than systematically examining how geopolitical forces are translated into concrete supply chain design and decision-making outcomes. As a result, there is limited insight into how organisations interpret, prioritise and respond to political uncertainty in practice.

This gap underscores the need for primary, decision-focused research that moves beyond macro level trends to examine managerial responses within global supply networks. Accordingly, this thesis seeks to address this limitation by empirically investigating how geopolitical dynamics influence supply chain design choices and strategic trade-offs under conditions of heightened uncertainty. This synthesis indicates that the literature at the intersection of geopolitics and

global supply chains remains relatively underdeveloped, with existing research dominated by conceptual and narrative contributions and a heavy reliance on secondary data. While there is broad consensus that globalisation is evolving and that global trade volumes have declined, much of the literature focuses on describing these shifts rather than examining how geopolitical forces are translated into organisational decision-making.

Populism, nationalism and protectionism are consistently identified as central drivers of change, contributing to heightened uncertainty within an already highly interconnected global trade system. Despite increased recognition of geopolitical risk, supply networks remain structurally vulnerable and the mechanisms through which organisations respond to political uncertainty are insufficiently explored. These limitations in the literature necessitate a refinement of the research focus, leading to a revised research statement that more explicitly examines how geopolitical dynamics influence supply chain design and strategic decision-making in practice. Reflecting on the research question and CIMO framework, the original statement,

“Within global supply chains (C), the reduction in global trade / reverse globalisation (I), influenced by geo-political strategies (M), is resulting in the restructuring of supply networks (O)”.

Has been refined to:

“Within global supply chains (C), the reduction in global trade and heightened uncertainty about globalisation’s future (I), driven by populist and nationalist influences on geo-political strategies (M), is leading to the restructuring and regionalisation of supply networks (O)”.

This updated statement acknowledges that populist and nationalist movements have reinforced protectionist strategies, accelerating a shift toward regional supply chain models. It also highlights the continuing need for empirical, primary research to understand how organisations can adapt supply networks for resilience in an unstable geopolitical environment. The refined research statement underpins the qualitative study presented later in this thesis. The survey and statistical analysis have been specifically designed to test whether the patterns identified in the literature, particularly the influence of populism, nationalism and geo-political strategies on

global supply networks, are observable in practice across a broad sample of industry participants. By grounding the empirical research in these synthesised findings, the study ensures that its design, variables and hypotheses directly reflect the most critical and emergent trends documented within the academic discourse.

3.6 Conclusion

This systematic literature review has shown that globalisation is undergoing significant transformation, shaped by the interplay of geo-political forces, economic realignment and societal discontent. The findings confirm that global trade volumes have slowed and that supply chain strategies are increasingly influenced by populism, nationalism and protectionist policies. Events such as the 2008 financial crisis, Brexit, the Trump administrations, the US–China trade war, COVID-19 and the Russia–Ukraine conflict represent inflection points that have redefined global supply networks.

Across fourteen themes, the literature reveals both convergence and gaps. There is broad consensus on the vulnerability of interconnected supply chains to political and economic shocks, yet many contributions remain narrative or secondary in nature, underscoring the need for robust primary research. The synthesis also highlights the emergence of regionalisation, “friend-shoring” and resilience-building as strategic responses, though their long-term effectiveness remains uncertain.

This chapter establishes the conceptual and empirical foundation for the thesis. The updated research statement, linking reductions in global trade and heightened uncertainty to the restructuring of supply networks, provides the basis for the qualitative study that follows. By testing these patterns within a broad industry sample, the research advances understanding of how organisations are adapting their global supply chains in an era of instability and shifting global power dynamics

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline and justify the research methodology adopted to address the study's central aim, to understand how geopolitical factors influence global trade and, in turn, how these dynamics reshape the design and operation of global supply chains. The methodology is designed to ensure both academic rigour and practical relevance, combining structured evidence synthesis with experiential insight from industry practitioners.

The study follows a sequential research design comprising two distinct but complementary phases. The first phase employed a systematic literature review (SLR), providing a comprehensive synthesis of existing research across the domains of global trade, geopolitics, supply chain design. This phase established the theoretical foundation for the study, identified key constructs, revealed gaps in current knowledge. The SLR was executed in accordance with the PRISMA framework and guided by CIMO logic, enabling the researcher to structure and refine the research scope in a transparent and replicable manner.

The second phase involved a qualitative empirical investigation, designed to explore how the geopolitical trends identified in the literature manifest in practice. Consistent with the interpretivist philosophical orientation of the study, a phenomenological approach was adopted to capture and interpret the lived experiences of industry professionals engaged in global supply chain management. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with senior practitioners across manufacturing, distribution, sourcing, logistics roles within industry. This qualitative phase generated rich primary data that provided depth and context to the insights derived from the literature.

Together, these two phases formed an integrated methodological framework that balances theoretical breadth with empirical depth. The systematic review ensured objectivity and structure in building the knowledge base, while the phenomenological interviews enabled the researcher to derive meaning from human experience and professional judgement in an evolving geopolitical environment. As the research progressed, the dynamic geopolitical

environment necessitated further methodological reflection. To maintain temporal and contextual relevance, supplementary pulse surveys and an updated literature review were conducted in 2025, capturing practitioner responses to renewed global trade tensions. These adaptive steps ensured that the study remained current, empirically grounded and responsive to evolving global realities. The following sections describe in detail the philosophical assumptions underpinning the research, the design and implementation of both methodological phases, the procedures used to ensure reliability, validity and ethical integrity throughout the study.

4.2 Research Philosophy and Approach

Every research project is underpinned by a set of philosophical assumptions that shape how knowledge is viewed, generated and interpreted. Understanding these assumptions is critical to ensuring coherence between the research objectives, the methods employed and the interpretation of findings. As Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) argue, ontological and epistemological positions directly influence research design choices. This study adopts a subjectivist ontology and an interpretivist epistemology, positioned within a phenomenological research approach. These perspectives collectively support the study's aim of understanding how geopolitical forces are experienced and interpreted by practitioners responsible for managing global supply chains. Phenomenology is particularly suited to research questions that seek to understand meaning rather than measurement and essence rather than frequency, making it appropriate for examining complex and evolving geopolitical phenomena as lived and interpreted in organisational contexts (Creswell et al., 2007).

4.2.1. Ontological Perspective

Ontology concerns the nature of reality and how it is perceived. The ontological position adopted in this study is subjectivist, assuming that reality is socially constructed and shaped by the perceptions and actions of individuals. Within the context of global supply chains, phenomena such as trade policy shifts, protectionism, or geopolitical crises do not exist as objective entities independent of human interpretation; rather, they gain meaning through the ways practitioners experience, interpret, respond to them in practice (Saunders et al., 2009). This ontological stance recognises that the structure and operation of global supply chains are dynamic and influenced by the decisions, perceptions, interactions of multiple social actors.

A subjectivist ontology aligns with the research objective, which seeks not only to describe geopolitical developments but to understand their impact as experienced by individuals within industry. This position rejects the notion of a single, measurable reality, favouring instead a pluralistic understanding of how different actors make sense of and respond to global disruptions and shifts in trade relations.

4.2.2 Epistemological Perspective

The epistemological stance of the study is interpretivist, reflecting the view that knowledge is constructed through understanding and interpreting human experience rather than through detached observation. An interpretivist perspective assumes that social reality is complex and context, dependent, therefore cannot be fully understood through purely quantitative or positivist inquiry. Interpretivism assumes that social reality is complex, context-dependent and cannot be fully understood through purely positivist or quantitative approaches (Creswell et al., 2007). Within this paradigm, the researcher seeks to explore meaning, perspective, context, understanding how and why individuals interpret geopolitical change as they do.

This interpretivist orientation directly informs the use of qualitative, semi-structured interviews as the primary means of data collection. Through dialogue and reflection, participants are encouraged to describe how they perceive and respond to geopolitical developments, enabling the researcher to identify patterns, shared meanings, variations in experience. Such an approach recognises that the same geopolitical event (for example, a tariff increase or trade restriction) may be interpreted differently depending on a participant's role, organisation, or regional context.

4.2.3 Research Approach

Given the study's interpretivist foundation, an inductive research approach was adopted. Inductive reasoning allows theory to emerge from empirical evidence, rather than testing pre-existing hypotheses. This approach is particularly appropriate in new or evolving fields where limited prior theory exists, as is the case with the intersection of geopolitics and global supply chain management. The inductive process began with the systematic literature review, which identified existing concepts and gaps within the academic field. Insights from this phase

informed the design of the qualitative study, shaping the interview framework and focus areas (Saunders et al., 2009).

The subsequent qualitative phase applied phenomenological methods to explore how practitioners understand and experience the phenomena identified in the literature. In doing so, the study aimed to derive the essence of lived experience, capturing how individuals interpret geopolitical risk, translate policy changes into operational decisions, adapt their supply chain strategies accordingly. This iterative process reflects an abductive element within the research approach, as the researcher continuously moved between empirical observation and theoretical interpretation to refine understanding and ensure alignment between literature and practice.

4.2.4 Alternative Methodological Positioning - Consideration of Abductive Logic

The study is predominantly inductive in nature, while also drawing on complementary abductive elements that strengthen its analytical depth. Abductive reasoning is characterised by an iterative movement between empirical observations and existing theoretical frameworks, enabling the refinement and extension of theory through engagement with surprising or emergent findings (Kovács and Spens, 2005). This interpretation is consistent with established qualitative research approaches within the international business and subsidiary evolution literature. For example, recent studies on competence creating subsidiaries adopt explicitly abductive analytical approaches, involving iterative cycling between theory and data to develop new conceptual insights (Reilly et al 2023). Similarly, longitudinal case based research examining subsidiary closure and knowledge transfer demonstrates how emerging empirical dynamics are interpreted through engagement with multiple theoretical lenses, including identity, emotion and knowledge transfer theory (Reilly, Tippmann and Sharkey, 2023).

In this study, while the primary emphasis remains on capturing and representing the lived experiences of participants, elements of abductive logic are evident in the iterative engagement between emerging empirical themes and the evolving theoretical framework. This includes the refinement of constructs related to geopolitics, supply chain restructuring and organisational response as data collection and analysis progressed. However, the research does not fully adopt an abductive stance, as the central analytical priority remains grounded in the inductive development of insights from participant narratives rather than systematic theory testing or

formal theory matching. As such, the study is most appropriately characterised as primarily inductive with abductive elements, reflecting a pragmatic and flexible qualitative research design.

4.2.5 Phenomenological Foundations

Phenomenology is concerned with exploring how individuals experience and ascribe meaning to specific phenomena. It seeks to uncover the essence of lived experience, enabling the researcher to describe the phenomenon from the participant's perspective. In this study, the phenomenon under investigation is the influence of geopolitical developments on global supply chain design and decision, making. A phenomenological approach was selected for three key reasons. First, it aligns with the interpretivist philosophy of understanding experience through meaning rather than measurement. Secondly, it is particularly suited to emergent and under-theorised fields, where lived experience provides critical insight into complex and evolving realities (Creswell et al., 2007). Third, phenomenology allows the researcher to capture the contextual nuances of how global events, such as trade wars, sanctions, or nationalist movements, are interpreted and operationalised within organisational settings.

The phenomenological method involves detailed reflection on participant accounts, emphasising empathy, context, interpretation. Through this process, the researcher seeks to describe not only what participants experience but how they experience it, what these experiences reveal about broader patterns of behaviour, adaptation, decision, making within global supply chains.

Predominantly phenomenological in orientation, this study draws on participants' experiences and perceptions, without being positioned as an exclusively phenomenological inquiry in the strict methodological sense. Rather than seeking to isolate the essence of a lived experience, the research examines how senior supply chain practitioners interpret, describe, and respond to geopolitical disruption within organisational and sectoral contexts. The study is therefore accurately characterised as an interpretivist qualitative study using thematic analysis with phenomenological grounding. This positioning reflects the research aim to identify patterns across participant accounts and develop an empirically grounded understanding of how geopolitical forces are shaping supply chain decision-making. While the thesis contributes conceptually to debates on supply chain resilience, risk, globalisation and geopolitical

disruption, it does not claim to generate a wholly new theory. Instead, it seeks to extend and refine existing theoretical perspectives through evidence from practitioner accounts.

4.2.6 Researcher Reflection

Given the interpretivist and phenomenological nature of the research, the position of the researcher is recognised as integral to the research process. As Tracy (2010) emphasises, reflexivity involves critical self, awareness of how one's own background, assumptions, professional experience may influence data collection and interpretation. The researcher's professional background in global sourcing and supply chain management informed both the formulation of the research questions and the depth of engagement with participants. While this background provided valuable contextual understanding, reflexive practice, through post, interview reflection and documentation, was essential to mitigate potential bias and ensure objectivity in interpretation.

Reflexivity also informed the researcher's decision to adapt aspects of the methodology as the study unfolded. In recognising that the geopolitical environment was rapidly evolving, the researcher responded by incorporating supplementary pulse surveys and updating the literature review in 2025. These adaptive steps reflected a commitment to methodological transparency and ensured that the research remained contemporaneous, contextually relevant and aligned with its interpretivist foundation. The study's philosophical orientation is defined by a subjectivist ontology, an interpretivist epistemology, an inductive phenomenological approach. This philosophical foundation provides coherence and consistency across all stages of the research process, ensuring that the methods selected are appropriate for the study's aim of generating deep, contextualised understanding of how geopolitical dynamics shape the realities of global supply chain management

4.3 Research Design

The research design provides the structural framework through which the study's objectives are pursued. It outlines the logical sequence connecting the research philosophy, methods, procedures to the research questions. In this study, a sequential exploratory design was adopted, combining a systematic literature review with a qualitative phenomenological investigation. This design reflects both the emergent nature of the research topic and the dual need to

understand what is already known from academia and how those developments are experienced in practice.

4.3.1 Overview of the Design

The study was designed in two distinct but interconnected phases.

Phase One – Systematic Literature Review (SLR):

This phase aimed to establish a robust theoretical foundation by identifying, evaluating, synthesising existing knowledge on the intersection between geopolitics, global trade and supply chain design. The SLR was executed following a five, phase process derived from the PRISMA, P framework (Moher et al., 2015) and informed by the CIMO logic developed by Denyer and Tranfield (2009). This structured approach ensured methodological rigour, transparency, replicability, while the use of CIMO logic allowed the researcher to define scope and refine the research questions systematically.

Phase Two – Qualitative Empirical Study:

Building upon insights derived from the literature, this phase sought to explore the lived experiences of professionals managing global supply chains within t industry. The objective was to understand how the geopolitical factors identified in the SLR are interpreted and managed in practice. A phenomenological approach using semi-structured interviews enabled participants to articulate their experiences, interpretations and strategies in their own terms, providing rich qualitative data for analysis.

The integration of these two phases ensured that the study combined breadth and depth: the literature review provided a comprehensive overview of the academic landscape, while the qualitative phase offered contextually grounded, human, centred insights into real, world implications.

4.3.2 Rationale for a Sequential Design

The sequential nature of the design is grounded in the study's interpretivist and inductive orientation. The systematic literature review served as the exploratory foundation, mapping the existing knowledge base, identifying thematic gaps, informing the construction of the interview

framework. This process enabled the researcher to progress logically from abstraction to experience, moving from the theoretical representation of geopolitics within the literature to the practical realities encountered by those managing global supply networks.

This design also aligns with the CIMO logic underpinning the study. The CIMO framework (Context–Intervention–Mechanism–Outcome) provided both the conceptual basis for structuring the systematic literature review and a guiding lens for developing interview questions. For example, the context (C) of global supply chains, the interventions (I) such as protectionist measures or trade restrictions, the mechanisms (M) by which organisations respond, the outcomes (O) such as reconfiguration or nearshoring, are all elements that bridge the literature and empirical phases. By maintaining continuity between phases, the research ensured conceptual alignment and analytical cohesion across the methodology.

4.3.3 Integration Between Phases

Integration between the systematic review and the qualitative study occurred at multiple stages:

Design Stage:

The CIMO analysis informed the identification of key constructs and themes, which subsequently guided the development of the interview protocol.

For example, the literature identified recurring themes such as globalisation, protectionism, tariffs, trade wars; these were translated into open, ended questions inviting participants to describe their experiences of such phenomena.

Data Collection Stage:

The SLR provided contextual knowledge of existing theory and terminology, ensuring that the interview questions were both grounded in academic concepts and accessible to industry practitioners. Semi-structured interviews were employed as the primary data collection method to facilitate an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences and interpretations. This approach allows flexibility while maintaining sufficient structure to ensure consistency across interviews. In phenomenological research, interviewing is viewed as a means of accessing the context and meaning of experience, enabling researchers to understand how individuals interpret and act upon their realities (Kvale, 1996; Seidman, 1998). As Dilley (2004) notes, interviews are particularly effective in interpretivist research as they allow participants to

situate behaviour and decision-making within broader organisational and environmental contexts. Interviews were conducted with senior practitioners across manufacturing, sourcing, logistics and distribution roles within global supply chains, generating rich primary data grounded in professional practice.

Analysis Stage:

Thematic findings from the literature and interview data were later compared and triangulated. This approach allowed the researcher to explore areas of convergence (where academic and practical perspectives aligned) and divergence (where practitioner experiences extended or challenged existing theory).

This iterative integration reflects an abductive element in the study's design, moving between theory and data to refine understanding and generate new conceptual insights. The combination of phases therefore serves not as a mixed, methods design in the conventional sense, but as a multi, method interpretive framework aimed at developing holistic understanding of a complex, emergent phenomenon.

4.3.4 Research Methods Alignment

The research design ensures methodological coherence between the philosophical stance, research approach, data collection methods:

Table 4.1 Research Methods Alignment

Component	Description	Alignment
Ontology	Subjectivist – reality is constructed through social interaction and interpretation	Justifies focus on lived experience
Epistemology	Interpretivist – knowledge derived from understanding human meaning	Supports qualitative enquiry
Approach	Inductive / Abductive	Allows theory to emerge from data
Methodology	Phenomenological	Captures the essence of experience
Methods	Systematic Literature Review and Semi-structured Interviews	Ensure depth and triangulation

This coherence provides both academic rigour and practical relevance. The systematic review secures a transparent evidence base, while the phenomenological interviews ensure that the findings are grounded in professional practice. Together, they enable the research to make an original contribution to both theory and applied supply chain management.

4.3.5 Limitations of the Design

As with all interpretivist research, the design carries certain limitations. The reliance on qualitative data restricts the generalisability of findings, the interpretive nature of phenomenological analysis introduces an element of subjectivity. However, these limitations are acknowledged and addressed through transparency, reflexivity, methodological rigour. The scope of the study is not deliberately focused on a single sector, so generalisability may be limited, , however the triangulation between literature and empirical data strengthens the credibility and transferability of the findings.

The research design reflects a deliberate and coherent sequence: the systematic literature review establishes theoretical understanding and scope, while the qualitative phenomenological study explores how these global forces are experienced and interpreted in practice. The integration of both phases enables the study to contribute original, evidence, based insights into how geopolitics reshapes global supply chain design and decision, making.

4.4 Qualitative Research Study

The second phase of this research involved the collection and analysis of primary qualitative data through semi-structured phenomenological interviews. This phase was designed to explore how the geopolitical dynamics identified in the literature are experienced, interpreted, managed by professionals operating within global supply chains. The intent was not to generalise findings but to uncover meaning through the lived experiences of individuals in real, world organisational contexts.

This empirical phase reflects the study's interpretivist and inductive orientation, aiming to generate insight grounded in human experience rather than hypothesis testing. By engaging directly with industry practitioners, the study sought to illuminate how macro, level political and economic forces translate into micro, level decision, making within the supply chain environment.

4.4.1 Rationale for Method Selection

Semi-structured interviews were selected as the most appropriate data collection method for this study due to their flexibility and ability to capture depth, nuance, personal perspective. As Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) note, semi-structured interviews are particularly effective when the goal is to explore meanings that participants ascribe to complex phenomena. This approach aligns closely with phenomenological research, where the objective is to understand experience from the participant's viewpoint and to derive the essence of that experience through careful interpretation.

Alternative methods, such as surveys or structured interviews, were considered but deemed unsuitable for an exploratory study of this nature. Surveys would have limited the richness of participant responses, while structured interviews could constrain participants' ability to discuss emergent themes or contextual influences. The semi-structured format allowed participants to elaborate freely while maintaining a clear focus on the research questions derived from the systematic literature review.

4.4.2 Sampling Strategy and Participant Profile

An intentional sampling strategy was employed to select participants with substantial professional experience and decision-making responsibility in global supply chain and sourcing functions. The objective was to capture informed perspectives from individuals directly involved in supplier selection, supply network configuration and procurement strategy across internationally exposed organisations. Participants were selected based on their seniority, functional expertise and proximity to supply chain decision-making processes in order to ensure both depth and relevance of insight.

Tables 4.2 and 4.3 below provide an overview of the participant profile and organisational representation within the study sample. A total of 22 semi-structured interviews were conducted with senior supply chain, procurement, logistics and operations professionals across a range of industries including healthcare, telecommunications, transportation, pharmaceutical, FMCG and industrial sectors. The sample was intentionally composed of participants occupying senior decision-making and leadership positions, including Directors and senior management personnel, to ensure respondents possessed significant strategic and operational insight into global supply chain management and the impact of geopolitical disruption. Participants represented organisations operating across multiple geographic regions including Ireland, the United States, the United Kingdom, China and Malaysia.

The participant demographic profile demonstrates a high level of professional experience and organisational tenure, with the majority of participants having more than five years' experience within their respective organisations and many holding leadership positions with global or regional responsibility. The inclusion of participants from multiple sectors and geographic contexts supported the development of a broad cross-industry perspective on the evolving geopolitical challenges facing global supply chains. To preserve confidentiality and comply with ethical research requirements, organisations were anonymised using organisation reference identifiers. In one case, two participants were interviewed from the same organisation to provide complementary leadership perspectives across different functional or managerial viewpoints, supporting triangulation and enhancing the depth of organisational insight obtained during the study.

The final sample comprised 22 practitioners (INT1–INT22) representing a diverse cross-section of industries, including healthcare (n=11), telecommunications and IT (n=5), transportation (n=2), industrial manufacturing (n=1), pharmaceutical (n=1), FMCG (n=1) and multi-sector leadership (n=1). All 22 participants occupied roles with global responsibility and exposure within multinational organisations. While healthcare constituted the largest proportion of the sample due to its highly globalised and regulated nature, the inclusion of participants from additional sectors enabled comparative understanding of how geopolitical pressures are interpreted and operationalised across different industry contexts. Participants occupied a range of senior positions within their organisations, including Directors (n=10), Managers (n=9) and Individual Contributors/Specialists (n=3), ensuring representation across supply chain roles. Geographically, interviewees were located across Ireland (n=14), the United States (n=6), China (n=1), Malaysia (n=1) and the United Kingdom (n=1), providing an internationally dispersed dataset reflective of globally integrated supply networks.

The diversity of roles, industries and regions strengthened the study's ability to capture varied organisational responses to geopolitical pressures. Data collection concluded after twenty-two interviews, as thematic saturation had been reached and subsequent interviews yielded no substantively new insights, consistent with established qualitative research principles regarding sample adequacy and saturation (Dilley, 2004).

Table 4.2 Participant Profile

Participant Code	Gender	Age Profile	Time with Organisation	Seniority Level
INT1	Male	Over 55	>10 Years	Director
INT2	Male	25–40	5–10 Years	Senior Manager / Decision Maker
INT3	Male	40–55	5–10 Years	Senior Manager / Decision Maker
INT4	Male	25–40	5–10 Years	Senior Manager / Decision Maker
INT5	Male	40–55	>10 Years	Senior Manager / Decision Maker
INT6	Male	Over 55	>10 Years	Director
INT7	Male	40–55	5–10 Years	Director
INT8	Female	40–55	<5 Years	Senior Manager / Decision Maker
INT9	Male	40–55	>10 Years	Senior Manager / Decision Maker
INT10	Male	25–40	<5 Years	Senior Manager / Decision Maker
INT11	Male	40–55	<5 Years	Director
INT12	Female	Over 55	>10 Years	Senior Manager / Decision Maker
INT13	Female	40–55	<5 Years	Senior Manager / Decision Maker
INT14	Male	25–40	5–10 Years	Director
INT15	Male	Over 55	>10 Years	Director
INT16	Female	40–55	5–10 Years	Director
INT17	Male	Over 55	>10 Years	Director
INT18	Female	40–55	>10 Years	Senior Manager / Decision Maker
INT19	Male	40–55	>10 Years	Director
INT20	Male	Over 55	<5 Years	Senior Manager / Decision Maker
INT21	Male	40–55	5–10 Years	Director
INT22	Female	40–55	5–10 Years	Senior Manager / Decision Maker

Table 4.3 Organisation and Industry Representation

Participant Code	Organisation Reference	Industry Sector	Geographic Location
INT1	Org A	Healthcare	Ireland
INT2	Org B	Healthcare	Ireland
INT3	Org C	Healthcare	UK
INT4	Org D	Healthcare	Ireland
INT5	Org E	Industrial	Ireland
INT6	Org F	Healthcare	US
INT7	Org G	Transportation	Ireland
INT8	Org H	Telecommunications / IT	Ireland
INT9	Org I ¹	Healthcare	US
INT10	Org J	Pharmaceutical	Ireland
INT11	Org K	FMCG	Ireland
INT12	Org L	Healthcare	China
INT13	Org M	Healthcare	US
INT14	Org N	Telecommunications / IT	Ireland
INT15	Org O	Healthcare	Malaysia
INT16	Org P	Healthcare	US
INT17	Org Q	Telecommunications / IT	Ireland
INT18	Org R	Telecommunications / IT	Ireland
INT19	Org I ¹	Healthcare	US
INT20	Org S	Transportation	Ireland
INT21	Org T	Multiple Industries	Ireland
INT22	Org U	Telecommunications / IT	Ireland

¹ Two participants were interviewed from the same organisation

4.4.3 Unit of Analysis

The primary unit of analysis within this study was the organisational supply chain decision-maker. More specifically, the research examined how senior supply chain, procurement,

logistics and operations leaders perceived, interpreted and responded to geopolitical developments and their impact on global supply chain strategy, risk management and operational decision-making. The study did not seek to analyse individual organisations in isolation, nor was it focused on a single supply chain event or industry sector. Instead, the research adopted a cross-industry exploratory approach, drawing on the experiences and perspectives of senior organisational actors involved in strategic supply chain decision-making across multiple sectors and geographic regions.

Accordingly, the unit of analysis was situated at the intersection of the organisational and managerial level, where geopolitical pressures are interpreted and translated into sourcing, network design, resilience, risk management and operational responses. This approach aligned with the study's interpretivist orientation and qualitative research design, which sought to understand how geopolitical disruption is experienced and operationalised within contemporary global supply chains. The use of senior decision-makers as participants was particularly important given their direct involvement in strategic supply chain governance, supplier management, international sourcing and organisational adaptation to geopolitical uncertainty. Their perspectives provided insight into both strategic and operational dimensions of supply chain response mechanisms within increasingly complex geopolitical environments.

4.4.4 Managing Confirmation Bias and Social Desirability Bias

Given the politically and commercially sensitive nature of geopolitics, protectionism, nationalism and supply chain strategy, careful consideration was given to the potential influence of both confirmation bias and social desirability bias throughout the interview design, data collection and analysis stages of the research. Social desirability bias may arise where participants provide responses perceived to be professionally acceptable, organisationally aligned, or socially appropriate rather than fully reflective of their genuine experiences or opinions (Bergen and Labonté, 2020). Similarly, confirmation bias may influence both participants and researchers through the selective reinforcement or interpretation of pre-existing assumptions and beliefs (Peters, 2022).

To minimise these risks, several deliberate methodological controls were implemented throughout the study. The interview guide was pre-tested and iteratively refined prior to formal data collection in order to identify and remove potentially leading, assumptive or overly

directional questions. This process enabled the wording and sequencing of questions to be adjusted to support open discussion and neutral exploration of participant experiences. Bergen and Labonté (2020) argue that careful question design and iterative refinement are important mechanisms for reducing socially desirable responding within qualitative interviews. Questions were intentionally structured to avoid presupposing geopolitical change or disruption. Rather than asking participants how sourcing decisions had changed due to geopolitical pressures, questions were framed in a more neutral and exploratory manner, such as asking whether sourcing decisions had changed, whether their global manufacturing footprint had evolved over time or what factors had influenced recent supply chain decisions. This reduced the likelihood of reinforcing predetermined assumptions or directing participants toward a particular narrative, thereby limiting the potential for researcher-led confirmation bias (Peters, 2022).

Similarly, direct political terminology such as “populism” was intentionally used sparingly during interviews. Instead, a broader range of operational and contextual proxy terminology was incorporated throughout the interview process, including references to tariffs, protectionism, localisation, reshoring, regionalisation, supply continuity, geopolitical uncertainty, trade restrictions and government intervention. This approach reduced the likelihood that participants would feel compelled to provide politically framed or socially conditioned responses while still enabling the underlying themes associated with populism and nationalism to emerge organically from participant experiences. Bergen and Labonté (2020) note that avoiding highly sensitive or socially loaded phrasing can significantly reduce socially desirable response patterns. In addition, the interviews were designed to encourage operational and experience based discussion rather than ideological or political positioning. Participants were therefore primarily asked about observable organisational responses, sourcing strategies, supplier diversification activities, manufacturing footprint decisions, inventory strategies and risk management approaches, rather than being asked to directly evaluate political movements, governments or political ideologies. This reduced the potential for impression management and professionally desirable responding, particularly given the seniority of participants and the commercially sensitive nature of many discussions (Larson, 2019).

The interviews were conducted using a conversational and semi-structured approach intended to build rapport and create an environment supportive of candid discussion. Bergen and Labonté (2020) identify rapport-building and participant comfort as important mechanisms for

reducing socially desirable responding in qualitative research. Participants were assured that all responses would remain confidential, organisations would be anonymised and quotations would be attributed using coded participant identifiers (INT1–INT22). This was particularly important given the commercially sensitive and politically nuanced subject matter explored throughout the study. Reflexivity was also maintained throughout the data collection process. Ongoing consideration was given to participant reactions, question phrasing, emerging themes and areas where responses appeared cautious, rehearsed, or organisationally aligned. This aligns with Bergen and Labonté's (2020) recommendation that researchers should treat social desirability bias as an ongoing reflexive consideration throughout qualitative fieldwork rather than solely as a post-analysis limitation. Finally, findings were not interpreted based on isolated participant statements alone. Themes and observations were validated through repeated patterns across participants, industries and organisational contexts. This helped reduce the risk that conclusions reflected isolated cases of impression management, ideological positioning, or individual confirmation effects.

Overall, while confirmation bias and social desirability bias cannot be fully eliminated within qualitative research, deliberate methodological steps were taken throughout interview design, data collection and analysis to minimise their influence. Consistent with Bergen and Labonté (2020), Larson (2019) and Peters (2022), bias management within this study was approached as an ongoing reflexive process intended to strengthen the credibility, trustworthiness and interpretive robustness of the research findings.

4.4.5 Interview Design and Protocol

Leveraging an illustrative case based approach (Siggelkow, 2007), the qualitative phase of this research employed semi-structured interviews to explore and illustrate the theoretical relationships identified in the systematic literature review. Rather than seeking statistical generalisation, the interviews were designed to provide rich empirical grounding for the hypothesis by uncovering how geopolitical ideologies manifest in real-world supply chain decision-making. Consistent with Siggelkow (2007) argument that cases are most powerful when used to illuminate mechanisms and provide conceptual insight, this study utilised practitioner narratives to demonstrate how abstract constructs such as populism and nationalism translate into operational and strategic sourcing behaviours

The objective of the interviews was therefore to examine how perceptions associated with nationalism and populism influence managerial decision-making within global supply chains. This focus was intentionally exploratory in execution, allowing participants to describe experiences and organisational responses without being constrained by predefined causal assumptions. The use of interviews enabled the study to capture nuanced behavioural evidence, contextual interpretations and emerging patterns that would not be observable through quantitative methods alone. In particular, the approach allowed closer examination of the mechanisms linking geopolitical narratives, policy environments and supply network restructuring, thereby strengthening the explanatory depth of the research.

Interview questions were designed to align directly with the research objective: to understand how perceptions associated with nationalism and populism influence decision-making in global supply chains. While globalisation and supply chain design are well-defined constructs within the literature, populism and nationalism are conceptually abstract and less operationalised in supply chain research. This presented a methodological challenge, rather than only asking participants directly whether these ideologies influenced their supply chains which risked eliciting superficial or politically filtered responses the researcher first sought to identify behavioural and linguistic proxies for these constructs.

To support this, an extensive review of academic and non-academic sources was conducted prior to fieldwork to identify recurring themes, language patterns and policy-related indicators commonly associated with populist and nationalist discourse. Keywords linked to protectionism, anti-globalisation sentiment, political polarisation, public opinion influence and national economic prioritisation were mapped and later used both to frame interview probes and to cross-reference interview transcripts during analysis. These keywords can be found in Table 4.4 below. This proxy based approach enabled the researcher to detect implicit ideological influence even where participants did not explicitly label it as such, strengthening construct validity within an exploratory qualitative setting.

Table 4.4 Populism Keyword Identification

1	Nationalistic favouritism	13	Chinese imports
2	(Anti) globalisation	14	Financial crisis (economic winners and losers)
3	Populism is seen as Pro-People - therefor anything anti-populist is perceived as "Against the people"	15	Pure and poor people v's corrupt and wealthy elite
4	Uncertainty	16	Challenge the status quo?
5	Impact to Policy and Institutions	17	Refrain from challenging status quo?
6	Immigration policy	18	Social and political marketplace v economic marketplace
7	Economic Policy	19	CPO - Corporate Political Obligation / Activity
8	Trade protectionist measures	20	(Anti / Pro) - Business
9	Foreign competition	21	Supply chain disruption
10	Political polarization	22	Government role - active / intrusive government
11	Public opinion	23	Economic objective v popular sentiment?
12	Them V Us culture	24	Political favouritism and Popularity - Perceptions

**No linkage intended between these columns – keyword listed in tabular list form*

An interview guide was developed based on the thematic categories and constructs identified during the systematic literature review and structured using the CIMO framework (Context–Intervention–Mechanism–Outcome). The interview guide can be found in Table 4.5 below. The guide comprised open, ended questions designed to elicit descriptive accounts of participants' experiences while maintaining alignment with the study's objectives.

The semi-structured design allowed for probing and follow up questions, enabling the researcher to explore unanticipated insights while maintaining thematic coherence. Prior to each interview, participants received a briefing document outlining the study's purpose, ethical considerations, main discussion themes. This ensured informed participation and encouraged reflective engagement. All interviews were conducted via Zoom, a practical and consistent platform given the geographic spread of participants. Each session lasted between 45 and 75 minutes and was recorded with consent.

Table 4.5 Interview Guide

Theme	Question - Base	Question - Probe
Introduction	Can you describe the scope of your current or experience at a high level? Can you describe the type of sourcing or supply chain decisions you make, your <i>geographic</i> responsibility?	Geography Job level and decision making
Global Supply Chain	Describe your current supply network?	International / Domestic supply footprint? Recent changes? Types of products
Global Supply Chain	Can you describe the factors you consider when identifying supplier for RFX and supplier award?	Are there corporate frameworks / guidelines? Selection criteria? Preference? + Trade off of cost and risk - are customers willing to pay for increased cost
Globalisation	How would you describe the landscape for global trade? Would you say that the landscape for global trade has changed in recent years?	What would say has influenced (this / any) change?
Nationalism	Is there a movement towards a more localized supply chain?	How does this come about? (was this deliberate / encouraged v natural) Is there a strategy / objective to source locally? KPI? Is there a Government/ political role in influencing decisions?
Populism	In your experience can you identify situations when public opinion had or could have an impact on sourcing decisions?	Corporate positions and public perception? Extensions of CSR? Government/ political role in influencing decisions?

	In your experience can you identify situations when government policy had or could have an impact on sourcing decisions?	
+Geo-political events	+Response to specific geo-political events	+Specific events shaping decision making? +Role of Media

4.4.6 Data Collection - Interview Process

Participants were invited to interview by email, a copy of which can be found in Appendix F. Prior to commencing the full interview phase, a pre-test interview was conducted to assess the clarity, relevance and depth of the interview schedule. The purpose of this pre-test was to evaluate whether the questions effectively elicited meaningful insights aligned with the research objective and to identify potential gaps in the instrument. The exercise also allowed the researcher to assess the natural flow of discussion and determine whether participants were able to connect abstract geopolitical constructs to concrete supply chain decisions. Insights from the pre-test interview highlighted the need to strengthen the linkage between geopolitical ideologies and observable organisational behaviour. In response, several refinements were introduced to the interview schedule. First, prompts were added to capture participants' reactions to specific geopolitical events, enabling the discussion to move beyond general perceptions toward real-world triggers that had influenced sourcing and supply chain strategy. Second, additional questions were incorporated to explore how organisations actively manage risk arising from geopolitical disruption. These included probing the trade-offs between cost and resilience, particularly whether customers or internal stakeholders were willing to absorb increased costs associated with diversification or localisation strategies.

The pre-test also revealed the importance of explicitly addressing emerging supply chain responses such as China Plus One strategies. As a result, targeted probes were added to understand whether diversification away from China was being pursued deliberately, rhetorically, or as a reactive response to geopolitical and trade-related pressures. These additional probes and areas were added to the Interview Guide in Table 4.5 above with the + symbol. These refinements improved the sensitivity of the interview instrument and ensured stronger alignment between theoretical constructs and practitioner experience.

Data collection occurred over a five, month period, during which interviews were conducted sequentially to allow for ongoing reflection and minor refinement of questions as new themes emerged, a process consistent with iterative qualitative research design. This approach enhanced data richness by allowing the researcher to explore emerging concepts in greater depth in later interviews. Immediately following each interview, the researcher completed a post, interview reflection, adapted from Seidman (1998) and cited in Dilley (2004), focusing on key observations, initial impressions, potential researcher bias. This reflexive documentation served two purposes: it supported continuous improvement in interviewing technique and provided an audit trail of interpretive reasoning. The recorded interviews were transcribed and checked manually for accuracy. All transcripts were anonymised; participants were assigned unique identifiers (INT1–INT22). This ensured confidentiality while enabling traceability between data excerpts and analytical codes in the subsequent analysis phase.

4.4.7 Role of the Researcher

Given the interpretivist nature of the study, the researcher's positionality and professional background were recognised as integral to the research process. The researcher's extensive professional experience in global sourcing and procurement within the healthcare industry provided both access to participants and contextual understanding of the operational realities being discussed. While this insider perspective enhanced interpretive depth, it also introduced the potential for bias. To mitigate this, the researcher maintained an explicit reflexive stance, critically examining assumptions and interpretations throughout data collection and analysis. Reflexive memos were used to capture emerging thoughts, emotional reactions, interpretive insights, forming part of the analytical audit trail.

4.4.8 Ethical Considerations in Data Collection

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee prior to data collection. Participants were provided with detailed information sheets explaining the study's purpose, data handling procedures, their rights, including the right to withdraw at any stage without consequence. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants. To ensure confidentiality, no organisational identifiers were recorded, interview data were stored securely in encrypted digital format accessible only to the researcher. The use

of anonymised codes (INT1–INT22) in all reporting safeguarded participant privacy while maintaining analytical transparency.

The empirical phase of this research employed a carefully structured yet flexible qualitative design consistent with the study's phenomenological orientation. Through semi-structured interviews with experienced supply chain professionals, the study captured rich, contextual insights into how geopolitical dynamics are understood and managed in practice. The data generated through this process formed the basis for the thematic analysis described in the next section, enabling the researcher to identify patterns, connections, meanings across participants' accounts. The Informed Consent and Plain Language Statement is listed in Appendix G.

4.5 Adapting the Research to an Evolving Global Context

The rapid pace of geopolitical change during the research period required the study to remain methodologically responsive to unfolding events. Although the original design focused on interviews conducted between 2023 and 2024, it became increasingly evident that developments in early 2025, most notably the intensification of tariff pressures and the re-election of President Trump were reshaping global trade discourse and corporate strategy. To preserve both the temporal validity and practical relevance of the research, supplementary data collection and literature updating were undertaken in the form of an updated Pulse Survey and updated systematic literature search and review.

4.5.1 Pulse Surveys

To capture evolving practitioner perspectives, a series of short pulse surveys was administered in mid-2025 to the original interview participants (INT1–INT22). These surveys provided an efficient means of gathering real-time reflections on renewed geopolitical tension and trade policy volatility. Comprising 3 questions and included an invitation to provide open text response, the surveys explored areas such as tariff escalation, regionalisation strategies, supplier diversification and policy uncertainty. The concise format encouraged high response rates while maintaining conceptual alignment with the earlier interview framework.

This supplementary method offered temporal validation of key findings by confirming which trends persisted, intensified, or transformed over time. It also enabled participants to

contextualise how their organisations were adapting to shifting conditions without the need for repeat in-depth interviews. The specific term “pulse survey” is more common in organisational practice contexts, however emerging academic research demonstrates its utility as a rapid semi-longitudinal survey method for tracking changes over time. Brown (2022) reports on a multi-wave pulse survey conducted in a health care organisation to monitor evolving engagement trends, highlighting both the potential and limitations of frequent short surveys for temporal analysis. Similarly, parallels can be drawn between this type of survey and Experience Sampling Methods commonly applied within organisational research (Beal, 2015). These methods are highly effective in capturing temporal variation in perceptions through short, focused surveys (Trull and Ebner-Priemer, 2009). The pulse survey served as a structured temporal validation mechanism, enabling comparison between pre and post escalation perceptions within a rapidly evolving geopolitical environment. The Pulse Survey and Results can be found in Appendix H and I.

4.5.2 Updated Systematic Literature Review

In parallel, the systematic literature review was revisited and extended in August 2025 to include literature published between 2023 and 2025. This update was considered necessary due to the emergence of significant new contributions following the 2024 U.S. presidential election and renewed emphasis on protectionism, friend-shoring and strategic decoupling.

Incorporating these newer studies strengthened the academic robustness of the research by ensuring that the theoretical foundations reflected the most recent discourse. The updated review revealed increasing alignment between academic analysis and practitioner experiences gathered through the pulse surveys, particularly regarding the politicisation of trade, the recalibration of global value chains and the acceleration of regionalisation.

4.5.3 Methodological Justification

The decision to extend data collection and revisit the literature aligns with principles of flexible qualitative design. In studies addressing emergent and fluid contexts, methodological adaptation is vital to maintaining ecological and construct validity. The pulse surveys provided a pragmatic mechanism for capturing dynamic practitioner insight while ensuring continuity

with the established participant cohort. Likewise, the literature update enhanced temporal rigour, linking empirical findings with the latest theoretical perspectives.

These measures demonstrate the researcher's commitment to methodological reflexivity, acknowledging that the phenomenon under investigation was not static but continuously influenced by real-world political and economic shifts. Through these adaptive steps, the study preserved both its academic integrity and its relevance to the evolving global supply chain environment.

4.5.4 Integration with Findings and Discussion

The supplementary activities were subsequently integrated into the later stages of analysis and interpretation. The pulse survey responses provided comparative depth, confirming that themes such as protectionism, regionalisation and executive decision-making under political pressure continued to evolve across time. Meanwhile, the refreshed literature reinforced these practitioner insights, demonstrating convergence between empirical reality and contemporary emergent theory. Together, these efforts insured that the research remained current, credible and contextually grounded, capturing a trend still unfolding in real time and strengthening the connection between theory, evidence and practice.

4.6. Data Analysis and Coding

The analysis of qualitative data in this study followed an inductive thematic approach, supported by phenomenological interpretation and guided conceptually by the CIMO framework (Context–Intervention–Mechanism–Outcome). This approach enabled the researcher to move from raw interview data toward a structured representation of meaning, capturing both individual and collective experiences of how geopolitical dynamics affect global supply chains.

The analytical process was iterative and reflexive, involving continuous movement between the data, emergent themes, the theoretical constructs identified during the systematic literature review. This cyclical approach reflects the abductive nature of the research design, where empirical observation and theoretical interpretation informed one another throughout the process.

4.6.1 Analytical Objectives

The primary analytical objective was to uncover the essence of participant experience, to identify how individuals within global supply chains perceive, interpret, respond to the geopolitical environment. The analysis sought to:

- Identify recurring themes and patterns across participant narratives.
- Explore variation in perception and interpretation across functional roles and geographies.
- Link experiential findings to the theoretical constructs derived from the systematic literature review.
- By combining phenomenological reflection with thematic structure, the analysis enabled both depth of meaning and conceptual clarity.

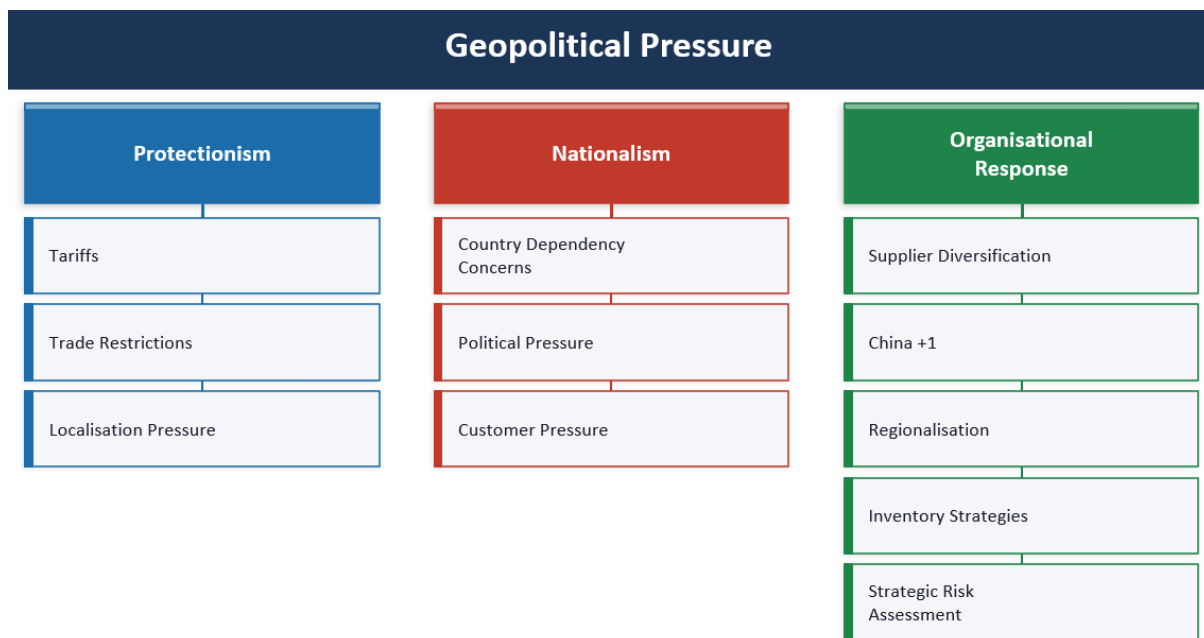
4.6.2 Analytical Framework and Process

The data analysis followed five structured stages, adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006) and Whittemore and Knafl (2005) to ensure methodological rigour:

Stage 1: Familiarisation with the Data

All interview transcripts were read multiple times to develop a deep understanding of participant perspectives. The researcher made initial margin notes and analytical memos capturing first impressions, emotional tone, notable concepts. This immersion was a critical step in phenomenological analysis, allowing the researcher to engage empathetically with participants' accounts while beginning to identify potential thematic patterns. Following familiarisation with the data, an initial high level coding tree (Fig 4.1) was developed to organise recurring concepts, relationships and emerging thematic patterns across participant narratives

Fig 4.1 Initial Coding Tree



Stage 2: Initial Coding

Coding was conducted manually, each code represented a discrete idea, perception, or phenomenon described by participants. Examples of early codes included:

- “Shift in supplier base due to tariffs”
- “Increased political scrutiny of sourcing”
- “Pressure for nearshoring / China+1”
- “Customer influence driven by media narratives”
- “Operational decisions influenced by national policy”

To ensure reflexivity, coding was conducted over several rounds, with earlier transcripts revisited as new insights emerged. An example of the coding process can be found in Table 4.6 below.

Table 4.6 Example Initial Coding from Interview Transcripts

Participant Extract	Initial Code	Interpretation
“We had to redesign the supplier network almost overnight because of the tariffs and uncertainty coming from the US-China situation.” (INT3)	Rapid supplier redesign	Reflects how geopolitical disruption accelerated reactive supply chain restructuring and reduced reliance on existing sourcing configurations.
“The conversation moved away from cost alone. Resilience and continuity became equally important in supplier decisions.” (INT7)	Shift from cost to resilience	Demonstrates movement from efficiency-focused sourcing toward resilience oriented decision-making under geopolitical uncertainty.
“There was pressure internally to reduce dependence on China even where commercially it did not fully make sense.” (INT11)	Political pressure influencing sourcing	Indicates how political narratives and organisational risk perception influenced sourcing strategy beyond purely economic considerations.
“We started qualifying suppliers in Vietnam and India much faster than we would have historically.” (INT5)	Accelerated supplier diversification	Illustrates proactive diversification and regionalisation strategies adopted in response to geopolitical exposure.
“The Red Sea disruption highlighted how exposed global logistics networks really are.” (INT14)	Exposure of logistics vulnerability	Reflects increased awareness of fragility within globally dispersed supply chain networks.
“Executive leadership became far more engaged in supply chain discussions than ever before.” (INT2)	Executive level supply chain involvement	Demonstrates elevation of supply chain risk to strategic leadership level due to geopolitical instability.

“Customers expected continuity regardless of what was happening politically.” (INT18)	Customer expectation of continuity	Reflects tension between geopolitical disruption and market/service expectations.
“We were making sourcing decisions based on what might happen politically, not just what had already happened.” (INT9)	Anticipatory geopolitical decision-making	Indicates forward-looking strategic behaviour driven by geopolitical uncertainty and perceived future risk.
“Friendshoring became a serious discussion internally after the tariff escalations.” (INT6)	Emergence of friendshoring strategies	Demonstrates how geopolitical alignment increasingly influenced sourcing and location strategy.
“The speed of policy changes made long-term planning extremely difficult.” (INT20)	Strategic planning uncertainty	Reflects how geopolitical volatility disrupted traditional long-term supply chain planning models.

Stage 3: Development of Thematic Categories

Once initial codes were consolidated, they were grouped into broader thematic categories that captured shared meaning, as outlined in Table 4.7 and 4.8 below.

Table 4.7 Category Development Example

Initial Codes	Category
Accelerated supplier diversification	Supply Chain Regionalisation
Emergence of friendshoring strategies	Supply Chain Regionalisation
Rapid supplier redesign	Supply Chain Reconfiguration
Exposure of logistics vulnerability	Supply Chain Vulnerability
Strategic planning uncertainty	Geopolitical Uncertainty
Political pressure influencing sourcing	Political Influence on Supply Chain Strategy
Executive level supply chain involvement	Strategic Elevation of Supply Chain Risk
Shift from cost to resilience	Resilience oriented Decision Making

Anticipatory geopolitical decision-making	Strategic Risk Anticipation
---	-----------------------------

Table 4.8 Theme Development Example

Categories	Final Theme
Supply Chain Regionalisation; Supply Chain Reconfiguration	Reconfiguration of Global Supply Networks
Political Influence on Supply Chain Strategy; Strategic Elevation of Supply Chain Risk	Geopolitics as a Strategic Driver of Supply Chain Decision-Making
Resilience oriented Decision Making; Strategic Risk Anticipation	The Strategic Shift from Efficiency to Resilience
Geopolitical Uncertainty, Supply Chain Vulnerability	Persistent Geopolitical Uncertainty and Supply Chain Exposure

The CIMO framework guided this organisation:

- Context: Descriptions of supply chain environments, structures, roles.
- Intervention: Geopolitical events (e.g., trade wars, tariffs, Brexit).
- Mechanism: Organisational or behavioural responses (e.g., diversification, supplier relocation, communication strategies).
- Outcome: Consequences observed (e.g., cost changes, lead, time shifts, governance transformation).

This structure provided a consistent analytical lens while allowing flexibility for emergent themes that did not fit neatly within the predefined categories.

Table 4.9 Mapping Final Themes to the CIMO Framework

Final Theme	Context (C)	Intervention (I)	Mechanism (M)	Outcome (O)
Reconfiguration of Global Supply Networks	Increasing geopolitical instability, tariff escalation, supply disruption, regional conflict	Supplier diversification, nearshoring, China+1 strategies, regionalisation	Reassessment of sourcing dependencies and network exposure	Redesigned supply chain structures with greater geographic diversification
Geopolitics as a Strategic Driver of Supply Chain Decision-Making	Politicised trade environment and rising geopolitical tension	Executive level involvement in sourcing and supply chain governance	Strategic reinterpretation of supply chain risk beyond cost considerations	Supply chain strategy became increasingly integrated into broader corporate strategic planning
The Strategic Shift from Efficiency to Resilience	Persistent uncertainty across global trade and logistics systems	Investment in resilience, dual sourcing, inventory buffering, alternative sourcing qualification	Increased prioritisation of continuity, flexibility and risk mitigation	Reduced emphasis on lean efficiency models and greater focus on resilience capabilities
Persistent Geopolitical Uncertainty and Supply Chain Exposure	Volatile political environment, sanctions, trade	Continuous monitoring of geopolitical developments	Anticipatory strategic decision-making under uncertainty	More adaptive and responsive supply chain management approaches

	restrictions, Red Sea disruption	and proactive risk assessment		
--	----------------------------------	-------------------------------	--	--

Stage 4: Theme Refinement and Synthesis

At this stage, the researcher examined relationships between themes, identifying points of convergence and divergence across participant experiences. For example, while several participants described tariff, driven supplier diversification as a deliberate resilience measure, others perceived it as reactive political compliance, illustrating variation in strategic interpretation. The process of theme refinement involved moving iteratively between coded data extracts and the developing conceptual framework. Preliminary thematic maps were produced to visualise connections between experiences, decisions, contextual drivers. These maps were then refined into a final set of core themes that reflected both individual meaning and collective pattern.

Table 4.10 Example of Thematic Codes Mapped to High Level Themes

	Supporting Codes	High Level Theme
Protectionism	Tariffs, Trade Restrictions, Localisation Pressure	Geopolitics as a Strategic Driver of Supply Chain Decision-Making
Nationalism	Country Dependency Concerns, Political Pressure, Customer Pressure	Persistent Geopolitical Uncertainty and Supply Chain Exposure
Organisational Response	Supplier Diversification, China+1, Regionalisation	Reconfiguration of Global Supply Networks
Organisational Response	Inventory Strategies, Strategic Risk Assessment	Strategic Shift from Efficiency to Resilience

Stage 5: Validation and Interpretation

To ensure interpretive credibility, each theme was re-examined against the full data set to verify consistency and representativeness. Direct participant quotations were retained as evidence of the interpretive process, ensuring transparency and traceability between raw data and analytical conclusions. The interpretation stage involved integrating empirical insights with theoretical constructs identified during the systematic literature review. This allowed the researcher to explore where lived experience reinforced, extended, or contradicted existing conceptualisations of global supply chain response to geopolitical change.

4.6.3 Triangulation

To enhance analytical rigour and interpretive credibility, multiple forms of triangulation were employed throughout the analytical process. Cross participant triangulation was achieved through comparison of perspectives across all interview participants (INT1–INT22), enabling identification of recurring patterns, areas of divergence and shared interpretations of geopolitical disruption across the global supply chain environment. Functional triangulation was achieved through the inclusion of participants from different organisational roles and decision-making levels, including sourcing, logistics, operations, procurement and executive leadership functions. Geographic triangulation was also present through the inclusion of participants operating across multiple regions including Ireland, the United Kingdom, Europe, Asia and North America.

Industry triangulation further supported analytical depth by incorporating perspectives from both healthcare and industrial sectors, allowing the researcher to compare how geopolitical and pressures were interpreted across different supply chain contexts.

In addition, methodological triangulation was achieved through the iterative comparison of interview findings with themes identified during the systematic literature review and relevant geopolitical developments occurring during the research period. This process supported analytical consistency while also enabling the identification of areas where empirical findings extended or challenged existing theoretical perspectives. An audit trail was maintained throughout the analytical process documenting coding decisions, category refinement, theme development and interpretive reflections to support transparency and dependability.

4.6.4 Data Management and Transparency

To maintain analytical rigour, all stages of the process were documented within a data audit trail that recorded coding iterations, theme development, analytical memos. Each transcript was assigned a unique identifier (INT1–INT22), enabling traceability between raw data and thematic output without compromising confidentiality.

4.6.5 Emergent Themes

Through this process, several core themes emerged that informed the findings chapter of this thesis. These included:

- Nationalism reconfiguring of supply chain footprints
- Protectionism and nationalism influencing strategy
- Decision Making under populist pressure, importance of optics
- Strategy alignment - total cost led, tariff mitigation or country specific dependency reduction
- Globalisation in retreat and the rise of regional networks

These themes reflect both the diversity and commonality of participant experiences and illustrate the multi, dimensional nature of geopolitical influence on supply chains. Each theme integrates experiential data with the theoretical insights derived from the literature, creating a cohesive bridge between empirical evidence and conceptual understanding.

4.6.6 Reflexivity in Analysis

Throughout the analysis, reflexivity remained central to ensuring authenticity and credibility. The researcher maintained a reflective journal to document evolving interpretations and personal reactions to the data. This ongoing reflexive practice helped identify potential biases arising from professional familiarity with the subject matter. Each interpretive decision, from the grouping of codes to the construction of themes, was therefore evaluated against both the data and the researcher's positionality. This process aligns with Tracy's (2010) criteria for qualitative quality, ensuring sincerity, transparency, meaningful coherence between the research aim and its analytical execution.

The data analysis combined inductive thematic methods with phenomenological reflection to uncover how global supply chain professionals perceive and respond to geopolitical disruption. Guided by the CIMO framework, the analysis ensured consistency with the systematic literature review while allowing new insights to emerge organically from participant experiences. The outcome of this process is a set of empirically grounded, conceptually informed themes that collectively represent the lived reality of global supply chain decision, making in an era of geopolitical uncertainty.

4.7 Reliability, Validity, Ethics

Qualitative research requires careful consideration of credibility, dependability, ethical integrity to ensure that findings are trustworthy and that interpretations genuinely reflect participants' lived experiences (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In contrast to quantitative paradigms that emphasise measurement reliability and statistical validity, qualitative research is evaluated through its authenticity, transparency, rigour in interpretation (Shenton, 2004). Given the interpretivist and phenomenological nature of the study, reflexivity was recognised as integral to research quality. Reflexive practice involved critical self-awareness of how the researcher's professional background and assumptions could influence data collection and interpretation. Quality and rigor were addressed through attention to credibility, transparency, reflexivity and meaningful coherence, consistent with Tracy's (2010) "big-tent" criteria for excellent qualitative research. These practices ensured that the findings are trustworthy, analytically rigorous and grounded in participants' lived experience.

This section outlines how the study addressed these criteria through adherence to established frameworks for qualitative trustworthiness (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, cited in Tracy, 2010) and through the ethical procedures implemented throughout the research process.

4.7.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the extent to which the findings accurately represent the perspectives and meanings of participants. To enhance credibility, multiple strategies were employed across data collection and analysis:

- **Triangulation:** The combination of a systematic literature review and empirical interviews enabled triangulation of data sources. Theoretical concepts identified in the literature were compared with practitioner experiences to validate and contextualise findings. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest triangulation as a vital strategy to improve confirmability and credibility. The collection of a variety of perspectives, using various data collection methods and comparing results in the triangulation process are helpful in improving trustworthiness
- **Participant Familiarisation:** Participants received a summary of the study objectives and thematic focus before interviews, ensuring informed and reflective engagement. While formal participant checking of full transcripts was not undertaken due to confidentiality agreements, the interactive interview style allowed for clarification and validation of meaning during dialogue.
- **Prolonged Engagement:** The researcher's professional background in global sourcing and supply chain management facilitated meaningful engagement and comprehension of complex topics, allowing deeper probing and contextual understanding.
- **Reflexivity:** Continuous reflexive practice was embedded in the research process. The researcher documented assumptions, interpretive choices, reactions after each interview, ensuring conscious awareness of potential bias in interpretation.
- These combined strategies ensured that the resulting analysis authentically reflected participant experiences within their operational and geopolitical contexts.

4.7.2 Dependability

Dependability concerns the stability and consistency of the research process over time. In interpretivist research, this is achieved through transparency of procedures and the maintenance of a clear audit trail. To ensure dependability:

- The research process was documented in detail from design through to analysis, including interview guides, correspondence, coding frameworks, reflective memos.

- All analytical decisions were logged, enabling traceability of how raw data were transformed into thematic findings.
- The use of Excel for coding ensured systematic management of data and supported replication of analytical logic.
- The study's methodological coherence, linking philosophy, design and methods, reinforced the internal consistency of the research approach.

Aligned with best practices, Nowell et al. (2017) recommend that reflexive journaling serves the function of establishing an audit trail, keeping track of emerging impressions of what the data mean and how they relate to each other, with the notes created becoming auditable evidence to support the trustworthiness of the study. Together, these measures provide a clear account of how data were generated, analysed, interpreted, allowing others to assess and follow the research process.

4.7.3 Generalisation and Transferability

In qualitative research, transferability is not claimed directly by the researcher, instead, responsibility for determining the applicability of findings to other contexts rests with the reader based on the contextual richness provided within the study (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). Transferability relates to the applicability of findings to other contexts. In this study, transferability was addressed through the provision of rich, contextual description rather than claims of statistical generalisability. Detailed information was provided about:

- The participant sample
- The industry / sector
- Organisational Context (where relevant)

By articulating this contextual detail, the research enables readers and future academics to assess the relevance of findings to their own contexts. While results are not intended to be generalised universally, they offer analytical transferability, providing concepts and insights that can inform theory building and decision making in similar globalised industries.

4.7.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree to which findings are shaped by the participants' perspectives rather than researcher bias. To ensure confirmability, multiple safeguards were employed:

- **Audit Trail:** A comprehensive record was maintained, including interview notes, reflexive journals, coding iterations, analytical memos. This provided transparency in how interpretations were developed. An audit trail keeping comprehensive records of all research decisions, raw data, coding procedures and analytic steps allows others to trace how conclusions were derived (Nowell et al., 2017).
- **Data–Evidence Linkage:** Direct participant quotations were used extensively within the findings chapter to substantiate interpretations and demonstrate clear linkage between data and analytical claims.
- **Peer Review:** Regular supervisory reviews provided external scrutiny of interpretations, ensuring analytical robustness and reducing subjectivity.
- **Reflexive Documentation:** The researcher explicitly acknowledged their professional standpoint and its potential influence on interpretation, balancing insider insight with critical distance.

To achieve confirmability, the researcher demonstrated that findings emerge from the data and not their own predispositions (Shenton, 2004). These measures collectively enhanced the objectivity and accountability of the research process.

4.7.5 Ethical Integrity

The study adhered strictly to ethical principles throughout all stages of the research process. Ethical approval was granted by the Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee prior to commencement. All participants were provided with an information sheet outlining the purpose of the study, data usage, confidentiality measures, their right to withdraw at any time. Ethics approval confirmation can be found in Appendix J.

Key ethical safeguards included:

- **Informed Consent:** Written consent was obtained from all participants before participation.
- **Anonymity and Confidentiality:** Participants and organisations were anonymised using identifiers (INT1–INT22). No personally identifiable or commercially sensitive information was disclosed.
- **Data Security:** All data were stored in encrypted digital form, accessible only to the researcher. Transcripts were stripped of identifying details and securely archived in compliance with university data retention policies.
- **Respect and Non-Maleficence:** The researcher ensured that participation did not cause discomfort, reputational risk or undue influence. Participants were reminded of their voluntary involvement and the academic purpose of the study.
- **Ethical considerations extended beyond procedural compliance to include the researcher's professional responsibility to interpret participant perspectives with accuracy, respect, sensitivity to their organisational realities.**

4.7.6 Research Integrity / Validity

To ensure comprehensive quality, the study was evaluated against Tracy's (2010) "Eight Big, Tent Criteria" for excellent qualitative research:

- **Worthy Topic** – addresses a relevant and emergent issue in global supply chain management.
- **Rich Rigor** – supported by systematic literature review, multiple data sources, transparent methods.
- **Sincerity** – achieved through reflexive awareness and transparent disclosure of researcher positionality.
- **Credibility** – strengthened through triangulation and direct participant voice.
- **Resonance** – findings reflect the lived realities of practitioners and extend theoretical insight.

- Significant Contribution – integrates academic and practical understanding of geopolitical impact on supply chains.
- Ethical Concerns – ensured through formal ethics approval and responsible participant engagement.
- Meaningful Coherence – demonstrated by alignment between philosophy, design, analytical execution.

Collectively, these principles underpin the integrity and trustworthiness of the research, ensuring that findings are credible, ethically sound, academically robust. The study's reliability and validity were achieved through methodological transparency, reflexive practice, rigorous ethical governance. The deliberate integration of triangulated data, reflexive documentation, structured audit trails ensured that findings authentically represent participants experiences while maintaining coherence with the philosophical and methodological foundations of the research.

4.8. Conclusion

This chapter has presented the methodological framework underpinning this study, demonstrating the alignment between the research philosophy, design, methods employed to address the study's central questions. Grounded in a subjectivist ontology and an interpretivist epistemology, the research adopts a phenomenological approach to explore how geopolitical developments influence global trade and reshape supply chain design and decision, making.

The study followed a sequential exploratory design comprising two complementary phases. The first phase, a systematic literature review, provided theoretical grounding and defined the conceptual parameters of the research. Executed through a structured, PRISMA aligned process and guided by CIMO logic, the literature review synthesised existing knowledge across the domains of global trade, geopolitics, supply chain management. It revealed that while the literature increasingly acknowledges geopolitical influence on supply chains, empirical understanding of how organisations experience and respond to such forces remains limited.

The second phase, a qualitative phenomenological investigation, addressed this gap by engaging directly with professionals across global supply chains. Through semi-structured interviews, the study captured rich, contextualised narratives illustrating how macro, level

geopolitical dynamics manifest in operational practice. The use of CIMO, informed questioning, reflexive documentation, transparent coding ensured analytical depth and alignment between literature and empirical evidence.

A systematic process of inductive thematic analysis was applied to the interview data, identifying patterns of meaning across participant experiences while remaining faithful to individual perspectives. This iterative analysis, grounded in phenomenological reflection, produced a coherent set of core themes that illuminate the complex and often reciprocal relationship between the global political economy and supply chain strategy.

Throughout both phases, methodological integrity was upheld through rigorous attention to credibility, dependability, confirmability, ethical governance. The researcher's reflexive practice ensured awareness of potential bias arising from professional familiarity with the subject matter, while adherence to institutional ethics protocols safeguarded participant confidentiality and data security. Recognising the emergent nature of the topic, the research design was also extended to include pulse surveys and a literature review update conducted in 2025. These supplementary activities enhanced the study's temporal validity and ensured that both the empirical evidence and theoretical framing reflected the most recent geopolitical developments. This responsiveness strengthened the methodological integrity of the research, demonstrating its adaptability to an evolving global context.

The methodology established in this chapter provides a coherent and transparent framework for examining a rapidly evolving phenomenon at the intersection of geopolitics and global supply chain management. By integrating systematic evidence synthesis with lived practitioner experience, the study contributes a balanced and empirically grounded understanding of how geopolitical forces shape supply chain configuration and strategy.

5. Research Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the empirical findings of the study, based on a series of in-depth interviews with senior professionals operating within global supply chains. The aim of this chapter is to explore how geopolitical factors particularly nationalism, populism, protectionism and broader geopolitical risk are influencing sourcing decisions, supplier strategies and supply chain redesign. These findings are drawn exclusively from primary data and reflect the lived experience of those managing the operational, commercial and strategic consequences of a rapidly shifting global trade environment.

Participants were selected from a cross section of industries, organisational types and geographies, offering a diverse but coherent view of how geopolitical factors are currently being interpreted and managed within supply chain operations. The insights gathered reflect both short term tactical impacts such as disruptions from tariffs, sanctions and regional conflict and longer term strategic shifts, including location diversification, dual sourcing models and changes in supplier engagement approaches.

A central theme to emerge from the interviews is the growing conflict between political and commercial objectives. While political rhetoric often emphasises nationalist agendas, reshoring or decoupling from foreign powers, the participants highlighted that cost, reliability and supply availability remain the dominant drivers of supply chain decision making. Many organisations appear caught between competing expectations, on one hand the need to be seen to support domestic or “friendly” sourcing and on the other, the operational realities of global supply chain integration and economic efficiency.

Throughout the findings, participants provided examples of how their organisations are navigating this tension. Some have adopted proactive risk monitoring frameworks and alternative sourcing strategies; others continue to operate with a more reactive approach to managing international supply networks. Many participants reflected on the symbolic power of geopolitical narratives, particularly when these are shaped by populist or nationalist sentiment. Several interviewees noted that such narratives often carry significant reputational

weight, exerting pressure on companies to align visibly with dominant political discourses or risk being seen as out of step with public or governmental expectations. This was not limited to direct regulatory compliance or operational alignment, but extended to broader perceptions of corporate responsibility, corporate governance, loyalty and national interest. Participants highlighted that failing to navigate these symbolic dimensions effectively could lead to reputational damage, diminished stakeholder trust, or public criticism especially in politically charged environments where the boundaries between policy, identity and commerce become increasingly blurred. The supplementary pulse surveys captured participant perspectives amid renewed 2025 trade tensions,

The chapter is structured thematically, with each section exploring one of the key geopolitical forces identified through the study's analytical framework. It begins by examining the broader influence of geopolitical risk on supply chain operations, followed by focused sections on populism, nationalism, protectionism and organisational response. The chapter then explores supply chain decision making and redesign and concludes in an discussion of observed outcomes. Across each section, interview data is presented using direct quotes and attributed commentary, providing a detailed and practically informed account of how geopolitical developments are reshaping supply chain strategy.

Given the complex and interrelated nature of geopolitical forces, some repetition across this chapter is both natural and intentional. Themes such as nationalism and protectionism frequently emerge in tandem, reflecting their overlapping influence on government policy, corporate perception and public discourse. Similarly, supply chain decision-making often aligns with multiple, interconnected drivers such as cost efficiency, resilience and regulatory shifts highlighting the integrated nature of global supply networks. Crucially, the organisation sits at the centre of these dynamics, acting as the primary decision-making unit where geopolitical pressures are interpreted, prioritised and translated into operational outcomes. As such, certain participant perspectives may reappear across sections to accurately reflect how these influences converge in practice. The recurrence of themes serves to illustrate the layered complexity facing organisations as they navigate an increasingly politicised global trade environment.

Together, these findings demonstrate the complexity, variability and context specific nature of geopolitical supply chain management. They also offer insight into the kinds of trade-offs,

adaptations and innovations organisations are pursuing as they navigate a world marked by political volatility and shifting global power structures.

5.2. Geopolitical Risk: Strategic and Tactical Impacts on Supply Chains

Geopolitical risk represents a broad spectrum of disruptions that range from armed conflict and trade disputes to sanctions, regulatory shifts and changing political alliances. These risks increasingly influence how organisations manage their supply chains, from daily operations to long term strategy. This section examines how the interview participants understood and responded to both strategic and tactical geopolitical risks. While strategic risks drive supply chain design and long horizon decision making, tactical risks often require immediate responses to evolving global conditions.

Drawing from interviews across multiple sectors, this analysis highlights how organisations navigate a constantly shifting geopolitical environment, often balancing resilience, cost and agility in the face of uncertainty. The section also includes feedback from the interview participants on how geopolitical events such as the Russia Ukraine conflict, US-China trade tensions, Red Sea disruptions and tariffs have reshaped risk management approaches.

5.2.1 Tactical Impacts: Disruption

Tactical geopolitical events such as trade sanctions, political unrest or abrupt policy changes create immediate disruptions that require fast, operational responses. Interviewees consistently pointed to tariffs and supply chain delays due to conflict or regulation as two dominant tactical challenges.

Tariffs were widely identified as a disruptive factor that altered sourcing behaviour and supplier selection. INT6 described how *"leadership requested the company work with Indian suppliers instead of Chinese manufacturers"* due to tariff uncertainty, reflecting an immediate shift in procurement policy. However, as INT8 noted, such changes are not always practical: *"Moving supply chains from China is not a viable solution for many businesses due to existing dependencies on Chinese infrastructure"*. INT4 pointed to the administrative and legal burdens of navigating new barriers: *"Disruptions caused by trade barriers require companies to reassess their supplier agreements frequently"*. INT7 added that *"longer lead times and*

increased financial risks due to new declarations on Russian goods have affected supply chain efficiency”, highlighting how geopolitical triggers extend well beyond Asia.

Others noted that responses were not always reactive. INT11 observed, *“Some companies are pre-emptively adjusting supply chains to anticipate these risks rather than reacting to them”*, demonstrating that some organisations embed geopolitical analysis into everyday operations. INT5 added a cautionary view: *“Companies should focus on diversifying trade routes instead of relying on a localized approach”*, cautioning against overreaction to individual events.

Supply chain disruptions caused by physical conflicts were also highlighted. INT10 referenced how “supply chains had to be re-engineered closer to the market rather than solely relying on geopolitical shifts”, citing the Red Sea and Suez Canal as recent examples. Several participants, including INT7, INT12 and INT13 reported delayed deliveries, longer lead times and greater risk in maritime corridors. This sentiment was echoed by INT16, who emphasized that “local supply is now required for critical local services”, especially where conflict threatens continuity. In some cases, corporate decisions were reactionary. INT13 described how *“leadership directed the company to stop buying Chinese equipment overnight, a knee jerk reaction driven by media influence”*. These actions often came without a corresponding operational plan, reflecting the unpredictable nature of tactical decision making in high pressure geopolitical climates.

5.2.2 Strategic Impacts: Supply Chain Realignment

In contrast to short term disruptions, strategic geopolitical risks shape long term supply chain structure, supplier development and geographic diversification. These risks often require deliberate planning across years, especially when linked to complex dependencies, such as those with China. A recurring strategic response was the implementation of China +1 sourcing strategies. INT3 observed that *“Vietnam was emerging with a skilled labour force that made it a viable alternative to China”*, while INT5 emphasized the need to shift due to rising government pressure: *“Sourcing strategies have had to shift due to government policies, but the infrastructure in alternative locations is still lacking”*. However, INT9 cautioned that *“many companies still rely heavily on China because the cost to benefit ratio of moving remains unfavourable”*. These contrasting views highlight the tension between strategic intent and operational feasibility. As INT14 noted, *“The development of capacity in new supply locations*

takes time. Energy infrastructure, workforce and logistics are not yet there in most alternatives to China”.

Strategic decisions often involve difficult trade-offs between risk, cost and availability of alternatives. INT2 reflected that *“organisations must balance cost savings with increased geopolitical risks”*, while INT5 explained that some companies still award business to riskier regions, including China and Israel, due to commercial advantages. However, based on the interview responses, this approach to risk based decision making varies by organisation, highlighted by INT1 indicating that they did not award business to an Israeli supplier due to the proximity to active conflict zones. INT7 added that *“China+1 strategies are restructuring global trade flows”*, while INT9 clarified that *“this only works if alternative suppliers can match China’s scale and cost efficiencies”*.

Several participants commented on the gap between political rhetoric and business reality. INT16 observed that *“despite nationalist rhetoric, many industries remain dependent on international supply networks”*, while INT4 stated, *“political reactions can be immediate, but supply chains have a delayed response”*. Interviewees noted that governments often encourage localized production through tariffs and mandates, but few provide support structures that make relocation viable. INT21 offered a particularly clear analysis: *“A presidential term is four years supply chains are 10 to 15 year investments. The timelines don’t align”*. Some organisations sought external guidance to enhance their strategic response. INT10 shared that *“industry bodies are now publishing strategic playbooks to support companies in navigating geopolitical risks”*, including tools such as supplier risk assessments and scenario planning. However, INT12 noted a key challenge: *“Many companies don’t have the internal capabilities to act on these strategic recommendations effectively”*, highlighting a maturity gap between awareness and execution.

This section highlights that geopolitical risk is both immediate and structural forcing companies to navigate the dual demands of reactive adaptation and long-term redesign. Tactical events such as tariffs, trade restrictions and armed conflict have triggered supply disruptions, supplier re-evaluation and route diversification. Meanwhile, strategic risks have pushed organisations to consider redesign strategies through initiatives like China +1 supply chain development and secondary sourcing models.

Importantly, the interviews highlight that strategic responses are often tempered by operational constraints. Participants described how corporate decision making was shaped by a complex interplay of risk, infrastructure, customer demand and political rhetoric. While some organisations have built dedicated geopolitical risk functions, others continue to rely on informal networks or reactive adjustments. Overall, the data reveal a clear trend: geopolitical risk has become a defining factor in supply chain management, requiring both short term agility and long-term vision. The next sections will explore how specific ideologies including populism, nationalism and protectionism further shape supply chain decisions in a geopolitically complex world.

5.3 Populism

Populism, broadly defined as a political approach that claims to represent the interests of ordinary people often positioned in opposition to perceived elites, global institutions or transnational economic actors, has become an increasingly influential force in shaping both public discourse and corporate decision making. Within the realm of global supply chains, populist movements tend to emphasize economic self-sufficiency, protection of domestic jobs and national sovereignty. While these narratives may resonate with domestic audiences, they often introduce volatility into trade environments and disrupt long established supply relationships.

This section explores how populism manifests across supply chains, drawing on interviewee insights to illustrate how political narratives, public sentiment and media influence intersect with sourcing strategy, supplier selection and broader corporate behaviour. The findings reveal that while populism may not consistently shape supply chain actions in a direct or formalized way, it often operates as a powerful contextual influence particularly through its impact on leadership priorities, stakeholder expectations and reputational risk frameworks.

5.3.1 Populist Rhetoric and Organisational Reaction

Several interviewees highlighted how populist rhetoric can drive corporate decision making, particularly among smaller or more consumer facing businesses. INT6 observed that “*smaller businesses are more influenced by popular rhetoric, whereas larger organisations maintain balanced strategies*”, highlighting the uneven influence of populism depending on

organisational scale and strategic maturity. Similarly, INT4 remarked that public opinion holds growing importance, *“but the extent to which it impacts supply chain decisions depends on various factors including the size of the populist group and the market dynamics”*. This sentiment was echoed by INT6, who described their organisation’s position as *“lip service”*, elaborating that while there is a public-facing narrative of alignment with national sentiment, the underlying sourcing strategies remain globally optimised. According to INT6, the company had made statements suggesting alignment with domestic or nearshore preferences, but in practice, no substantial changes had been made to the global supplier base. The interviewee explained this as a strategic communication choice: *“It’s more about being seen to respond, rather than actually shifting operations”*. This highlights a performative aspect of corporate responses to populist pressures where reputational management, branding and stakeholder reassurance take precedence over tangible operational shifts. Several other participants, including INT12 and INT17, also alluded to this divergence between external messaging and internal decision-making, framing it as a pragmatic response to managing risk in a volatile political environment without compromising commercial efficiency.

INT13 described a situation where senior leadership abruptly instructed the company to cease purchasing equipment from China, a decision that appeared to be heavily influenced by media narratives rather than a structured risk assessment. This reactive approach illustrated how external political and media pressures can prompt sudden shifts in procurement policy, particularly when leadership seeks to demonstrate responsiveness to public sentiment or geopolitical tensions. INT7 echoed this pattern, noting that populist driven corporate decisions are *“often more about signalling than substance”* and that such decisions *“lack long term viability”*. These comments reflect how populism can produce short term, reactionary shifts in strategy that may conflict with longer term supply chain goals or risk mitigation efforts.

INT14 added another dimension, explaining that *“populism is cyclical and often a reactionary force, but it rarely causes companies to make drastic short term supply chain changes”*. INT16 supported this interpretation, stating, *“It’s a post Covid reaction populist sentiment ... we will settle back somewhere in between. Supply chains don’t move on four-year cycles”*. These perspectives suggest that while populism may temporarily influence strategic direction, the scale of operational relocation, cost factors and supplier dependencies often limit its sustained impact on supply chains.

5.3.2 Media Narratives and Public Perception

Interviewees consistently identified the media both social and mainstream as playing a central role in disseminating populist narratives and shaping the broader environment in which sourcing decisions are made. INT13 expressed concern over how polarized media environments can distort perception: *“It’s almost like where do you go for your information... I don’t really think people can make unbiased decisions anymore”*. They further noted that mainstream media often echoes governmental views, while social media lacks accountability: *“There’s just no telling who’s paying those bills... they’re not required to cite sources”*. INT7 expanded on this concern, describing how misconceptions about global trade policies are reinforced by politicized media narratives: *“Stop looking at Fox News and asking for a daily update off the bots”*, was a directive issued during the Red Sea crisis. During that period, widespread media reporting on attacks against commercial vessels led to a surge in reactive questions from executives and stakeholders, many of whom were drawing information from sensationalized or politically biased sources. In response, internal directives were issued to limit reliance on certain media channels and automated content feeds that were seen as fuelling anxiety rather than providing actionable intelligence. The episode underscored how rapidly evolving geopolitical events can become distorted through media narratives, leading to misinformed demands or ill-considered decisions at the corporate level. INT15 noted the dual risk of both forms of media, stating: *“Mainstream news is censored and managed, whereas social media is unvetted and everyone has a platform. Both are dangerous for the economy and have significant social impact”*.

Despite these concerns, several interviewees emphasized that sourcing decisions remain largely cost driven. INT10 stated, *“Public opinion is influenced by media, but decisions are still mostly cost based”*. INT14 agreed, adding that public sentiment is more likely to manifest in consumer behaviour than direct supply chain strategy, citing *“Public opinion does not influence sourcing decisions, but the public vote with their wallet”*. However, INT18 introduced a more nuanced view, suggesting that sourcing decisions are increasingly interpreted as political or ideological acts: *“People read investment announcements as statements on nationalism or globalisation”*. This point was echoed by INT22, who observed that populist messaging is often framed around job creation: *“Governments link supply chain decisions to employment to appeal to national sentiment”*.

5.3.3 Country of Origin and Perceived Values

Throughout the interviews, there was consistent reference to the increasing visibility of country of origin in both consumer and corporate decision making. INT16 noted that *“Covid increased awareness of where product is sourced”*, while INT1 highlighted a growing sensitivity in both public and corporate domains. Yet participants consistently noted a misalignment between stated values and actual purchasing behaviours. INT7 commented that *“people express strong nationalistic preferences but rarely pay more for locally produced goods”* and INT3 explained: *“While consumers say they prefer local products, they rarely pay the premium required to sustain domestic manufacturing”*. INT10 added that *“many consumer decisions are now based on ideals and values, rather than being solely cost driven”*, yet these values often fail to override economic considerations.

Several interviewees described how organisations have responded structurally to this shift. INT13 stated: *“There’s increased importance of Country-of-Origin classifications right now. We have specialized functions reviewing classifications”*. INT8 further indicated that *“some companies are creating geopolitical management roles to assess ongoing risks”*, highlighting the institutionalization of sourcing transparency and geopolitical risk management in some organisations. Still, commercial realities dominate, INT19 noted that *“while there’s pressure to diversify from China, this is not mirrored in customer requirements... decisions are still based on price”*. This tension underscores the challenge for organisations seeking to navigate between populist expectations and operational feasibility.

5.3.4 National Narratives and Tariff Misconceptions

The role of tariffs as a populist instrument emerged as a particularly strong theme across the interviews. Multiple participants referenced a widespread misconception particularly in the U.S. that tariffs are paid by exporting nations. INT6 explained: *“People are listening to what politicians are saying... there’s a misconception that Trump tariffs mean China is paying. Consumers don’t realize they are bearing the increased cost”*. INT7 echoed this, saying: *“Many believe tariffs hurt China, but they don’t realize domestic consumers bear the cost”*. Similarly, INT13 stated: *“At the end of the day, it’s the end customer that pays for that”*.

These insights highlight how economic realities are often masked by political rhetoric, especially when tariffs are used as a symbolic tool to appeal to domestic audiences. INT1 noted

that “*companies promoting ‘Made in America’ often struggle with supply chain feasibility*”, while INT10 remarked: “*Governments are pushing for national production, but execution remains challenging*”.

5.3.5 Country Contexts and Political Dimension

The impact of populism was also shown to be context dependent. INT3 noted a clear distinction between the political climates of the UK and Ireland, citing the UK’s two-tiered society and populist narratives as factors in the Brexit vote. INT17 described the role of populist ideology in shaping U.S. trade policy: “*It’s promise, promise, promise and they will never deliver*”. This aligns with broader concerns that populist movements often rely on emotionally resonant, but economically unviable, narratives. The divergence of views on China as a sourcing hub also illustrates how populist framing intersects with strategic decision making. INT20 described a deliberate move away from Chinese suppliers due to leadership preference, based on prior experiences. In contrast, INT7 stated: “*We cannot decouple from China no one can match their speed, cost, efficiency and infrastructure*”. These opposing perspectives underscore how populism complicates what are often pragmatic decisions rooted in operational efficiency and cost effectiveness.

The interview data indicates that populism exerts a differentiated but potentially powerful influence on global supply chain decision making. While it does not often dictate direct action, populist sentiment amplified by media narratives and political rhetoric shapes the context in which decisions are made, particularly by influencing public expectations, internal leadership sentiment and reputational considerations. Smaller and consumer facing organisations appear more vulnerable to reactionary shifts driven by populist messaging, while larger organisations tend to maintain more stable strategies. The growing politicization of sourcing decisions, especially regarding country of origin and China related trade, reflects broader shifts in the public discourse surrounding globalisation and national identity. Ultimately, supply chain leaders are increasingly required to navigate a complex terrain where cost, resilience and public perception intersect. Populism, though often external to supply chain operations, is now a key part of the external environment shaping organisational strategy.

5.4 Nationalism

Nationalism, in the context of global supply chains, refers to a strategic preference for domestic production, local job creation and economic self-sufficiency. Unlike populism, which is often emotionally driven and rooted in public rhetoric, nationalism tends to take form through structured policy initiatives, corporate commitments and market signals. In recent years, nationalist narratives such as “Made in America”, “Buy Local”, or efforts to reshore production have intensified in both political messaging and corporate communication. Participants in this study reflected on how these narratives intersect with supply chain decision making. Many questioned whether nationalism has translated into practical shifts in sourcing strategy, while others described reputational, symbolic or regulatory influences that have pushed nationalism to the forefront of stakeholder expectations. This section explores those dynamics, examining both where nationalism is driving change and where its influence remains limited or performative.

5.5.1 Are Supply Chains Moving Toward a Nationalist Footprint?

When asked directly whether they had observed a shift toward local or national supply footprints, 68% of participants answered no. Further details of the interviewee responses are categorised in Table 5.1 below, with detailed comments in Table 5.2 for additional context. INT1 stated that “decisions are cost driven, supply will follow the lowest cost”, indicating that price remains the primary consideration, even in the face of rising nationalist sentiment. INT2 shared a similar observation, noting that “the opposite effect is being observed due to cost factors”, particularly post COVID. Instead of reshoring, their company had increased international sourcing to mitigate rising expenses. INT3 also rejected the idea of a national pivot, saying, *“I believe it’s the opposite effect with food price inflation people will not pay more for local produce”*. INT4 agreed, stating, *“Possibly in theory, but not in practice people are not willing to pay”*. Several participants referred to their customers’ price sensitivity as the key limiting factor. As INT6 explained, *“The supply footprint has little importance to end customers. They are cost driven for the most part”*. INT11 echoed this, saying, *“There’s no appetite to pay higher costs for national supply. Decisions are still cost driven”*. Beyond cost, others pointed to operational limitations. INT8 noted, *“Decisions are based on cost and there are huge barriers to onboard new suppliers”*, particularly in developed markets where regulatory expectations and onboarding timelines create friction. INT9 was critical of the

national supply capacity itself: *“The domestic supply chain is inadequate. It simply can’t scale”*.

However, a smaller number of participants did report instances of regional or national sourcing, though often with caveats. INT5 stated, *“Yes, this is due to the nature of products. They’re large, metal based items that are required to be close to the point of use. That’s not nationalism it’s physics”*. Similarly, INT13 described how their organisation *“is moving manufacturing to North Carolina to reduce dependency on China”*, but noted that this was more about improving logistics and avoiding risk than aligning with political goals. INT14 shared that *“local supply is required to support local services”* and cited examples of suppliers shifting production from China to the U.S. to enhance control and visibility. INT17 pointed to reliability, not ideology, as the catalyst: *“It’s a reliability issue. You can invest all you want in China, but then if they shut the doors, it’s no good to you. It’s not that low cost is absolutely no good it’s just not reliable anymore”*.

INT21 introduced the term *“economic nationalism”* to describe the dynamic: *“Any localised resourcing is a result of increasing reliability requirements rather than nationalist agendas”*. Similarly, INT22 said, *“New facilities are being opened in Germany and the U.S. to mitigate risk from reliance on China”*, but clarified that this was part of a broader resilience strategy, not driven by nationalist ideology. INT10 perhaps best summed up the paradox: *“Yes, supply is becoming more regional but it’s not strategic or planned. It’s a reaction to geopolitical noise, not a return to domestic first policy”*.

Table 5.1 Supply Chain Movement Towards Nationalist Footprint

Participant	Is there a movement towards a local / national supply footprint?	Rationale
INT1	No	Cost
INT2	No	Cost
INT3	No	Cost
INT4	No	Cost
INT6	No	Cost
INT8	No	Cost
INT11	No	Cost
INT15	No	Cost
INT19	No	Cost
INT20	No	Cost
INT18	No	Public Perception
INT7	No	Reliability / Capacity / Availability
INT9	No	Reliability / Capacity / Availability
INT12	No	Reliability / Capacity / Availability
INT16	No	Reliability / Capacity / Availability
INT5	Yes	Reliability / Capacity / Availability
INT10	Yes	Reliability / Capacity / Availability
INT13	Yes	Reliability / Capacity / Availability
INT14	Yes	Reliability / Capacity / Availability
INT17	Yes	Reliability / Capacity / Availability
INT21	Yes	Reliability / Capacity / Availability
INT22	Yes	Reliability / Capacity / Availability

Table 5.2 Supply Chain Movement Towards Nationalist Footprint – Participant Comments

Participant	Participant Comments
INT1	Decisions are cost driven, supply will follow the lowest cost
INT2	The opposite effect is being observed due to cost factors
INT3	No, I believe it's the opposite effect with food price inflation, people will not pay more for local produce
INT4	Possibly in theory but not in practice, not willing to pay
INT5	Yes, this is due to nature of products are required to be close to point of use
INT6	Supply footprint has little importance to end customer as they are cost driven for most part
INT7	We aren't at that sort of nationalistic level with flying the flag in the organization quite yet,
INT8	Decision are based on cost and there are huge barriers to onboard new suppliers
INT9	Domestic supply chain is inadequate
INT10	Supply is regional however this footprint is not strategic or planned
INT11	No appetite to pay higher costs for national supply, decisions are cost driven
INT12	Many companies now view China as high risk, moving out of China but to multiple locations in Asia
INT13	Organisation is moving manufacturing to North Carolina to reduce dependency on China
INT14	Local supply is required to support local services. Also some suppliers moving manufacturing to USA from China to reduce risk and improve reliability
INT15	Domestic supply is too expensive, other low cost options are being explored
INT16	While there is a interest in moving out of China, this doesn't necessarily mean manufacturing transfers to the US. It will transfer to a different location such as Vietnam or Mexico instead, some other foreign location
INT17	Its is a reliability issue, you can invest all you want in China and then if they shut the doors, it's no that low cost is absolutely no good to you

INT18	Impact of larger public companies stating that they are making strategic shift away from certain locations for manufacturing and sourcing can influence public opinion also
INT19	No value in exiting low cost overseas sourcing models as 99.9% of customers will not pay more for locally sourced product
INT20	Assumptions that local supply is more morally correct, however there is better value from global supply chains and international supply
INT21	Its is economic nationalism, any localised resourcing is a result of increasing reliability requirements rather than nationalist agendas
INT22	New facilities are being opened in Germany and the US to mitigate risk from reliance on China

5.5.2 Perceptions vs. Practice

Although most participants had not observed major structural changes in their supply footprints, several described how nationalism is increasingly present in corporate messaging, political expectations and consumer perception. These influences, while often symbolic, still shape behaviour. INT18 explained, *“The impact of larger public companies stating that they are making strategic shifts away from China whether it’s real or not can influence public opinion. It becomes part of your brand”*. INT1 described how their marketing team had increasingly focused on U.S. made messaging: *“There’s been a big push to highlight American made. One product was heavily branded as domestic, but the supplier was giving us a ton of quality problems”*.

INT3 described this as a form of managed perception: *“Companies are promoting ‘Made in America’ but they’re still sourcing from global vendors. It’s branding, not sourcing strategy”*. INT21 called this *“economic nationalism”* a term they used to describe how companies adopt nationalist language to appeal to stakeholders, while still maintaining global operations. INT7 highlighted the cultural divide between rhetoric and reality: *“We aren’t at that sort of nationalistic level with flying the flag in the organisation quite yet”*. INT22 confirmed that new site openings were happening, *“but only because of the risk profile of China. It’s risk mitigation. We don’t want to be overexposed to one country”*.

Participants also commented on the gap between government mandates and private sector capabilities. INT15 noted, *“Local supply is now required for critical services, even if costs increase”*, citing public health as one example. But INT14 cautioned that *“the sustainability of these mandates is questionable. They’ll evaporate the moment budget cuts come in”*. INT4 provided a practical example of failed execution: *“During the U.S. steel tariff period, we were told to buy American. There was no inventory. We had to import screws and finish the product here because U.S. suppliers just didn’t have the stock”*. INT22 echoed this constraint: *“The ability to move supply chains quickly is very limited. It takes time, capital and long-term relationships”*.

The tension between public pressure and practical limitations was reinforced by INT9: *“It’s interesting how the trade relationship between China and the U.S. can keep a lot of what could be political craziness in check because we need them and they need us”*. Even when customers respond well to domestic branding, few are willing to pay the premium. INT4 observed, *“They like seeing ‘Guaranteed Irish,’ but they won’t pay extra for it”*. INT6 speculated, *“If you surveyed people, they’d say domestic is better. But at the point of sale? They’ll choose the cheaper option”*. INT19 was even more blunt: *“There’s no value in exiting low-cost sourcing models. 99.9% of customers won’t pay more for locally sourced product”*. INT21 likened this contradiction to nature: *“It’s like putting a rock in a river. The water finds a way around it. You can say national supply all you want, but the flow of business will work around that pressure if the economics aren’t there”*.

Participants consistently described a divide between nationalistic values and economic value. Many acknowledged that domestic production was viewed more favourably by governments and customers but said that few were willing to sacrifice price or efficiency to achieve it. INT4 noted, *“Most people favour national or local sources but they won’t pay the premium. The idea is nice, but it’s not realistic”*. INT6 explained this further: *“You could run a consumer study and I’m sure they’d say, ‘Yes, local is better.’ But watch what they buy and it tells a different story”*. INT7 pointed out that *“nobody cares whether your product is made in America... they just want the cheapest product”*, especially in retail or consumer driven sectors. This was confirmed by INT3, who added, *“Nearer isn’t always better. Local suppliers might not have capacity and they might not be reliable”*.

INT10 observed that governments are actively encouraging reshoring, *“but execution remains difficult. There’s just too much inertia. Suppliers don’t pivot fast and boards are reluctant to absorb the cost without guaranteed returns”*. Even when domestic sourcing aligns with public messaging, participants warned that companies often fall short on follow through. INT3 said, *“They’ll promote the local label, but the actual operations haven’t changed”*. INT1 added, *“Sometimes the packaging changes before the supplier does”*. While nationalism is increasingly present in political messaging, corporate communication and consumer messaging, its direct impact on supply chain strategy remains limited and fragmented. The findings from this study indicate that few organisations are making a fundamental shift toward fully nationalized sourcing. Instead, participants described a landscape shaped by cost, capacity and risk, with nationalist themes appearing more often in language than in logistics.

Where changes are taking place, they are typically reactive driven by supply disruption, regulatory risk or geopolitical tension rather than a deliberate nationalist strategy. Symbolism plays a significant role in public facing messaging, but behind the scenes, many companies continue to rely on international supply networks, diversified regional networks and global cost competitiveness. Participants raised concerns about the disconnect between political expectations, consumer narratives and operational capability. While there is reputational value in appearing aligned with national priorities, the ability to deliver on those promises is frequently undermined by cost competitiveness, infrastructure gaps, lead times and internal resistance. As INT21 reflected, nationalism may add pressure to the system but when the flow of global trade meets resistance, *“it finds a way around it”*. Ultimately, nationalism influences the conversation but does not yet control the outcome.

5.5 Protectionism

Protectionism, in the context of global supply chains, refers to policies and practices aimed at protecting and bolstering domestic industries from foreign competition. These protectionist mechanisms may include tariffs, trade restrictions, reshoring incentives or country of origin mandates. While often framed as tools to strengthen national resilience or restore manufacturing competitiveness, participants described these measures as complex, politically driven and frequently counterproductive in both operational terms and competitive nature. This section explores how protectionism has manifested in recent years particularly through tariffs and government policies like the CHIPS Act, Made in America Initiative and the extent to

which such efforts have reshaped supply chain strategy. Drawing from participant insights, it reveals a tension between protective intent and disruptive consequence, where short term political goals conflict with long term supply chain logic.

5.5.1 What Does Protectionism Look Like?

The most frequently cited form of protectionism was tariffs. Participants widely described these measures not as industrial lifelines but as disruptors that imposed costs, complexity and confusion. INT6 stated plainly: *“Tariffs have made some domestic industries less competitive rather than stronger”*. INT9 echoed this, explaining that *“increased tariffs on Chinese imports have forced companies to rethink their sourcing strategies”*, with most organisations opting to diversify rather than reshore. INT1 was particularly direct in rejecting the framing of tariffs as protective: *“Most economists would agree with my perspective that a tariff is in fact a tax on the purchaser... it gets passed on to the consumer”*. Several others noted this pas through effect. INT22 stated that *“tariffs are passed straight to the customer”* and INT4 emphasized that in healthcare, this means increased costs for patients. Participants also identified the operational challenges tariffs introduce. INT16 shared that tariffs *“increased complexity”* and led to changes in the sourcing model to rely more on semi-finished goods. INT13 noted that tariffs *“resulted in a dual source strategy”* where companies maintained a China option but developed alternatives as a contingency. INT3 raised the broader concern: *“Tariffs are a spiralling escalation that no one is going to win from”*. Rather than enabling competitiveness, they often raised input costs, complicated customs compliance and forced organisations into reactionary planning.

Beyond cost, participants referenced formal mechanisms like Trade Agreements, Made in America mandates and Buy American policies as characteristics of protectionism. INT15 noted that some of these rules now form part of U.S. federal procurement expectations: *“We’re required to provide domestic sourcing for critical services even if it costs more”*. INT1 similarly noted that *“TAA compliance and domestic origin now shape the eligibility of suppliers for certain government contracts”*. TAA compliance refers to compliance with the Trade Agreements Act, a US federal law that governs procurement by US government agencies. It ensures that the US government only acquires products from approved countries that have a trade agreement with the U.S., or from products made in the US itself. However, INT14 offered a cautionary view: *“The sustainability of these mandates when cost pressures mount is*

questionable”. This sentiment was shared by INT5, who cited an example from the steel sector: *“There was no inventory, no infrastructure to even source some of the screws... companies had to import the screws and finish the products here”*. These examples demonstrate how protectionist intentions often fail in practice due to underlying supply chain limitations.

Government policies, particularly those driven by foreign policy or domestic political priorities, were viewed by many participants as central actors in the protectionist shift. Several commented on how specific legislation, such as the CHIPS Act or Section 301 tariffs, created new parameters for sourcing decisions sometimes without adequate infrastructure or clarity. INT5 observed: *“There’s a real push from governments, but the lead times and capital investment required to move production are enormous”*. INT22 made a similar point: *“The ability to move supply chains quickly is very limited. These aren’t 12-month projects”*. INT4 described government influence as *“reactive”* suggesting that political agendas often ignore the realities and complexities of global supply networks.

Participants also described the politicisation of regulatory tools. INT1 stated: *“The FDA is being used as a political weapon against China... this isn’t just about health and safety anymore”*. This framing reflects a broader view that protectionist measures are increasingly embedded in foreign policy strategies. The Huawei issue was also raised as an example. INT8 shared: *“We started seeing in tenders for telco jobs that Huawei was not on the approved equipment list... it spooked loads of people”*. This demonstrates how foreign policy shifts, especially those tied to national security, can trigger protectionist behaviour without any formal change in tariff law. INT17 illustrated the challenge stating *“organisations have to insulate from elected presidents and their policies... they make decisions to protect themselves from political cycles”*. This insight suggests that organisations are not simply reacting to protectionist policy they are actively building resilience against it.

5.5.2 Trade War Impact on Supply Chain

Participants offered varied perspectives on whether the U.S.– China trade war has produced material changes in supply networks. INT20 reflected: *“There’s more narrative than action. Companies talk about diversifying away from China, but they rarely bring manufacturing home”*. Others, however, described tangible adjustments. INT2 stated that their organisation had *“shifted some sourcing to Southeast Asia”* in response to tariffs, while INT13 explained:

“We moved production to Mexico to avoid duties... purely a tariff decision”. INT16 noted that Chinese suppliers themselves were responding: *“They started offering goods from alternative sites to maintain orders”*. In this way, the trade war has not always reshored supply, but it has fragmented it.

INT21 drew attention to the competitive ripple effects and the displacement of trade outside the US, *“We’re seeing Saudi Arabia assembling basic kits and calling it ‘Made in Saudi’ just to get around origin rules”*. This kind of behaviour reveals how trade barriers incentivise workaround solutions rather than structural shifts. INT6 put it plainly: *“Tariffs haven’t led to real movement back to the U.S. They’ve created complexity, increased cost and driven changes but not the ones policymakers imagined”*. Participants were also sceptical about the long term success of these measures. INT10 reflected: *“Governments are trying to build economic self-sufficiency, but it’s hard to implement. The supply base isn’t ready and the incentives don’t go far enough”*.

It is evident that protectionism, as experienced by supply chain practitioners, is less of a strategic blueprint and more a source of volatility and uncertainty. Interviewees described how tariffs, domestic content mandates and foreign policy manoeuvres have shaped sourcing decisions but more often by adding risk and complexity than by driving meaningful onshoring or national resilience. While some changes such as dual sourcing or supplier relocation to tariff free zones can be traced directly to protectionist triggers, participants overwhelmingly characterized these as tactical, not ideological. Few participants believed that protectionism was building a stronger domestic industrial base. More commonly, it was seen as reactive, political and inefficient. This section reveals that supply chains are not easily reshaped by policy alone. Participants described how government initiatives often outpace practical capability, leaving supply chains to manage the resulting cost, confusion and reputational risk. Protectionism may be indicative of a desire for national growth but in execution, it exposes just how globally interdependent modern supply chains remain.

5.6 Organisation

The strategic orientation of an organisation plays a critical role in determining how it identifies, assesses and responds to geopolitical risks. This section examines how organisational structures, leadership dynamics and stakeholder expectations influence both the perception and

operational management of geopolitical disruptions and how these responses ultimately shape supply chain outcomes. Across the interviews, participants described varying levels of maturity in geopolitical risk response. Some organisations had embedded structured monitoring systems and risk based frameworks, while others adopted more reactive, ad hoc approaches. This variation appeared closely tied to organisational size, governance models and industry sector, underscoring the diversity of internal capabilities and strategic postures.

5.6.1 Mandates and the Myth of Nearshoring

Notably, none of the interview participants reported receiving a formal corporate mandate to relocate supply chains closer to domestic markets in response to geopolitical risk. Rather than top down directives, nearshoring efforts when present were framed as resilience initiatives, often triggered by supply continuity concerns rather than national allegiance. INT3 commented *“Corporate might state that they want to nearshore, but the decision comes down to cost and it’s often more cost effective with pricing from an international supplier”*. This sentiment was shared by INT6, who described their organisation’s position as *“lip service”*. In elaborating on this view, INT6 suggested that while senior leaders referenced nearshoring in strategic messaging and external communications, there was little to no internal follow-through in terms of concrete initiatives, investment or supplier shifts. The rhetoric was seen as symbolic rather than actionable, intended to signal alignment with geopolitical narratives without disrupting established cost driven sourcing models. Similarly, INT7 reflected, *“They want to be seen to have a local or domestic strategy, but that’s not what actually plays out on the ground”*. These responses point to a critical divergence between rhetoric and practice. While organisations may publicly emphasize domestic alignment or regionalization, internal sourcing strategies continue to prioritize cost and operational feasibility over political alignment. As INT1 stated, *“It all sounds great in the town hall meetings, but when you get into actual cost modelling and supplier performance, the decision doesn’t hold up”*.

Several interviewees described how customer expectations exert subtle but significant pressure on organisational sourcing strategies. INT7 explained, *“Many organisations feel pressure from the public and customers to be seen to have local and domestic sourcing strategies, however the organisation will ultimately choose cost effective solutions”*. INT3 similarly noted, *“While consumers say they prefer local products, they rarely pay the premium required to sustain domestic manufacturing”*. These findings suggest that nearshoring is often more performative

than strategic driven by reputational considerations and stakeholder perception rather than organisation level mandates or structural reorientation. INT6 noted, *“You’d be surprised how much marketing influence feeds into supply chain decisions we sometimes make symbolic shifts to maintain the brand image rather than the supply performance”*.

5.6.2. Emerging Risk Monitoring Functions

A notable finding was the emergence of geopolitical risk monitoring functions within select organisations. INT5 reported that a new geopolitical risk team had been recently established: *“They track global events and generate risk scenarios for our strategic suppliers it’s very data driven now”*. INT17 shared that their organisation produces a “monthly geopolitical report aligned to our current supplier locations, including factors like regional instability and trade barriers”. Others acknowledged this as a growing trend. INT8 observed, *“We haven’t created that function yet, but some of our peers have... they’re setting up geopolitical management roles specifically for assessing ongoing supply chain risk”*. INT12 emphasized the strategic necessity: *“Supply chain teams must have dedicated risk assessment functions to support supplier selection and sourcing decision making”*. These developments signal a recognition that geopolitical risk is no longer peripheral. Instead, it is becoming embedded within supplier governance and organisation risk management structures albeit unevenly across organisations.

Interview data revealed a strong link between organisation size and the sophistication of geopolitical risk management. Larger, multinational organisations tended to have more formalized approaches, while smaller organisations demonstrated greater reliance on reactive or informal processes. INT17 representing a large technology manufacturer, described *“extensive risk based supplier management strategies that include geopolitical scoring criteria”*. Likewise, INT22 noted that their semiconductor business had integrated geopolitical risk into its tier one supplier evaluations and country diversification planning. In contrast, INT20, from a medium sized privately owned firm, described a less formal approach: *“Often our decisions are more subjective than objective and do not always follow a risk based approach”*. Reflecting on a past sourcing decision, they admitted, *“We were aware the supplier selection was not ideal, but we figured we’d deal with the consequences if they arose”*. This disparity underscores how organisational structure and resourcing play a critical role in shaping strategic resilience. INT18, operating in a highly regulated sector, emphasized that *“We have*

no choice but to integrate geopolitical considerations, the scale of our business and regulatory scrutiny demands it”.

Several participants highlighted the role of industry associations and external networks in guiding organisational response to geopolitical risk. INT12 stated, *“Membership in industry bodies provides guidance on navigating geopolitical complexities. Our strategic playbook now has a full section on geopolitics it’s becoming a mainstream discussion point”*. These collaborations can serve as benchmarks of best practice and early warning, especially for organisations without dedicated internal resources. As INT14 noted, *“Sometimes the associations are more in tune with emerging trends than internal teams, we rely on their intelligence to sense what’s coming next”*.

The findings suggest that organisational response to geopolitical risk is multifaceted shaped not only by structure and size, but by the interconnection of leadership commitment, stakeholder perception and operational realities. While larger organisations are beginning to institutionalize geopolitical risk monitoring, many still struggle to align rhetoric with practice. Cost pressures remain a dominant force, often overriding symbolic commitments to domestic or regional sourcing. Nearshoring initiatives, when present, are typically pursued in response to performance or continuity concerns rather than ideological motivation. At the same time, reputational considerations particularly customer sentiment are influencing corporate narratives and sometimes prompting superficial alignment with nationalistic expectations. As geopolitical volatility continues to rise, the capacity to embed strategic, risk informed approaches into organisational supply chain governance will likely become a key differentiator. organisations that move beyond reactive posture to embrace structured, intelligence driven decision making may gain not only resilience, but reputational advantage in an increasingly uncertain global environment.

5.7 Supply Chain Decision Making

Supply chain decision making is shaped by a complex interplay of strategic priorities, operational constraints and external pressures, including geopolitical volatility. While earlier sections explored the influence of populism and nationalism as contextual forces, this section focuses on how organisations make sourcing and supply chain decisions, what factors drive them, how corporate strategy intersects with supply constraints and to what extent political or

public sentiment plays a role. Interview responses reveal that despite increasing geopolitical pressure, the dominant drivers of supply chain decision making remain rooted in cost, reliability, regulatory compliance and availability of alternatives. Populist or nationalist rhetoric may influence brand messaging or customer expectations, but these factors rarely override operational priorities. In practice, supply chain location decisions reflect a balance of commercial logic, material requirements and risk tolerance.

5.7.1 Decision Making Factors: Cost, Reliability and Availability

Cost emerged as the most frequently cited factor influencing supplier selection. Of the 22 participants, ten (INT1, INT2, INT3, INT6, INT7, INT10, INT11, INT14, INT15, INT19) directly identified cost as the primary determinant. INT7 remarked, *“Right now, nobody cares whether or not your product is made in America... all they want is the cheapest product”*. This sentiment was echoed by INT3, who stated, *“While consumers say they prefer local products, they rarely pay the premium required to sustain domestic manufacturing”*. Even among participants who acknowledged strategic discussions about nearshoring or domestic supply, these ideas often faltered in execution due to commercial constraints. INT15 summarized the reality directly: *“It’s too expensive to manufacture in the U.S. at scale”*. Similarly, INT6 commented that discussions around domestic sourcing often amounted to *“lip service”*, as pricing from global suppliers remained more competitive.

Reliability was the second most frequently cited factor. Participants described how organisations increasingly prioritize supply continuity especially in the wake of COVID 19 and geopolitical disruptions. INT8 emphasized that while their organisation had no formal nearshoring mandate, reliability was now a decisive criterion: *“We had to move supply closer simply because we couldn't depend on long lead times anymore”*. INT14 added that locating suppliers in similar time zones had improved responsiveness and planning accuracy. However, local sourcing does not automatically equate to greater reliability. INT3 challenged the assumption that proximity guarantees performance: *“Nearer is not always better”*. The reality, as described by several interviewees, is that supplier selection involves a careful trade-off between geographic convenience, proven capability and cost effectiveness. The availability of alternatives also significantly influenced decision making. INT1 indicated that raw material constraints dictated supplier and footprint identification. Similarly, INT17 explained, *“You can only move away from China if you actually have an alternative sometimes there just aren’t*

capable suppliers elsewhere". INT4 stressed that it's not only about finding another supplier, but one that meets required regulatory standards. INT14 reinforced this, noting that onboarding new suppliers particularly those with specialized capabilities are not always practical due to long lead times and capital investment.

5.7.2 Supply Chain Location Decisions

When asked about the presence of any corporate mandate to nearshore or move manufacturing domestically, participants expressed a resoundingly negative position. INT6 noted, *"There's no formal mandate just a desire to be seen to be doing it"*. INT3 agreed, stating that *"Corporate might state they want to nearshore, but in practice the decision comes down to cost"*. Instead, most location decisions were described as reactive or product specific. INT13 pointed to raw material constraints, stating, *"We source from Japan for precious metals and Taiwan for semiconductors it's where the resources are"*. For some, local sourcing was pursued only when justified by logistical or supply continuity reasons. INT8 described this as a response to performance risk: *"We moved a key product line to Europe not because of ideology, but because delays were getting out of hand"*.

Some interviewees also mentioned leadership preferences that informally shaped sourcing practices. INT20 explained that their leadership team *"had a preference to avoid Chinese suppliers"* and had encouraged procurement to *"work with Indian manufacturers based on past experience"*. INT16 referenced how U.S. policy tools like the "Made in America Act" and US Department of Defence contracting rules influenced sourcing: *"If you want to win federal contracts, you need a domestic supply strategy even if it's more expensive"*. While strategic aspirations may influence executive intent, the absence of formal mandates means that sourcing decisions remain grounded in economic feasibility. In INT7's words, *"It's all about being seen to have a domestic strategy it doesn't mean you actually do"*.

While risk is explored in more detail in the following Supply Chain Redesign section, several participants emphasized its influence on real time sourcing decisions. INT5 noted that *"populist policies can create artificial trade barriers that disrupt supply chains more than they protect domestic industries"*. These disruptions are often unpredictable, forcing companies to diversify or restructure sourcing without clear strategic gains. INT13 described an example of executive decision making influenced by geopolitical pressure: *"Leadership directed the*

company to stop buying Chinese equipment overnight a knee jerk reaction driven by media influence". INT6 added that smaller organisations are more likely to respond this way: "Larger organisations maintain balanced strategies, but smaller businesses are more influenced by popular rhetoric". Some participants suggested that populist driven supply chain changes may lack longevity. INT16 remarked that "Covid increased awareness of where product is sourced, but populism is cyclical... It will settle back somewhere in between". INT14 added that while populist pressure may trigger short term reaction, "it rarely causes companies to make drastic supply chain changes". INT10 offered a different angle, emphasizing the importance of consumer values in business to consumer markets: "Customers now make choices based on ideals and values not just cost. For some brands, sourcing ethically or locally isn't optional it's brand critical".

The findings show that while external forces such as populism, policy shifts and geopolitical disruption may alter the backdrop of supply chain decision making, the core drivers remain consistent. Cost, reliability and supplier availability dominate decisions, with nearshoring or reshoring pursued only when they align with commercial priorities. Public or political rhetoric may influence branding or stakeholder expectations, but sourcing behaviour remains tightly linked to feasibility and risk. Corporate mandates to localize supply were notably absent across nearly all participants and those that had made such shifts did so for logistical or risk mitigation reasons not ideological alignment. As geopolitical instability grows, companies appear to be refining not reinventing their sourcing strategies. Rather than wholesale relocation, organisations are emphasizing dual sourcing, regional diversification and risk informed sourcing frameworks. Decision making remains a balancing act between political optics, supply resilience and the calculation of global cost structures.

5.8 Supply Chain Redesign

As global supply chains have grown more exposed to geopolitical shocks organisations have been compelled to rethink the design of their sourcing, production and logistics networks. The combined forces of populism, nationalism, protectionism and trade policy interventions, most notably tariffs, have introduced volatility that challenges traditional supply chain models. This section explores how organisations are redesigning their supply chains to manage these risks, focusing on strategic responses such as supplier diversification, dual sourcing, inventory strategies and the use of digital tools and monitoring functions. The interview findings

highlight that while most organisations are not abandoning global sourcing, they are actively re-engineering their supply networks to embed greater flexibility and resilience. These changes are not always dramatic or immediate but reflect an evolving mindset that recognizes the need for long term adaptability in the face of geopolitical uncertainty.

5.8.1 Supply Chain Strategies for Managing Geopolitical Risk

A prominent theme across interviews was the shift toward more risk informed supply chain strategies. Many participants reported the implementation of mitigation measures designed to insulate operations from geopolitical disruptions. These included the use of multiple suppliers, increased safety stocks, regional diversification and investment in visibility and monitoring tools. INT1 explained, *“We’ve moved to dual source some of our critical items not because of cost, but because the political environment in some countries has become too unpredictable”*. Similarly, INT10 described a broader corporate response: *“We’ve seen a push to create more regional options, not to bring everything back home, but to reduce dependency on a single geopolitical zone”*.

Several organisations were also adopting buffer strategies to mitigate supply shocks. INT8 noted that *“higher safety stock levels are now considered part of the resilience toolkit”*, while INT7 explained that their company had *“set up control towers to track geopolitical events and assess potential disruptions in real time”*. The function of geopolitical monitoring was further emphasized by INT5, who described a structured model where the organisation reviews political developments monthly and adjusts its supply exposure accordingly. This practice was mirrored by INT12, who remarked that *“monitoring geopolitical risk is now just as important as tracking logistics performance”*. Beyond these structural strategies, some participants also described other approaches. INT13 shared that *“procurement has been instructed to prioritize suppliers that can demonstrate flexibility those who can shift production between regions if needed”*. This reflects a growing appreciation for agility within the supply network,

The concept of resilience emerged as a central principle guiding supply chain redesign. While potentially previously overshadowed by cost efficiency, resilience has gained strategic prominence in response to recent disruptions. Organisations are now embedding resilience into their supplier selection criteria, planning cycles and network architecture. INT7 summarized this shift concisely *“We used to optimise for lowest cost now it’s about survival, about*

continuity". INT14 echoed this, stating: *"Resilience is now a strategic KPI. We're tracking it just like we track cost and delivery"*. This was further substantiated by INT16, who noted that *"our post COVID strategy explicitly calls for increased resilience through supplier diversification and inventory flexibility"*. Others, such as INT20, discussed the balance between resilience and cost: *"It's not that we ignore cost, but we're willing to accept a higher price for lower exposure"*. Interestingly, several participants tied resilience not just to geopolitical risk, but also to reputational risk. INT3 pointed out that *"supply failures caused by poor geopolitical risk planning can damage trust in our brand"*. In this context, resilience is not just an operational concept it becomes a reputational safeguard. In some cases, national policies also influenced resilience strategies. INT21 noted that *"regulatory mandates such as the Chips Act or UFLPA (Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act) are forcing us to find alternate supply routes even if they're less efficient"*. This again highlights the trade-off between compliance and operational efficiency.

The redesign of supply chains in response to geopolitical risk reflects a pragmatic adjustment rather than a complete restructuring. Organisations are not abandoning global sourcing models, but they are reconfiguring them to accommodate a more uncertain world. Dual sourcing, inventory buffers, digital monitoring and regional diversification are among the key tools being employed to manage risk while preserving performance. Interview data suggest that these strategies are not purely reactive. In many cases, they represent a shift in mindset toward a model where supply chains are viewed as strategic assets to be safeguarded against political disruption. While the extent and sophistication of redesign efforts vary by organisation size and sector, a common thread is emerging that indicates resilience is no longer optional, but essential. As organisations continue to navigate a landscape shaped by tariffs, political ideology and economic nationalism, their ability to proactively redesign supply chains will play a decisive role in securing long term stability and competitive advantage.

5.9 Outcomes

The interviews revealed a diverse and complex set of supply chain responses to the geopolitical forces such as populism, nationalism and protectionism. As organisations attempt to balance cost, reliability, public perception and risk, the outcomes of their decisions vary. This section considers the observed and anticipated outcomes across participants, drawing on themes of

sourcing shifts, network redesign and inventory strategies with a view to the implications for future of global supply.

5.9.1 Displacement of Trade and the Emergence of Southeast Asia

Many participants noted that following tariff imposition trade has not returned to domestic markets as nationalist rhetoric might suggest but has instead been displaced to alternative low cost regions particularly Southeast Asia. INT6 described this shift as *“a logical response to the cost implications of tariffs on Chinese goods”*, highlighting increased sourcing from Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia. This was reinforced by INT4, who noted: *“We’ve seen demand move into Southeast Asia not because of reshoring, but to reduce over reliance on China”*. INT9 offered a pragmatic view: *“China Plus One strategies are only viable if those alternatives can match the infrastructure and pricing China offers. Right now, most cannot, but companies are trying anyway to hedge exposure”*. While participants recognised the benefits of geographic diversification, several cautioned against overestimating the readiness of these markets. INT5 remarked: *“There’s still a lack of maturity in logistics, labour and road networks in many of these locations. We’ve had to invest heavily in onboarding new suppliers”*. This sentiment was echoed by INT19, who added: *“There’s a lot of talk about alternatives to China, but the truth is, capacity doesn’t exist at the scale needed without serious investment and long lead times”*.

5.9.2 Reconfiguration of Supply Strategies: Dual Sourcing and Inventory Management

One of the clearest operational outcomes across interviews was the expansion of risk mitigating supply strategies such as dual sourcing, regional inventory buffering and formal contingency planning. INT12 noted: *“We’re not just dual sourcing now we’re evaluating second and third tier suppliers to insulate ourselves”*. INT17 described the introduction of *“alternative inventory strategies and controlled stocking programmes for high risk products”*, particularly in sectors sensitive to geopolitical shock such as pharmaceuticals and electronics. Similarly, INT10 explained: *“With Israel and Palestine, we’ve had to move fast reactive, yes, but with backup plans in place. That includes inventory, secondary sources and mapping logistics corridors”*. Several participants described deliberate shifts away from lean, just in time models. INT18 summarised: *“We’ve moved from supply chain efficiency to supply chain resilience. It’s a mindset shift”*. INT14 added that visibility was a critical enabler, referencing investment in

control towers and geopolitical monitoring dashboards: *“We need to know, in real time, what’s going on globally. It’s not just about reacting it’s about getting ahead of risk”*.

5.9.3 Nearshoring, Friendshoring and ‘Lip Service’ Strategies

When asked whether organisations were genuinely reshoring or nearshoring supply chains, responses were mixed and often cynical. INT3 explained: *“Corporate might state that they want to near shore, but when you run the numbers, global pricing still wins”*. This view was supported by INT6, who described nearshoring as “lip service” and INT7, who said, *“You have to be seen to be supporting local manufacturing, but in reality, the supply chain hasn’t moved”*. Nevertheless, there were some concrete examples. INT13 referenced reshoring of specific production lines to North Carolina for reliability and INT22 shared that *“new facilities have been opened in Germany and the U.S. to mitigate reliance on China”*. These examples, however, were exceptions rather than the rule. For most organisations, any movement toward nearshoring was product specific, reactive or aligned to customer mandates rather than a political or ideological strategy. Interestingly, Friendshoring or prioritising sourcing from politically ‘friendly’ countries emerged as a rising trend. INT1 highlighted the emergence of Friendshoring as a risk mitigation strategy, INT16 also stated: *“Our sourcing models are being updated to reflect friendly trade zones. It’s not just cost anymore it’s political alignment, too”*. Others indicated that U.S. government contract conditions for DoD (Department of Defence) or TAA (Trade Agreements Act) compliance were influencing decisions more than internal corporate strategy.

The question of whether supply is inevitably moving closer to the end market was a point of reflection across the interviews. Some participants anticipated a longer-term trend in this direction, citing risk mitigation and customer expectations. INT17 posed the question directly: *“Is moving closer to market inevitable? I think we’re on that path it’s just not linear”*. INT8 provided a counterpoint: *“Moving away from China sounds good on paper, but we’re still locked into these relationships by infrastructure and scale”*. Other participants framed the movement as a new layer of complexity. INT11 explained: *“We re-engineered some supply chains closer to market during the Red Sea crisis, but it wasn’t because of policy it was because of physical security. Even then, the complexity just shifted somewhere else”*. This was echoed by INT5, who argued that *“diversifying routes and building flexibility into trade corridors”* was more viable than relying on localisation. Ultimately, participants agreed that supply chains

are moving but not consistently and not necessarily close to end markets. The direction is heavily influenced by risk, sector dynamics and evolving customer requirements.

Ultimately, participants agreed that supply chains are shifting but the pace, direction and objective behind these shifts are neither consistent nor universally aligned toward nearshoring. In the immediate aftermath of COVID-19, there was a widespread expectation that global supply chains would naturally contract and move closer to end markets as companies sought to build resilience and reduce exposure to international shocks. However, interviewees consistently indicated that this anticipated retraction has not materialized in a meaningful or sustained way. As INT16 stated, *“We expected most supply to nearshore or reshore, but that wasn’t the case”*. Instead, cost, infrastructure and supplier capabilities continue to dominate decision-making. While some organisations are relocating select production lines or diversifying their supplier base, these moves are often limited in scope or confined to specific categories. INT7 remarked that *“coming closer to market is not inevitable”*, highlighting that the presumed trajectory toward regionalization is much more conditional than potentially broadly assumed. INT3 echoed this, cautioning that *“nearer is not always better”*, particularly when local infrastructure or supplier maturity is lacking. The resulting picture is one of complex supply redesign rather than universal near shoring.

5.9.4 The Role of Government, Cyclical Patterns and Long Term Direction

Several participants commented on the role of short-term political cycles and the pressure to respond to public expectations. INT7 observed that *“governments work on a four year cycle, companies can’t afford to rebuild a global supply chain every time there’s a new administration”*. This sentiment was echoed by INT1, who explained that *“most of the political rhetoric doesn’t translate into real investment or long-term support”*. There was also frustration around the symbolic nature of government programmes. INT4 stated: *“Most policies are reactive. They say they’ll support local industry, but they don’t provide the infrastructure to back it up”*. INT15 added that political messaging can often lead to confusion rather than clarity, especially when it comes to trade and sourcing: *“Leadership just want to be seen to be doing the right thing but it’s the supply chain that has to figure out how to make it work”*. This disconnect reinforces the earlier discussion around “lip service”, where reputational alignment to political trends outweighs practical supply chain shifts.

While most outcomes discussed were reactive or tactical, a small number of participants pointed to long term shifts toward circular supply models and sustainability focused redesign. INT10 mentioned early stage initiatives to integrate reverse logistics and local production loops, though they admitted these were “in pilot phase and difficult to scale”. There was cautious optimism that geopolitical disruptions could catalyse more sustainable models in the long term. INT21 observed: *“If you’re redesigning your supply chain anyway, you might as well build in sustainability, resilience and traceability. We’re not there yet, but the opportunity is there”*. The outcomes described by participants reflect a supply chain environment in transition. The traditional models of cost based global sourcing are being challenged. Noable shifts in supply chain strategy are appearing such as or Southeast Asia instead of China, Friendshoring instead of Offshoring, inventory buffers instead of just in time. Yet across all themes, the consistent thread is complexity. Supply chains are not reverting to national models, nor are they fully global in the way they were pre COVID. They are becoming adaptive, risk-responsive and increasingly politicised. Whether these changes are sustainable or simply short term risk responses remain uncertain. However, it is evident from the interviews is that organisations are learning to operate in an environment where geopolitical pressure is now a permanent variable and supply chain outcomes must evolve accordingly.

5.10 Emerging Themes

While the principal findings of this research focused on the influence of populism, nationalism, protectionism and broader geopolitical pressures on global supply chain decision-making, several additional themes surfaced during the interview process. Although these themes were not raised consistently across all participants, they reveal important shifts in organisational awareness, behavioural responses and evolving risk priorities. Collectively, they provide insight into how organisations are adapting structurally and cognitively to an increasingly politicised and uncertain global sourcing environment.

5.10.1 Organisational Responses: Dedicated Geopolitical Monitoring Functions

A notable development described by several participants was the formalisation of internal structures dedicated to monitoring geopolitical exposure. INT13 outlined the creation of specialised roles focused on country-of-origin classification and compliance oversight, reflecting the increasing complexity and scrutiny surrounding trade regulations. Similarly,

INT5 and INT16 described the emergence of cross-functional teams tasked with interpreting political developments and advising procurement and supply chain functions on potential operational impacts. These organisational adaptations indicate a shift from reactive to more proactive geopolitical risk management. Rather than relying solely on external advisors or fragmented internal awareness, organisations are beginning to embed monitoring capabilities directly within their governance and sourcing frameworks. Participants suggested that this trend is particularly evident among larger organisations and those operating within highly regulated sectors, where disproportionate or delayed responses to policy changes could result in significant financial or compliance risk. This institutionalisation reflects a growing recognition that geopolitical volatility now constitutes an ongoing operational variable rather than an episodic disruption.

5.10.2 Post-Covid Expectations versus Structural Reality

Participants widely reflected on the gap between early pandemic driven expectations and structural change within global supply chains. While Covid-19 initially triggered widespread discussion around reshoring and nearshoring, many interviewees noted that these anticipated shifts did not materialise at scale. INT16 explained that the pandemic functioned primarily as a shock event that temporarily heightened visibility of sourcing origins and supply fragility, but it did not fundamentally alter cost driven sourcing models within their organisation.

Several participants emphasised that Covid-19 was ultimately framed internally as a one-off crisis rather than a sustained geopolitical or structural turning point. In contrast, geopolitical tensions, in particular the deteriorating U.S.-China relations and the Russia Ukraine war were perceived as longer term forces requiring strategic adaptation. As INT5 noted, early commitments to diversify supply chains following Covid-19 were frequently deprioritised once immediate supply pressures eased and commercial priorities resumed. This divergence highlights how crisis induced momentum toward localisation weakened in the absence of continued external pressure, reinforcing the depth of economic and financial considerations underpinning global sourcing strategies.

5.10.3 Cybersecurity and Geopolitical Exposure

Although discussed less frequently, cybersecurity emerged as an expanding dimension of geopolitical risk within supply chains. Participants linked this theme primarily to concerns surrounding technology bans, supplier trustworthiness and exposure to politically sensitive organisations. INT8 provided a clear example, stating that Huawei was deliberately excluded from their supplier base due to perceived security and compliance risks associated with geopolitical tensions. This theme reflects a broadening of geopolitical risk beyond traditional trade and tariff considerations into digital and technological domains. Participants noted growing awareness that supplier relationships now carry not only operational and financial exposure but also potential vulnerabilities linked to data security, regulatory restrictions and reputational risk. While these concerns were not yet systematically embedded into supplier evaluation processes, they indicate an emerging recognition that geopolitical tensions increasingly influence technology enabled supply chain decisions.

5.10.4 Evolving perceptions on China

Perceptions surrounding China featured prominently across interviews, particularly in relation to diversification narratives such as “*Anywhere But China*” (ABC). Participants described how leadership rhetoric frequently promoted supplier relocation or reduced dependency on Chinese manufacturing. However, this strategic intent was consistently contrasted by ongoing operational reliance. INT7 stated, “*We cannot decouple from China, cannot match the speed, cost, efficiency and infrastructure of China elsewhere*”, while INT9 acknowledged, “*We say ABC, but the truth is we’re still 80% reliant on China*”.

Interviewees repeatedly emphasised that diversification efforts are constrained not only by cost and capacity, but also by structural limitations in alternative sourcing regions. Several participants referenced infrastructure and operational viability challenges in countries often positioned as substitutes within “*China Plus One*” strategies. INT5 and INT9 both highlighted deficiencies in road networks, port congestion, energy reliability and labour productivity across parts of India, Vietnam and Indonesia. These barriers were described as materially limiting the scalability and consistency required for large-volume manufacturing relocation. Participants noted that while these markets present long-term potential, their current infrastructure maturity remains insufficient to replicate China’s integrated manufacturing ecosystem. As such, ABC

(Anywhere But China) was widely characterised as a strategic aspiration rather than an executable short-term shift. The findings reveal a persistent tension between geopolitical driven diversification narratives and the operational realities that continue to anchor global supply chains in China.

5.11 Sectoral Variation in Geopolitical Supply Chain Responses

Geopolitical pressures were identified across all participant organisations, the degree and nature of response varied noticeably by sector. These variations were primarily shaped by differences in regulatory exposure, operational criticality and the structural flexibility available within each industry's supply chain. Participants from telecommunications and transportation sectors described a stronger emphasis on supplier proximity to end-user markets, driven by service continuity requirements and national infrastructure dependency. INT7 highlighted that telecom networks cannot tolerate extended disruption due to the societal reliance on emergency communication systems, reinforcing the need for geographically closer or politically aligned service providers. Similarly, INT20 noted that transportation services require regional supplier support to ensure operational responsiveness and minimise disruption risk. In these sectors, geopolitical instability was framed not only as a commercial threat but as a direct operational and reputational risk.

In contrast, healthcare and pharmaceutical participants consistently emphasised regulatory approval as a barrier to rapid supply chain relocation. INT9 and INT12 both referenced lengthy validation and approval cycles that restrict the ability to switch suppliers quickly, even where geopolitical risk is recognised. INT10 further explained that regulatory requalification processes can delay sourcing changes by several years, making diversification a slower and more controlled process compared to other industries. Participants from FMCG and industrial sectors described comparatively greater flexibility, with sourcing decisions driven more heavily by commercial competitiveness and responsiveness to market conditions. INT5 characterised diversification in these sectors as opportunistic rather than compliance driven, while INT11 highlighted that supplier changes could be executed more rapidly due to lower regulatory constraints. These findings suggest that while geopolitical forces are pervasive, sectoral context plays a significant moderating role in shaping organisational response. Industries tied to critical infrastructure demonstrated faster and more precautionary localisation

behaviours, whereas highly regulated sectors showed slower adaptation due to structural and compliance-related limitations.

5.12 Pulse Survey Analysis: Evolving Perspectives on Supply Chain Reconfiguration

To evaluate how perspectives on global supply chain configuration had evolved over time, a pulse survey was conducted in July 2025 with participants previously interviewed between February and September 2024. The purpose was to determine whether intensifying geopolitical developments during the intervening period had altered organisational sentiment or strategic orientation toward localisation, regionalisation or structural supply chain reconfiguration. Between the initial interview phase and the pulse survey, the geopolitical environment changed materially. By July 2025, Donald Trump had been elected to a second presidential term in the United States and had already enacted a series of aggressive trade measures. In February 2025, new tariff actions targeting both China and Mexico signalled a renewed protectionist posture, followed by further escalation through the April 2025 “Liberation Day” tariff announcements. These measures substantially increased uncertainty across global trade flows, particularly for supply chains and organisations reliant on cross-border manufacturing and international sourcing.

Given the magnitude and symbolic significance of these policy shifts, which reinforced nationalist and protectionist rhetoric at the highest political level, it was important to revisit participants to assess whether their perceptions, risk priorities or organisational responses had shifted since the prior year. The pulse survey therefore served as a temporal validation mechanism, allowing the study to capture whether heightened geopolitical volatility translated into tangible changes in managerial thinking or sourcing behaviour. This follow-up was especially relevant as many participants had previously characterised geopolitical pressures as influential but uneven in their operational impact. The survey enabled comparison between pre and post escalation sentiment, strengthening the study’s ability to evaluate whether geopolitical events were acting as sustained structural drivers rather than episodic shocks. The Pulse Survey was a short form, 3 question and free text box polling survey emailed to participants. A copy of the Pulse Survey Template can be found in Appendix E and the Pulse Survey Results can be found in Appendix F.

5.12.1 Transition and Change

During the 2024 interviews, the dominant narrative was that while geopolitical concerns were visible, they had not yet translated into widespread supply chain restructuring. Most (15 of 22) participants responded “No” when asked if their organisations were actively moving away from a global footprint in favour of a local supply chain. These perspectives were typically driven by cost considerations, with many expressing scepticisms about the viability of reshoring or nearshoring. As one participant (INT4) stated at the time, *“There’s always political pressure to be more domestic, but when we run the numbers, the global model still wins”*. In contrast, the July 2025 pulse survey indicates a significant change in sentiment. Of the 22 original participants, 20 now answered “Yes” when asked whether supply chains are shifting toward a more national or regional model. Only two respondents maintained their earlier stance of “No”. This dramatic transition from a majority “No” in 2024 to an overwhelming “Yes” in 2025 suggests a material shift in mindset, even if not yet fully reflected in operational changes.

Participants language in 2025 reflected a heightened sense of geopolitical urgency. One respondent highlighted that although diversification is complex and costly, “the new world order of tariffs has forced the situation”. Another participant described the environment as unstable and unpredictable, stating that tariffs *“could change overnight with no warning”*, making it difficult to take long-term strategic decisions. These responses contrast sharply with the more sceptical or dismissive tone of 2024, where political narratives were often framed as temporary or symbolic. The 2025 feedback instead reflects growing acknowledgement that geopolitical disruption is now materially influencing operational planning. These evolving sentiments align with recent academic discussions that frame regionalisation and politically aligned sourcing as increasingly central strategies in response to sustained geopolitical volatility (Golgeci et al., 2025; Paulraj et al., 2024). The shift observed in this survey therefore reflects not only organisational adaptation, but broader structural changes increasingly recognised across the emerging literature.

5.12.2 Drivers of Change

The shift in sentiment appears driven by a convergence of external pressures, including protectionist trade policy, tariff volatility, political uncertainty and reputational exposure. Participants described how these pressures are now directly influencing supply chain evaluations. One respondent noted that while diversification had previously been aspirational,

recent tariff escalation meant organisations were forced to act despite the associated cost and qualification burden. Another participant described the commercial consequences of responding to U.S. tariff policy, explaining that their organisation is prepared to dilute volume commitments and move production domestically even though this is leading to increased unit costs which are viewed as necessary to maintain market availability. Several respondents emphasised that uncertainty itself has become a destabilising force. INT6 stated it was “*difficult to make long term decisions at the current time with so much change*”, reinforcing how policy unpredictability is shaping decision making behaviour. At the same time, other respondents stressed that economic logic still dominates decision-making. As INT2 explained, nearshoring is often not cost-effective in most scenarios, with cost efficiency and risk management continuing to outweigh purely ideological motivations.

Participants also described organisational tension between political directives and financial targets. One respondent acknowledged that their company has been instructed to pursue more regional sourcing, but cost pressures remain a constraint, requiring a balance between compliance and commercial viability. INT7 characterised their organisation’s posture more bluntly, describing the business as being in “*fight or flight mode due to tariff uncertainty and cost pressure*”.

5.12.3 Reinforcing the Research

The pulse survey findings confirm that geopolitical pressures identified as emerging themes in the 2024 interviews are now translating into tangible strategic responses or active reassessment. Participants no longer frame geopolitical developments as abstract or rhetorical; instead, they describe concrete supply chain implications driven by policy risk and trade disruption. One respondent captured this shift clearly, stating that corporations are attempting to acquiesce to political volatility despite recognising that relocating manufacturing to satisfy political agendas is “*largely impractical*”. The data also reveals a climate of political fear influencing corporate behaviour. INT17 explicitly described a “*perceptible and perceived fear among US corporates*”, highlighting how organisations feel pressured to demonstrate alignment even where the business case is weak. This reinforces the core argument of the research: that political ideology is exerting growing influence on supply chain logic and strategic decision-making.

Importantly, respondents acknowledged the long-term cost implications of politically driven supply chain decisions. As INT17 warned, when companies feel “*strong-armed into a response they would never have chosen, it comes at a price*”, signalling enduring commercial consequences arising from geopolitical pressure.

This progression from cautious acknowledgement in 2024 to explicit descriptions of organisational response, cost trade-offs and heightened strategic uncertainty in 2025 underscores a key contribution of the study. The pulse survey provides temporal validation that geopolitical ideology is no longer peripheral to supply chain strategy but actively reshaping organisational behaviour. These findings align closely with recent academic work positioning geopolitics as an embedded and persistent driver of supply chain design rather than an episodic disruption (Golgeci et al., 2025; Paulraj et al., 2024). In summary, the pulse survey validates and extends the original research findings by evidencing how rapidly evolving political climates directly alter managerial sentiment, sourcing priorities and perceived organisational risk. The survey provides a dynamic, longer term validation of the research: geopolitical pressures do not only influence supply chains they reshape organisational logic over time. It demonstrates that supply chain strategy is not static but sensitive to political and ideological currents that evolve rapidly. By capturing this shift across a 12 to 18 month horizon, this research validates its central argument: that political ideology has moved from the periphery to the centre of supply chain decision making. The survey confirms that the ideologies of nationalism, populism and protectionism are no longer theoretical influences but are materially affecting corporate decision-making across global supply chains.

5.13 Conclusion

The findings from this study reveal a deeply complex and evolving relationship between geopolitics and global supply chains. Across interviews, participants consistently highlighted how nationalism, populism, protectionism and broader geopolitical risk are reshaping supply chain decision making. The resulting impact is increasing complexity and unpredictability, highlighting the need for responsive and adaptive supply chains. While political rhetoric and public sentiment are clearly influential, the evidence suggests that operational decisions remain largely grounded in commercial logic. Cost, availability of alternatives and risk mitigation continue to dominate sourcing choices, even when layered against pressures for domestic alignment or ideological narratives. As INT7 remarked, “*Right now nobody cares whether or*

not your product is made in America... all they want is the cheapest product", capturing the commercial constraints that frequently override value based ambitions.

The interviews revealed a notable shift in geo-political awareness. Organisations are no longer viewing geopolitical instability as a peripheral concern, but rather as a core variable in supply chain planning. The emergence of China+1 strategies, dual sourcing models, increased investment in inventory and the rise of nearshoring or "friendshoring" approaches reflect a more active attempt to build resilience even if many of these developments are still in early or emerging stages. As INT22 stated, *"New facilities are being opened in Germany and the US to mitigate risk from reliance on China"*, underscoring a tangible if selective response to risk concentration. The study reveals a consistent theme of disconnect between appearance and action. Many organisations are seeking to appear responsive to nationalist or populist narratives branding themselves as local first, publishing origin details or signalling alignment with political agendas while continuing to operate international, cost optimized models behind the scenes. INT6 referred to this as *"lip service"* and INT21 added, *"It's economic nationalism"*, driven more by expectations than ideology. Geopolitical responses were also shown to diverge based on organisational characteristics. Larger and more mature organisations had emerging dedicated geopolitical monitoring functions, diversified supplier networks and formal risk management strategies. Smaller organisations, by contrast, often relied on ad hoc responses or were more directly influenced by media narratives, leadership instincts or customer sentiment.

Ultimately, the outcomes of these shifting dynamics are still unfolding. Trade patterns are being redirected, sourcing decisions are becoming more strategic and organisations are exploring new operating models in response to a political, regulatory and economic factors. Yet, full supply chain redesign and upheaval remain rare. As INT4 commented, *"Political reactions can be immediate, but supply chains have a delayed response"*. While political cycles turn quickly, supply chain strategies take time to adapt and often struggle to align within volatile policy environments where organisations must find a way to remain competitive. The findings reveal a central dynamic underpinning geopolitical driven supply chain transformation. Organisations are navigating between what they are expected to be seen to do and what they are operationally capable of doing. The result is an operating environment shaped by tentative risk management strategies balancing the realities of infrastructure, cost and global interdependence

6. Discussions and Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

This chapter brings together the findings from all stages of the research process to demonstrate how geopolitics has moved from a peripheral consideration to a structural driver of supply chain design. Through triangulating the CIMO analysis, the systematic literature review, the interview study, the updated 2023–2025 literature review and the July 2025 pulse survey, this chapter shows how a once fragmented theme has evolved into a dominant explanatory force.

Early stages of the research highlighted unexplained patterns in supply chain behaviour that could not be accounted for by purely economic or operational models. This is consistent with broader academic shifts, where academic sentiment has increasingly questioned the assumption that supply chains operate in politically neutral contexts (Kobrin, 2017; Witt, 2019). At the same time, growing evidence of anti-globalisation sentiment, protectionism and nationalist policy interventions suggests a wider systemic transition affecting global integration and supply chain configuration (Buckley and Hashai, 2020; Meyer, 2017).

By synthesising the qualitative findings of this study with the evolving academic literature, this chapter positions geopolitics as an embedded, not coincidental, dimension of supply chain management. Theoretical perspectives on globalisation and political risk underscore the timeliness of the research, while the empirical data illustrate how geopolitical ideology has become a lived organisational reality. The analysis presented here therefore supports the overarching argument that supply chain design is no longer shaped solely by efficiency and optimisation logics, but increasingly by political forces, national agendas and societal expectations.

6.2 The Evolution from Emergent to Reality

The research began with a CIMO framing exercise designed to explore the changing dynamics of global supply chains. Geo-politics was explored as a mechanism to explain the relationship between changes in global trade and changes in organisational design. The early observations align with literature describing how populism, anti-globalisation pressures and trade policy

unpredictability increasingly challenge the long-standing assumptions about stable and efficiency driven supply chains (Kobrin, 2017; Rodrik, 2018; Witt, 2019).

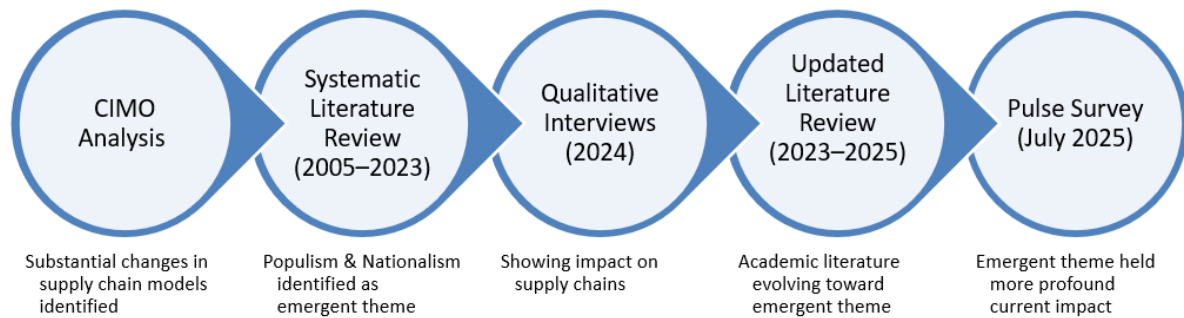
The systematic literature review (2005–2023) strengthened this initial direction. It revealed that academic discussions were beginning to acknowledge socio-political forces as influences on global supply chains but had not yet developed a clear theoretical structure to explain them. Themes such as protectionism, nationalism and trade contestation were emerging across the literature but remained fragmented and under-theorised. Academics have highlighted the fragility of globalisation under rising political tension (Bremmer, 2014; Meyer, 2017) and questioned whether efficiency dominant models could withstand growing political intervention uncertainty (Buckley and Hashai, 2020). These theoretical gaps provided clear motivation for the empirical phase of this research.

The qualitative interviews offered strong empirical evidence that geopolitics was not merely an emerging theme but an active determinant of organisational decision-making. Participants described how political narratives, regulatory expectations and public sentiment were increasingly embedded in sourcing strategies and risk governance processes. This supports assertions in the literature that government action, policy volatility and ideological shifts directly disrupt supply chain stability and configuration (Chae et al., 2019; Roscoe et al., 2020).

The 2023–2025 updated literature review confirmed that academic thinking had since accelerated. Concepts such as friendshoring, nearshoring, strategic autonomy and policy driven reconfiguration were becoming central to analyses of supply chain strategy (Gereffi, 2014; Witt, 2019). These developments aligned closely with interview insights describing similarly motivated organisational behaviour. The July 2025 pulse survey demonstrated that geopolitical pressures identified earlier in the research had intensified. Participants reported board level misalignment between economic objectives and perceived reputational goals, expanding compliance requirements and increased uncertainty in both everyday sourcing decisions and longer terms strategic goals. These findings echo the literature of the time, forecasting a transition toward more regionalised, politically aligned supply chain structures as geopolitical volatility persists (Dong and Kouvelis, 2020; Nakamura, Yamada and Tan 2019). The triangulated findings across the research process confirms a clear evolution: what began as an emergent theme in the literature and practice has become a validated, structural driver of supply chain design. This evolution is provided in Fig 6.1 below. The convergence between academic

developments, interview findings and pulse-survey evidence demonstrates that geopolitics has shifted from contextual noise to a defining and sustained influence on global supply chain strategy.

Fig 6.1 Evolution of Populism as a factor influencing Supply Chain Decision Making



6.3 Reinforcing the Research Findings

The findings of this research anticipated and now closely align with, the emerging academic conversation on the political drivers of supply chain decision-making. At the early stages of this PhD, the relationship between political ideology and supply chain design was not yet firmly established in academic literature. However, interview participants consistently described how decisions were increasingly shaped not only by cost and capability but also by political climate, national policy agendas and societal expectations. This shift mirrors broader academic observations that global supply chains are becoming more exposed to political volatility, ideological contestation and state-led intervention (Kobrin, 2017; Meyer, 2017; Witt, 2019).

Participants recounted how geopolitical narratives and public sentiment influenced internal decision processes. One interviewee described how supplier exit decisions were taken overnight in response to media or political pressure rather than operational risk. This reflects academic findings that political events can generate immediate disruption within supply chains, often circumventing traditional optimisation and efficiency logic logics (Roscoe et al., 2020). Another participant highlighted internal pressure to “buy American”, aligning sourcing decisions with nationalist rhetoric. This corresponds with literature showing how public

sentiment, political messaging and national identity shape organisational attitudes toward globalisation and outsourcing (Mansfield and Mutz, 2013; Rodrik, 2018). Populism, once treated as an abstract political phenomenon, is now gaining relevance within the literature and in practice as a direct and practical driver of supply chain risk. Academics have linked populist movements to heightened regulatory uncertainty, protectionist sentiment and instability in global trade relationships (Buckley and Hashai, 2020; Kobrin, 2017). These themes clearly resonated with interview participants, many of whom described political shifts as key influences on both operational and strategic decisions.

Similarly, nationalism and protectionism are central themes in participant narratives are now widely acknowledged within emerging academic models that connect political ideology to changes in supply chain structures. For example, papers examining tariffs, reshoring initiatives and regionalisation strategies demonstrate how political motives increasingly override cost efficiency and how organisations respond by diversifying suppliers, relocating production or redesigning networks (Chae et al., 2019; Dong and Kouvelis, 2020). Interviewees described these same behaviours, noting how geopolitical concerns drove diversification efforts and heightened sensitivity to reputational and regulatory exposure. What the literature had previously treated as early signals of a potential shift is now evidenced in practice as a pervasive influence. The alignment between academic analysis and lived operational experience reinforces the central argument of this thesis: that geopolitical ideology has moved from a background contextual force to an active agent shaping supply chain structure, governance and strategy. This convergence also underscores the timeliness of the research. The interviews captured a pivotal moment when political ideology was beginning to reshape organisational logic, while the updated 2023–2025 literature shows this evolution gaining increased academic recognition. As academics increasingly connect geopolitical trends to supply chain design, this study provides real world evidence of how these trends materialise through organisational decision making, culture and risk perception.

It can be said that this research has both anticipated and validated a broader theoretical shift. What began as emergent and loosely connected insights across the literature and interviews has now crystallised into a coherent narrative: supply chains are not purely economic systems but politically influenced, interdependent and dynamic structures shaped by power, policy and ideology. The findings therefore serve not only as empirical confirmation of a transforming

landscape but also as a critical contribution to the ongoing development of theory at the intersection of geopolitics and supply chain strategy.

6.5 Advancing Perspective on Geopolitical Disruption and Supply Chain Redesign

6.5.1 Mapping Findings to the CIMO Framework

To further consolidate and interpret the findings, they are mapped onto the CIMO (Context–Intervention–Mechanism–Outcome) framework. This mapping provides a structured lens through which to understand how geopolitical developments translate into supply chain decision-making and directly informs the conceptual model presented in the subsequent section. In doing so, it moves beyond descriptive thematic categorisation and offers an integrated explanation of the relationships observed across the data. Within this framework, the context is defined by the global supply chain environment shaped by international trade and the evolution of globalisation. Consistent with both the literature and empirical findings, this context is no longer characterised by continuous expansion, but rather by a reconfiguration of globalisation. Participants repeatedly reflected on a shift away from highly integrated global supply chains towards more constrained and regionally influenced configurations. As INT7 noted, “the assumption that global sourcing will always be the lowest cost option is no longer holding true in the same way”, highlighting a broader transition from efficiency driven models towards more complex and uncertain operating environments. This contextual shift establishes the conditions within which organisations must operate and make strategic decisions.

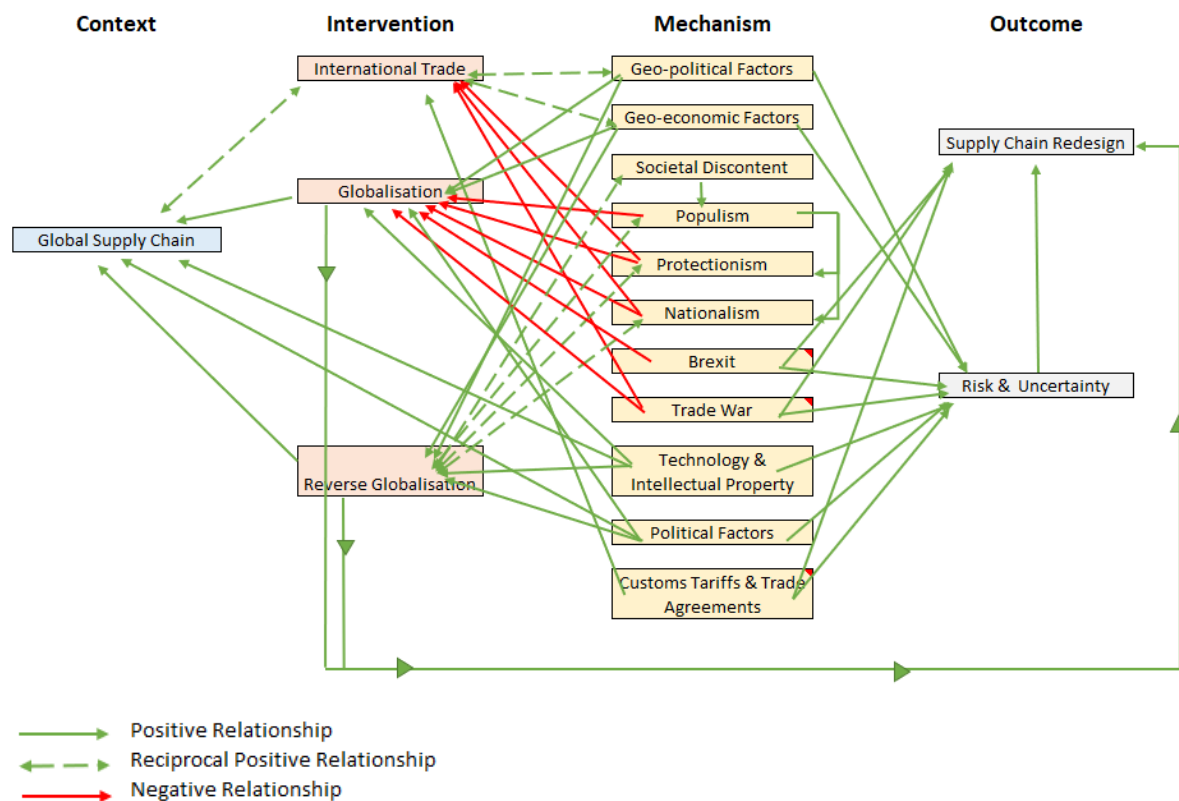
The intervention dimension captures how this evolving context manifests in both policy and organisational responses. International trade and globalisation are increasingly shaped by deliberate political and economic actions, including tariffs, trade restrictions and regulatory shifts. At the same time, organisations are actively intervening through changes to their supply chain structures, including diversification and regionalisation strategies. These interventions are not isolated reactions but reflect a broader pattern of reverse globalisation, where both states and organisations play a role in reshaping global trade flows and supply network configurations. At the centre of the framework are the mechanisms, which represent the underlying forces driving these changes. The findings identify a set of interconnected geopolitical mechanisms, including populism, nationalism, protectionism and societal discontent. These mechanisms operate in a reinforcing manner, where societal and political pressures translate into policy actions that directly affect global trade. Several participants

highlighted how these dynamics are not abstract but are increasingly visible in day-to-day decision-making. For example, INT12 observed that “decisions that used to be purely commercial are now heavily influenced by political and reputational considerations”, illustrating how geopolitical factors are embedded within organisational processes. These mechanisms are further intensified by discrete events such as Brexit and trade conflicts, alongside structural concerns related to technology, intellectual property and national sovereignty.

A critical insight emerging from the findings is the role of risk and uncertainty as the central mediating mechanism. While geopolitical developments provide the underlying drivers, it is the perception and experience of uncertainty that directly shapes organisational response. Participants consistently described an environment in which predictability has diminished and traditional planning assumptions are no longer reliable. As INT3 stated, “it’s not just the cost anymore, it’s the unpredictability you don’t know what changes are coming next”. This highlights how uncertainty acts as the key transmission mechanism between macro level geopolitical change and micro level decision-making. The outcomes of these dynamics are reflected in observable changes to supply chain strategy, most notably supply chain redesign. organisations are increasingly prioritising resilience, flexibility and risk mitigation over pure cost optimisation. This includes diversification of supply bases, regional sourcing strategies and reduced reliance on single-country dependencies. Importantly, these outcomes are not static end points but form part of an ongoing adaptive process. As organisations redesign their supply chains, they simultaneously reshape their exposure to geopolitical risk, creating a feedback loop that reinforces the evolving nature of the system.

This CIMO mapping demonstrates that supply chain transformation is not the result of isolated shocks or singular decisions, but rather emerges from the interaction of contextual conditions, strategic interventions and underlying geopolitical mechanisms, mediated through organisational perceptions of risk and uncertainty. This integrated understanding provides the foundation for the conceptual model presented in the following section, which synthesises these relationships into a coherent framework and illustrates how geopolitical forces are embedded within the structure and evolution of global supply chains.

Fig 6.2 Mapping Findings to the CIMO Framework



6.5.2 A Model for Geopolitical Disruption and Supply Chain Redesign

Building on the findings of both the systematic literature review and the empirical analysis, Figure 6.3 below presents a conceptual model that integrates the key dynamics through which geopolitical forces influence global supply chain structures. The model responds directly to the fragmentation identified within the literature, where geopolitical risk, supply chain resilience and globalisation are often examined in isolation rather than as part of an interconnected system.

At a macro level, the model captures the temporal evolution of globalisation, beginning with the period of expansion prior to the 2008 financial crisis, followed by a gradual contraction in the post-2008 environment and accelerating through key geopolitical inflection points, including the Brexit vote, the Trump administration and the escalation of trade tensions. This trajectory reflects a broader shift identified in both the literature and empirical findings: globalisation is not reversing outright but is being reconfigured under geopolitical pressure. Central to the framework is the identification of change drivers, which emerge as a sequential

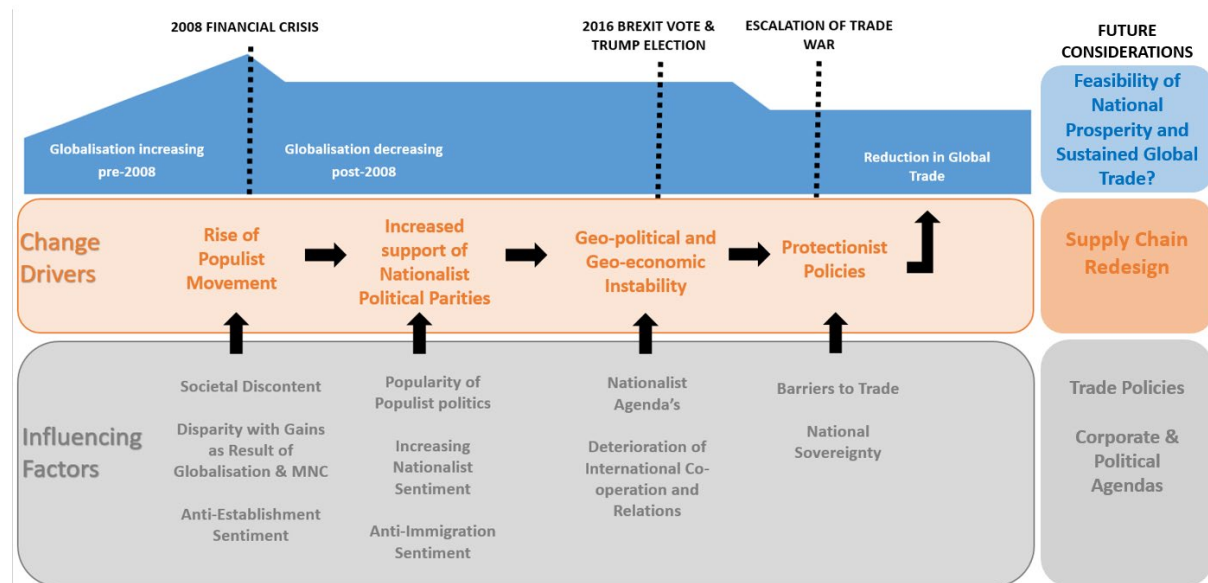
and reinforcing process. The rise of populist movements, driven by societal discontent and perceived inequalities associated with globalisation, contributes to increased political support for nationalist agendas. These developments, in turn, intensify geopolitical instability, ultimately manifesting in the implementation of protectionist policies. Rather than viewing these as discrete events, the model conceptualises them as part of a causal chain of political and economic reinforcement, where each stage amplifies the next.

Importantly, the model highlights the underlying influencing factors that sustain these dynamics. These include societal discontent, disparities in the distribution of globalisation gains, anti-establishment sentiment and declining international cooperation. The inclusion of these factors extends the analysis beyond organisation level responses, positioning supply chain decisions within a broader socio-political and institutional context. This aligns with emerging literature emphasising the role of institutional pressures and political legitimacy in shaping supply chain strategy. The culmination of these dynamics is reflected in the increasing prevalence of protectionist policies and barriers to trade, which act as direct triggers for supply chain redesign. Consistent with both the literature and empirical findings, organisations are observed to respond through a range of strategic interventions, including diversification of supply bases, regionalisation and the adoption of “China+1” strategies. However, the model moves beyond describing these responses to illustrate the structural conditions under which they emerge, linking macro level geopolitical change to organisation level decision-making.

The right-hand side of the model introduces a forward-looking perspective, capturing the strategic implications of these shifts. The tension between national prosperity and sustained global trade emerges as a central unresolved question, reflecting a broader paradox identified in the findings: while protectionist policies may offer short-term national benefits, they simultaneously introduce inefficiencies and increased costs into global supply chains. As such, supply chain redesign is not presented as a one-time adjustment, but as an ongoing adaptive process within a more fragmented and politically influenced global system. From a conceptual perspective, this framework contributes by integrating previously disconnected strands of literature into a coherent structure. It links geopolitical drivers (context), organisation responses (interventions) and resulting outcomes, while also making visible the underlying mechanisms that connect them. In doing so, it provides a more holistic understanding of how supply chains are being reshaped in response to geopolitical disruption.

Rather than proposing a new theory, the model serves as an organising framework that refines and extends existing theoretical perspectives on globalisation, supply chain design and risk. It offers a structured lens through which to interpret both past developments and future trajectories and provides a foundation for further empirical investigation into the evolving relationship between geopolitics and global supply chains.

Fig 6.3 Geopolitical Disruption and Supply Chain Redesign



6.6. Implications for Theory and Practice

This section synthesises the theoretical and practical significance of the research by demonstrating how the findings extend existing academic understanding while also offering guidance for organisations navigating an increasingly geopolitical operating environment. By integrating insights from the literature reviews, qualitative interviews and the pulse survey, this analysis highlights how geopolitics has evolved from a peripheral consideration to a central driver of supply chain design and decision making. The implications outlined here therefore address both the advancement of supply chain theory and the practical adaptations required of organisations, illustrating the broader relevance and contribution of the study.

The findings of this study contribute to the theoretical landscape of supply chain management by demonstrating that geopolitics is no longer an external contextual variable but a structural force that shapes the design, governance and operation of global supply chains. Theoretical

frameworks that traditionally conceptualised political dynamics as background conditions must now account for their direct and sustained influence on strategic decision making within organisations. This research therefore offers several important contributions to the development of supply chain resilience theory, global value chain literature and decision making models under uncertainty.

6.6.1 Extending supply chain resilience theory by embedding geopolitical risk

The study shows that organisations increasingly require the ability to sense, interpret and respond to geopolitical signals, often at speed and with limited information. This aligns with the principles of Dynamic Capabilities Theory, which emphasises the organisation's ability to integrate, build and reconfigure resources in rapidly changing environments. Recent work highlights how dynamic capabilities such as sensing, agility and adaptability support resilience during large-scale disruptions (Kaneberg et al, 2025). Similarly, research on dynamic supply chain capabilities suggests that market responsiveness and adaptability underpin the capacity to manage both short-term disruption and long-term structural change (Aslam et al. 2018).

The study extends existing models of supply chain resilience by positioning geopolitical risk as a core determinant of resilience architecture. Conventional resilience frameworks predominantly emphasise operational, financial and environmental disruptions, often treating political events as occasional external shocks. The findings demonstrate that geopolitical dynamics such as nationalism, protectionism, politicisation of trade and strategic decoupling have become persistent structural conditions that organisations must anticipate and integrate into network design. By incorporating state driven forces and macro political behaviours into the theoretical understanding of resilience, this research expands the scope of resilience theory beyond organisation level capabilities, highlighting the interdependence between corporate decision making and state actions. The result is a more comprehensive theoretical model in which resilience emerges not only from organisational preparedness but also from the firm's ability to interpret, forecast and align with geopolitical trajectories.

Similarly, this research also reinforces the view that supply chains operate as Complex Adaptive Systems, where interconnected actors respond to disruptions in nonlinear and sometimes unpredictable ways. CAS perspectives emphasise self-organisation, adaptation and emergent behaviour across networks (Surana et al., 2005). More recent work shows how

organisations within CAS environments adopt proactive and reactive strategies to manage cascading disruptions and restructure networks in response (Zhao et al, 2019).

6.6.2 Challenging efficiency driven assumptions underpinning globalisation theory

The findings also challenge foundational assumptions within globalisation theory and supply chain economics, particularly the belief that global network configurations are primarily shaped by rational, efficiency oriented decision making. Traditional perspectives rooted in transaction cost economics and comparative advantage assume that organisations optimise globally for cost and scale (Beugelsdijk et al. 2009; Porter, 1985). Even discussions of slowing or reversing globalisation historically framed these shifts as economic rather than political phenomena (Buckley and Hashai, 2020; Kobrin, 2017). Interview evidence revealed that executives frequently responded to political sentiment, regulatory pressure, media narratives and societal expectations sometimes in ways that contradicted cost based optimisation. This suggests that established theoretical frameworks grounded in transaction cost economics, comparative advantage and global efficiency paradigms are increasingly insufficient in contexts of political volatility. Instead, decision making is shown to be influenced by political legitimacy concerns, reputational exposure and the need to maintain alignment with evolving national and international expectations. The research therefore supports a theoretical shift towards models that recognise political legitimacy and sociopolitical alignment as emerging determinants of global supply chain structure.

This aligns with research showing that political and ideological forces increasingly shape organisational behaviour, with nationalism, protectionism and public sentiment acting as constraints on economic rationality (Mansfield and Mutz, 2013; Rodrik, 2018). Recent work in supply chain management similarly highlights how organisations are redesigning networks for political legitimacy, reputational risk and geopolitical alignment rather than efficiency alone (Golgeci et al., 2025).

6.6.3 Bridging macro political forces with micro-organisation decision making

A further contribution lies in bridging macro level geopolitical academic with micro level organisational theories in supply chain management. Political science has long examined how nationalism, protectionism and state intervention shape global economic flows, while supply

chain theory has tended to focus on organisation level capabilities and operational responses to uncertainty. This study connects these bodies of literature by showing how geopolitical signals are interpreted within organisations and translated into sourcing decisions, supplier diversification strategies and risk governance processes. It demonstrates that geopolitical disruptions do not simply “impact” supply chains; rather, they are mediated through organisational sensemaking, leadership interpretation and internal governance structures. Similarly, the contributions of Wu and Jia (2018) suggest that supply chain localisation and redesign are deeply institutional processes involving government agendas, social expectations and legitimacy considerations. This integration provides a more nuanced theoretical account of how global political shifts manifest in operational and strategic practice.

6.6.4 Reframing risk and uncertainty in supply chain decision making theory

Finally, the research reframes how risk and uncertainty are conceptualised within supply chain decision making models. Traditional frameworks often assume that organisations respond to quantifiable risks through structured assessment and optimisation mechanisms. The findings strongly resonate with Institutional Theory, which explains how organisations conform to coercive, normative and cognitive pressures arising from the wider institutional environment. Recent studies demonstrate how geopolitical rivalry, state intervention and regulatory expectations shape supply chain design choices, often pushing organisations toward similar responses under shared institutional pressures (Roscoe et al. 2022). The findings of this study reveal that geopolitical disruptions introduce ambiguity, incomplete information and contested interpretations that challenge purely rational models of decision making. Executive decision making were shown to involve a complex blend of political awareness, reputational considerations and internal negotiation among stakeholders. This suggests the need for theoretical models that incorporate behavioural, cognitive and institutional dimensions of decision making under geopolitical uncertainty. By highlighting the interpretive and socially constructed nature of risk, the study enriches theoretical understandings of how organisations navigate uncertain political environments.

These contributions advance theoretical debates by demonstrating that geopolitics must be treated not as a peripheral contextual influence, but as an embedded and shaping force operating across strategic, operational and governance dimensions of global supply chains.. The integration of geopolitical analysis into supply chain theory opens new avenues for

research and provides a more realistic foundation for understanding how global supply chains evolve under political volatility.

The Theoretical Mapping table in Appendix K maps the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter 2 to the empirical findings of this study. The findings broadly support existing theories of supply chain design, risk and resilience, while also highlighting their limitations in explaining contemporary supply chain behaviour under geopolitical disruption. In particular, while Transaction Cost Economics and Global Value Chain theory explain the original configuration of global supply chains, the findings demonstrate a shift toward structural reconfiguration driven by geopolitical pressures. Dynamic Capabilities and Viability perspectives provide a stronger explanation for this transformation, while Institutional Theory highlights the role of external political forces in shaping organisation behaviour. Furthermore, the findings emphasise the importance of relational embeddedness, governance mechanisms and power dynamics in enabling adaptation and reveal persistent tensions consistent with a paradox perspective. Collectively, this mapping supports the argument that supply chains are dynamic, politically influenced systems undergoing continuous reconfiguration.

6.6.5 Implications for Practice

The findings of this research carry significant implications for practice, particularly as geopolitical volatility continues to reshape global supply chains and procurement decision making. While the preceding analysis demonstrated how nationalism, protectionism and wider geopolitical pressures manifest within organisational behaviour, this section synthesises these insights into a set of practical, actionable implications. These implications are described across strategic, operational and governance domains, reflecting the multidimensional nature of geopolitical risk and the embedded role it now plays in supply chain management. By translating the empirical research insights into concrete practical guidance, this section highlights how organisations must adapt their sourcing models, decision processes, capabilities and oversight structures to operate effectively in an increasingly political global environment. The implications are summarised in Table 6.1 and are discussed in further depth below.

Table 6.1 Implications for Practice

	High Level Shift Identified in the Research	What This Means in Practice (Organisational Implications)	Broader System Implications (Societal / Policy / Global)
Strategic	Geopolitics becomes a core parameter in supply chain strategy	Geopolitical intelligence integrated into sourcing decisions; structured scanning and scenario planning; formal political risk scoring; shift toward diversified and regionally balanced supply networks (e.g., China+1).	Reduced national and sectoral dependency on high risk regions; improved continuity of essential goods; strengthened alignment with national resilience strategies.
	Shift from cost efficiency to risk adjusted value models	Quantification of resilience benefits and avoided disruption costs; integration of continuity and risk metrics into scorecards; leadership education on cost-risk trade offs.	More stable national supply ecosystems; reduced vulnerability to trade shocks, sanctions political volatility.
	New capability requirements within procurement	Development of hybrid skill sets combining commercial acumen, geopolitical literacy data analytics; revised recruitment profiles; targeted capability building for teams and leaders.	Improved societal level resilience through a more capable procurement profession; enhanced national expertise in supply chain risk.
Operational	Need for predictive, real time risk monitoring	Investment in predictive analytics, dashboards simulation tools; integration of political, trade, logistics supplier data; elevated analytical capability across procurement.	Faster identification and mitigation of disruptions; reduced impact on healthcare and other essential sectors during geopolitical crises.
	Diversification increases qualification and transition workload	Expansion of supplier qualification activities; longer transition timelines; adoption of multi sourcing as a standard operational model; increased cross functional coordination	Emergence of more distributed global manufacturing bases; strengthening of regional production capabilities.

		(quality, regulatory, procurement).	
	Decision making becomes more nuanced and politically exposed	Need for clearer escalation pathways; balancing political sensitivity with evidence based operational judgement; cross functional decision frameworks.	More consistent responses to geopolitical shocks; reduced likelihood of reactive or politically driven disruptions affecting society.
Governance	Heightened scrutiny from boards, investors regulators	Continuous geopolitical risk monitoring; ethical and transparent sourcing processes; formal cross functional governance bodies incorporating procurement, risk, legal sustainability.	Increased organisational accountability; stronger public trust in supply chain integrity and ethical sourcing.
	Convergence of corporate governance and public policy	Active engagement with policymakers; alignment with evolving trade and resilience regulations; participation in industry and cross sector forums.	More coherent national resilience and industrial policies; improved public–private coordination during geopolitical disruption.
	Emergence of AI enabled governance and monitoring	Adoption of AI tools for risk sensing, supplier screening scenario modelling; establishment of new oversight structures to ensure responsible use; integration of AI outputs with human judgement.	Earlier detection of geopolitical risks; more transparent, predictive stable supply chain governance across sectors.

6.6.6 Strategic Implications

The findings of this research reveal a decisive strategic shift in how organisations conceptualise and design global supply chains. Geopolitics has become a constant and structurally embedded force that organisations must attend to, rather than an episodic shock that triggers temporary adjustments. Participants consistently described geopolitical considerations such as trade

policy uncertainty, diplomatic tensions, sanctions regimes and public sensitivity to sourcing locations as now inseparable from strategic sourcing. The implications for practice are significant: supply chain and procurement decisions must integrate geopolitical intelligence as a standard element of strategic planning. Organisational strategies now require structured political scanning, formal scenario analysis and cross functional governance mechanisms capable of interpreting political signals and translating them into coherent decision frameworks. This represents a notable evolution from past practices, where geopolitical developments were followed informally or interpreted through fragmented internal channels.

A related strategic implication concerns the transformation of sourcing models themselves. The research shows that the long dominant low cost China centric model is increasingly being replaced by diversified, regionally balanced and politically aligned sourcing configurations. While cost advantages historically justified high concentration in a single region, decision makers interviewed for this study emphasised that geopolitical volatility manifested through tariffs, diplomatic tensions or policy unpredictability has fundamentally altered this calculation. Diversification is no longer viewed as a discretionary risk mitigation initiative, rather, it forms the strategic backbone of modern supply chain design. Models such as China+1 or SEA+1, once considered optional or future oriented, have become practical imperatives. These shifts carry direct implications for qualification timelines, supplier discovery processes and strategic resource allocation. Organisations must identify, assess and develop new suppliers across emerging manufacturing hubs, requiring longer planning cycles and more robust qualification frameworks.

The findings further indicate that the dominant logic underpinning procurement traditionally centred on cost efficiency has undergone a profound reframing. Cost remains important, but the research demonstrates a strategic rebalancing towards risk adjusted value models that privilege resilience, continuity and optionality. Many interviewees described organisational efforts to quantify the financial return on resilience through avoided disruption costs, reduced downtime, or the strategic value of supply optionality. These strategic recalibrations have practical implications for performance measurement: continuity metrics, risk scores and resilience indicators must now be integrated into executive dashboards and procurement scorecards. Leadership education is similarly required, particularly to shift senior management understanding from a narrow cost based evaluation of procurement to a broader appreciation of risk adjusted outcomes.

Strategically, the research also highlights a significant evolution in talent requirements across supply chain and procurement roles. Participants repeatedly described a widening capability gap, noting that traditional buyer profiles predicated on negotiation, cost analysis and operational execution are no longer sufficient. Procurement now demands hybrid skill sets that combine commercial expertise with geopolitical literacy, data analytics, digital monitoring and interpretive judgement. Organisations must therefore prioritise capability development through targeted training programmes, revised recruitment profiles and deliberate succession planning. Senior leadership also has a role to play in reframing organisational expectations and reinforcing the strategic importance of geopolitical and analytical capability within the procurement profession. At a societal level, these strategic evolutions collectively contribute to more resilient and politically aware supply networks, with direct implications for the continuity of essential goods and national economic stability.

6.6.7 Operational Implications

At an operational level, the findings show that geopolitical uncertainty is reshaping the systems, processes and decision pathways through which supply chains function. Participants described a growing recognition that traditional operational models built on long term stability, predictable trade flows and steady supplier relationships are increasingly mismatched with the volatility of modern geopolitics. This mismatch requires substantial operational reconfiguration. Organisations must invest in predictive geo-political risk assessment, modelling, simulation tools and real time risk dashboards capable of integrating diverse data signals, including political events, trade disputes, logistics disruptions and supplier level indicators. These tools enable faster, more informed responses, but they also require procurement teams to build analytical and interpretive capabilities. Operational roles must now include not only the ability to access data but also the ability to convert complex digital insights into strategic action.

A major operational implication highlighted by participants relates to supplier qualification and transition. As organisations diversify away from historically dominant geographies, qualification activities have expanded significantly in scale and complexity. What was once a periodic, linear process has become a continuous operational burden. New suppliers must be assessed not only on quality and cost criteria but also on political alignment, exposure to

geopolitical risk and resilience indicators. This requires more rigorous audits, cross functional evaluation frameworks and longer lead times to bring new suppliers online. Operations teams must also adopt multi sourcing as a default posture rather than an exception. This shift necessitates adjustments in production planning, inventory management and regulatory compliance.

The findings also indicate that decision making processes within operations have become more nuanced and, at times, more difficult. Participants described situations where decisions were delayed or constrained by overlapping pressures operational data pointing in one direction and political narratives or investor expectations pointing in another. This creates decision environments marked by fraught trade-offs, requiring clearer internal processes and stronger coordination across procurement, risk, legal and external communications. Organisations must therefore design decision frameworks that account for political sensitivity while preserving the integrity of evidence based operational judgement. Where trade-offs arise between political imperatives and operational efficiency, explicit governance pathways are needed to ensure transparent and consistent decision making. The operational implications extend beyond organisational boundaries. As supply chains underpin public access to essential goods particularly in healthcare operational delays or failures triggered by geopolitical uncertainty can have societal repercussions. By strengthening predictive capabilities, improving qualification processes and clarifying decision pathways, organisations contribute to broader societal resilience and reduce the likelihood of politically induced supply disruptions.

6.6.8 Governance Implications

The research also reveals far reaching implications for governance structures, both within organisations and across broader policy ecosystems. Participants described increasing scrutiny from boards, investors, regulators and the public concerning where and how products are sourced. Geopolitical volatility has intensified expectations that organisations demonstrate transparency, ethical sourcing and compliance with complex and evolving regulations. This creates a governance imperative to institutionalise continuous risk monitoring, ensuring that geopolitical developments are captured, assessed and escalated through formalised channels. Governance structures must therefore expand beyond traditional compliance functions to include cross functional collaboration between procurement, risk, legal, sustainability and corporate communications.

The findings also point to the increasing convergence of corporate governance and external policy. Governmental trade policies, industrial strategies and regulatory frameworks now exert a direct influence on procurement decisions, particularly in sectors deemed nationally significant. Organisations are expected not only to comply with policy developments but also to anticipate them, engage proactively with policymakers and align sourcing decisions with broader national resilience objectives. This creates a dual responsibility to navigate regulatory complexity while also contributing to the design of realistic and workable policy frameworks. Industry collaboration through trade associations, cross sector councils and public-private partnerships becomes an essential mechanism for aligning corporate and national goals.

Another key governance implication relates to the adoption of AI enabled monitoring and decision support frameworks. Participants described early stage experimentation with AI tools for risk sensing, supplier evaluation and scenario forecasting. These tools create opportunities for more proactive, predictive governance, yet they also introduce new oversight requirements. Organisations must ensure that AI enabled processes are transparent, auditable and appropriately supervised, preventing overreliance on automated outputs and ensuring alignment with ethical and regulatory standards. This requires new governance competencies and, in some cases, entirely new oversight structures.

Finally, the research shows that governance itself has become an arena of geopolitical risk. Decisions that were historically internal such as sourcing locations or supplier selection now intersect with public perception and reputational risk. Boards and senior leaders must navigate these pressures while maintaining consistency between political responsiveness and long term organisational strategy. Effective governance therefore requires a more holistic and anticipatory approach, integrating political awareness, stakeholder expectations and ethical considerations. These governance developments reinforce the broader societal implications of the findings. More accountable and transparent supply chain governance contributes to consumer confidence, supports national resilience and strengthens the ability of organisations and governments to jointly navigate geopolitical volatility.

These strategic, operational and governance implications illustrate that organisations can no longer treat geopolitical disruption as an external shock, but rather as a persistent condition that must be actively managed. The research demonstrates that the capacity to interpret political

developments, diversify exposure, strengthen analytical capability and embed transparent governance will determine not only organisational resilience but also the stability of wider supply ecosystems. As geopolitical forces increasingly intersect with supply chain structures, the organisations that succeed will be those that institutionalise political awareness, embrace risk adjusted value models and engage proactively with policymakers and industry networks. These implications therefore not only guide organisational adaptation but also contribute to broader societal and national resilience in a world where supply chains are inseparable from geopolitics.

6.7 Limitations and Opportunities for Further Research

6.7.1 Limitations

As with any qualitative and exploratory study, several limitations shape the scope and interpretation of the findings and naturally lead toward opportunities for future research. The first limitation relates to the sectoral boundaries of the study. Although the empirical work included participants from a range of industries including healthcare, pharmaceuticals, telecommunications, IT, transportation, industrial manufacturing, FMCG and multi-sector organisations, the healthcare-related respondents represented the largest proportion (54%) of the sample. This sector is characterised by exceptionally high regulatory oversight, public scrutiny and political visibility, which provided particularly rich insights into how geopolitical ideology permeates supply chain strategy. However, the dominance of healthcare perspectives means that the findings may not fully generalise to sectors operating under different commercial structures, regulatory environments or supply chain priorities. Industries such as automotive, aerospace or consumer technology may experience geopolitical pressures differently, particularly where speed-to-market, technology control or capital intensity play a more significant role in sourcing decisions.

A second limitation concerns the level within organisations from which data were generated. Interviews were primarily conducted with senior leaders responsible for global sourcing, supply chain management and strategic decision-making. These individuals offered valuable perspectives on how political narratives, regulatory changes and geopolitical uncertainty shape high level decisions. However, this focus may omit important variations in decision making that occur across other layers of the organisation. Middle managers, operational teams, cross-functional partners and frontline staff may interpret geopolitical pressures differently and their

perspectives could reveal nuances about how strategic messages are translated into day to day action.

A further limitation relates to the temporal context in which the study was conducted. Data collection took place during a period of heightened geopolitical volatility, including escalating trade tensions, rising nationalist sentiment, shifting protectionist agendas and persistent global instability. This context contributed to the salience of geopolitics in organisational thinking but may represent an intensified moment rather than a stable or enduring state of affairs. As geopolitical conditions evolve, stabilise or intensify further, organisational responses may shift accordingly; longitudinal data would therefore be valuable in understanding how organisations adapt over time.

Geographical and cultural representativeness also presents a limitation. Although participants worked within global supply chains, their organisational and cultural contexts were predominantly Western. Organisations based in Asia, Africa, the Middle East or Latin America may experience very different institutional pressures, political ideologies and geopolitical relationships. These alternative perspectives could reveal divergent understandings of political risk and alternative pathways through which geopolitics shapes supply chain design.

Finally, the study focused on organisational decision-makers rather than governmental or policy actors. While this approach generated insights into how organisations interpret and respond to geopolitical pressures, it did not incorporate the perspective of those designing these policies, regulations and political narratives that influence corporate behaviour. This creates a natural boundary in the analysis and highlights an opportunity for deeper investigation of the macro–micro interface between state and organisational strategy.

6.7.2 Opportunities for Future Research

These limitations create several promising possibilities for future research, each of which could deepen theoretical understanding and broaden the empirical foundations of supply chain geopolitics. A first opportunity lies in conducting cross-sector comparative studies. Examining industries with distinct cost structures, regulatory exposures and geopolitical sensitivities such as automotive, electronics, aerospace or consumer goods would allow researchers to assess whether the patterns identified in this study represent broader structural dynamics or are

specific to highly regulated sectors like healthcare. Such comparative work could reveal whether geopolitics is emerging as a universal strategic driver or manifests more unevenly across the global economy.

A second opportunity concerns the exploration of multi level organisational decision making. Future studies could investigate how geopolitical pressures are interpreted not only by senior leaders but also by middle managers, operational teams and cross-functional units such as quality, logistics, compliance and regulatory affairs. This would highlight how geopolitical narratives cascade through organisational hierarchies, how strategic intentions are implemented in practice and where alignment or disconnect emerges across different levels of the organisation. Longitudinal research presents another important opportunity. Tracking organisations over several years would offer insights into whether the changes described in this study such as diversification, regionalisation, friendshoring or supplier reconfiguration become permanent features of supply chain architecture or remain temporary, politically induced adjustments. Longitudinal designs would also shed light on how organisations recalibrate their dynamic capabilities in response to shifting geopolitical landscapes and provide stronger evidence on the durability and evolution of geopolitical effects.

A further opportunity lies in expanding the geographical and cultural scope of analysis. Investigating organisations headquartered in China, India, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Africa or Latin America could reveal different institutional pressures, political contexts and strategic interpretations of nationalism, populism and protectionism. This comparative international work would enhance understanding of how geopolitical ideology influences supply chain behaviour across diverse geopolitical environments and would offer a more holistic picture of global supply chain governance. Future studies could also incorporate the perspectives of governmental and policy actors. Exploring how governments conceptualise supply chain security, national resilience, industrial policy and geopolitical alignment would illuminate how political agendas are formed and how they shape corporate expectations and behaviours. Such research would deepen understanding of the reciprocal relationship between public policy and organisational strategy and broaden the institutional foundations of supply chain theory.

There is also significant potential for theoretical development. Given the intersections identified in this research between Dynamic Capabilities, Complex Adaptive Systems and

Institutional Theory, future research could explore how these frameworks might be integrated to better account for political ideology as a structural determinant of supply chain design. Researchers could also develop quantitative measures of geopolitical exposure, political risk or institutional pressure to support predictive modelling and comparative analysis. These advances would contribute to a more comprehensive theoretical toolkit for examining supply chain decision-making in a politically volatile world.

6.8 Conclusions

This research set out to understand how geopolitical ideology influences global supply chain strategy, decision making and organisational behaviour at a time of accelerating political volatility. Across every stage of the study spanning the CIMO framing, systematic literature review, qualitative interviews and the 2025 pulse survey the evidence demonstrated a consistent and profound shift, geopolitics has moved from a peripheral contextual factor to a central structural force shaping the design and governance of global supply chains. In contrast to long-standing assumptions rooted in efficiency, competitive advantage and rational economic optimisation, the study shows that nationalism, populism and protectionism increasingly frame how organisations perceive risk, configure networks and justify strategic decisions.

The evolution of the findings across the research process reinforces this conclusion. Early stages of the work identified emerging signals of political disruption in both practice and literature but lacked clear theoretical coherence. The interview study, however, revealed how deeply political dynamics had influenced executive decision making, with participants describing decisions shaped by regulatory pressure, media narratives, public sentiment and reputational concerns often in ways that contradicted cost based optimisation. The 2025 pulse survey further confirmed that geopolitical considerations were no longer episodic or symbolic: they were now embedded within strategic conversations, supplier evaluations, compliance processes and network redesign discussions. This progression from weak signals to strong empirical validation underscores the argument that global supply chains can no longer be analysed solely through economic or operational frameworks.

The thesis makes several significant theoretical contributions. First, it extends globalisation theory by demonstrating the limitations of efficiency-dominated models in politically contested

environments. The evidence shows that global supply chains are not economically neutral but socially and politically constituted. Second, the study advances supply chain resilience and risk theories by placing geopolitical ideology at the centre of risk perception and mitigation. Third, it contributes to Dynamic Capabilities, Complex Adaptive Systems and Institutional Theory by illustrating how organisations identify and interpret political triggers, how networks self organise in response to political shocks and how organisations conform to or resist institutional pressures rooted in nationalism and protectionism. Together, these contributions offer a more politically aware theoretical foundation for analysing global supply chain behaviour.

The research also generates valuable practical insights. Organisations operating within global supply chains must now integrate geopolitical analysis into their decision-making processes as standard practice rather than crisis response. The findings highlight the need for enhanced political sensing capabilities, stronger cross-functional coordination between supply chain, legal, regulatory and government affairs teams and revised supplier assessment models that account for ideological alignment and reputational exposure. The study also reinforces the necessity of building optionality into supply chain architectures whether through diversification, regionalisation or selective nearshoring to navigate environments where political conditions may override economic logic. Likewise, the evolving skillset required by supply chain professionals has also been highlighted as a critical factor for building operational resilience and long term strategies.

As with any research study, limitations exist, including the broad sectoral scope including healthcare, IT, telecommunications, the emphasis on senior leadership perspectives, the specific geopolitical moment during which data were collected and the Western orientation of the organisational contexts. These limitations provide opportunities for further research, including a longitudinal approach, cross-sector comparisons, multi level organisational studies, international research across diverse geopolitical contexts and a deeper exploration of how governments and policy makers conceptualise supply chain security and political alignment. Future theoretical work integrating geopolitical ideology with existing operations and supply chain frameworks would further strengthen and extend the contributions of this thesis.

Ultimately, this research captures a pivotal moment in the evolution of global supply chains. It demonstrates that decisions once guided predominantly by efficiency, cost and capability are increasingly shaped by political narratives, ideological forces and societal expectations. Supply

chains have become sociopolitical systems and structures that reflect national priorities, public sentiment and geopolitical tensions as much as they reflect operational requirements. Recognising and understanding this shift is essential for academics, practitioners and policy makers seeking to navigate a world where political ideology is now a defining feature of global economic organisation.

Reference List

Alvstam, C.G., Ivarsson, I. and Petersen, B. (2019) 'Are multinational enterprises from emerging economies configured differently?', *Journal of International Business Studies*, 50(1), pp. 1–26.

Archibugi, D. and Iammarino, S. (2002). The globalization of technological innovation: definition and evidence. *Review of International Political Economy : RIPE*, 9(1), 98–122.

Aslam, H., Blome, C., Roscoe, S. and Azhar, T. M. (2018). Dynamic supply chain capabilities: How market sensing, supply chain agility and adaptability affect supply chain ambidexterity. *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, 38(12), 2266–2285.

Baccini, L., Pinto, P. and Weymouth, S. (2017) 'The distributional consequences of preferential trade liberalization: firm level evidence', *International Organisation*, 71(2), pp. 373–395.

Basu, P. and Ray, P. (2022). China-plus-one: expanding global value chains. *The Journal of Business Strategy*, 43(6), 350–356.

Beal, D.J. (2015) 'ESM 2.0: State of the art and future potential of experience sampling methods in organisational research', *Annual Review of Organisational Psychology and Organisational Behaviour*, 2, pp. 383–407.

Bednarski, L., Roscoe, S., Blome, C. and Schleper, M.C. (2025) 'Geopolitical disruptions in global supply chains: implications for purchasing and supply management', *Production Planning and Control*, 36(4), pp. 536–562.

Beeson, M. (2018) 'Geeconomics with Chinese characteristics: the Belt and Road Initiative and China's evolving grand strategy', *Economic and Political Studies*, 6(3), pp. 240–256.

Bekkers, E. (2019) 'Challenges to the trade system: the potential impact of changes in future trade policy', *Journal of Policy Modelling*, 41(3), pp. 489–506.

Benczes, I. and Szabó, K. (2022) 'An economic understanding of populism: A conceptual framework of the demand and the supply side of populism', *Political Studies Review*, 21(4), pp. 650–664.

Bergen, N. and Labonté, R. (2020). "Everything Is Perfect and We Have No Problems": Detecting and Limiting Social Desirability Bias in Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 30(5), 783–792.

Beugelsdijk, S., Pedersen, T. and Petersen, B. (2009) 'Is there a trend towards global value chain specialization? An examination of cross-border sales of US foreign affiliates', *Journal of International Management*, 15(2), pp. 126–141.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2017) 'Thematic analysis', *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 12(3), pp. 297–298.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) 'Using thematic analysis in psychology', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), pp. 77–101.

Bremmer, I. (2017) 'The new rules of globalisation', *Harvard Business Review*, January–February, pp. 103–107.

Brown, M.I. (2022) 'Investigating the promise and pitfalls of pulse surveys', *Industrial and Organisational Psychology*, 15(1), pp. 137–149.

Bowersox, D. J., Closs, D. J. and Cooper, M. B. (2010). *Supply chain logistics management* (3rd ed.). McGraw-Hill/Irwin.

Buckley, P.J. and Hashai, N. (2020) 'Scepticism toward globalisation, technological knowledge flows and the emergence of a new global system', *Global Strategy Journal*, 10(1), pp. 94–122.

Brusset, X. and Teller, C. (2017). Supply chain capabilities, risks and resilience. *International Journal of Production Economics*, 184, 59–68.

Caceres, S.B. and Ear, S. (2012) ‘The geopolitics of China’s global resources quest’, *Geopolitics*, 17(1), pp. 47–79.

Carataş, M.A. and Spătariu, E.C. (2019) ‘Global economy under trade war’, *Ovidius University Annals, Series Economic Sciences*, 19(1), pp. 63–66.

Chae, S., Lawson, B., Kull, T.J. and Choi, T.Y. (2019) ‘To insource or outsource the sourcing? The role of political ideology’, *Journal of Operations Management*, 65(2), pp. 124–141.

Chae, S., Mukhopadhyay, S. and Sahaym, A. (2017) ‘Trade policy uncertainty and supply chain decisions’, *Decision Sciences*, 48(4), pp. 773–812.

Charpin, R. and Cousineau, M. (2025). Friendshoring: how geopolitical tensions affect foreign sourcing, supply base complexity and sub-tier supplier sharing. *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, 45(5), 1006–1031

Christopher, M. and Towill, D.R. (2001) ‘An integrated model for the design of agile supply chains’, *International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management*, 31(4), pp. 235–246.

Coase, R. H. (1937). The Nature of the Firm. *Economica*, 4(16), 386–405.

Colantone, I. and Stanig, P. (2018). Global Competition and Brexit. *The American Political Science Review*, 112(2), 201–218.

Colicchia, C. and Strozzi, F. (2012). Supply chain risk management: a new methodology for a systematic literature review. *Supply Chain Management*, 17(4), 403–418.

Corbett, L.M. (2008) ‘Manufacturing strategy, the business environment and operations performance in small low-tech firms’, *International Journal of Production Research*, 46(20), pp. 5491–5513.

Creswell, J. W., Hanson, W. E., Clark Plano, V. L. and Morales, A. (2007). Qualitative Research Designs: Selection and Implementation. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 35(2), 236–264.

Day, S. J., Godsell, J. and Shou, Y. (2025). Impact Pathways: Caught in the deglobalisation crosswind? De-risking by “China+1” or “In-China-For-China.” *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, 45(5), 995–1005

Denyer, D. and Tranfield, D. (2009) ‘Producing a systematic review’, in Buchanan, D.A. and Bryman, A. (eds.) *The SAGE handbook of organisational research methods*. London: SAGE, pp. 671–689.

Dilley, P. (2004) ‘Interviews and the philosophy of qualitative research’, *The Journal of Higher Education*, 75(1), pp. 127–132.

Dong, L. and Kouvelis, P. (2020). Impact of Tariffs on Global Supply Chain Network Configuration: Models, Predictions and Future Research. *Manufacturing and Service Operations Management*, 22(1), 25–35

Duong, A. T. B., Vo, V. X., do Sameiro Carvalho, M., Sampaio, P. and Truong, H. Q. (2023). Risks and supply chain performance: globalization and COVID-19 perspectives. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, 72(7), 1962–1986.

Drucker, P. F. (1962). The Economy’s Dark Continent. First Publication in: *Fortune*, LXV (4), pp. 265–270. In: Klaus, P., Müller, S. (eds) *The Roots of Logistics*. Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg.

Eisenhardt, K. M., Graebner, M. E. and Sonenshein, S. (2016). Grand Challenges and Inductive Methods: Rigor without Rigor Mortis. *Academy of Management Journal*, 59(4), 1113–1123.

Ellram, L.M., Tate, W.L. and Petersen, K.J. (2013) ‘Offshoring and reshoring: an update on the manufacturing location decision’, *Journal of Supply Chain Management*, 49(2), pp. 14–22.

Forrester, J. W. (2013). Economic theory for the new millennium (2003). *System Dynamics Review*, 29(1), 26–41.

Gallezot, J. and Aussilloux, V. (2008) ‘Collected customs duties: the level of taxation on imports applied by the US and the EU’, *The World Economy*, 31(10), pp. 1208–1225.

Gereffi, G. (1994) ‘The organisation of buyer driven global commodity chains’, in Gereffi, G. and Korzeniewicz, M. (eds.) *Commodity chains and global capitalism*. Westport, CT: Praeger, pp. 95–122.

Gereffi, G. (2018) ‘The global economy: organisation, governance and development’, in Smelser, N.J. and Swedberg, R. (eds.) *The handbook of economic sociology*. 2nd ed. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 160–182.

Gereffi, G. (2011) ‘Global value chains and international competition’, *The Antitrust Bulletin*, 56(1), pp. 37–56.

Gereffi, G. (2014) ‘Global value chains in a post-Washington Consensus world’, *Review of International Political Economy*, 21(1), pp. 9–37.

Gereffi, G., Posthuma, A. C. and Rossi, A. (2021). Introduction: Disruptions in global value chains – Continuity or change for labour governance? *International Labour Review*, 160(4), 501–517.

Gereffi, G., Humphrey, J. and Sturgeon, T. (2005). The governance of global value chains. *Review of International Political Economy* : RIPE, 12(1), 78–104

Gereffi, G., Lim, H.-C. and Lee, J. (2021). Trade policies, firm strategies and adaptive reconfigurations of global value chains. *Journal of International Business Policy*, 4(4), 506–522.

Ghemawat, P. (2017) ‘Globalisation in the age of Trump’, *Harvard Business Review*, 95(4), pp. 112–123.

Golgeci, I., Roscoe, S., Gligor, D.M. and Oh, C.H. (2025) ‘Advancing the sociopolitical view of supply chain management’, *International Journal of Operations and Production Management*, 45(5), pp. 955–984.

Gulotty, R. and Li, X. (2020) ‘Anticipating exclusion: global supply chains and Chinese business responses to the Trans-Pacific Partnership’, *Business and Politics*, 22(2), pp. 253–278.

Gygli, S., Haelg, F. and Sturm, J.-E. (2018) *The KOF globalisation index – revisited*. KOF Working Papers. Zurich: ETH Zurich. Available at: <https://kof.ethz.ch/>

Hameri, A.-P. and Hintsa, J. (2009) ‘Assessing the drivers of change for cross-border supply chains’, *International Journal of Production Economics*, 119(2), pp. 342–352.

Hammami, R. and Frein, Y. (2014). Redesign of global supply chains with integration of transfer pricing: Mathematical modeling and managerial insights. *International Journal of Production Economics*, 158, pp. 267–277.

Handfield, R., Graham, G. and Burns, L. (2020) ‘Coronavirus, tariffs, trade wars and supply chain evolutionary design’, *International Journal of Operations and Production Management*, 40(10), pp. 1649–1660.

Hartwell, C. A. and Devinney, T. M. (2024). The demands of populism on business and the creation of “corporate political obligations.” *International Business Review*, 33(2), Article 102075.

Hasani, A., Zegordi, S.H. and Nikbakhsh, E. (2015) ‘Robust closed-loop supply chain network design’, *International Journal of Production Research*, 53(5), pp. 1596–1615.

Hendry, L., Stevenson, M., MacBryde, J., Ball, P., Sayed, M. and Liu, L. (2019), “Local food supply chain resilience to constitutional change: the Brexit effect”, *International Journal of Operations and Production Management*, Vol. 39 No. 3, pp. 429-453.

Ho, W., Zheng, T., Yildiz, H. and Talluri, S. (2015). Supply chain risk management: a literature review. *International Journal of Production Research*, 53(16), 5031–5069.

Ivanov, D. and Dolgui, A. (2020) ‘Viability of intertwined supply networks’, *International Journal of Production Research*, 58(10), pp. 2904–2915.

Kaneberg, E., Piotrowicz, W. D., Jensen, L.-M., Hertz, S. and Kedziora, D. (2025). Supply chain resilience and critical dynamic capabilities: a balanced scorecard approach. *Production & Manufacturing Research*, 13(1).

Kauppi, K. (2013). Extending the use of institutional theory in operations and supply chain management research: Review and research suggestions. *International Journal of Operations and Production Management*, 33(10), 1318–1345.

Kobrin, S.J. (2017) ‘Bricks and mortar in a borderless world’, *Global Strategy Journal*, 7(2), pp. 159–171.

Kobrin, S.J. (2020) ‘How globalisation became a thing that goes bump in the night’, *Journal of International Business Policy*, 3(3), pp. 280–286.

Kocabasoglu-Hillmer, C., Vanpoucke, E., Son, B.-G. and Roden, S. (2023). Seeing with fresh eyes – the potential of paradox theory to explore persistent, interdependent tensions in supply chains. *International Journal of Operations and Production Management*, 43(11), 1669–1689.

Kohl, T., Brakman, S. and Garretsen, H. (2016) ‘Do trade agreements stimulate international trade differently? Evidence from 296 trade agreements’, *Review of World Economics*, Vol. 152 No. 1, pp. 51–82.

Kovács G and Spens KM (2005), "Abductive reasoning in logistics research". *International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management*, Vol. 35 No. 2 pp. 132–144

Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: an introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Sage Publications.

Kwak, D.-W., Rodrigues, V. S., Mason, R., Pettit, S. and Beresford, A. (2018). Risk interaction identification in international supply chain logistics: Developing a holistic model. *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, 38(2), 372–389.

Lamming, R. (1996) *Squaring lean supply with supply chain management*. London: McGraw-Hill.

Lamming, R., Johnsen, T., Zheng, J. and Harland, C. (2000) ‘An initial classification of supply networks’, *International Journal of Operations and Production Management*, 20(6), pp. 675–691.

Larson, R. B. (2019). Controlling social desirability bias. *International Journal of Market Research*, 61(5), 534–547

Lee, H. L., Padmanabhan, V. and Whang, S. (1997). The Bullwhip Effect in Supply Chains. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 38(3), 93.

Lee, C.-H., Son, B.-G. and Roden, S. (2023). Supply chain disruption response and recovery: The role of power and governance. *Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management*, 29(5), Article 100866.

Lee, C.-H., Roden, S. and Son, B.-G. (2025). Exploring the effect of justice and buyer-supplier embeddedness on supply chain disruption response: Buyer-supplier dyadic perspectives. *International Journal of Production Economics*, 290, Article 109770.

Lincoln, Y.S. and Guba, E.G. (1985) *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Lund, S., Manyika, J., Woetzel, J., Bughin, J., Krishnan, M., Seong, J. and Muir, M. (2019) *Globalisation in transition: the future of trade and value chains*. McKinsey Global Institute.

Luo, Y. (2022). Illusions of techno-nationalism. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 53(3), 550–567.

MacCarthy, B.L., Blome, C., Olhager, J., Srai, J.S. and Zhao, X. (2016) 'Supply chain evolution', *International Journal of Operations and Production Management*, 36(12), pp. 1709–1726.

Mansfield, E.D. and Mutz, D.C. (2013) 'US versus them', *International Organisation*, 67(1), pp. 1–29.

Meyer, K.E. (2017) 'International business in an era of anti-globalisation', *Multinational Business Review*, 25(2), pp. 78–90.

Meyer, K. E., Fang, T., Panibratov, A. Y., Peng, M. W. and Gaur, A. (2023). International business under sanctions. *Journal of World Business : JWB*, 58(2), Article 101426.

Miled, M. S. and Fiore, C. (2014). The “Authorized Economic Operator” certification and firm performance. 2014 International Conference on Advanced Logistics and Transport (ICALT), 167–172

Moher, D. et al. (2015) 'PRISMA-P', *Systematic Reviews*, 4(1), pp. 1–9.

Nakamura, K., Yamada, T. and Tan, K. H. (2019). The impact of Brexit on designing a material-based global supply chain network for Asian manufacturers. *Management of Environmental Quality*, 30(5), 980–1000.

Nowell, L.S., Norris, J.M., White, D.E. and Moules, N.J. (2017) 'Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16, pp. 1–13.

OECD (2021) *Global value chains: efficiency and risks*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

Osarenkhoe, A. (2009). An integrated framework for understanding the driving forces behind non-sequential process of internationalisation among firms. *Business Process Management Journal*, 15(2), 286–316.

.

Paulraj, A., Datar, A., Nakamura, A. and Seepana, C. (2025). Navigating sociopolitical waters: exploring the influence of key factors on global supply base concentration. *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, 45(5), 1066–1089.

Peters, U. (2022). What Is the Function of Confirmation Bias? *Erkenntnis*, 87(3), 1351–1376. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10670-020-00252-1>

Pickles, J. and Smith, A. (2011) ‘De-localisation and persistence in the European clothing industry’, *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 18(4), pp. 319–334.

Pilbeam, C., Alvarez, G. and Wilson, H. (2012) ‘The governance of supply networks: a systematic literature review’, *Supply Chain Management: An International Journal*, 17(4), pp. 358–376.

Politi, J. and Sevastopulo, D. (2019) ‘Trump escalates trade war with China’, *Financial Times*, 10 May.

Porter, M.E. (1985) *Competitive advantage*. New York: Free Press.

Prataviera, L. B., Perotti, S., Melacini, M. and Moretti, E. (2020). Postponement Strategies for Global Downstream Supply Chains: A Conceptual Framework. *Journal of Business Logistics*, 41(2), pp. 94–110.

Qin, M., Su, C.-W., Umar, M., Lobońt, O.-R. and Mantellini, F. (2023) ‘Are climate and geopolitics the challenges to global economic stability?’, *Economic Analysis and Policy*, 77, pp. 748–763.

Reilly, M., Scott, P. S., Tippmann, E. and Mangematin, V. (2023). Sustaining competence creation in the multinational enterprise: The role of piloting in subsidiaries. *Journal of International Management*, 29(3), Article 101034

Reilly, M., Tippmann, E. and Sharkey Scott, P. (2023). Subsidiary closures and relocations in the multinational enterprise: Reinstating cooperation in subsidiaries to enable knowledge transfer. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 54(6), 997–1026

Rodrik, D. (2011) *The globalisation paradox*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rodrik, D. (2018) 'Populism and the economics of globalisation', *Journal of International Business Policy*, 1(1–2), pp. 12–33.

Rodrik, D. (2021) 'Why does globalisation fuel populism? Economics, culture and the rise of populism', *Annual Review of Economics*, 13, pp. 133–170.

Roscoe, S., Aktas, E., Petersen, K. J., Skipworth, H. D., Handfield, R. B. and Habib, F. (2022). Redesigning global supply chains during compounding geopolitical disruptions: the role of supply chain logics. *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, 42(9), 1407–1434

Roscoe, S., Skipworth, H., Aktas, E. and Habib, F. (2020). Managing supply chain uncertainty arising from geopolitical disruptions: evidence from the pharmaceutical industry and brexit. *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, 40(9), 1499–1529.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2009) *Research methods for business students*. 5th ed. Harlow: Pearson Education.

Seidman, I. (1998) *Interviewing as Qualitative Research*. 2nd ed. New York: Teachers College Press.

Seppälä, T., Kenney, M. and Ali-Yrkkö, J. (2014) 'Global supply chains and transfer pricing: insights from a case study', *Supply Chain Management: An International Journal*, 19(4), pp. 445–454.

Seuring, S., Yawar, S. A., Land, A., Khalid, R. U. and Sauer, P. C. (2021). The application of theory in literature reviews – illustrated with examples from supply chain management. *International Journal of Operations and Production Management*, 41(1), 1–20

Shang Shu, C. and Shen, W. (2021). Beyond Trade War: Reevaluating Intellectual Property Bilateralism in the US–China Context. *Journal of International Economic Law*, 24(1), 53–76.

Shapovalova, I. M. (2016). Logistical support of interstate trade and economic cooperation. *Indian Journal of Science and Technology*, 9(14).

Sheffi, Y. and Rice, J. B. (2005). A Supply Chain View of the Resilient Enterprise. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 47(1), 41.

Shenton, A.K. (2004) 'Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects', *Education for Information*, 22, pp. 63–75.

Shi, W., Hoskisson, R. E. and Zhang, Y. A. (2016). A Geopolitical Perspective into the Opposition to Globalizing State-Owned Enterprises in Target States. *Global Strategy Journal*,

Siggelkow, N. (2007) 'Persuasion with case studies', *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(1), pp. 20–24.

Simangunsong, E., Hendry, L.C. and Stevenson, M. (2012), "Supply-chain uncertainty: a review and theoretical foundation for future research", *International Journal of Production Research*, Vol. 50 No. 16, pp. 4493-4523.

Son, B.-G., Kocabasoglu-Hillmer, C. and Roden, S. (2016). A dyadic perspective on retailer–supplier relationships through the lens of social capital. *International Journal of Production Economics*, 178, 120–131

Stokols, A. and Kollar, J. (2025) 'Extended state infrastructure power in an age of geopolitical rivalry', *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 57(1), pp. 3–21.

Sturgeon, T.J., and Gereffi, G. (2009). Measuring success in the global economy : International trade, industrial upgrading and business function outsourcing in global value chains. *Transnational Corporations*, 18(2), 1–36.

Sturgeon, T.J., Memedovic, O., Biesebroeck, J.V. and Gereffi, G. (2009) 'Globalisation of the automotive industry: main features and trends', *Int. J. Technological Learning, Innovation and Development*, 2 (1//2), pp.7-24.

Sun, Y. and Grimes, S. (2016). China's increasing participation in ICT's global value chain: A firm level analysis. *Telecommunications Policy*, 40(2–3), 210–224. h

Surana, A., Kumara, S., Greaves, M. and Raghavan, U. N. (2005). Supply-chain networks: a complex adaptive systems perspective. *International Journal of Production Research*, 43(20), 4235–4265.

Tang, C. S. (2006). Perspectives in supply chain risk management. *International Journal of Production Economics*, 103(2), 451–488.

Teece, D.J. (2007), "Explicating dynamic capabilities: the nature and microfoundations of (sustainable) enterprise performance," *Strategic Management Journal*, 28 (13), 1319-1350

Teece, D. J. and Pisano, G. (1994), "The Dynamic Capabilities of Enterprises: An Introduction," *Industrial and Corporate Change*, 3 (3), 537-556

Teece, D.J., Pisano, G. and Shuen. A. (1997), "Dynamic capabilities and strategic management," *Strategic Management Journal*, 18 (7), 509-533

Thürer, M., Tomašević, I., Stevenson, M., Blome, C., Melnyk, S., Chan, H. K. and Huang, G. Q. (2020). A systematic review of China's belt and road initiative: implications for global supply chain management. *International Journal of Production Research*, 58(8), 2436–2453.

Tracy, S.J. (2010) 'Qualitative quality: Eight "big-tent" criteria for excellent qualitative research', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(10), pp. 837–851.

Trull, T.J. and Ebner-Priemer, U.W. (2009) 'Using Experience Sampling Methods/Ecological Momentary Assessment (ESM/EMA) in clinical assessment and clinical research: Introduction to the special section', *Psychological Assessment*, 21(4), pp. 457–462.

Wang, Z., Gao, W. and Mukhopadhyay, S. (2016). Impact of taxation on international transfer pricing and offshoring decisions. *Annals of Operations Research*, 240(2), 683–707.

Wertz, F.J. (2014) ‘Phenomenological research methods for counselling psychology’, *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 45(1), pp. 93–109.

Williamson, O. E. (1996). *Economics and Organization: A Primer*. California Management Review, 38(2), 131-146.

World Trade Organisation (2023) *World trade report 2023*. Geneva: WTO.

World Trade Organisation (2024) *Global trade outlook and statistics*. Geneva: WTO.

Witt, M.A. (2019) ‘De-globalisation’, *Journal of International Business Studies*, 50(7), pp. 1053–1070.

Witt, M. A., Lewin, A. Y., Li, P. P. and Gaur, A. (2023). Decoupling in international business: Evidence, drivers, impact and implications for IB research. *Journal of World Business : JWB*, 58(1), Article 101399.

Wong, C., Skipworth, H., Godsell, J. and Achimugu, N. (2012). Towards a theory of supply chain alignment enablers: a systematic literature review. *Supply Chain Management*, 17(4), 419–437.

Yang, C. (2014). Market rebalancing of global production networks in the Post-Washington Consensus globalizing era: Transformation of export oriented development in China. *Review of International Political Economy : RIPE*, 21(1), 130–156.

Zajak, S. (2017) ‘MNCs and politicization from outside’, in Dörrenbächer, C. and Geppert, M. (eds.) *Multinational corporations and organisation theory: post-millennium perspectives*. Bingley: Emerald Publishing, pp. 389–423.

Zhao, K., Zuo, Z. and Blackhurst, J. V. (2019). Modelling supply chain adaptation for disruptions: An empirically grounded complex adaptive systems approach. *Journal of Operations Management*, 65(2), 190–212.

Zhu, M., Miao, S., Lam, H. K. S., Liang, C. and Yeung, A. C. L. (2025). Navigating through geopolitical risk: the role of supply chain concentration. *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, 45(5), 1032–1065

Appendix A – CIMO Framework

1. CIMO Logic Question	2. Application	3. Keyword Development	4. Definitions / Background / Key concepts identified in preliminary literature review	5. Keyword Refining	6. Search Strings + Boolean Operators	7. Thematic Analysis Heading
Context: Which individuals, relationships, institutional settings or wider systems are being studied?	The disruption of global supply chains Global supply chain	Global supply chain Global supply network Disruption Supply chain disruption Supply chain displacement	Supply Network, Management and supply of goods and services that transcend national boundaries, Management of internal and external supplier locations. Distinction between global and local / domestic due to International v Domestic issues, variables, parameters and constraints. Supply Networks comprises different entities that are connected by the physical flow of material. Supply chain disruptions are unplanned and unanticipated events that disrupt the normal flow of goods and materials within a supply chain (Craighead et al, 2007). Supply chain as a value chain, increases competitiveness but also vulnerability (Harrison et al, 2013) Drivers of Risk that cause disruption - Natural disaster, Labour Dispute, Supplier Bankruptcy, War & Terrorism, Sole Source Supply.	Global supply chain Global Value Chain (GVC) Supply chain	Global supply chain OR Supply chain AND Globalisation	Global Supply Chain / Global Value Chain
Intervention: The effects of what event, action or activity are being studied?	The reduction in global trade and reversal / slow down of globalisation	Reverse globalisation Regionalisation Localisation Reduced global trade Anti-globalisation Stagnation	Tariffs and duties, non-tariff trade barriers, currency exchange rate, corporate income tax, transportation time, inventory cost, worker skill and availability, and industry context (Meixell & Gargaya, 2005). Globalisation has reached a plateau and, in some areas, is in reverse. Stagnation of Globalisation. Growing backlash against Globalisation.	Globalisation Reverse Globalisation	Global supply chain OR Supply chain AND Reverse Globalisation Global supply chain OR Supply chain AND Geo-politics OR Geo-economics Global supply chain OR Supply chain AND Global trade	Globalization / Reverse Globalization International Trade Geo-economics & Geo-politics
Mechanisms: What are the mechanisms that explain the relationship between interventions and outcomes? Under what circumstances are these mechanisms activated or not activated?	Vulnerable and interdependent global supply networks Uncertainty Geo-economic & Geo-political factors: - <i>Global pandemic</i> - <i>Trade war</i> - <i>Protectionism</i> - <i>Nationalism</i>	Geopolitics Geo-economics Global economic changes . Factors Global / open markets Protectionism Nationalism	Geo-politics is now pursued chiefly through economic means, with the balance of international power influenced by economic policy and global trade. Geo-economics refers to the relationship between commerce and strategy, geo-politics is concerned with the role of global power / influence and strategy. Geo-economics is thus about advancing geostrategic goals, not mutually beneficial trade relations. According to this understanding, geo-economics can be defined as 'the geostrategic use of economic power'. (Vihma, 2018). Geo-economics replacing geopolitics in the core or centre of the globalising international system, "Logic of conflict, grammar of commerce" (Luttwak, 1990).	Geo-economics Geo-politics + Global Trade	Supply chain design AND Geo-politics OR Geo-economics Supply chain design AND Globalisation OR Reverse globalisation Supply chain design AND Global trade	<i>Brexit</i> <i>Trade War</i> Populism Protectionism / National Sovereignty / Nationalism Tariffs
Outcomes: What are the effects of the intervention? How will the outcomes be measured? What are the intended and unintended effects?	Organisations are redesigning their supply chains, moving from global to local	Supply chain response Supply chain redesign Supply chain strategy Supply chain risk	Buy, make, source strategies - vertical integration and outsourcing decisions, Supply chain goals and measurement, performance is measured in terms of reliability, responsiveness, flexibility, cost, and assets (Meixell & Gargaya, 2005). Interconnectedness of supply-chain's and as a result the increased risk from this connectedness (Chopra & Sodhi, 2004). The role of agility in the supply chain is to enable the respective members to respond quickly to unanticipated changes in supply and/or demand (Gligor & Holcomb, 2012).	Supply Chain Design Risk / Uncertainty / Complexity		Supply Chain Design / Redesign / Configuration Risk / Uncertainty / Complexity

Appendix B - PRISMA Checklist

Yes – Fully reported N/A – Not applicable to this qualitative review

#	Checklist Item	PRISMA Guidance	Reported?	Location in Chapter / Notes
TITLE				
1	Title	<i>Identify the report as a systematic review.</i>	Yes	Chapter 3 title: '3. Literature Review Chapter' and Section 3.2: 'Systematic Literature Review Process'
ABSTRACT				
2	Abstract	<i>See the PRISMA 2020 for Abstracts checklist.</i>	Yes	Section 3.1 Introduction provides a structured overview of the SLR scope, methodology and findings. Thesis abstract updated to include PRISMA-aligned summary of the review.
INTRODUCTION				
3	Rationale	<i>Describe the rationale for the review in the context of existing knowledge.</i>	Yes	Section 3.1 Introduction; Section 3.2 – rationale for SLR given fragmented and interdisciplinary nature of the literature
4	Objectives	<i>Provide an explicit statement of the objective(s) or question(s) the review addresses.</i>	Yes	Section 3.2.1 Phase I – CIMO framework applied to formulate research questions; two objectives stated explicitly
METHODS				
5	Eligibility criteria	<i>Specify the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the review and how studies were grouped for the syntheses.</i>	Yes	Section 3.2.3 Phase III – inclusion criteria (relevance to global trade and supply chain design with geopolitical reference); exclusion criteria (outside SCM discipline, unrelated to global trade, solely internal operations)
6	Information sources	<i>Specify all databases, registers, websites, organisations, reference lists and other sources searched or consulted.</i>	Yes	Section 3.2.2 Phase II – Scopus, Emerald Insight, Business Source Complete (EBSCO); search period 2005–2025; backward and forward citation review completed

#	Checklist Item	PRISMA Guidance	Reported?	Location in Chapter / Notes
		<i>Specify the date when each source was last searched or consulted.</i>		
7	Search strategy	<i>Present the full search strategies for all databases and other sources, including any filters applied, so others could repeat the search.</i>	Yes	Section 3.2.2 Phase II – full Boolean search strings presented for each database; language and date filters stated; Section 3.3 Phase 3 – search strings reproduced in full
8	Selection process	<i>Specify the methods used to decide whether a study met the inclusion criteria of the review, including how many reviewers screened each record and title/abstract, how many reviewed each report and whether any automation tools were used.</i>	Yes	Section 3.2.3 Phase III – title/abstract screening by primary researcher; all 4,843 records screened individually; second academic reviewer cross-checked inclusion/exclusion decisions; consensus reached through discussion; no automation tools used
9	Data collection process	<i>Specify the methods used to collect data from reports, including how many reviewers collected data from each report, any processes for obtaining or confirming information from study investigators and if applicable, details of any automation tools used.</i>	Yes	Section 3.2.3 Phase III – all records exported to Excel; duplicates removed; Mendeley used for document management. Section 3.2.4 Phase IV – descriptive and thematic coding applied to each included paper by primary researcher
10	Data items	<i>List and define all outcomes for which data were sought. Specify whether all results that were compatible with each outcome domain in each</i>	Yes	Section 3.2.4 Phase IV – descriptive coding categories listed (author, year, journal, method, relevance rating); thematic coding categories listed (GVC, globalisation, geo-politics, supply chain design, international trade, tariffs, protectionism, populism, risk)

#	Checklist Item	PRISMA Guidance	Reported?	Location in Chapter / Notes
		<i>eligible study were sought and if not, the methods used to decide which results to collect.</i>		
11	Study risk of bias assessment	<i>Specify the methods used to assess risk of bias in the included studies, including details of the tool(s) used, how many reviewers assessed each study and whether any automation tools were used.</i>	Yes	Section 3.2.3 Phase III – quality appraisal applied a CIMO-grounded scale balancing external validity (literary quality) and internal validity (methodological rigour). High/Medium/Low relevance ratings defined and applied to each of the 48 included studies. Criteria for each rating level elaborated in Section 3.2.4.
12	Effect measures	<i>Specify for each outcome the effect measure(s) (e.g. risk ratio, mean difference) used in the synthesis or presentation of results.</i>	N/A	Not applicable – this is a qualitative systematic literature review, not a meta-analysis. No quantitative effect measures were calculated.
13	Synthesis methods	<i>Describe the processes used to decide which studies were eligible for each synthesis, how data were prepared for synthesis, any methods used to summarise or aggregate data and any methods used to explore variability among the results of included studies.</i>	Yes	Section 3.2.4 Phase IV – concept-centric synthesis approach (Webster and Watson, 2002); thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke (2006; 2017); inductive coding; Whittemore and Knafl (2005) five-step method; conceptual matrices developed
14	Reporting bias assessment	<i>Describe any methods used to assess risk of bias due to missing results in a synthesis (arising from reporting biases).</i>	Yes	Section 3.2.3 Phase III – second reviewer cross-check reduces selection bias; grey literature included separately to reduce publication bias; backward and forward citation chasing reduces search bias; English-language restriction acknowledged as a potential limitation of the review process

#	Checklist Item	PRISMA Guidance	Reported?	Location in Chapter / Notes
15	Certainty assessment	<i>Describe any methods used to assess certainty (or confidence) in the body of evidence for an outcome.</i>	Yes	Section 3.2.4 Phase IV – High/Medium/Low relevance ratings applied to each included study as a structured certainty proxy, consistent with qualitative SLR practice in management research (formal GRADE framework not applicable to this review type). Rating criteria defined in Section 3.2.4.
RESULTS				
16a	Study selection – numbers	<i>Describe the results of the search and selection process, from the number of records identified to the number of studies included in the review, ideally using a flow diagram.</i>	Yes	Section 3.2.3 and PRISMA Flow Diagram– 4,856 records identified (4,768 database + 88 snowballing); 13 duplicates removed; 4,843 screened; 4,599 excluded at title/abstract stage; 244 full texts assessed for eligibility; 48 studies included. Flow diagram fully populated with these numbers.
16b	Study selection – exclusion reasons	<i>If applicable, provide the reasons for excluding studies after full-text review.</i>	Yes	Section 3.2.3 Phase III – reasons for excluding 196 full-text papers stated: outside SCM discipline, no direct reference to geopolitical factors, focus on internal operations only without external trade context, insufficient relevance to supply chain design or reconfiguration. Presented in PRISMA Flow Diagram
17	Study characteristics	<i>Cite each included study and present its characteristics.</i>	Yes	Thematic sections 3.3.1–3.3.8 – all 48 included studies cited and discussed. Table 3.3 (Thematic Trends) provides longitudinal frequency data by theme and year. Summary table of study characteristics added (methodology type, database source, year, relevance rating) consistent with PRISMA requirements.
18	Risk of bias in studies	<i>Present assessments of risk of bias for each included study.</i>	Yes	Section 3.2.4 – High/Medium/Low relevance and quality ratings assigned to each of the 48 included papers. Ratings summarised in Table 3.3 (Thematic Trends) and presented alongside study

#	Checklist Item	PRISMA Guidance	Reported?	Location in Chapter / Notes
				characteristics. Criteria for each rating level defined in Section 3.2.4.
19	Results of individual studies	<i>For all outcomes, present, for each study: (a) summary statistics for each group and (b) an effect estimates and its precision.</i>	N/A	Not applicable – qualitative review. Individual study findings are synthesised thematically in Sections 3.3.1–3.3.8 rather than reported as individual statistical outcomes.
20	Results of syntheses	<i>For each synthesis, briefly summarise the characteristics and risk of bias among contributing studies. Present results of all statistical syntheses.</i>	Yes	Sections 3.3.1–3.3.8 – thematic synthesis results reported for each of the 14 themes. Section 3.2.5 Phase V – three major conclusions summarised.
21	Reporting biases	<i>Present assessments of risk of bias due to missing results (arising from reporting biases) for each synthesis assessed.</i>	Yes	Section 3.2.3 – grey literature inclusion and citation chasing documented as bias-reduction strategies. Section 3.2.5 – English-language restriction and three-database scope acknowledged as potential sources of reporting bias. Presented as a limitation of the review process.
22	Certainty of evidence	<i>Present assessments of certainty (or confidence) in the body of evidence for each outcome assessed.</i>	Yes	Section 3.2.5 Phase V – limitations of the literature noted (limited empirical grounding, conceptual fragmentation, limited primary research). Certainty of the evidence base discussed per theme in Sections 3.3.1–3.3.8. Consistent with qualitative SLR practice; formal GRADE grading not applied.
DISCUSSION				
23	Discussion of results	<i>Provide a general interpretation of the results in the context of other evidence.</i>	Yes	Section 3.2.5 Phase V – three conclusions drawn and contextualised. Thematic sections 3.3.1–3.3.8 each include a synthesis and discussion.
24	Limitations of evidence	<i>Discuss any limitations of the evidence included in the review.</i>	Yes	Section 3.2.5 Phase V – limited empirical grounding identified; conceptual fragmentation noted; scarcity of primary practitioner research highlighted.

#	Checklist Item	PRISMA Guidance	Reported?	Location in Chapter / Notes
25	Limitations of review process	<i>Discuss any limitations of the review process used.</i>	Yes	Section 3.2.3 and Section 3.2.5 – single researcher screening with second-reviewer check noted; English-language restriction acknowledged; three-database scope discussed as a boundary condition; protocol amendment (date extension 2020 to 2025) documented transparently.
26	Conclusions	<i>Provide a general interpretation of the results in the context of other evidence and implications for future research.</i>	Yes	Section 3.2.5 Phase V – three conclusions stated; implications for the empirical (qualitative interview) phase identified.
OTHER INFORMATION				
27	Registration and protocol	<i>Provide registration information for the review, including register name and registration number, or state that the review was not registered. Indicate where the protocol can be accessed, or state that a protocol was not prepared.</i>	Yes	Section 3.2 – statement added: 'The review was not prospectively registered; however, a detailed protocol was developed and documented prior to execution, consistent with PRISMA-P guidance (Moher et al., 2015).' Protocol documented in thesis working materials.
28	Support	<i>Describe sources of financial or other support for the review and the role of the funders or sponsors in the review.</i>	Yes	Section 3.2 or thesis front matter – statement added: 'This systematic literature review was conducted as part of a doctoral research programme. No external funding was received in support of this review.'
29	Competing interests	<i>Declare any competing interests of review authors.</i>	Yes	Section 3.2 or thesis front matter – declaration added: 'The author declares no competing interests in relation to the conduct or reporting of this systematic literature review.'
30	Availability of data, code and other materials	<i>Report which of the following are publicly available and where they can be found: template</i>	Yes	Section 3.2.3 – Excel data record (SLR Analysis) containing all included studies, coding categories, relevance ratings and thematic classifications is maintained and available for examination. Stated as

#	Checklist Item	PRISMA Guidance	Reported?	Location in Chapter / Notes
		<i>data collection forms; data extracted from included studies; data used for all analyses; analytic code; any other materials used in the review.</i>		available upon request for the purposes of replication and transparency.

Appendix C – Systematic Literature Review Protocol

<i>PRISMA-P Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic review and Meta-Analysis Protocols.</i>		
Section /topic	Item #	Checklist item
ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION		
Title		
Identification	1a	The systematic review of the literature pertaining to supply chain redesign as a result of reduced global trade resulting from geo-political impact.
Authors		
Contact	3a	Geraldine Gough
Contributions	3b	PJ Byrne (Supervisor)
INTRODUCTION		
Rationale	6	The preliminary literature review identified that recent geo-political activities may be causing a slowdown in global trade or a reversal of globalisation, which in turn is influencing a change in the structure and design of global supply chains.
Objectives	7	Through the application of CIMO Logic the following research statements were developed: -A redesign (O) of global supply chains (C) are underway as geo-political influences (M) reduce global trade (I) -Within global supply chains (C), the reduction in global trade / "reverse globalisation" (I), influenced by geo-economic and geo-political strategies (M), is resulting in the restructuring of supply networks (O) The objectives of this systematic literature review are: 1. To understand how and to what extent that geo-political strategies are causing a reduction in global trade. 2. How are global supply chains responding to the said changes in global trade
Eligibility criteria	8	The primary criteria for inclusion in the study is the subject area of the paper, the paper must be relevant to the the effect of the changes in global trade on supply chain design. There is no limit on the geographic location of the studies, however the results will be limited to the English language. The search will include both peer reviewed and non peer reviewed papers, the inclusion of non peer reviewed papers will facilitate the

		inclusion of industry, government and business publications that are relevant to the nature of this study. The search will include all types of publications within the specified databases, including both grey and white literature, conference papers, reviews and editorials due to the novel and emerging subject matter, likewise the search will include all types of study methodologies - Theoretical, empirical studies and review papers, either qualitative or quantitative paper. The publication period to be considered are papers published between 2005 and 2020, this date range has been set as the preliminary literature review indicated that the initial reversal of globalisation can be traced back to around the 2008 financial crisis.
Information sources	9	The literature search will consist of a database search within the Scopus, Emerald and Business Source Complete (EBSCO) databases. These database's were selected as they are recognised as the largest databases of peer-reviewed and multidisciplinary journals, providing access to a broad range of content. As noted above the literature review will include both grey and white literature sources, The researcher has planned to include and report any grey literature content retrieved within the systematic literature review however will analyse and report these findings separate to the core academic analysis and review. Where the researcher will not have access to any search results through the DCU Library access, the researcher will use secondary routes to access the literature results.
Search strategy	10	The search strategy can be found on Tab 2 - SLR Process. The researcher has conducted a pretest of the search using the search criteria set out to ensure a sufficiently wide and robust search, furthermore the researcher has completed a pretest of potential results prior to 2015 and was satisfied that the range from 2005 to 2020 has met the objectives of the study. The application of CIMO Logic refined broad subject terms into specific keywords which are used to construct search strings with Boolean operators. The search is a free text search, based on applying the search strings in the specific format required for the each data base and searching the fields specified below. In each database the results will be further limited to publications between 2005 - 2020 and the English language results by using the Limit function. SCOPUS - Search Fields: Title, Abstract and Keywords. Search String: (global supply chain) OR (supply network) AND globali* OR (reverse globali*) AND (geo-economics) OR (geo-politics) OR (global trade) AND Design OR Redesign OR Configuration OR Reconfiguration. Limit to: 2005-2020, English Language TITLE-ABS-KEY ((global AND supply AND chain) OR (supply AND network) AND globali* OR (reverse AND globali*) AND (geo-economics) OR (geo-politics) OR (global AND trade) AND design OR redesign OR configuration OR reconfiguration) AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2020) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2019) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2018) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2017) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2016) OR LIMIT-TO (

		PUBYEAR , 2015) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2014) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2013) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2012) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2011) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2010) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2009) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2008) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2007) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2006) OR LIMIT-TO (PUBYEAR , 2005)) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English")) EMERALD - Search Fields: Title and Abstract. Search String: Global Supply Chain OR Supply network AND Globali#ation OR Reverse Globali#ation AND Geo#economics OR Geo#politics OR Global Trade AND Design OR Redesign OR Configuration OR Reconfiguration Limit to: 2005-2020, English Language Global+Supply+Chain+OR+Supply+network+AND+Globalisation+OR+Reverse+Globalisation+AND+Goeconomics+OR+Geopolitics+OR+Global+Trade+AND+Design+OR+Redesign+OR+Configuration+or+ReconfigurationandfromYear=2005andtoYear=2020 Business Source Complete (EBSCO) - Search Fields: Title, Abstract and Keyword. Search String: “Global Supply Chain” OR “Supply network” AND Globali#ation OR Reverse Globali#ation AND Geo#economics OR Geo#politics OR “Global Trade” AND Design OR Redesign OR Configuration OR Reconfiguration. Limit to: 2005-2020, English Language (“Global Supply Chain” OR “Supply network” AND Globali#ation OR Reverse Globali#ation AND Geo#economics OR Geo#politics OR “Global Trade” AND Design OR Redesign OR Configuration or Reconfiguration)
Study records		
Data management	11a	The search will be saved within each database, a record of all search results will be recorded and saved in an excel file. The search results from each database will be downloaded and stored in the Mendeley referencing tool. Following the initial download, any duplicates will be removed prior to indexing. All records will be tracked and reported as outlined in Tab 4 - Record Reporting. **Where it is not possible to download all of the search results and export from the database due to database limitations, the initial results will be reviewed and the title and abstract will be screened within the database**
Selection process	11b	The title and abstract for all papers will be read and reviewed, the researcher will determine if the paper is relevant to the study based on the subject area and topics dealt with within the paper, to deem a paper relevant the researcher will consider the prevalence and significance of supply chain and global trade within the abstract as the focal point of the paper or study. Following this review the researcher will share both lists of paper to be included and excluded from the study with a fellow researcher for review. Any recommendations to the final list of papers based on the second researchers opinion will be considered. The researcher will also complete a review of the reference

		lists of the papers to be included in the study and consider any new and relevant papers identified within these Reference Lists.
Data collection process	11c	Each paper included in the scope of the final literature review will be read in full and summarised using the template in Tab 2, Summary Template
Data items	12	The researcher will gather data on: DESCRIPTIVE CATEGORIES: -Title, Journal, Year -Methodology -# Citations -Research Area / Field -Research Contribution THEMATIC FINDINGS: The following theme's have been identified through the development of the CIMO Framework: -Global Supply -Reverse Globalisation -Geo-economics / Geo-politics -Supply Chain Redesign Any additional or emerging themes that arise through the literature review process will also be added.
Outcomes and prioritization	13	The preliminary literature review used to develop the CIMO framework indicates a strong link between the role of geo-politics in reducing global trade, the researcher will seek to identify if this is the case. Furthermore the researcher look to the data to understand if / what impact this is having on global supply chain design.
Risk of bias in individual studies	14	The identification of specific themes for the analysis and synthesis of the data from the outset will reduce bias, likewise the inclusion of a second researcher will further reduce bias.
Data		
Synthesis	15a	Quantitative synthesis is not anticipated due to the conceptual and qualitative nature of the literature, the diversity of study designs and variation in contexts, methodologies and outcome measures across the included studies.
	15b	Not applicable. A statistical meta-analysis will not be conducted as the review is exploratory and interpretive in nature rather than quantitative.

	15c	No formal subgroup analysis or meta-regression is planned. However, thematic comparison across industries, geographic regions and geopolitical factors will be undertaken where relevant patterns emerge within the literature.
	15d	The review will adopt a qualitative thematic synthesis approach. Data will be coded iteratively to identify recurring themes, strategic responses, theoretical perspectives and emerging patterns relating to geopolitical risk and global supply chain design. Findings will be synthesised using the CIMO framework to support structured interpretation and conceptual development.
Meta-bias(es)	16	Potential meta-biases include publication bias, language bias arising from the inclusion of English-language studies only and selective reporting within published studies. These limitations will be acknowledged within the review and considered during interpretation of findings.
Confidence in cumulative evidence	17	The strength of the cumulative evidence will be assessed through consideration of methodological rigour, consistency of findings across studies, theoretical contribution and relevance to the research objectives. Emphasis will be placed on triangulation of themes across multiple studies and contexts to support the credibility and robustness of the review findings.

Appendix D – Literature Review Coding

	Paper Citation	Relevance	Themes (1)	Themes (2)	Themes (3)	Global Supply Chain / Globalisation	Geo-economics / Geo-politics Supply Chain Design / International Trade	Tariffs	Risk / Uncertainty / Complexity / FTA's / PTA's	Customs / Unions	Brexit	Trade War	Transfer Pricing	Populism	Protectionism / National Sovereignty / Belt & Road	Lens / Perspective of Paper
1	Meyer, K. E. 2017. Int	Med	Anti-global	International Trade		/	X	X							X	Impact of a
2	Bremmer, I. 2014. The	Med	Anti-global	International Trade		/	X	X							X	Challenges
3	Buckley, P. J., & Hasha	Med	Anti-global	MNC		X	X	X	X	X						Impact of a
4	Sturgeon, T., Memedc	Low	Automotive	Globalisation		X	X	X								Impact of g
5	Kobrin, S. J. 2017. Bric	High	De-globalis	Geo-politic Interconnectednes		X	X		X	/		/		X	X	Cyclical nat
6	Witt, M. A. (2019). De	High	De-globalis	International Populism		X	X	X	X					X	X	Impact of c
7	Baccini, Leonardo, Pal	Med	Preferentia	MNC		X	X		X		X					Impact of P
8	Beugelsdijk, S., Peders	Low	Global Value Chain design			X		X								Internal fac
9	Gulotty, R., & Li, X. (20	Med	Preferentia Trans Pacific Partnersh			X		X	X	X	X					Role of PTA
10	Thürer, M., Tomašević	Low	Belt & Road	Global Supply Chain		X		/	/	X						Impact of E
11	Alvstam, C., Ivarsson,	High	Global Value	Political influence		X	X	X	X	X						Political inf
12	Beeson, M. (2018). Ge	Med	Belt & Road	Geopolitical and Geo-economics influ		X	X								X	The growth
13	Corbett, L. M. (2008).	Low	Manufactu	Changing business env		X										Manufactu
14	Osarenkhoe, A. (2009)	Low	Internationalisation	costs					X							Internation
15	Gereffi, G. (2014). Glob	Med	Global Value	Changes to globalisation		X	X	X	X	X						Changes to
16	Gereffi, G. (2011) 'Glo	Med	Global Value	Industrial U China Mexi		X	X			X						Success fac
17	Shapovalova, I. M. (20	Med	Globalisation	Economic I Logistics		/	X	/	/	X		/			X	Impact of g
18	Gygli, S., Haelg, F., & S	Med	Globalization			X	/									Globalisati
19	Bekkers, E. (2019). Chi	Med	Global Trade			X	X		X	X	X	X				Simulation
20	Yang, C. (2014). Market	Med	GPN Evolut	China		X	X		X	X						Transforma
21	Hasani, A., Zegordi, S.	Low	Supply chain modelling			X		X								Supply Cha
22	Caratas, M. A., & Spät	High	Global Trade	Trade War			X	X		X	X	X	X			Discussion
23	MacCarthy, B. L., Blon	Med	Supply Chain Evolution			X		X	X							Identifies p
24	Miled, M. S., & Fiore, I	Low	Int Trade p	Role of AEO		X			X							Erole of AE
25	Nakamura, K., Yamada	High	Brexit	Tariffs / Im supply chain		X		X	X	X		X				Geo-politic
26	Pickles, J., & Smith, A.	Med	Globalisation of textile industry			X		X	X	X		X				Globalisati
27	Prataviera, L. B., Perot	Low	Postponement Strategies			X										Role of pos
28	Roscoe, S., Skipworth,	High	Brexit	Impact of g supply chain		X		X	/	X		X				Geo-politic
29	Seppälä, T., Kenney, N	Low	Transfer pr	Supply chain design		X		X	X	X			X			Role of trar
30	Ellram, L.M., Tate, W.I	Med	Manufacturing location decision n			X	X	X	X	X						Manufactu
31	Hammami, R., & Frein	Low	Transfer pr	SC Redesign				X					X			Transfer pr
32	Shi, W., Hoskisson, R.	Med	Geopolitics	Globalisation		X		X		X		X			X	The role of
33	Mansfield, E. D., & Mu	Med	Outsourcing	International Trade			X	X		X					X	Gauging att
34	Simangunsong, E., Her	Med	Supply Chain Uncertainty			X			X							Supply chain
35	Rodrik, D. (2018). Pop	Low	Populism	Globalisation			X	X						X		Role of glob
36	Hameri, A.-P., & Hints	High	Supply Chain Change factors			X	X		X	X						Forecast of
37	Caceres, S.B. and Ear,	Low	China	Natural resource strategy			X									Natural res
38	Sturgeon, T.J., & Gereff	Low	Global Value	Economic Data		X			X							Requireme
39	Chae, S., Mena, C., Po	High	Tariffs	Supply Chain Complex		X	/		X	X		X				Impact of T
40	Sun, Y., & Grimes, S. (	Low	Globalisation	Role of China in ICT VC		X			X	X						Supply Cha
41	Hendry, L., Stevenson,	Med	Brexit	Local supply chain		X		X	X		X					Impact of B
42	Wang, Z., Gao, W., & I	Med	Transfer pr	Global Supply Optimis		X		X	X	X			X			Transfer Pr
43	Dong, L., & Kouvelis, P	High	Tariffs	Supply chain Interconne		X	X		X	X						Impact of T
44	Zajak, S. (2017), "MNC	Med	Role of MN	Pollicisation of MNC		X		X		X						Extended r
45	Basu, P., & Ray, P. (20	Med	Global Value	China-Plus- De-globalis		X	X	X	X	X		X			X	Impact of U
46	Duong, A. T. B., Vo, V.	Med	Supply Chain Globalisati	Supply Chain		X	X		X	X						Simultaneo
47	Luo, Y. (2022). Illusion	Med	Techno-nat	De-globalis Geo-politic		X	X	X		X		X			X	Conceptual
48	Witt, M. A., Lewin, A.	High	Decoupling	Geo-politic Supply Chain		X	X	X	X	X		X			X	Empirical e

Appendix E – Systematic Literature Review Full Paper List

Author(s)	Year	Paper Title	Journal / Publication	Relevance
Alvstam, C., Ivarsson, I. and Petersen, B.	2019	Are multinationals and governments from emerging economies configuring global value chains in new ways?	International Journal of Emerging Markets, 15(1): 111–130	High
Baccini, L., Pinto, P. and Weymouth, S.	2017	The distributional consequences of preferential trade liberalization: Firm level evidence	International Organization, 71(2): 373–395	Med
Basu, P. and Ray, P.	2022	China-plus-one: expanding global value chains	Journal of Business Strategy, 43(6): 350–356	Med
Beeson, M.	2018	Geoeconomics with Chinese characteristics: the BRI and China's evolving grand strategy	Economic and Political Studies, 6(3): 240–256	Med
Bekkers, E.	2019	Challenges to the trade system: The potential impact of changes in future trade policy	Journal of Policy Modeling, 41(3): 489–506	Med
Beugelsdijk, S., Pedersen, T. and Petersen, B.	2009	Is there a trend towards global value chain specialization? An examination of cross border sales of US foreign affiliates	Journal of International Management, 15(2): 126–141	Low
Bremmer, I.	2014	The new rules of globalization	Harvard Business Review, 92(1): 103–107	Med
Buckley, P. J. and Hashai, N.	2020	Skepticism toward globalization, technological knowledge flows and the	Global Strategy Journal, 10(1): 94–122	Med

		emergence of a new global system		
Caceres, S. B. and Ear, S.	2012	The geopolitics of China's global resources quest	Geopolitics, 17(1): 47–79	Low
Carataş, M. A. and Spătariu, E. C.	2019	Global economy under trade war	Ovidius University Annals, Series Economic Sciences, 19(1): 63–66	High
Chae, S., Mena, C., Polyviou, M., Rogers, Z. S. and Wiedmer, R.	2019	The effects of tariff increases on supply base complexity: A conceptual framework	Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management, 25(4)	High
Corbett, L. M.	2008	Manufacturing strategy, the business environment and operations performance in small low-tech firms	International Journal of Production Research, 46(20): 5491–5513	Low
Dong, L. and Kouvelis, P.	2020	Impact of tariffs on global supply chain network configuration: Models, predictions and future research	Manufacturing and Service Operations Management, 22(1): 25–35	High
Duong, A. T. B., Vo, V. X., do Sameiro Carvalho, M., Sampaio, P. and Truong, H. Q.	2023	Risks and supply chain performance: globalization and COVID-19 perspectives	International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management	Med
Ellram, L. M., Tate, W. L. and Petersen, K. J.	2013	Offshoring and re-shoring: An update on the manufacturing location decision	Journal of Supply Chain Management, 49(2): 14–22	Med
Gereffi, G.	2011	Global value chains and international competition	The Antitrust Bulletin, 56(1): 37–56	Med

Gereffi, G.	2014	Global value chains in a post-Washington consensus world	Review of International Political Economy, 21(1): 9–37	Med
Gulotty, R. and Li, X.	2020	Anticipating exclusion: Global supply chains and Chinese business responses to the Trans-Pacific Partnership	Business and Politics, 22(2): 253–278	Med
Gygli, S., Haelg, F. and Sturm, J.-E.	2018	The KOF globalisation index – revisited	KOF Working Papers, ETH Zurich	Med
Hameri, A.-P. and Hintsa, J.	2009	Assessing the drivers of change for cross-border supply chains	International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management, 39(9): 741–761	High
Hammami, R. and Frein, Y.	2014	Redesign of global supply chains with integration of transfer pricing: Mathematical modeling and managerial insights	International Journal of Production Economics, 158: 267–277	Low
Hasani, A., Zegordi, S. H. and Nikbakhsh, E.	2015	Robust closed-loop global supply chain network design under uncertainty: the case of the medical device industry	International Journal of Production Research, 53(5): 1596–1624	Low
Hendry, L., Stevenson, M., MacBryde, J., Ball, P., Sayed, M. and Liu, L.	2019	Local food supply chain resilience to constitutional change: the Brexit effect	International Journal of Operations and Production Management, 39(3): 429–453	Med
Kobrin, S. J.	2017	Bricks and mortar in a borderless world: Globalization, the backlash and the multinational enterprise	Global Strategy Journal, 7(2): 159–171	High

Luo, Y.	2022	Illusions of techno-nationalism	Journal of International Business Studies, 53: 550–567	Med
MacCarthy, B. L., Blome, C., Olhager, J., Srai, J. S. and Zhao, X.	2016	Supply chain evolution – theory, concepts and science	International Journal of Operations and Production Management, 36(12): 1696–1718	Med
Mansfield, E. D. and Mutz, D. C.	2013	U.S. versus them: Mass attitudes toward offshore outsourcing	World Politics, 65(4): 571–608	Med
Meyer, K. E.	2017	International business in an era of antiglobalization	Multinational Business Review, 25(2): 78–90	Med
Miled, M. S. and Fiore, C.	2014	The 'Authorized Economic Operator' certification and firm performance	2014 International Conference on Advanced Logistics and Transport (ICALT): 167–172	Low
Nakamura, K., Yamada, T. and Tan, K. H.	2019	The impact of Brexit on designing a material based global supply chain network for Asian manufacturers	Management of Environmental Quality: An International Journal, 30(5): 980–1000	High
Osarenkhoe, A.	2009	An integrated framework for understanding the driving forces behind non-sequential process of internationalisation among firms	Business Process Management Journal, 15(2): 286–316	Low
Pickles, J. and Smith, A.	2011	Delocalization and persistence in the European clothing industry: The reconfiguration of trade and production networks	Regional Studies, 45(2): 167–185	Med

Prataiviera, L. B., Perotti, S., Melacini, M. and Moretti, E.	2020	Postponement strategies for global downstream supply chains: A conceptual framework	Journal of Business Logistics, 41(2): 94–110	Low
Rodrik, D.	2018	Populism and the economics of globalization	Journal of International Business Policy, 1: 12–33	Low
Roscoe, S., Skipworth, H., Aktas, E. and Habib, F.	2020	Managing supply chain uncertainty arising from geopolitical disruptions: evidence from the pharmaceutical industry and Brexit	International Journal of Operations and Production Management	High
Seppälä, T., Kenney, M. and Ali-Yrkkö, J.	2014	Global supply chains and transfer pricing: Insights from a case study	Supply Chain Management: An International Journal, 19(4): 445–454	Low
Shapovalova, I. M.	2016	Logistical support of interstate trade and economic cooperation	Indian Journal of Science and Technology, 9(14)	Med
Shi, W., Hoskisson, R. E. and Zhang, Y. A.	2016	A geopolitical perspective into the opposition to globalizing state-owned enterprises in target states	Global Strategy Journal, 6(1): 13–30	Med
Simangunsong, E., Hendry, L. C. and Stevenson, M.	2012	Supply-chain uncertainty: a review and theoretical foundation for future research	International Journal of Production Research, 50(16): 4493–4523	Med
Sturgeon, T. J. and Gereffi, G.	2009	Measuring success in the global economy: International trade, industrial upgrading and business function outsourcing in global value chains	Transnational Corporations, 18(2): 1–36	Low

Sturgeon, T., Memedovic, O., Van Biesebroeck, J. and Gereffi, G.	2009	Globalisation of the automotive industry: main features and trends	International Journal of Technological Learning, Innovation and Development, 1(1/2): 7– 23	Low
Sun, Y. and Grimes, S.	2016	China's increasing participation in ICT's global value chain: A firm level analysis	Telecommunications Policy, 40(2–3): 210–224	Low
Thürer, M., Tomašević, I., Stevenson, M., Blome, C., Melnik, S., Chan, H. K. and Huang, G. Q.	2020	A systematic review of China's belt and road initiative: implications for global supply chain management	International Journal of Production Research, 58(8): 2436–2453	Low
Wang, Z., Gao, W. and Mukhopadhyay, S.	2016	Impact of taxation on international transfer pricing and offshoring decisions	Annals of Operations Research, 240(2): 683– 707	Med
Witt, M. A.	2019	De-globalization: Theories, predictions and opportunities for international business research	Journal of International Business Studies, 50(7): 1053–1077	High
Witt, M. A., Lewin, A. Y., Li, P. P. and Gaur, A.	2023	Decoupling in international business: Evidence, drivers, impact and implications for IB research	Journal of World Business, 58: 101399	High
Yang, C.	2014	Market rebalancing of global production networks in the post-Washington consensus globalizing era: Transformation of export	Review of International Political Economy, 21(1): 130–156	Med

		oriented development in China		
Zajak, S.	2017	MNCs and politicization from outside	Multinational Corporations and Organization Theory: Post Millennium Perspectives (Research in the Sociology of Organizations, Vol. 49), Emerald Publishing Limited: 389–423	Med

Appendix F – Invitation to Interview

Dear (Participant Name)

As part of my PhD Study, I am conducting research into the role of geo-political and geo-economic factors in global supply chain design. To date I have completed a review of published literature in this area and have identified a number of both existing and emergent factors. Of specific interest to my study is the role of populism and nationalism on supply chain decision making. I plan to conduct semi-structured interviews with participants who have experience in global sourcing and international supply chains to explore these themes further and gain a deeper understanding. The research and findings will be published in my final PhD thesis and may also be published in academic journals, selected by the researcher. Because of your experience and background in supply chain, I am extending an invitation to you to participate in an interview.

If you accept, you will be asked to participate in an interview with myself (Geraldine Gough). No one else will be present unless you would like someone to accompany you. The interview will be held over Microsoft Teams, I will use Microsoft Teams to transcribe the interview and may take hand written notes. No one else will have access to this information. The transcription files and notes will be stored securely on a laptop and will be destroyed when I complete my PhD or after a maximum of three years. Participants in the study will be anonymized, you will be referred to only by number and not by name, and only I, the interviewer will know your assigned number.

During the interview I will ask you about global supply chains in the context of globalization, factors that influence decision making within the supply chain and current considerations relating to supply chain design. You are not obliged to answer the questions, if there is a risk that you could share some personal, proprietary or confidential information or that you feel uncomfortable with you are welcome to request that we move to the next question. You are free to withdraw from the interview at any time. Similarly, when the interview concludes you will have the opportunity to advise if there is anything you wish to omit from the interview transcription.

You do not have to participate in this study if you do not wish to do so, and if you chose to decline you do not have any obligation to state your reasons for declining.

I would like to thank you for taking the time to read this letter. If you would like to know more about the study before deciding whether to participate, please contact the interviewer at geraldine.grant4@mail.dcu.ie. If you agree to participate, I would be grateful if you could read the Plain Language Statement and Informed Consent Form attached, returning a signed copy of the Informed Consent Form please to geraldine.grant4@mail.dcu.ie. Regardless of whether you choose to participate, please let the interviewer know if you would like to receive a summary of the findings. To receive a summary, contact: geraldine.grant4@mail.dcu.ie.

|
Yours faithfully

Geraldine Gough

Appendix G – Informed Consent and Plain Language Statement

DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY Plain Language Statement

Introduction to the Research Study

This study seeks to understand the extent to which geo-political factors and geo-economic factors are influencing globalisation and global trade, and the subsequent impact of any changes to global trade on international supply networks.

Privacy Notice

Participation in this study is anonymous, participants will not be identified in the interview, the interview transcript or the reporting of the interview findings.

This study is being conducted by a student of the Business School at Dublin City University. The student, or primary researcher is the Data Controller for the purposes of data management, her contact details are listed below:

*Primary Researcher / Interviewer (DCU PhD Student) & Data Controller – Geraldine Gough
(geraldine.grant4@mail.dcu.ie)*

DCU Data Protection Officer – Mr. Martin Ward (data.protection@dcu.ie Ph.: 7005118 / 7008257)

This study will not gather any personal data, however please contact either the named Data Controller or Data Protection Officer above if you have any questions.

Data Retention

Data will be collected and stored for a maximum of three years, at which point the data will be deleted from the electronic database (DCU Google Drive)

Participant Involvement

Participation in the study will involve a 60 minute interview using Microsoft Teams. The interview will be semi-structured in style, with predefined question areas. With your consent, the interview will be transcribed.

Benefits (direct or indirect) to participants from involvement in the Research Study

The results of the study will be shared with you for your information, these may be beneficial or of interest.

Confidentiality of Data

Confidentiality of information can only be protected within the limitations of the law - i.e., it is possible for data to be subject to subpoena, freedom of information claim or mandated reporting by some professions.

Participation

Participants may withdraw from the Research Study at any point. Participation will end at the point of withdrawal.

If participants have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact:

The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Research and Innovation Support, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-7008000, e-mail rec@dcu.ie

DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY Informed Consent Form

Research Study Title

This study seeks to understand the extent to which geo-political factors and geo-economic factors are influencing globalisation and global trade, and the subsequent impact of any changes to global trade on international supply networks. This research is being conducted as part of a PhD program within the Business School of Dublin City University. The primary researcher in the study is Geraldine Gough (PhD Student), the research study is being supervised by PJ Byrne (PhD Supervisor).

Confirmation of particular requirements as highlighted in the Plain Language Statement

As stated in the attached Plain Language Statement, your participation in this research study requires involvement in an interview. Your identity will be anonymized throughout the interview and reporting of the findings.

Participant – please complete the following (Circle Yes or No for each question)

<i>I have read the Plain Language Statement (or had it read to me)</i>	Yes/No
<i>I understand the information provided</i>	Yes/No
<i>I understand the information provided in relation to data protection</i>	Yes/No
<i>I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study</i>	Yes/No
<i>I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions</i>	Yes/No
<i>I am aware that my interview will be audiotaped</i>	Yes/No

Agreeing to participate in this study and signing this informed Consent Form I understand;

I may withdraw from the Research Study at any point.

While my identity will not be publishing in this research, and my personal data not collected. I understand that the confidentiality of information can only be protected within the limitations of the law - i.e., it is possible for data to be subject to subpoena, freedom of information claim or mandated reporting by some professions.

Any data gathered will be stored on DCU Google Drive for a maximum of three years, at which point it will be disposed of.

Signature:

I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been answered by the researchers, and I have a copy of this consent form. Therefore, I consent to take part in this research project

Participants Signature: _____

Name in Block Capitals: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____

Appendix H – Pulse Survey

Subject Follow-Up Survey on Evolving Geo-Political Impact on Supply Chain Design

Dear Interview Participants,

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to thank you again for your valuable contribution to my PhD research on the impact of geopolitical factors, particularly populism, nationalism, and protectionism on global supply chains. Your insights formed a critical part of my findings and I remain very appreciative of the time and expertise you shared.

As the geopolitical landscape continues to evolve at an unprecedented rate, I am conducting a short follow-up pulse survey to assess whether perspectives and strategies have shifted since our original interview. The survey consists of just two brief questions and an optional comment field. I would be very grateful if you could take a moment to respond.

- 1. As a result of recent geopolitical developments and increasing uncertainty, are you considering or is your organisation already shifting supply chains towards a more local, national, or regional footprint?**
 - Yes
 - No
- 2. If yes, is this shift primarily driven by or in response to Nationalism, Protectionism or Populism?**
 - Yes
 - No
- 3. Please feel free to add any additional comments that would provide further context to your response.**

Your continued participation would greatly enrich the final stage of this research. If you are open to sharing your updated views, please simply reply to this email with your answers. Feel free to mark an X, highlight, colour etc... to indicate your feedback. I have chosen a direct email survey for your convenience to reply.

Thank you once again for your continued support and engagement with my research.

Kind regards,
Geraldine Gough

Appendix I – Pulse Survey Results

Original Responses to Interviews (February - September 2024)		Pulse Survey Findings July 2025		
Participant	Original Interview - Movement towards local supply?	1. As a result of recent geopolitical developments and increasing uncertainty, are you considering or is your organisation already shifting supply chains towards a more local, national, or regional footprint?	2. If yes, is this shift primarily driven by or in response to Nationalism, Protectionism or Populism?	3. Please feel free to add any additional comments that would provide further context to your response.
INT1	No	Yes - even despite the final landscape not being fully clear	Yes	Supply chains de-risk and diversification is an easily held aspiration but approval, qualification, splitting of spend can incur time and cost, however the new world order of tariffs has forced the situation.
INT10	Yes	Yes	No	Alterations to strategy are driven by the need for flexibility - to be able to respond as best and as quickly, as possible to changes in US tariff policies. Due to this ongoing uncertainty, the organisation is prepared to dilute to its volume commitments with certain CMO's to locate production within the US to enable tariff mitigation and overall disruption to market availability. Invariably, this is leading to increased unit costs

				but seen as a necessary step to secure availability within a key market.
INT11	No	No	No	
INT12	No	Yes	Yes	In the early stage of supply chain transfer, although there will be some challenges, such as increased procurement costs, prolonged delivery lead time, unstable product quality, etc. However, in the long run, given the long-term trend of geopolitical factors, establishing a diversified supply chain can help distribute the operational risks of the organisation and is of great significance for the sustained and healthy development of the organisation.
INT13	Yes	No	No	A diversified strategy was already in place to have alternatives outside of China. The plan is accelerated as of February but unchanged.
INT15	No	Yes	No	This changes mainly driven by business needs to get the most competitive supply source
INT16	No	Yes	Yes	
INT18	No	Yes	Yes	
INT19	No	Yes	Yes	
INT20	No	Yes	Yes	

INT21	Yes	Yes	Yes	
INT22	Yes	Yes	Yes	
INT6	No	Yes	Yes	Mainly caused by uncertainty, difficult to make long term decisions at the current time with so much change. Tariffs could change overnight with no warning, cannot make strategic decision.
INT2	No	Yes	No	In my view, while there are some protectionist sentiments, those within my organisation are primarily driven by cost and risk factors. Even with the introduction of considerable tariffs by the US presidential administration, we have found that on- or nearshoring is often not cost-effective, in most scenarios. The key considerations tend to be around cost efficiency and risk management rather than an ideological push towards nationalism or protectionism. It's clear that while geopolitical factors play a role, the financial feasibility and operational risks are the main driving forces in our decision-making process.
INT3	No	Yes	Yes	

INT4	No	Yes	Yes	Our decision to evaluate a more regionalized supply chain strategy is multifaceted. While cost efficiency and operational resilience remain core priorities, recent global disruptions including trade tensions, evolving regulatory landscapes and growing emphasis on national self-sufficiency have underscored the strategic risk of over-dependence on distant or single-source suppliers. This shift is not solely a reaction to nationalism or protectionism, but also part of a broader initiative to build agility, reduce lead times and better align with evolving customer expectations around reliability and sustainability. Where feasible, we are exploring dual sourcing and nearshoring strategies to mitigate risk and enhance responsiveness in key product categories
INT5	Yes	Yes, where we can balance costs we are located looking to have a more in region source and with change in US leadership it means short term uncertainty. Cost pressures still exist in our business so it can cause some delays in finding the right source.	Not easy to answer this question, we have company directives to look for more in region sources , but we also have cost targets so balancing both is where we are today, as mentioned on the last section the changes in the US will also push us in a direction that we	

			did not see 13 months ago. So maybe the answer is yes to all 3 as it appears to be a mix.	
INT7	No	Yes	Yes	Business is in fight or flight mode due to tariff uncertainty and cost pressure.
INT8	No	Yes	Yes (Protectionism)	Currently trading with an Israeli based hardware vendor , currently reviewing alternatives for to the war and potentially trade restrictions
INT9	No	Yes	Yes	
INT14	Yes	Yes	Yes	

INT17	Yes	Yes + No	Yes	I think this question would probably require a 3rd option? The inclusion of 'Both' would be indicative of the dilemma being faced by US corporations. Should we, shouldn't we? How crazy can this president get if we don't comply, how could we be punished , or, conversely, how can we court favour? So 'Yes' , most (US) corporations ARE looking to acquiesce to the highly volatile environment however, most are coming to the conclusion that 'No' is the most logical situation in regards to maintaining foreign, off shore, business models and being able to reach and be established in other markets that can't be serviced from America. However, if I take Dell as a current example, many staff members in Asia (Malaysia and China in particular) are losing their jobs while the corporation is moving those responsibilities back to Austin. This is actually happening in America too, where team members located in, for example, Boston, Nashville, Seattle and California are being requested to move to Austin or lose their jobs. While there is a perception that the US is attempting to 'bring back' business to America, the reality does not match the practicalities. While certain
-------	-----	----------	-----	---

				activities CAN be moved with an acceptable level of disruption (tech support, on line services, software development etc) it would be largely impractical to move legacy supply chains, specifically manufacturing, to appease the current administration. This is a huge dilemma for corporations. Do they kowtow to what is rapidly becoming an environment where the perceived lack of compliance towards what one man demands could result in punitive measures, ones which would be applied just for the sake of punishment and not for any logical or financial efficacy. I feel a lot of US business owners are in a no win situation, damned if they do damned if they don't. Q2 - There is a perceptible and perceived fear among US corporates. For example, the removal of DEI policies and the speed at which they were removed, is immoral. However, the savings in removing these policies is significant. Whole departments dedicated to DEI have been substantially removed. In the instances it can be strongly argued that while the corporations are struggling with what next steps to take regarding the Trump administration, it didn't take may of them long to, for example, remove the DEI
--	--	--	--	---

				protections and put it in the profit and loss account. Q3 - What we're seeing within global markets is unprecedented. When the potential harm that will likely be inflicted for years to come, is based on the mood of a serially poor and failed 'business' man who is driven by ego and vanity, the future outcomes are not good. If the administration had retained subject matter experts in key economic roles, there may have been some element of hope left. However, when the core group of people now responsible for those key areas have been put into position purely because they display a maniacal level of obedience to a morally corrupt president the process can only fail in the long-term. The strength of any process is only as strong as the weakest link. When you have multiple weak links and several probable points of implosion, running a country as large as the US as a beauty contest is deigned to fail. Most ordinary team members working in US corporations have been impacted by the current US administration. Even in Ireland are pension pots have shrank significantly in the past 6 months. Although these situations are cyclical (we hope!)
--	--	--	--	--

				the amount of damage being done within the geopolitical environment is awfully detrimental and will take years after Trump to be corrected. When companies, who have felt strong armed into a response they would never have chosen, it comes at a price. Everything comes at a price, even geopolitical landscapes. This will mean continued price impacts or cost recover for many years to come.
--	--	--	--	--

Appendix J – Ethics Approval

Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City University



Professor P.J. Byrne
DCU Business School

Geraldine Gough
DCU Business School

4th October 2022

REC Reference: DCUREC/2022/166

Proposal Title: The role of geopolitics and geo-economics in the changing dynamic of global trade and the subsequent impact on global supply chains.

Applicant(s): Professor P.J. Byrne, Geraldine Gough

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for your application to DCU Research Ethics Committee (REC). Further to notification review, DCU REC is pleased to issue approval for this research proposal.

DCU REC's consideration of all ethics applications is dependent upon the information supplied by the researcher. This information is expected to be truthful and accurate. Researchers are responsible for ensuring that their research is carried out in accordance with the information provided in their ethics application.

Materials used to recruit participants should note that ethical approval for this project has been obtained from the Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee. Should substantial modifications to the research protocol be required at a later stage, a further amendment submission should be made to the REC.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Melrona Korrane
Chairperson
DCU Research Ethics Committee



Taighde & Nuálaíocht Tacaíocht
Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath,
Baile Átha Cliath, Éire

Research & Innovation Support
Dublin City University,
Dublin 9, Ireland

T +353 1 700 8000
F +353 1 700 8002
E research@dcu.ie
www.dcu.ie

Note: Please retain this approval letter for future publication purposes (for research students, this includes incorporating the letter within their thesis appendices).

Appendix K – Theoretical Contribution Mapping

Theory	Theory Position	Evidence from Interview Findings	Interpretation / Contribution
TCE (Coase, Williamson)	Organisations structure supply chains to minimise cost and transaction risk	Multiple participants described historical sourcing decisions driven by cost efficiency and scale (e.g., INT3, INT7)	Efficiency driven globalisation as baseline condition
GVC Theory (Gereffi)	Global production organised through governed networks with power asymmetries	Participants highlighted reliance on concentrated geographies (eg, China) and dependency risks (INT5, INT11)	Geopolitical pressure exposes structural dependency
Risk Theory (Tang, Ho)	Efficiency increases vulnerability to disruption	Participants described fragility exposed during COVID and geopolitical events (INT2, INT9, INT14)	Vulnerability, disruption is no longer episodic
Resilience Theory (Sheffi)	Organisations respond through buffering, redundancy, flexibility	Evidence of short-term responses such as stockpiling and dual sourcing .(INT6, INT10)	Resilience is used but insufficient for sustained disruption
Viability (Ivanov)	Supply chains must adapt to survive in changing environments	Participants described permanent shifts (e.g., moving sourcing regions, redesigning networks) (INT1, INT8, INT15)	Supply chains are being reconfigured, not restored
Dynamic Capabilities (Teece)	Organisations sense, seize and reconfigure in response to change	Rapid decision-making, supplier switching and strategy shifts described (INT4, INT12, INT18)	Organisations adapt operationally
Institutional Theory	External pressures (regulation, politics) shape organisation behaviour	Tariffs, political pressure and regulatory constraints driving decisions (INT2, INT13, INT20)	Critical extension geopolitics acts as coercive force, not just context
Social Capital / Embeddedness	Relationships enable coordination and adaptation	Strong supplier relationships enabled flexibility and prioritisation during disruption (INT6, INT16, INT19)	Adaptation is network-dependent, not firm-only

Governance (Contractual vs Relational)	Contracts + trust manage inter-firm behaviour	Contracts often insufficient; reliance on trust and long-term relationships (INT10, INT17)	Shift toward relational governance under uncertainty
Power Theory	Power influences behaviour in supply chains	Buyers exerted pressure (pricing, allocation), but cooperation depended on relationships (INT7, INT14)	Limits of coercion and importance of relational power
Paradox Theory	Organisations must manage competing tensions	Participants explicitly described trade-offs , cost vs resilience, speed vs security (INT1, INT9, INT21)	Tensions are persistent and unresolved