

Unlocking Nigeria's Potentials: Harnessing the Power of Cultural Diplomacy in Catalysing Nigeria's Influence and Progress in Africa.

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Abstract

Foreign policy is an exclusive preserve of sovereign states. The principles depend, largely, on the capacity, disposition, and willingness of states to extend their influence beyond their borders. In 1960, Nigeria gained independence and began to project her foreign policy principles to the international system. The first and only Nigeria's Prime Minister, Alhaji Tafawa Balewa, enunciated what became Nigeria's foreign policy principles. Subsequent administrations, civilian and military alike, continued in the same stance notwithstanding identified flaws in some of the policies occasioned by the realities of the international system. Nigeria's socio-economic challenges demands that a multifaceted approach be adopted in tackling them. Consequently, there is the need to adopt soft power approach to enhance Nigeria's interest in the international system. This article seeks to project cultural diplomacy as an area in Nigeria's foreign policy that demands an attention arguing that Nigeria can employ and deploy cultural diplomacy as a soft power approach to improve on her international relations. The study adopts both primary and secondary sources of data collection and uses historical analysis to distil the data. With a huge population, sound and enterprising youths but mitigated by massive unemployment, the study argues that Nigeria can deploy her available huge cultural potentials through Nollywood, Scholarship, Artists, et cetera to increase her relevance in the international system while solving domestic problem of unemployment and poverty. The study concludes that the full realisation of such objective is predicated on a conscious and deliberate policy adopted by the Nigerian government to enhance her cultural diplomatic prowess in her international relations.

Introduction

Culture has a big impact on how people see each other and work through their differences. Cultural dynamics are changing in tandem with the abundance of global engagement and exchange opportunities. Cultures are mixing, merging, and altering; we can no longer view them as comparatively fixed entities offering themselves for mutual understanding (Bound et al., 2007). Furthermore, despite some assertions, it is not possible to make a compelling case that these

components of US foreign policy are no longer required in light of the end of the Cold War and the lack of serious threats. Rather than a new order, the world has actually entered a moment of tremendous instability. It is crucial therefore to reevaluate prioritised areas in order to tackle these new issues. While traditional diplomacy and military might be becoming less effective in handling many of these issues, cultural diplomacy in its broadest sense has gained importance (Laqueur, 1994, 20).

The above assertions by Bound et al and Laqueur are important in understanding the position cultural diplomacy occupies in the mind-sets of its advocates and admirers in the practice, study and conduct of international relations. Laqueur's work cited above is particularly important because he highlights the type of dangers facing the international system after the demise of the Cold War and the limits of military power and traditional diplomacy to tackling such challenges. As the Cold War ended with the Soviet Union's collapse, unexpectedly, the global system entered into a new disorder of state failure, terrorism, religious extremism, human insecurity, *et cetera*. The 11 September terrorist attack in the United States was a test case. Indeed, Laqueur's work and Huntington's "*the Clash of Civilisation*" (1996) clearly indicate that a new approach to international relations is required; engagements through cultural diplomacy in combination with hard power, when necessary, remain the option to surmount the emerging challenges. Good ideals and images of the Americans as expressed through their arts, films, music, food, literature, education, *et cetera* are the drugs for the different ailments that have bedevilled the world after the Cold War. Such ideals can be communicated to other countries through the powers of attraction and conviction; through cultural diplomacy and not 'hard power' or force.

In Africa, similar challenges and opportunities exist. As the United States employed cultural diplomacy to win followers and admirers all over the world notwithstanding their domineering stance in international system, Nigeria that has shown lots of benevolence in her Africa's international relations has not shown enough interest in the use of her rich cultural heritage to its advantage in Africa. The impact of information technology in the promotion of Nigeria's culture, advancement of Nigeria's interest abroad, provision of jobs for the teeming unemployed but willing-to-work youths and elders, cannot be overemphasised. Nigeria's insecurity challenges are alarming and overwhelming. Youths' restiveness and separatist agitations are increasing ostensibly owing to unemployment and joblessness in the country. Incidentally, the Nigerian government cannot employ all the available citizens seeking for jobs and there are little welfare programmes available for the unemployed masses to leverage on for their survival. The private sector is grappling with lots of challenges that many are no longer breaking even leading to relocation to other countries or total collapse. The implication is that both the country and the citizens are in dire need alternative options to their advantage. Nigeria's rich cultural heritage presents a significant solution to the majority of the challenges in Nigeria faces today. For the purposes of this research, the following questions are raised; how is cultural diplomacy relevant to Nigeria's foreign policy? and to what extent could cultural diplomacy mitigate the domestic challenges confronting Nigeria? Consequently, the objectives of this study are to; understand the relevance of cultural diplomacy to Nigeria's foreign relations and examine how cultural diplomacy can help mitigate Nigeria's domestic economic challenges. To achieve the objectives, let us start by examining the concepts of culture and cultural diplomacy

Culture and Cultural Diplomacy in International Relations.

Culture is the totality of the people's way of life that includes their belief system, language, values, attitudes, songs, preferences and prejudices that are transmitted from one generation to another. It is what makes a people similar to some, yet different from others (Adefuye 2011). Cultural diplomacy is an international relations theory that evolves from a country's cultures, political ideals and principles, as well as religious practices. It is a soft spot of diplomacy that arguably has more influence than formal diplomacy in contemporary international relations (Sotubo and Chidozie 2014, 64). It is, relatively, a recent theory in international relations though its practice can be seen throughout history. Explorers, travellers, traders, teachers and artists were the early 'cultural diplomats' that enabled the exchange of information, ideas and gifts across international boundaries, with other states' government representatives and their people ensuring that cultures intermingle. Such deliberate efforts of cultural exchange can be identified as early examples of cultural diplomacy (Ayakoroma 2013, 2).

Cultural diplomacy operates in the fields of arts, sports, literature, music, science, business & economy *et cetera*. It is an exchange of ideas, information, art, and other aspects of culture between countries to facilitate mutual understanding (Ryniejska-Kieldanowicz 2011). It comprises all a nation does to explain itself to the world (Schneider 2004). Indeed, artists, actors, musicians and writers in any culture act as the national conscience, reflecting on society's good and bad points and challenging the status quo (Schneider and Nelson 2008). Hence, cultural diplomacy is the domain of diplomacy concerned with establishing, developing and sustaining relations with foreign states by way of culture, art and education (Ayakoroma 2013).

From the above, cultural diplomacy may be practised by a state or her agencies as well as through individual citizens. Individuals, through their personal efforts in arts, music, films, *et cetera* may get engaged in the propagation and dissemination of cultures across boundaries and effectively affecting the perception of such countries and her citizens. On the other hand, such individuals or government agencies or their representatives may embark on a deliberate cultural diplomacy, to use her soft power to influence the perception, behaviour and attitude of others, who may be enemies or have confrontational attitudes towards them. An instance was the United States' use of the arts, music, and literature, of her citizens to influence the Soviet citizens and their allies during the Cold War. Hence, Schneider (2004) observes that it was during the Cold War that the United States harnessed the power of culture as the stealth weapon against the Soviet Union, and its ideology, communism. He argued that the United States was able to achieve that through cultural programs, from the huge gathering of intellectuals to more intimate artists' and writers' exchanges, to music programs on radio Free Europe helped to turn Europeans away from socialism and communism, and opened the door of western culture and lifestyle to soviet artists and citizens.

Equally, cultural diplomacy may be deployed to deepen relations among allies and to influence others within a region to be more responsive, responsible and accountable for their actions to their citizens. To that effect, it is seen as a soft power approach and has become increasingly recognised as a means of resolving conflicts, end wars, settle disputes, build sustainable relationships between countries, strengthen economic ties and respect for human rights (Adefuye 2011). Indeed, if well employed, it acts as a soothing balm in conflict and difficult situations in international relations.

It is important to note that cultural diplomacy works better within and through the activities of the civil society organisations that act in partnership and cooperation with other cultures because they

work in networks that cut across boundaries. Jora (2013) notes that diplomacy begins and ends with interstate relations, but its effectiveness depends on forging partnerships, leveraging private sector support, managing networks and shaping public opinion. This is important because, though the early practitioners of cultural diplomacy are individuals that worked through networks, today's international relations are broader and demands a more articulate attention and collaborative effort to navigate through the challenges of international politics and achieve success. Equally, civil society organisations are powerful actors in international relations of today. In several developing democracies, they keep their governments on their toes and could be the leading instruments of democracy, good governance, interstate relations, and global disseminators of proper or standard international ideals, norms and conducts. In moments of crises, they can freely operate between the concerned states to seek and restore damaged relations and secure the freedom of the citizens against oppressions. Indeed, the role of civil society organisations in cultural diplomacy cannot be overemphasised. Governments that neglect civil society organisations do so at their own peril. Hence, a government can leverage on strong civil society groups to advance her cultural diplomacy and by extension, foreign policy.

On the other hand, cultural diplomacy does not negate the idea of working through individuals. Indeed, it deals with arts, dance, music, literature, *et cetera*, where individuals are the key actors. Its starting point is individuals and its target is still individuals, either in government or as in the civil society. The actions of individual cultural diplomats are targeted at foreigners; governments and individuals alike, and influenced by the outcome of the feelings of the targeted audience. Thus, the report of the United States' Committee on cultural diplomacy recognises that "[c]ultural diplomacy is a two-way street: for every foreign artist inspired by an American work of art, there is an American waiting to be touched by the creative wonders of other traditions. Culture spreads from individual to individual, often by subterranean means; in exchange programs like Fulbright, Humphrey, and Muskie, in person-to-person contacts made possible by international visitor and student exchange programs, ideas that we hold dear – of family, education, and faith-cross borders, creating new ways of thinking" (U.S. Department of State 2005, 4-5).

Listening is central to the practice of cultural diplomacy (U.S. Department of State 2005) while its genuine elements are the elements of exchange and neutrality (Jora 2013). Jora used genuine elements to differentiate cultural diplomacy that is of "a two-way street", as described above and the one that is political in nature. That is, cultural diplomacy that is objective and willing to listen and accept, or somehow, that is amenable to other cultures rather than 'cultural propaganda'. Thus, genuine cultural diplomacy as opposed to propaganda is a two-way communication process that includes both efforts to project a nation's image and values to other countries and peoples as well as receive information and try to understand the culture, values and images of other countries and their peoples (Jora 2013). Indeed, it is used to describe a form of diplomacy that places emphasis on cultural understanding as a basis for dialogue and trust (Adefuye 2011).

Similarly, cultural diplomacy shows respect and dignity to the other and leaves the other with the saving face to change at will. The attractive appeal makes it humane and respectful. While one is considering and admiring another culture, one is at liberty to take the aspects of the culture that one values, transforming oneself in the image of the new culture without losing one's identity (Ogo, 2017). Thus, in the international system, different cultures meet, mingle and morph (Bound, et al. 2007). In doing so, they reveal differences in ways that humanise, rather than threaten states in the

international system (Schneider and Nelson, 2008). To this extent, the other sees the opportunity to change as being in her interest rather than being condemned to do so. Hence, co-optive power –the ability to change what others want- rests on the attractiveness of one’s culture and values or the ability to manipulate the agenda of political choices in a manner that makes others fail to express some preferences because they seem to be too unrealistic(Nye, 2004).

Such cultural attractions are targeted at foreign citizens and cultures. Hence, cultural diplomacy aims at familiarising foreign recipients with the country, its inhabitants, culture, language, and to create a positive image of the country via its culture (Ryniejska-Kieldanowicz, 2011). Consequently, art and culture are in the forefront of many countries’ promotional efforts aimed at creating a positive image, thus helping to achieve their political aims. Its vast ranging currencies include cultural relations, cultural co-operation, public diplomacy, and even propaganda (Kang, 2013). Meanwhile, the role of cultural diplomacy is to plant seeds – ideas and ideals; aesthetic strategies and devices; philosophical and political arguments; spiritual perceptions; ways of looking at the world – which may flourish in foreign soils (U.S. Department of State, 2005).

Today, many believe that culture is not inferior to politics. Culture is in politics and vice versa. Culture conditions politics. Thus, there is the existence of political culture of societies to show how interwoven both have become. A culture that abhors violence, for instance, cultivates a dissent political culture devoid of violence and guided by tolerance, opposition and freedom of speech, criticism and association (Ogo, 2017). Hence, cultural diplomacy is relevant in war and peace times as it conditions the society. It influences and enhances domestic and international politics too. To this extent, culture is an important aspect of the soft power of the state that cannot be ignored. Thus, Nye (2004) describes it as a staple of daily democratic politics while the U.S. Department of State (2005) argues that it reveals the soul of a nation state. This is why Bound et al (2007) argue that culture can be used as a forum for set piece political messaging, and as a safe space for unofficial political relationship building; it can keep doors open at difficult times; and it can help to renegotiate relationships for changing times.

Relevance of Cultural diplomacy in International Relations

In addition to the already mentioned benefits that cultural diplomacy accords every state, other benefits in the practice of its international relations are enormous. Nye (2004) rightly observes that it is cost effective, attractive in war and peace times and uses a different kind of currency (not force, not money) but attraction. In order to promote cooperation and mutual trust amongst varied peoples, nation states are finding that cultural diplomacy is an essential instrument. Cultural diplomacy offers politicians a base upon which to build in an increasingly interconnected world where understanding is often necessary for military, political, and economic agreements. International interactions can become more stable and productive by interacting with many cultures. These partnerships can withstand changes in political and governmental environments (U.S. Department of State 2005).

Fundamentally, the goal of cultural diplomacy is to establish a foundation of trust with foreign cultures. Policymakers need this trust in order to more successfully seek economic cooperation and come to political agreements. According to (U.S. Department of State 2005), countries that

participate in cultural exchanges nudge other societies to see them favorably. This assumption of common interests becomes more important when seeking agreement on certain policy matters. For example, countries that have engaged in cultural diplomacy may discover that their requests from overseas are greeted with more tolerance and candor.

Additionally, cultural diplomacy works to dispel unfavorable stereotypes that could skew perceptions. For instance, the United States is often seen through the prism of materialism and violence. Cultural diplomacy works to refute these ideas by exhibiting values like family, faith, and a dedication to education. It promotes a sense of togetherness that can cut over cultural divides by reaffirming the basic values that bind various communities together. To this effect, many citizens of other countries are attracted to United States and desire to live and work in it.

The capacity of cultural diplomacy to forge long-lasting connections is a key benefit. These ties are based on interpersonal relationships and respect for one another rather than being constrained by shifts in political or governmental systems. This becomes especially important when thinking about how to interact with powerful foreign society members who might not be reachable through conventional diplomatic routes. Through outreach that may reach the hearts and minds of common people, cultural diplomacy promotes understanding and goodwill that will ultimately strengthen international relations.

Moreso, even in the face of policy differences, cultural diplomacy offers a constructive agenda for collaboration. By establishing impartial venues for interpersonal communication, it enables countries to interact with one another on equal footing, encouraging communication and cooperation in spite of differences. Because of its adaptability, cultural diplomacy can be an extremely effective tool for rapprochement, particularly in areas where diplomatic connections are strained or nonexistent (U.S. Department of State 2005). It is an essential component of contemporary international relations because it makes links that can diffuse tensions and promote communication.

Engaging youth and non-elite people is one of cultural diplomacy's most influential aspects. Getting in touch with young people can have a significant impact in today's globalised society, as they are frequently the ones driving change. By lowering language barriers and enabling connection on a more accessible level, cultural diplomacy promotes collaboration and understanding among the next generation.

Also, cultural diplomacy fosters the development of civic society. Through the promotion of transparency and acceptance, it stimulates communication that combats misinformation, animosity, and radicalism. In a time when cultural conflicts are frequently the root cause of international tensions, cultural diplomacy plays an even more important role in fostering tolerance and understanding.

Therefore, cultural diplomacy is a multidimensional strategy that develops trust, promotes common values, and forges long-lasting bonds in order to improve international relations. In addition to acting as a link between countries, it also teaches people about other cultures and values. Cultural diplomacy provides a positive way ahead in a time of division and miscommunication by proving that cooperation and respect for one another can triumph over animosity and strife. One cultural

exchange at a time, nations may foster a more cooperative and peaceful globe through these initiatives.

Equally, cultural diplomacy is important for branding and re-packaging of a country's ideals and cultures for a wider acceptance and influence all over the world. Laqueur's appeal to the U.S. government was to recognise the importance of cultural diplomacy after the cold war, invest and use same to her advantage. The US Committee report on cultural diplomacy and Schneider's "*Culture Communicates: US Diplomacy that Works*" convey similar messages. Hence, cultural diplomacy could be used for branding and marketing of the Nigeria's ideals, cultures, policies and preferences for a wider coverage and acceptability. This is important because cultural diplomacy aims to represent the nation in all its complexity by covering multiple facets(Jora 2013). This is particularly important because the system is characterised by interdependence. Cultures do not just "meet and mingle" unless they are aware of their existences.

Ryniejska-Kieldanowicz and Kang see the task of building the brand of a country as the same as in the commercial spheres of commodity identity building, after all, culture is both a commodity and a means of social interaction and transformation(Kang, 2013). Branding and some elements of advertising could be of help for the dissemination of such cultures to the foreign targeted audience. Similarly, companies expanding abroad must be aware and conscious of their host's cultures to avoid confrontations and to improve their chances of success and gains. It is on the basis of this that cultural diplomacy is an effective instrument of economic and political relations on bilateral and multilateral levels. Consequently, the brand of a country is linked with its economy, exports, tourism and direct investments. The implication is that the image and culture of a country must be attractive and inviting, not that of fear and suspicion. Thus, cultural diplomacy can be used to promote a country's brand as it is cost effective while its understanding and benefits are mutual.

Nye (1990) captures the tenets of the above in his concept of "co-optive" approach or "soft power" which is about getting others to want what you want while the soft power resources are cultural attraction, ideology and international institutions. Soft power rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others. It rests on the powers of attraction and seduction(Nye 2004)which makes the other willingly want to emulate and follow your path with little or no resistance. Such is possible because trust is built and maintained in the process cements the relationship (see Jora 2013). To reify the benefit of cultural diplomacy to the achievement of a country's national interest in war and peace times, Schneider looks at its impact on the US and Soviet Union and their citizens during the Cold War. For her,

...the Cold War cultural programs were brilliantly adapted to their targets. For example, the exchanges of both people and works between American and Russian writers, artists, and scholars which began shortly after Stalin's death in 1953 appealed to the inherent Russian respect for the intelligentsia and for cultural expression, while challenging some basic beliefs about their own society and ours. The best and the brightest from the two countries, including Arthur Miller, Joyce carol Oates, and john Steinbeck from the US, and Aleksander Kushner, VasilyAskyonov, and Yevgeny Yevtushenko from the Soviet Union, met to discuss their art and the environments in which it was created. American writers who participated recalled that their counterparts seemed most impressed – and amassed – by the freedom of speech accorded them as official representatives of their government. When

Norman Cousins was asked at one meeting if the American writers would not get in trouble for criticising the government openly, he astounded his soviet interlocutor by replying that any government official who complained would be more likely to encounter difficulties (Schneider 2004, 6).

Thus, cultural diplomacy has important and far-reaching effects on the conduct of international relations. If a state has cultures that are appealing and seductive to others, it strengthens the state's capacity towards the realisation of her interest because others would emulate her so as to do what she does and want what she wants. The outcome would be the greater good of all courtesy of soft power packaged in culture rather than hard power realised through military, political, and strategic manoeuvres.

Importance of Cultural Diplomacy to Nigeria's foreign policy

Cultural diplomacy is considered by many, especially the realists, as a weak approach to the conduct of foreign policy. Although its result is effective with minimal cost, many states are unwilling to invest in it. This may not be unconnected with the so-called realities of the international system, where every actor is interested in getting her national interest in a system that seems difficult to be regulated. In a self-help situation, all countries strive to safeguard their interest with an understanding that the system is one that the strong holds way. To that extent, some countries feel that investments in such areas do not worth it and see that as secondary, especially when the real interests of the system are basic survival and the provision of the necessary conditions for a meaningful life against all odds. It is for this reason that the United States, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, decided to remove the little allocations meant for public diplomacy so as to plough same back into the other areas that would enhance the new role that she has come to acquire: the role of the reigning hegemon. It is for the above reason that the US Report of the Committee on cultural diplomacy laments the abysmal treatment that cultural diplomacy received after helping to defuse tensions created by the Soviet Union and her ideology, communism, in the international system. To such states, Schneider (2004, 22) reminds that "soft power requires hard dollars". Looking good and attractive demands investment to maintain the beauty and continually remain attractive.

In Africa, effort at boosting cultural diplomacy is still very low. Although there exists governments' departments and ministries of culture and culture-related issues, there is no serious attempt to improve culture as a relevant tool in foreign policy through investments or allocation of funds. Budgetary allocations are still heavily dominated by defence and security, notwithstanding the fact that culture could play a significant role in securing the people, a position widely held by the U.S. Committee on Cultural Diplomacy and Schneider and Nelson's *"Mightier than the Sword: Arts and Culture in the U.S.-Muslim World Relationship"*, among others. The Festival of Arts and Culture, (FESTAC) hosted by Nigeria in Lagos in 1977 for the promotion of African cultures and heritage was seen, by many, as a waste of resources. The establishment of the Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilisation (CBAAC) by the Gowon administration charged with the responsibility to promote public interest in Black and African Arts and Civilisation, and the preservation of values from the 2nd World Black and African festival of Arts and Culture (Adefuye 2011) was a step in the right direction but funding the agency remains a big challenge.

In Nigeria, for instance, lack of attention and finance has negatively affected the export of Nigeria's cultural elements like dishes that are "natural, with all their nutritional values intact; original and direct from their various sources, unlike most western foods, which are canned and contain a lot of preservative elements, which could have harmful effects on our body system" (Ayakoroma 2013). That notwithstanding, quite unlike Mr. Biggs, McDonalds, and KFCs as well as the Chinese, the Japanese, Thais, and the Indians that promote their cuisines abroad, Nigerian cuisines have not been promoted as global brands though they are healthy and nutritional. That Nigerian cuisines are not expanding across the globe is not because they are not good enough to compete within the system, but because there is limited political attention and financial commitment paid to it by the government, the private sector, while even scholars do not consider such area relevant enough to research on. Perhaps, the reason for such neglect from the government may be the usual dismissal of all forms of diplomacy as been "too soft and peripheral to deal with the real issues of security" (Schneider (2004, 22). The realists are at the centre of this argument.

In serious situations, as espoused by the realists, statesmen and leaders do not believe that cultural diplomacy is at the core of international relations as to tackle serious security challenges. However, it could complement the search and consolidation of power, but never to be compared with or substituted for political, economic, and military power that the state requires for survival, relevance, and influence.

The above criticisms, notwithstanding, its importance to a country like Nigeria is immeasurable. This is important because Nigeria is a big brother to other African states that needs to be admired rather than feared. Also, as rightly noted by Nye (2004), the possession of power (military, political, and economic) is not a guarantee of success in a state's international engagements. Consequently, Nigeria has another reason to consider other options, besides power, in their conduct of international relations. Already, there are several factors restraining the use of force in international relations. Such could be located in the following;

- Military power is much better at deterring attacks than it is at compelling others to act according to your wishes.
- Military power is better at dealing with other established military forces than it is at dealing with insurgencies and terrorism.
- Being a hegemon does not mean that all other states are powerless or that they are willing to accept your dominance. Indeed, the opposite is true ... (Rourke 2008, 49).

Therefore, in reference to the above, cultural diplomacy is attractive and inviting in Nigeria's international relations. It is a psychological therapy for disorder, gradually integrating the international system into a global civil society without any body, state, etc. taking the glory and none losing out. Cultural diplomacy helps in the understanding and analysis of how culture influences Nigeria's foreign policy with other states. African people admire Nigeria's culture and people. Consequently, Nigeria foreign policy should take advantage of this to invest in her culture and tourism.

Nigeria's people and culture are the soft power attribute of her international engagement. Such can be exhibited through dressing, food, language, scholarship, etc. Nigerian clothes and designers are making waves in the international system. Nigerian brands of "senators", "agbadas", "ankaras" etc. are Nigeria's clothing outfits that are sought after by many African states and beyond. Nigerian

foods, *eba*, *ewedu*, *garri*, rice, yam and varieties of soup are of taste and sought after by many countries. From interactions with many Nigerian food vendors in the West and South Africa, it was discovered that many Europeans and other Africans eat Nigerian foods. Such people desire to be as strong and smart as Nigerians are. Since they are not Nigerians by birth, many believe that eating Nigerian foods would make them be as strong and enterprising as Nigerians in the international system. This boosts Nigeria's image and increases such people's connection with and likeness for Nigeria, Nigerians and their culture.

Nigeria's Nollywood is the umbrella that covers and amplifies Nigeria's cultures to the international setting. It has been the vehicle for exporting Nigeria's image and identity and a source of job and wealth creation. It is believed that the films, soaps and programmes from Nollywood can be used to paint an admirable image of the Nigerian societal standards, intrigues and moral values, which echoes the nuances of the African people (Ogunnubi and Isike 2015). Research reports conducted by Isike and Isike (2012); and Isike (2014) respectively reported a dramatic change in the perception of the respondents as the outcome of the impact of watching Nollywood movies. Hence, with a huge cultural reservoir, Nigerian private investors in the entertainment industry has turned it in a multi-billion-dollar audio-visual industry through the Nollywood industry. This is possible because of private investments. The Nigerian government can leverage on this investment to improve the industry for their foreign policy advantage. In doing that, Nigeria's foreign policy becomes more influential in a way that her economic and military powers may not have been in the past.

Another area of significance in Nigeria's cultural diplomacy of international relations is Nigerian Universities and Scholars. Given the nature of western cultural infiltration in the present age, African cultures and ideas would have gone into extinction but for the effort of the African universities and research institutions, Nigeria inclusive. Through the Universities, Africa has been producing excellent intellectuals who had won World Noble Prizes, like Profs Wole Soyinka and Chinua Achebe, trained in Nigerian Universities but taught the Whitemen their own language in their institutions. Others include Chimamanda Adichie, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Chief Emeka Anyaoku, Akinwumi Adesina of African Development Bank, among others. Through the Universities and research institutes in Nigeria, Nigerian professionals making waves all over the world as African ambassadors were trained and nurtured. Their contributions to world growth and development have been significant. Similarly, the institutions have become the bedrock for research into Africa's international relations and the foreign policies of African countries. Their contributions consistently became a basis for government decision regarding policy choices (Ogunnubi 2013). Unfortunately, Nigerian Universities are not attracting commensurate foreign Scholars and Students. This is an area where cultural diplomacy could be relevant to Nigeria's foreign policy, if properly engaged and utilised.

Nigeria's music industry is a multibillion-dollar opportunity with less emphasis on its importance to Nigeria's foreign policy. The Nigerian music industry is ruling Africa's airwaves. In the 1980s and 90s, western music and artistes dominated African music scene. Michael Jackson, Tony Braxton, R Kelly, Celine Dion, *etcetera* were the dominant artists ruling African airwaves. Today, that has become history through the efforts of Nigerian music artists. The Nigerian music artists – P-Square (although separated but making impacts separately), Burna Boy, Olamide, Davido, Wizkid, Flavour,

Tiwa Savage, Timaya, D-bang, Tuface, Asa, Don Jazzy, Patoranking, YemiAlade, Rema, Kizz Daniel, *et cetera* dominate African music airwaves. Many of them are collaborating with others within the continent while many others are exporting Nigerian music and culture to the West expanding African ideas and values to the wider world through collaborations with Western artists. In the MTV African Awards, Nigeria artists prove they dominate the African music scene. The implication is that Nigerian music artists are using their African dominance of the music industry to contribute in shaping opinions, educating and entertaining Africans and non-Africans alike in African cultures and in Nigeria's interest. Nigeria's foreign policy makers should leverage on their effort to advance Nigeria's foreign policy in Africa and beyond

Summary and Conclusion

This study examines Nigeria's foreign policy from the time of its independence in 1960, emphasising the changes in guiding concepts and difficulties encountered. The foundations were created by Alhaji Tafawa Balewa's fundamental foreign policy beliefs, which were upheld by succeeding administrations notwithstanding their shortcomings.

Also, the paper makes the case that Nigeria needs to employ a variety of strategies to overcome her socio-economic problems and promote the application of cultural diplomacy as a kind of soft power in her foreign policy. Through the utilisation of its cultural resources, like Nollywood, educational scholarships, and creative abilities, Nigeria may simultaneously address domestic problems like poverty and unemployment and expand its influence internationally. The large number already employed by this sector bear testimony to the fact that if government adopts and pays attention to cultural diplomacy in her foreign policy, a significant number of job opportunities would be created for the teeming unemployed Nigerian youths.

To bolster its claims, the study uses a combination of primary and secondary data as well as historical analysis. In the end, it concludes that Nigeria's performance in this area depends on a determined government plan to support its cultural diplomacy initiatives and develop a more powerful presence on the international scene.

Nigeria's foreign policy greatly benefits from cultural diplomacy since it is a tactical instrument for advancing the nation's soft power, showcasing its rich cultural legacy, and fortifying ties with other nation states. Nigeria may promote goodwill and understanding with other countries by presenting its many cultures through music, cinema (particularly Nollywood), art, and educational programs (Adeleke, 2015). This improves Nigeria's standing internationally and makes it possible to work together on a range of international problems.

As Akinwunmi(2018)would add, cultural diplomacy can greatly reduce domestic problems by opening doors for business expansion and employment development. Nigeria may have access into international markets by encouraging cultural exports, especially through its entertainment sector and the arts, which can boost local economies and lower unemployment. Scholarships and cultural exchanges can also improve access to education, empowering young people and tackling challenges of poverty and social instability. Therefore, a well-thought-out cultural diplomacy plan might match Nigeria's foreign policy objectives with its home requirements, eventually promoting a more powerful and stable country in Africa. In all, Nigeria's historical background and present

socioeconomic constraints have formed its foreign policy, which calls for creative strategies like cultural diplomacy to enhance both the country's standing abroad and its internal circumstances.

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