

The Cultural Dimension of Nigeria's Foreign Policy: A Contemporary Perspective

¹Dorcas Achetu Salifu, ¹Aderemi Opeyemi Ade-Ibijola & ¹Rotimi Olajide Opeyeoluwa

¹Department of International Relations and Diplomacy, Afe Babalola University Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti-State.

Email: dorcassalifu84@gmail.com, adeibjope@gmail.com & rotbaba@gmail.com

Abstract

Culture and foreign policy have a long-standing nexus which dates back to the 19th century. The inter-section has continued to grow in relevance and is becoming more relevant as the decades come by. Nigeria's foreign policy has evolved over the years, from the early post-independence era when it was heavily influenced by the principles of non-alignment and Pan-Africanism, to the more recent years when it has shifted towards regional and global leadership. However, at the core of Nigeria's foreign policy has been Afrocentrism. This study focused on the cultural dimension of Nigeria's foreign policy from a contemporary perspective. The study examined the nexus between culture and Nigeria's foreign relations and the role of entertainment in relations to Nigeria's foreign policy. One of the key findings of this study was that Nigeria's cultural heritage can play a significant role in shaping foreign policy objectives and strategies. The qualitative method of research was employed in this study and the method of data collection was through primary and secondary data. The use of primary data such as interviews and secondary include books, journal articles, and internet sources. With the aid of data collected, the study revealed that Nigeria has focused on Africa as the center-piece of its foreign policy and has neglected other factors such as its cultural heritage in pursuing its foreign policy goals. The study therefore recommended the need for Nigeria to leverage its cultural heritage in its external relations by focusing not only on its Afrocentric ideology but also through cultural diplomacy to promote its soft power potential and enhance its image on the international stage. By promoting cultural exchange programs, participating in international cultural festivals and establishing cultural centers abroad to create an equilibrium on the international stage, Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings can increase.

Keywords: Culture, Foreign policy, Nigeria, entertainment, contemporary perspective.

Introduction

Historically, every society has certain ways it operates and interact with others. Culture serves as a major instrument in organizing the principle of human life. It is obvious that virtually everything about human beings invariably revolves and radiates around cultural orientation and practices. The impact of culture in the contemporary international political system has overlapped into policy choices and ascendancy of organization and states in the international arena. Culture has become a soft instrument of diplomacy and has been used in the international arena by states and has affected outcome of events in disproportional manner. It has made states within the international system more conscious of making use of cultural resources in the pursuit for their foreign policy to varying degrees of successes. Cultural exchange has assumed ascendancy with the pursuit of foreign relations since the 19th century. The practice is informed by the belief that culture in diplomacy possesses potentials for enormous influence. This is because it attempts to bypass commercial media images by appealing directly to the people on a non-political level. Thus, 'Knowing who is the other and explaining to him who we are, is the only way to use diplomacy

successfully'. It has been argued that a principal tool with which the world can instill the culture of peace and diminish the culture of war is cultural diplomacy (Anaememe, 2015).

It is of great evidence that culture defines who we are, this is captured by the American cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead who aptly states that "we are our culture". The statement to a great deal underscores the significance of one's own culture and the uniqueness of diversity of cultures across the world. Culture has risen to a subject of importance to not only anthropologists, sociologist and political scientists, but also to natural scientist as well. The role that cultures plays in the international system in connection with states relations, the impact of culture in diplomacy- the art or practice of conducting international relations, as in negotiating alliances, treaties and agreements- and its importance are not well recognized (Wolf & Rosen, 2004).

According to Graham (2015, p.15-20), mainstream international relations theorist, particularly the classical realist and liberalist, were reluctant to recognize culture at the core of international relations for long. Instead, culture was deemed to be peripheral. Many have argued that the reluctance of scholars to openly recognize the presence of culture in international relations account for the failure to predict the end of Cold War, and the resultant transformation of global politics (Lapid & Kratochwil, 1996). The changing realities in the international environment and the challenges it created for international relation scholars to re-think the discipline has broadened the space for a reconsideration of the role of culture in international relations. The nexus between culture and foreign relations has continue to grow as an area of interest to both scholars and practitioners in recent times as a cardinal aspect of the field of international relations.

The art of using culture for foreign relations and diplomatic dealings geminated from France and has spread in sync with globalization. The foundation of culture in the Nigeria's foreign policy was built since 1960. The government of Nigeria since the dawn of independence has evolved strategies to guide their actions in the international arena. It is obvious Nigeria has recognized the importance of cultural diplomacy and culture after her independence. In 1960, when Nigeria became an independent state, culture constantly found its way of being part of her foreign policy and a tool for diplomacy. It has shown in form of festivals, cultural exchange, movies, music, sports and tourism have become platforms for Nigeria to showcase her image. Nigeria has also used culture to ease external concerns and gain appeal.

Nigeria has entered into bilateral inter-state cultural and educational agreements with different countries of the world. The first cultural agreement Nigeria ventured into was in 1974 with the Arab Republic of Egypt, the agreements have burgeoned to well over hundred and is still counting. Although Nigeria has made use of her cultural resources to pursue her foreign policy objectives, one issue that has a recurring decimal in her cultural relations is the absence of an institutional public policy platform that would help in rebuilding her image. It is arguable that Nigeria is the most influential and powerful nation in Africa. Its military resources and foreign relations strategies vis-a-vis its cultural diplomacy is still awe-inspiring. Nigeria has taken up leadership positions, both at sub-regional and regional level in Africa (Obiozor, 2013) and this is not surprising given the element of power the country possesses. This study essentially interrogates the role of culture in Nigeria's foreign policy within the context of contemporary international relations and diplomacy.

Conceptual Analysis

Culture

Over the decades Culture has had numerous definitions used by different authors and scholars. A very common definition is “the sum total of way of life and practices of a people in a given society”. According to Green (1972) culture is not planned: how people act and behave is fostered and limited by the specific culture within which they live. He posits that culture is the sum total of a people’s response to the environment and this gauges their ability to change and respond to the dynamics of change. According to UNESCO (2008), culture refers to the language, beliefs, values and norms, customs, roles, knowledge, skills and all other things people learn that make up their “way of life”, especially dress. Culture is essentially man made and manifests in both the material and non-material human activities. Hence, culture includes the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively and the distinctive ideas, customs, social behavior, products, or way of life of a particular nation, society, people, or period. Edward Burnett Tylor (1891) provides a classic definition of culture “as that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief art, morals, law. Customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”. Tylor’s definition is instructive. He sums culture as everything that people have learned and preserved from past collective experience. A comprehensive definition of culture is provided by the Nigeria Cultural Policy document of 1988. The document states that culture is “The sum total of the of the people’s way of life, comprising and non-material components. The material comprising technology clothing, food, machines, buildings, airport, etc., while non-material culture, comprises the political, social, legal and economic institutions, which sustain material and spiritual wellbeing. Culture also comprises the philosophical which embraces ideas, beliefs, manners attitudes as well as creativity.

Taylor an English anthropologist defined culture as a universal concept, it signifies an important attribute or feature of human identify, diversity and symbolized the existence and identity of people or race in the world. Culture can be defined as the identity of people or race in the world. Culture is a cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving. Others see culture as the systems of knowledge shared by a relatively large group of people.

Cultural diplomacy is primarily associated with soft power. Nye explains ‘culture’ as one of three sources of a nation’s soft power. He identifies three sources of a nation’s soft power as its culture, political values, and foreign policies with internationally consented credibility and moral authority (Nye, 2006 in Kang, 2013). Nancy Snow writes that culture power is soft power and suggest in pragmatic terms, the three ways in which soft power advantage of a country is measured are;

- a. In a case when culture and ideas match prevailing global norms;
- b. When a notion has greater access to multiple communication channels that can influence how issues are framed in global news media
- c. When a country’s credibility is enhanced by domestic and international behavior (Snow, 2009, p.4 cited in Kang, 2013).

Foreign Policy

Foreign policy has been defined by various scholars in numerous ways; However, it is certain that it is concerned with the behavior of a state towards other states. Hermann defined foreign policy as the discrete purposeful action that results from the political level decision of an individual or group of individuals. It is basically the observable artifact of a political level decision. It is not the decision, but a product of the decision. Thus, Hermann successfully defines foreign policy as the behavior of states.

George Modelski, defines foreign policy as the system of activities evolved by communities for changing the behavior of other states and for adjusting their own activities to the international environment. Foreign policy must throw light on the ways states attempt to change, and succeed in changing the behavior of other states. He noted that only those aspects of policy that aim at the change in the existing behavior of states, as the primary objectives of foreign policy.

Foreign policy are the strategies set in place by a state in its relation with other states and this strategy are pursued by the state's leaders in the international system. Holsti (1995) viewed foreign policy as the actions of a state towards the external environment and the conditions usually domestic under which these actions are formulated. Also Rode (1957) explained foreign policy as the formulation and implementation of a group of principles which shape the behavior pattern of a state while negotiating with other states to protect or further its vital interests. Nnoli (1978) says a nations reaction to the external environment involving the organization of both domestic and external relations.

It is of no argument that not all international contacts can be really associated with foreign policy, this is because foreign policy covers only such activities which are sponsored, supported or are known by the government. It is therefore clear that actions which are international in character but which are conducted without the knowledge of the government cannot be classified under foreign policy.

Many factors and forces produce foreign policy. The factors and forces may be natural and could also be man-made, some could be temporal or permanent. Rode (1957), a nation must consider basic facts of its existence in devising its foreign policy; i.e., it's economic endowment, geographical situation, population potential and ideological environment. Most authors and scholars assume that the foreign policy of states emanates from the domestic scene. This notion does not take in cognizance the place or position of weak, dependent or satellite states that lack the capability for autonomous actions due to their dependent status in the world political economy. For these unfortunate countries, their foreign policy actions emanate abroad, and are confronted by external forces over which they have little or no control, and which they believe they cannot confront (Obikeze & Obi 2003). Foreign policy is a product of many factors and forces. These forces and factors could be natural or man-made which could be permanent or temporary. Rodee (1957), in devising its foreign policy, a nation must consider basic facts its existence i.e., geographical situation, population potential, economic endowment and ideological environment.

Culture and Nigeria's Foreign Policy: A Contemporary Perspective

Culture in its broadest sense is cultivated behavior; that is the totality of a person's learned, accumulated experience which is socially transmitted, or more briefly behavior through social learning (Choudhury, 2019). Culture basically connotes communication and communication is

culture. Culture is symbolic to communication, some of the symbols include a group's skills, knowledge, attitudes, values, and motives.

Culture is a complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (Ofoegbu, 1980). Furthermore, the National Culture Policy of Nigerian, launched in 1988 states that culture is the sum total of the people's way of life. Culture comprises of material and non-material components. While the material components identified by this important national document include fashion, food, technology, machines, buildings, airport etc., the non-material aspects include the political, social, legal and economic institutions. Culture also comprises the philosophical aspects which embrace ideas, beliefs, manners, attitudes as well as creativity.

In Nigeria, and Africa as a whole, culture is not a new born, but very much at the heart of culture. Reception of foreigners with dance and funfair, exchange of gifts such as beads, kola nuts, cloths, cowries, salt, and animals like horses and many others were common practices in ancient kingdoms, chiefdoms and caliphates (Osuntokun, 2006). For example, Oyo Kingdom with a province in Dahomey extended to parts of Benin Republic, which gives details to why both provinces have enjoyed diplomatic relations, especially in form of marriages. At independence, Nigeria sought to make cordial and friendly relationships so as to draw the attention of other countries to her culture, values and foreign policy.

Nigeria's cultural heritage is shown in her heterogeneity has been central in the pursuit of her foreign policy. Nigeria has mobilized to the effective use of her cultural values thereby facilitating the realization of the cultural foreign policy objectives. (Timothy-Asobele 2002; pine, 2014). For example, the Tiv puppet theatre has been deployed as an agency of cultural relations and the good will of soft power gains Nigeria has accreted on its account (Pine, 2014).

Again, culture and Nigeria's foreign policy is intertwined. Nigeria has always shown the concept of "UBUNTU" which means "I am because we are" and believe how can I be satisfied when my brother lacks, Nigeria plays the role of a big brother to African countries as Africa is the center piece of her foreign policy and this also led to the creation of the Economic community of West African States. Culture has served as an effective tool for enhancing Nigerian foreign relations. Culture can be said to be the handmaiden of contemporary diplomacy. This chimes with the postulation of Adefuye (1992, p.3) that, "indeed, the manner of the formulation and implementation of a country's foreign policy is considerably influenced by the nature of its culture." Even though Nigeria has no distinct institutional entity to pursue her cultural diplomatic agenda, she has continually made creative use of other cultural ideologies and agencies. Some notable platforms are United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO), African Union (AU), Economic Community of west African States (ECOWAS), Second Black festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC), Pan-Africanism, National Troupe, States' Art Council, etc.

Nigeria is a country endowed with a lot of cultural heritages that have attracted lots of tourists, Nigeria's cultural heritages include its cherished arts, customs, festivals, sacred or worship sites, norms, values, ideologies, dress and dress-patterns, traditional monuments and architectures, technology and technological sites and other artefacts which are cherished and conserved for their historical, political, educational, recreational and religious significance among others (Keshi, 2016). Nigeria has used festival not only to showcase her rich culture, but also an instrument of foreign relations. A notable example is the organization and hosting of the Second World Festival

of Arts and Culture in 1977 (FESTAC 77). The activities of FESTAC 77 brought together people of all races and nationalities to Nigeria in celebration of black arts and culture. FESTAC 77 was primarily a Pan- Nigerian and Pan-African project aimed at uniting Africans using the instrument of culture. It thus brought together, blacks and people of African descent that were dispersed in North America, the Middle East, Asia and Australia to reaffirm their common destiny and human dignity.

Theoretical Framework

Interdependency theory was populated by Keohane and Nye (1997), the theory is that unequal resource endowment propels states to depend on others for external resources lacking within their territorial domains. The existence of a country is intrinsically connected to its partnership with other countries because “It takes two to tango”. Despite its analytical utility, the theory is lacking in the area of reciprocal benefits that should accrue to the resource-rich country which is the benefactor partner.

System theory

The System theory was adopted in this study as a frame of analysis. It developed in the 1950s, the theory provides a useful basis for both theoretical and practical analysis, the main proponents of the theory are James Rosenau, McClelland, Morton Kaplan, and Karl W. Deutsch. Rosenau, one of the proponents suggested that systematic research be pursued not only in terms of local, national and international system but also in terms of issues areas (Palmer, 2007). Its underlying assumption is that there is order or system in international relations. It views nations as being in continuous contact in intricate framework of relationships resulting from the process of interactions, just as Nigeria is interacting with China through cultural relations (Agubamah & Zasha, 2013).

The behavior of a Nation, according to McClelland. Is a two-way activity of taking from, and giving to, the international environment, this is the main aim of Nigeria’s (cultural) relations with Countries (Chandra, 1986). The system theory also places emphasis on the significance of the interaction of behaviors of states just as this study is centered on Nigeria’s cultural connection in line with foreign relations. The system’s theory also views international environment as a result of diverse actions. As the system theory involves, the purposes, intentions and expectations of Nigeria in her cultural relations, to promote and maintain cultural link s and connections, therefore the suitability of this theory for this study.

Significance of Culture in Nigeria’s Foreign Policy

Since the 19th century Cultural exchange has been used in the pursuit of foreign relations, this practice is backed up with the belief that culture in diplomacy possesses the potential to influence enormously. Culture over the years has appealed directly to the people on a non-political level. “Knowing who is the other and explaining to him who we are” also serves as a method to use diplomacy successfully. Culture is a complex whole which consists of knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society. Man is a measure of his culture; he creates culture and culture creates knowledge for man to all aspects of his being.

Culture travels with trade, conquests and migrants (Stelowska, 2015). The early diplomats carried messages and in doing so delivered their own culture to foreign lands and also carried their culture to brought back foreign ones. It was done with the help of traditional exchange of gifts, which is custom dating back to the ancient times and sustained till date. This helped to establish mutual

trust and understanding. Western religious missionaries also carried their culture to foreign lands like Asia, Africa and other parts of the world (Stelowska, 2015). During this period local culture was respected.

By the fifteenth century, the world witnessed a clash of civilizations. The new world brought about new ideas, technologies and political forms, which created the need for modern day diplomats to emerge as nation state representatives. Culture being dynamic, over the years, changes in the world have significantly impacted on culture. The world has changed from the past scenes of wars to one that seeks peace through non-violent means. Accordingly, countries have adopted cultural diplomacy to promote international relations. It entails the use of language, dressings/fashion, arts and literature, theatre, dance and music, and other cultural expressions as part of a country's foreign policy pursuit.

The foundation of culture in the Nigeria's foreign policy was built since 1960. It is no doubt that the foreign policy of any nation is usually the final function to be handed over to an independent government. The government of Nigeria has strategies they use to guide its actions in the international arena, through the use of foreign policy countries promote and protect its national interest in the course of interaction with other countries and building relationships with specific countries on the international scene. Countries react to events and situations in the international system in manners that are conducive to their interest and in accordance with their perception of world order, this reaction is usually as a result of certain principles formulated in the process of evolution of a country as a player on the international scene. It is obvious Nigeria has recognized the importance of culture and cultural diplomacy after her independence.

Nigeria employs its culture as a diplomatic platform to project its soft power. Cultural diplomacy has been adjudged the best form of soft power and a key diplomatic tool in today's multicultural world. Cultural diplomacy is at the heart of Nigeria's culture. Reception of foreigners with dance and funfair, exchange of gifts such as beads, kola nuts, cloths, salt, cowries, animals (such as horses) and many others were common practices in ancient kingdoms, chieftains and caliphates (Osuntokun, 2006). For example, Oyo Kingdom with a province in Dahomey extended to parts of present-day Benin Republic, which explains why both provinces have enjoyed diplomatic relations, especially in form of marriages. Hausa trades went as far as Sudan, Dakar and Bangu, trading using indigenous languages and even married women from these places. Several other examples abound. At independence, Nigeria aimed at making friends and to draw the attention of other countries to her culture, values and foreign policy focus.

Nigeria at the continental level sought to promote Pan-Africanism, African unity, solidarity, shared values, as well as peace and development through continental initiatives like the 1980 Lagos Plan of Action and the 2002 New Partnership for African Development. Nigeria also initiated the promotion of black culture and strengthen personal and cultural ties between Nigeria and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) are the organization of the Festival of Arts and Culture in 1977 and establishment of the Technical Aid Corp (TAC) in 1987. Nigeria established several institutions and saddled them with the mandate of promoting foreign policy, culture and cultural diplomacy. These includes Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Information and Culture. In addition to these, the diplomatic missions abroad, Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO), Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC), the National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC), the National Theater, National Commission for Museum and Monuments (NCMM), the Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization (CBAAC) and the Ministries of Culture and Tourism of t thirty-six states in the country also promotes the country's diverse cultural heritage. Also, the civil

society and the movie industry have become important stakeholders in promoting Nigerian culture and its image abroad (Osuntokun, 2006).

In other words, the decision of Nigeria to use culture as a yardstick and the goal of her foreign policy meant that Nigeria is determined to foster common cultural ties with other African countries and show her identity to the globe in total. In 1960 when Nigeria became an independent state, culture constantly found its way of being part of her foreign policy and a tool for diplomacy. It has shown in form of festivals, cultural exchange, movies, music, sports and tourism; all these have become platforms for Nigeria to showcase her image. Nigeria has also used culture to ease external concerns and gain appeal.

One of the fundamentals of mobilizing culture in the pursuit of Nigeria's foreign policy is to explode this Caucasian myth. Nigeria has gotten involved and propagated Nigeria and Africa's cultural heritage through the convocation of large-scale cultural activities and carnivals nationally and intentionally, the hosting of conferences and workshops to promote African cultures and civilization. The most emblematic of this being the 1977 staging of the famous second Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC '77) in Lagos from January to February, where two thousand arts exhibitions were staged and her rich cultural heritage was displayed to the world. By the end of the festival, the Federal Government established the Centre for Black African Arts and Civilization (CBAAC) to warehouse and coordinate researches relating to the cultures and civilizations of people African descent. The Centre has continued to carry out its remit with unbaiting candor and zeal; providing platforms for cultural engagements between Africans and the rest of the world; and other intellectual endeavours (Ademuleya & Fajuyigbe, 2007).

The National Cultural Policy of Nigerians was launched in 1988, it states that culture is the sum total of the people's way of life. Culture comprises of material and non-material components. While the material components identified include fashion, food, technology, machines, buildings, airport etc., the non-material aspects include the political, social, legal and economic social institutions. Culture also comprises the philosophical aspects which embrace ideas, beliefs, manners, attitudes, as well as creativity (Anaemene, 2015)

Culture has a significant role to play in state engagements. Ordinarily, the international system is anarchical and as such each state has the latitude to employ self-help. In applying self-help each state relies on the item that belongs to it in engaging with other states, in order to nibble on natural resources, it does not possess so that it can take itself up the power ladder to another lane (Field Source, 2023).

Since, cultural heritage has to do with the aspect of culture that flows down from or forebears. If we go by tribe, we realize that Nigeria can boast of 3000 or more ethnic groups with so many cultures. As a country we have been able to put together some items we celebrate as Nigerians. In view of this the country will need to take into consideration those items that have related on the basis of norms to engage with other states within the International system and interestingly the country will have to find a way of including those cultural heritages into the underpinning factors of its foreign policy, while not going beyond the underpinning factors. It will have to find a way pf including the cultural heritage. With this in view, cultural heritage will play a significant role in foreign relations with other states (Field Source, 2023)

Nexus between Culture and Nigeria's Foreign Relations

A significant point that distinguishes the contemporary international relations from the tenets of its classical variant is the seeming realization by states that the classical preoccupation with the pursuit and acquisition of power for their national aggrandizement was no longer as expedient as it used to be. Power has been eroded by the ever-changing exigencies of the realities of globalization. It is not that the world has changed or that might be no longer right, rather, contemporary international relations has been made even more profound by the modulations in the structural configurations of the international system. The phases of polarization and the present hierarchical international order are all accompanied by distinct orbits of power and influence. In this emerging order, soft power which is the ability to co-opt rather than coerce has gained increasing currency as the most optimum approach to the conduct of international relations. The capacity to shape the preference of others through appeal and attraction (Nye, 2004).

The currency of soft power is culture, political values and foreign policy. The dynamic configuration of power impacts not only on the capacity but also on the mechanics by which states pursue their national interest. It places on states the onus of formulating and implementing their domestic and foreign policies with an eye on the most adroit combination of the forms of power which most optimally position their countries for wresting the most benefits from the international system.

Cultural diplomacy has always been present in interstate relations. Diplomats have always been purveyors of culture, as emissaries taking indigenous ways of life to distant climes and bringing home those of their host states. While emphasis may vary, there appear however to be a consensus around the notion of cultural diplomacy being- "the exchange of ideas, information and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understandings" (Cummings, 2003). La Porte argues that cultural diplomacy is 'a strategy of information and persuasion aimed at an audience in order to get a favorable opinion for a foreign policy of a country or organization' (La Porte, 2007, p.25).

Cultural diplomacy, as a part of the overarching predilection of soft power is designed essentially to cohere the ideological exigencies of hegemonic globalization. Cultural diplomacy penetrates national milieus, promoting distinct world views and attitudes which are consistent with designated western universalistic values such as freedom, liberty, good governance, justice, and democracy. On the economic sphere, structural reconfigurations which deliberately extrovert national economies by altering the demand structures and preferences towards the international market. Artfully glamorized commodities and popular cultural products are mass produced and with the globalization of neoliberalism, particularly the dictates of free trade and open market dump on the international market.

Nigeria, has engaged in her foreign policy pursuits to preserve her national interest. The core of Nigeria's national interest was conceptualized by Ibrahim Babangida, a one time Head of State of Nigeria. Babangida state that "Nigeria's national interest can be defined as predicted on the nation's military, economic, political and social security' (cited in Akinboye, 1999, p.366). Anything that will enhance the capacity of Nigerians to defend their national security must be seen as being an interest. Anything that promotes Nigeria's economic growth and development is the national interest. Anything that will make Nigeria politically stable is also a national interest and that includes culture.

Culture is at the center of Nigeria's national development by that it is part and parcel of Nigeria's national interest. The place of essentiality of culture in Nigeria's national development is captured in the National Cultural policy (1988) section 1, 4 "when therefore we talk of self-reliance, self-sufficiency and national identity as the core of our national development objectives, we are referring to culture as the function spring of all policies whether educational, social, political or economic". The strategies of national development would depend on the understanding of the cultures, the adaption of political, educational and economic elements for development, as well as its strategies for social integration and development.

The major instrument that nation-states use in the pursuit of their cultural diplomacy initiative is the laundering of their corporate image through the instrumentality of public diplomacy. Public diplomacy involves the institutionalization of agencies as frameworks of cultural engagements in the community of nations in order to accrete goodwill, good image, and propagate her cultural ethos and values. The Nigerian government has mobilized both material and immaterial cultural ensembles in public diplomacy as a veritable strategy of pursuing her foreign policy goals and objectives.

Assessing the Impact of Entertainment Industry on Nigeria's External Relations

Nigeria's cultural heritage has been embodied heterogeneously in the pursuit of her foreign policy. Nigeria's cultural heritage has been used to facilitate the realization of the cultural foreign policy objectives with variance of successes. The Tiv puppet theatre has been deployed as an agency of cultural diplomacy and the good will and soft power gains Nigeria has accrued on its account (Pine, 2014; Tingir, 2018).

Nigerian music, cuisines, sports, clothing attire, language (ethnic tribe and pidgin), literary distinctions and academic excellence have continued to be globally admired and appreciated. As former British High Commissioner to Nigeria, Catriona Laing said, she felt sad to leave the country having spent "a fabulous time" engaging with its music, dance and culture. During her farewell speech she said "I am sad leaving Nigeria; it is so much fun; I had a fabulous time here, and I will be back. I love the dance, music, the culture," This shows the impact Nigeria's culture and entertainment had on her, she further said she would encourage her successor to do the same as she travelled to some states within the country, thus affirming "knowing who is the other and explaining to him who we are".

Cultural tourism and festivals have projected Nigeria's cultural diplomacy. Like the Igede Agba (New Yam Festival), Argungu fishing festival, Osun Oshogbo festival, Eyo Festival, Durbur, Black heritage festival and Igue festival etc. These festivals attract spectators which includes tourists from different parts of the world and participants. Nigerians have used these festivals to showcase their rich culture. A notable festival was the FESTAC Festival of Arts and Culture, where all black people of the world came to Nigeria to celebrate the black culture and reaffirm their common destiny and human dignity. The Calabar carnival is another festival that is projected abroad. It is regarded as the biggest street party in Africa. Nigeria's reputation as one of the continent's most cultural hubs is well reflected in the arts festival held across the country.

Also, Independent art Festivals are becoming popular, some of which are Gidi Cultural Fest (Lagos), Lagos Photo Festival held in Lagos, Eko International Film Festival, Agila Socioeconomic Carnival (Otukpo and Ado) to mention a few. These Festivals created environments to unite talents together, promote youth empowerment and maximize the economic potential of the art industry. A dynamic form of cultural diplomacy is in the literary world. Professor Wole Soyinka,

Chimamanda Adichie Ngozi and Chinua Achebe's literary accomplishments distinguishes and set Nigeria on the Literary map and are worthy of cultural ambassadorial ship. Chimamanda Adichie has won the Commonwealth Prize for Literature and also the Orange Prize with her novel, *Half of a yellow Sun*. With no doubt, Nigerian writers have significantly contributed to the country by exporting the Nigerian culture and tradition to other parts of the world.

Nigeria today stands tall before the international community because of the collective endeavours of her writers, while our politics and shenanigans of our business deals often sell the country's private shames in the international scandal market, it is through the collective endeavours of Nigerian writers that Nigeria stands redeemed and enhanced in the eyes of the world (Nnolim cited in Umaisha, 2010, p. 2). Music has proven to be a cultural diplomatic tool in projecting Nigeria's external relations. Nigerian music has become a global phenomenon and its music sphere has proven to transcend globally. Through cultural exchange such as music, literature, arts and dance nations can appreciate their differences and common interest. Recognizing of culture as an essential tool of diplomacy, most foreign ministries have incorporated cultural specialists on the list of their diplomatic corps. Nigerian arts and music are increasingly exported, throwing light on the rich cultural diversity of the country. Several musicians like Mercy Chinwo, Davido, Wizkid, Burnaboy, Chike and Arya Starr among others have projected Nigeria's image outside her borders. Their musicals are widely played abroad and have won many awards. These musicians have served as Nigeria's cultural ambassadors. For the past five decades, Nigerian musicians have toured the world showcasing Nigerian talents. The late Afro King Fela Anikulapo and his son Fela Anikulapo Kuti, were pioneers of Afro-beats popularizing blackness and Africanness in a world where being black and African was considered demeaning. Ebenezer Obey, Victor Uwaifo, Sunny Ade among others are till date referred as cultural ambassadors.

Also, the National Troupe of Nigeria and the Benue dancing Troupe have toured and performed in foreign countries, extending a hand of friendship to the world. The impact of their tour was felt during the Benue Dance Troupe tour to Mexico. The dance caused the Mexico to send a choreographer, Maria Carmen live in Nigeria for twelve months. On her return to Mexico, she replicated this and became a Nigerian dance expert at the Safari Resort, Puebla Mexico, gaining a synthesis of Mexican and Nigerian performative idiom. The performance was able to fetch Nigeria an identity in Mexican consciousness as friendly and entertaining. Benue State and the Mexican governments signed an agreement for the development of a wild park in Kyogen, Kwande Local government of Benue State. The Benue dance Troupe have performed in Cuba, Tel-Aviv, Israel. The dance has brought national unity and external relations cannot be emphasized. It builds sustainable relationships between countries and helps to strengthen economic ties between Nigeria and foreign countries. Cultural dance performances can thus open up salient areas such as belief systems.

Sports have been a major tool for cultural diplomacy. Nigerian footballers are being celebrated all over the world and have won several international sports competitions and football has become a national ideology for unity. Some of Nigeria's prominent sport figures include Mary Onyali, J.J Okocha, Blessing Okagbare. Nigeria's commitment to sport development led to the hosting of the All-African Games twice (1973 and 2003). Sport is more of an investment as it is cheap and effective. International sporting events are instruments that help to foster friendship and peace. Sports brings people together, all the athletes in an international sporting competition have the same mindset and goal which is to win. These athletes are people from different cultural background, race and religion.

Food is another major external relation. Everyone needs food and loves food especially trying intercontinental delicacies. Nigerian cuisines are part of the cultural heritage of a nation, the indigenous foods are nutritional and natural and are different from Western cuisine that are processed and canned with low or no nutritional values (Adesina, 2017). Nigerian foods are not only pleasing to the citizens but also to foreigners. This is obvious in the large number of Nigerian fast food like the chicken republic, Tantalizers, Mama Cass have surpassed the foreign owned ones. It is of great note that some private owned enterprises owned by Nigerians abroad have outlets where Nigerian food is displayed and sold, in the Diaspora there are various African supermarkets. Nigerian food and cuisines, which consist of indigenous or local dishes or food items from various Nigerian ethnic groups, are part of the cultural heritage of the country (Ayansina, 2014).

Language also is a tool for cultural diplomacy. When one engages in a conversation with a Chinese or Russian, they tend to reply in their language even if they were asked in English. Nigeria can also project its language which is a cultural heritage within the international system. It is not a must to employ English as our foreign policy language. We can look for one or two of our local languages and project it on the international system (Field Source, 2023). Dress Culture as a tool for external relations, dress and dressings indicate national, cultural or religious identity. Dress culture has been described as a mirror of the culture of the people in any society (Akinbileje, 2014). The multi-ethnic and multi-lingual feature of Nigeria, dress happens to be one of those features that distinguish one ethnic group from another. The diversity of Nigeria's ethnic groups is not only unique, but also very attractive to both the ethnic groups within the country and to foreigners. With over 300 ethnic groups with diverse dress styles, the traditional dress styles signify which ethnic group one belongs to.

The Nollywood industry/Nigerian Film Industry is also a tool for external relations. Nigerian movies have served as one of the most influential and accessible mediums of cultural diplomacy. Films have the ability to affect the masses all around the world. Certain Nigerian movies have succeeded in not only entertaining audiences but have helped in educating, enhance and sustaining relationships that transcends bothers and break certain stereotypes. The 4th Edition of the Annual Public Lecture of National Institute of Cultural Orientation (NICO) held in Abuja, on 16th August 2013, focused on Nollywood as an instrument for Nigeria's Cultural Diplomacy. Film is a transmitter of culture, a potent weapon by which the identity and character of a nation, its image, its culture, its peculiar sounds and its aspirations and achievements are impressed on minds throughout the world (Asobele, 2002). The Nollywood industry has served as a powerful medium to provide the Nigerian story to the world, thus, serves a major diplomatic role.

Nigerian films are all over the globe, cutting across Africa, the United States, Europe, Asia and the Caribbean. Nigerian stories are told through Nigerian movies all over the world. This therefore, serves as a form of external diplomatic relations. The late Professor Dora Akunyili enlisted Nollywood in 2009 as part of the rebranding project to be used to rebuild a positive image for Nigeria. These movies have been used by Nigerian missions abroad to respond to negative ideologies about Nigeria. It is important to know that the Nollywood industry emerged as a multi-billion-dollar industry with a huge opportunity to promote social, economic, political and cultural development of the country.

The Federal government in 2017 stated that no fewer than 15 million Nigerians were living in various countries of the world (Project Development Facility, 2017). Professor Yemi Osinbanjo,

former Vice President of Nigeria alluded that, Nigeria has one of the diaspora communities made up of entrepreneurs, professionals and sector experts, whose personal and professional exploits have made Nigeria proud (Osinbanjo, 2018). Nigerians in diaspora have various organizations of which cultural organizations are the most common (Wapmuk, Akinkoutu & Ibnoye, 2014). Their organizations are aimed at cultural preservation and celebration. They have a common denomination of being Nigerians, the diaspora groups also preserve their unique identities which add up to present the rich cultural diversity of the country.

Conclusion

The Foreign policy of Nigeria even though, has a cultural dimension, it has not been fully harnessed. Nigeria's foreign policy, which is, Afrocentric in nature should deliberately infuse cultural heritage of the country into driving its cardinal foreign policy objectives on the international scene. Given the fluidity and divergence of interests amongst nation-states of the international system, Nigeria should be more proactive in engaging the international community using her cultural assets which has given her a measure of soft power to project its foreign policy objectives. The use of culture as a tool for the Nigeria's foreign policy has become imperative in enhancing Nigeria's foreign policy. From the gifts exchange of ancient rulers to modern diplomacy, culture can be used by leaders of the country to achieve vital national foreign objectives. The practice of promoting foreign relations can be enhanced to derive maximum benefits without resorting to hard-ball diplomacy.

In today's globalizing world, culture has taken its place and has an essential role to play in international relations. Cultural exchange creates a chance to appreciate points of commonality and shared values amongst both contiguous states and even far-flung states in the international system. Culture is a complex and dynamic tool which has enormous capacity for fostering socio-economy prosperity and accelerating harmonious living in an otherwise combustible international arena. The role culture plays in Nigeria's foreign relations through sports, cultural tourism, festivals, films, food, language, music, dance, diaspora and literature will not only create friendly relationships but will also serve as a revenue for generating income to boost economic strength.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made.

- i. Given the rapidly changing nature of the contemporary world in which we live today, there is obvious need for Nigeria to accommodate these realities in its foreign policy thrust. To this end, this study recommends that Nigeria should not just review its foreign policy but remake it in tandem with contemporary conditionings of a rapidly globalizing world system.
- ii. With the high acceptability of Nigeria culture, music, dance, sports, literary work, arts and craft worldwide, the Nigerian government should leverage this by jettisoning the archaic Afrocentric foreign policy which is no more in tandem with realities of present-day international system.
- iii. Some traditional clothes can be used as a vehicle to enhance Nigeria's foreign relations. The deployment of dress culture as a vehicle to enhance foreign relations can be done through the promotion of Nigeria dress culture in foreign countries and especially at diplomatic fora. Diplomats should project this to the international community so that Nigeria's dress code can be imbibed. During diplomatic visits of foreign heads of states and official, Nigeria can present and showcase Nigerian attires to them.

- iv. Also, the cultural, diplomatic and economic significance of the film industry has become noticeable as a veritable source of income, power and prestige, the Nigerian state should therefore work in synergy with the industry to further achieve its national interests at the sub-regional, regional and global levels. This will confer respectability, visibility and an uncommon voice for Nigeria.
- v. Nigerians in Diaspora who are willing to promote Nigeria's cuisines should be provided with adequate support to promote Nigeria's food culture and culinary diplomacy. In this manner, the noticeable Nigeria's sub-imperial power both within the West African sub-regional and beyond can be further enhanced and projected with relative ease and much successes.

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