WHAT BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS CAN BALKAN STATES LEARN AND ADOPT FROM AFRICA ON MATTERS OF CULTURAL DIPLOMACY?

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Abstract: This study aims to investigate aspects of cultural diplomacy as a tool for enhancing foreign relations and economic development in Africa, with examples from Kenya. The chapter highlights the best practices and lessons that Balkan states can learn and adopt. It posits how soft power can be leveraged to strengthen foreign relations and economic benefits. As a result of financial constraint and lack of natural resources, developing nations utilize soft power to gain diplomatic recognition and influence among other states. The study employs liberalism theory, which postulates that diplomatic engagement includes negotiations, cooperation, and peaceful methods of interaction between states. The case study methodology was employed to investigate the aspects of soft power and cultural diplomacy strategies that enhance strong foreign relations. Case studies from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tourism, Sports and The Pan African Kisima Music and Film Awards were adopted. The African continent prides itself on its rich cultural heritage in Kiswahili, an official language at the African union. The emergence of the digital and social media space has placed creative arts, sports, film and music at the centre of cultural diplomacy. Benefits transferred from the Western world included those derived from soft power, such as investments and cultural exchange.

Keywords: Cultural Diplomacy, Soft Power, Foreign Relations, Cultural Heritage, Tourism, Artefacts

Introduction

According to William Frijhoff (1-14), culture is how society presents itself. There is an African cultural history, a symbol of social history, a unique approach to social construction based on the lives and experiences of communities developed from

African cultures. Culture, in the context of cultural diplomacy, is "art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, customs, and beliefs are examples of distinguishing moral, material, intellectual, and emotional aspects of the society or a social community" (FDFA 45-55; Tevdovski).

Cultural diplomacy is a form of soft power (McGuire, 323-354) encompassing the sharing of ideas, values, traditions, identity knowledge, literature, terminology, and other cultural aspects (Codina Sola et al., 343-372). Matsuura defines culture as "that which provides the context, values, subjectivity, attitudes, and skills on which the development process must take place"[1]. Gould et al. argue that cultural diplomacy, despite being a core pillar of foreign policy, is a country's "expressive life." It is deemed as an alternative to foreign relations (Šešić et al.). Cultural diplomacy is often considered a subsection of "public diplomacy", a trade strategy that incorporates craftsmanship, education, and sentiments (FDFA, 45-55).

Cultural diplomacy aims at promoting and sharing one country's culture with other countries, fostering aspirations and ambitions[2] while promoting values and beliefs (Pajtinka), displaying the most significant visual art, and demonstrating poetry, music, cinematography, theatre, literature, dance, and crafts (Holoborodko and Nataliia, 141-154). It fosters interaction among nations and motivates individuals to be

[1] According to Matsuura while addressing the UNESCO in 2001, culture was defined as "a set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, material, and emotional features of a society or a group of people, and it is encompassed additionally to arts, literature, lifestyle, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs."

[2] Cultural diplomacy is a set of activities, undertaken directly by or in collaboration with diplomatic authorities of a state, aimed at promotion of foreign policy interest of that particular state in the realm of cultural policy through fostering cultural exchange with other foreign state, which is important in contemporary diplomacy (Pajtinka 95-108).

interested in other nation's cultures (Makhubu, 53-66). For citizens of a specific state (i.e. the US) to be interested in another state's culture (i.e. Bulgaria), they must first be exposed to Bulgarian culture often (Grigorova).

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) re-established the Old Silk Road Economic Belt in the Western Balkans (Akili, 405). It is the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, and is expected to reach 4.4 billion inhabitants, accounting for 63% of the world's population (Zhu and Cuiping, 135-161). The BRI is China's soft power policy for achieving national and foreign goals by projecting a non-confrontational and cooperative picture of the region (Lai and Lu).

The structural design of the study and objectives: The introduction section provides an overview. Literature review section highlights the existing published material in relation to the study. Methodology highlights the procedure undertaken to collect the information used in the study. Findings and discussion sections give the outcome of the study and establish their relation to the study objectives. Finally, the conclusion section summarizes and determines whether the study objectives were met. The study is formed based on the absence of insightful regard for cultural diplomacy, preceded by some clarity about what precisely the practice is (Videkanić, 504-522). The study looks to research the viability of cultural diplomacy as an apparatus for progressing foreign relations in African and Balkan states.

Literature Review

Cultural diplomacy is covered within the framework of liberal theory (*Picture 1*) where states and non-state actors collaborate. International Relations should continuously encourage cooperation among states and peaceful methods of

interaction where state[3] and non-state actors are pursuing diplomatic collaboration and engagement (Rossi). Webber and Smith (11) note that cultural diplomacy has traditionally been a critical social approach taken by a country when a state wants to build social extensions in foreign countries. For developing countries, cultural diplomacy has been used to attract tourism or promote strategic trade with distant countries (Kizlari). Berridge (92-95) writes, "soft power is cultural power" from which a country's preferred standpoint of delicate power is measured. Through cultural soft power, a country can influence how its image is broadcasted in foreign countries (Muhasilović).

Liberalism is cantered on the writings of philosophers, namely Immanuel Kant, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Thomas Jefferson, and other founders of liberal politics (Lehto). Liberals believe that state governments should work together to achieve stability and reduce conflict (Subotic, 309-330). Indeed, as Nye has stated, "Liberalism reinforces institutionalism's effort to understand politics, which is required to formulate structures that enhance collaboration, well-being, and human rights" (Nye and Koehane, 329-349).

Historical Background

The intentional deployment of culture as a tool to promote foreign policy goals is traced back to the Byzantine Empire (Evans and William; Pajtinka, 95-108). The medieval Byzantine missionaries shared Christian theological doctrine (Mouriki and Slobodan), arts and architecture through Egypt, Arabia and Russia, and Romania. According to Haldon, this

[3] After World War I, France started to send cultural diplomats as a specific field in diplomacy to foreign diplomatic missions as *cultural attache's* (Pajtinka, 95-108).

resulted in the assimilation of Byzantine social attitudes, values, and institutions in Europe (Haldon).

Modern cultural diplomacy cropped up at the end of the 19th century through the creation of the first specialized cultural-diplomatic institution known as Alliance Française (Horne, 222-241), founded at the request of a French diplomat, P. Cambonin Parisin, in 1883 (Pajtinka, 95-108). He opened its first international branch in Barcelona, Spain, and named it *Comité local* a year later. The main objective of the institution was, and still is, the promotion of the French language abroad to increase the number of speakers. Other Western countries followed the French: the USA with their Information Agency (1925), Germany and its Deutsche akademie (1925), and the UK with British Council (1934) (Eren, 125-134).

During World War I, France deployed the first cultural attachés and ambassadors, each with particular responsibilities in cultural diplomacy (Patjinka, 95-108). During this period, the French Foreign Office established the Directorate General for Cultural Affairs, a professional agency within its institutions committed to cultural diplomacy (Garcha). The British Council was established in 1934 on Sir R. Leeper's initiative to promote British "culture propaganda." Corse recorded that this aimed to counter German propaganda in Latin American and Middle Eastern countries (Pappé).

Cultural diplomacy became a crucial tactic of ideological struggle during the Cold War, becoming an intrinsic aspect of the battle between the two power blocs (Prevots). The United States made significant investments in cultural-diplomatic practices, meant to globally propagate the principles of democracy and independence as components of American cultural identity (Espinosa; Nietzel, 152-171). Culture was given a comprehensive role in American diplomacy at

the beginning of the Cold War (Prevots). Soviet Communism was seen as a systemic threat to the American way of life, as well as a military and political risk (Gould-Davies, 193-214).

Moreover, the private sector's role in US cultural diplomacy[4] can be seen in the Hollywood film industry as a global powerhouse in both the commercial and creative realms (Kurucz, 62-71). The US, being a developed country, continues to use the strategy of global marketing to further its cultural diplomacy to further economic development (Dautbasic, 1-7). Ivan De Luce points out that the US has utilized American popular culture and then marketed globally through various brands, such as McDonald's, Coca-Cola, Hollywood, and music (Fullerton et al., 205-212). As stated by Gray et al., culture and arts also have a direct economic impact, generating more than $800 billion in economic production in the United States annually, accounting for more than 4% of GDP. Furthermore, human rights, democracy, and the rule of law are all promoted by liberal standards, which include international cooperation and the legal system fronted by the US on the global stage (Cox).

Similarly, South Korea has utilized exporting pop culture through cultural diplomacy to enhance economic development. S. Korea, over the past two decades, has grown to the 12th largest economy through increased emphasis on the branding of Korean companies such as LG and Samsung electronics, increased focus on infrastructure, and banning censorship laws, which led to a phenomenon called Hallyu, translated to as "Korean Wave" (Oh 167-196). The Korean Wave of K-pop, TV dramas, and gaming cultural approach

[4] Cultural diplomacy has been found to be primarily, in large portions, propagated by the entities independent from the government but focused on forming connections at the state levels with other states. The international cultural relations initiated by private sector players, either for their own cultural or business interest, usually act without the initiative from the state (Kurucz 62-71).

contributed $9.5 billion to their economy in 2018 (Maina), according to the Korea Foundation for International Cultural Exchange.

Nye's "The Means to Success in World Politics" (56-57) uses the soft power theory to expound on the intangible resources of soft power as a progression of the soft power philosophy[5]. Nye's soft power theory promotes a favourable public perception and reputation abroad, making it easier for the state to conduct its affairs (*Ibid)*. This viewpoint considers culture to be a component of foreign policy and a way of projecting soft power on a global scale (Zamorano, 165-186).

President Hu Jintao, during the 17th Chinese Communist Party National Congress in 2007, outlined a more critical aspect of social cohesion and creativity, and an element of national power enhancement (Chen). The internationalization of Chinese media, the improvement of movies, and the propagation of Confucius Institutes were among the most recognizable activities in this program (Su, 317-322). According to Winter (1376-1399), the BRI's (*Picture 2*) significance as a part of China's strategic policy has gradually grown in magnitude, representing the "vision of connectivity" through massive investment, infrastructural growth exemplified, positioning the countries along the Balkans BRI route for multicultural exchanges and knowledge sharing (Zakić and Bojan, 48-68). China's BRI has resulted in an increase in the appreciation of cultural heritage in the Balkan regions (Hackaj, 66-

[5] Nye outlines how influence of a state may come from the intangible and enlightened sources such as a positive image worldwide from a given state that is displayed politely. The image may be from a state's domestic or foreign policies, or the qualities that are unique to that state independent of other actions or policies such as a culture from the state. This positive image may generate admiration for other nations, thus soft power. This may result in other nations adopting these soft power policies either domestically or internationally that may lead to the enhancement of their international relations through soft power policies or actions (Nye, 56-57).

77), and use of cultural diplomacy (Duarte and Laura, 593-607). China promotes the Chinese language and traditions by providing cultural and educational exchange programs[6] via the Confucius Institutes (CIs) (Zhou and Jianbin, 127-142).

Africa has a variety of cultural diplomacy instruments that can foster economic development for the region, like tourism in wildlife and natural landmarks (as in *Picture 4*), film and music (*Pictures 11 & 12*), cuisine (*Pictures 8 & 9*), festivals, art, and museums (*Pictures 5 & 6*), sports (*Pictures 10 & 13*), and some are integrated into the constitutions of various African countries (Maina). Africa focuses on balancing the interests of socially diverse groups and addressing their needs equally while upholding national cohesion (Deng). According to Deng, it invests in promoting its interests in the global landscape and maintaining favourable relations with its neighbours and the international community. Certainly, diplomacy is about a nation's attitude toward relating with others (Maina).

Cultural Diplomacy in Africa

Cultural diplomacy is influential in forging relationships, shaping public opinion, and struggling to win the support of the private sector (Njiru). It has become an increasingly popular way of engaging in international dialogue with the Western World, although it is not limited to these countries. In Africa, the UNDP applauds the continent's democratic progress, highlighting that Africa has the most considerable

[6] In many African countries, Chinese foreign policy since the early 2000s has led to an increase in fully-funded scholarships from Chinese universities offered to African students in China. This has enlarged the cultural exchange through education where African students learn Mandarin and other Chinese languages as part of their scholarship programs. Thus, China's penetration in the African continent has been on the rise through foreign infrastructural public-private partnerships, arts, and economic investments.

number of nations running under democratic systems since the 1960s independence movements (Maina).

Cultural diplomacy is a big part of Uganda, with its 65 indigenous communities, where cultural diplomacy had to be exercised for these communities to coexist (Kwachuh). According to Wani (611), preserving the population's different cultural identities (as in *Picture 8),* has been a government priority even after the country's independence in 1962, as observed in Article 37 of the Ugandan constitution which states that "every individual has the right to belong to, practice, and promote their culture."

Kenya has potential in cultural diplomacy, and the key lies in the combined effect of its various elements to promote economic development in the country (Njiru). Marketing of Kenyan artefacts through its national air carrier (*Picture 7*) supports local communities, with items such as beautifully woven sisal kiondo bags, women's kanga wrap-around light garment, Kikoi, and fabric Maasai shuka that has graced the international fashion world (Kamuiru).

Kiswahili is the national language in East African community states, recognized in Article 137 of the protocol establishing the EAC (Kawoya and Makokha). This has increased cross-border trade, cohesion and interconnectivity, cultural interactions, technology and knowledge sharing[7], and has made Kiswahili the official AU language (*Ibid)*. Sports in Kenya, for instance, enhance the Kenya brand on the global stage and have already increased trade and investments

[7] The Kiswahili language has unified an extensive part of Eastern and Southern Africa states by increasing the number of its speakers. As a result, Swahili speaking nations eased trade barriers that existed before, many border communities have forged cohesion and interactions, it has become a tool for knowledge exchange especially as a subject being taught in schools across the region. Results of Swahili language have reached beyond the cultural sphere, and led to economic, and political milestones.

worth $6B through the World Rally Championship 2026, sprinter Eliud Kipchoge's sub-2-hour ENEOS challenge, Lupita Nyong'o's Oscars legacy, and Kenya's Rugby Safari Sevens (shown in *Picture 13*) (Bukhala).

The challenges that undermine cultural diplomacy include financial challenges, lack of coordination between Ministries, intellectual property and copyright infringement, lack of private sector support and lack of cultural preservation (Maina; Njiru). Further challenges include climate change and water shortages, substantial disparities in wealth distribution, scarcity and conflicts of resources, high unemployment levels, youthful populations, political instability, language barriers, and food shortages (Kawoya and Makokha). Undoubtedly, Africa needs to develop new strategies to trigger innovation and guarantee a sustainable future based on equality (Ndulu).

Methodology

This study has adopted subjective and case study methodology to examine the topic of cultural diplomacy in enhancing foreign relations in developing countries of Africa and the Balkan region. Research methodology clarifies the rationale for picking a specific research method in the study, which examined the role of cultural diplomacy in foreign diplomacy relations in the Balkans and Africa (Njiru; Ünlü, 388-402).

Here the cases were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The target population for the study included those involved in cultural diplomacy activities such as the Ministry of Sports, Culture, and Heritage, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Tourism, sportspersons, and artists (Maina; Todorović, 1-14). Since cultural diplomacy is an indistinct concept in these regions, most of the re-

search relied on secondary sources, including books, diaries, articles, and periodicals. This helped capture the existing knowledge from global, regional, national, and local perspectives (*Ibid)*.

Findings and Discussion

Cultural diplomacy has an influence on enhancing foreign relations. In addition, this study will elaborate on the impact of cultural diplomacy on the social, economic, and political spheres of Balkan countries, as observed in Africa. For instance, Kenya's efforts included allocating 40% of the total public space for cultural events and investing in cultural exports, which accounted for 2.77% of the GDP. Additionally, cultural studies have been integrated into school curricula, and there is a strong commitment to gender equality and the use of Swahili as an official language (Mungai).

Economic development is measured qualitatively through the Human Development Index (HDI), infant mortality, Gender-Related Development Index (GDI), and level of literacy (Lewis). Economic growth is a measurement tool used extensively by countries, as growth is a necessity for development. While economic development is more appropriate for assessing progress and living standards on account of achieving economic development, states explore different avenues – such as cultural diplomacy – for growth and economic expansion to better position themselves in the international system for international trade (*Ibid*).

According to Snowball and Enyinna (513-530), the United States Media and Entertainment (M&E) industry is the world's largest. The default strategy of America's cultural diplomacy has been to bring investments into the export of culturally diverse elite art and intellectualism. Motion pictures, television shows and commercials, digital content, musical and

sound recordings, television, radio, book publishing, video games and supplemental products and services account for 25% of M&E market, contributing $717B (*Ibid).*[8] According to Price Waterhouse Coopers' (PwC) 2018-2023 E&M Outlook, the US industry would be worth above $825B by 2023.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has numerical figures showing that cultural products account for 2.8% of all global imports. Between 1980 and 1998, the value of cultural imports rose exponentially, where a fifth of the total is made up of music materials. More specifically, 11% is made up of sound records and sound processing equipment (*Ibid)*.

The American dream and its culture have spawned a thriving industry, accounting for almost 50% the country's GDP (*Ibid)*. In Africa, the creative and cultural industry provides many employment opportunities (*Picture 11*). South Africa prides itself as one of the largest creative industries (*Picture 3*). In 2017, it contributed 1.7% of the total GDP, which was estimated at R.62 billion. Almost 6.94% of the country's population is employed in the creative sector (*Picture 3*), according to a mapping report conducted by the South African Cultural Observatory in 2018 *(Ibid)*.

Kwame Nkrumah, a pan-African political icon, believed in the relevance of culture and that (African) knowledge and education might make a substantial contribution worldwide. Another historic leader, Léopold Senghor stated that a distinctive African way of life expresses itself primarily through the arts. Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere's *Ujamaa* concept emphasized that a person becomes a person through

[8] America's Motion Picture, television shows, music and video games from the US has been the biggest form of soft power for the US to the rest of the world. This has led to the US movies and pop culture to infiltrate and influence the way of life through imitations of songs, lifestyle, and digital content especially to the countries in the Global South.

the cultures, as well as changes in social and cultural values (Kanu).

Liberalism accommodates the notion that international relations are no longer only for states, but they also include individuals, societies, and global organizations (Maina; Šešić et al.). Liberalism is a broad concept incorporating a variety of ideas and arguments about how institutions, behaviours, and trade (*Picture 1*) relations impede and reduce states' coercive force (*Ibid)*.

Africa represents a vast topography ranging from sandy beaches, exotic wildlife (*Picture 4*), and captivating natural sceneries, not to mention important historical museums (*Pictures 5 & 6*), traditional attire that's achieved international recognition in high-end fashion shows (*Pictures 11*), and diverse cuisine (*Pictures 8 & 9*) (Maina).[9] Africa focuses on tourism (*Picture 4*) as a strategy to create a positive image and attract foreign investors through international trade.

African nations have focused on the MICE tourism sector, the fastest-growing sector, according to ICCA. Through MICE, summit congregations – i.e. the Africa Travel Association annual conference, World Trade Organization, TICAD, UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), and Tea/coffee tourism – were enabled, enhanced the global profile, and generated a multiplier effect (Kanu). Africa's travel and tourism industry creates revenue and employment, and stimulates production. With a projected growth rate of 4.9% and contributing 9% to the continent's GDP, Africa's travel and

[9] Use of available resources such as landscape, wildlife and culture has been an intangible soft power tool on the African continent to bolster international relations especially to the West. Thus, the Central and Eastern European states such as Bulgaria, Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Romania and Moldova can leverage their rich cultural roots for tourism. This could enhance more cooperation in the conflict-prone region, promote their trade, and forge far-reaching international relations towards East or West.

tourism industry is still in its infancy, yet it draws heavily on the region's vast natural and cultural riches (Christie et al.).

Tanzania's Mt. Kilimanjaro (*Picture 4*), one of the best safari destinations in Africa and the world, has adventures (i.e. wild animals) and exotic forests to savannah ecosystems, which attract steady tourism (Bikombo). In addition, Ethiopia's Lalibela rock-hewn churches (*Pictures 5 & 6*) are mysterious traditional structures depicting the cultural heritage of the Ethiopians. They attract tourists to Ethiopia, showcasing the ancient social, religious, and architectural aspects of the ancient Ethiopian people (*Ibid)*.

Kenya Airways has branded the slogan "*the Pride of Africa*" (*Picture 7*) to help market Kenya's tourism industry and cultural heritage. Additionally, "Karibu Nyumbani" used by Kenya Airways' staff – while welcoming Kenyans and foreigners into the state – showcases the country's hospitality, promotes Kenya as a gateway to Africa, and enhances Kenya's brand on the international stage (Njiru).

The Kisima Music and Film Awards is a Pan African event dedicated to celebrating the African narrative through culture, music, stories and creativity themed "Reawakening the soul, spirit and vibrancy of Africa through Music and Film." The award is open to the whole of Africa. It is a Pan-African melting pot of authentic talent, driven by an unrelenting passion to showcase the rich diversity of African music and film (*Pictures 11 & 12*). It is a celebration of African talent, the strengthening of African solidarity, and a point of convergence for displaying African talent, skills, dreams and aspirations (*Pictures 11 & 12*).

The Kisima Award is audacious, deep and progressive. It focuses on the use of digital nomination platforms that allow all of Africa's bilingual diversities: Anglophone, Francophone, Lusophone, and the Arabic north to nominate their cham-

pions and heroes before a panel of eminent, experienced industry players, music scholars, veteran musicians and film artists who select the finalists (*Picture 11*). The process of picking the winners is fully participatory and transparent.

Since 1997, Kisima has grown by leaps and bounds from a Kenyan event with clay trophies at Nairobi's Braeburn theatre to a glamorous Pan African event not just for music but incorporating a variety of films. The event has seen a massive expansion, attracting international entrants and personalities, becoming an integral part of both Kenyan Music and Culture. The event is an African celebration of Africa's gifts to the world. The award aims to bring together African artists, thespians, creative musicians, and representatives from the entire film and music industry, infusing Pan-Africanism and offering global players the opportunity to engage with the authenticity of Africa's finest artistic culture.

Our objective is to promote Pan African cultural diversity, celebrate achievers in the music and film industry and stimulate collaborations, cultural exchanges, business opportunities within the region, and actively contribute to the growth of the film and music industry.

We believe the Balkans can adopt similar initiatives – such as the Pan-African Kisima Music and Film Awards – to promote talent in the Balkan film and music industry, thereby exposing Balkan culture to the world and traversing language barriers with the help of language models that translate artistic talent online. Spencer-Oatey states that nations and organizations use culture as a vital tool for establishing and marinating relations among themselves, and so can Balkan countries in cultivating economic, political, and trade relations[10]. Although attention has been given to the cultural

[10] Connections are usually strong and long lasting in establishing international treaties when cultural diplomacy is leveraged to find peace and cooperation between states, which had initially encountered conflicts (Rana).

aspect, it has not matched the intensity directed toward trade, politics, and economic matters (Rana).

Theoretically, culture refers to any activity or event that preserves its natural form (Šešić), and is derived from the conscious efforts of man, thus being the outcome of distinct undocumented rules (Keesing, 73-97). As Linton (31) positis, culture is a group of perfectly illustrated phenomena, processes, objects, or particular behaviours. The fronting of cultural diplomacy should not lead to clashes of cultures (McGowan), like in former Yugoslav republic boundaries (Biruski, 327-348).

Generally, efforts to force particular cultures onto others yield conflicts (Biruski, 327-348; Galtung). Thus, cultural exchange is an essential tool in fostering diplomatic events within governments to prevent cultural conflicts and promote state culture (Njiru). Cultural understanding builds a conducive atmosphere to other state interests, whether political or economic, to enhancing people's connections from different cultural backgrounds, such as the former composition of the Yugoslav republic (Otmacic).

For instance, Kiswahili language has enhanced international relations between Kenya and its neighbours, comprising 150 million Swahili speakers. This led to the formation of a cultural diplomacy strategy for 2018-2022 that brought together more than seven countries (Njiru). In addition, the East Africa community – recognized in Article 137 of the protocol establishing the EAC – increased cross-border trade, enhanced cohesion, interconnectivity, cultural interactions, technology and knowledge sharing, and key to this has been the adoption of Kiswahili language as one of the official AU languages (Mungai).

Traditional foods and drinks such as the Ugandan Matoke (steamed bananas) (*Picture 8*), Waragi (traditional al-

cohol) (*Picture 8*), and Ethiopian Anjera/Injera depict their heritage (*Picture 9*). They use traditional food and drinks to showcase their culture and what kept them bonded as a community. These aspects are still alive in their communities to date (Wani). South Africa's sports culture is among the most coveted in Africa. Their Springboks national rugby team and Proteas national cricket team are excellent on the world stage (*Picture 10*).

Sports also enhances Kenya's brand on the global stage and increases trade and investments. As previously mentioned, activities in sports hosted by Kenya for diplomatic purposes include the World Rally Championship 2026 (*Picture 13*) worth $6B, Sprinters' Eliud Kipchoge sub-2-hour ENEOS challenge in 2019 (*Picture 13*), and Kenya's Safari Sevens Rugby team (*Picture 13*) on the annual IRB sevens world series.

Conclusion

As African states leverage cultural diplomacy to enhance foreign relations, so should the Balkan states. The best way to realize this is by building ties with other countries that have successfully applied this strategy, like Kenya, through cultural exchanges at schools and universities – harnessing the use of cultural heritage embodied in folklore music, dance and traditional costume fashion. Opportunities exist for enhancing the international promotion of traditional Balkan food to the world that is tasty and unique. There is a need for Balkan nations to draw inspiration from the Pan African Kisima Music and Film Award and establish an Oscar-level film and music awards or festival to celebrate top talent in the creative industry, a significant source of employment. This will serve as a platform to share authentic Balkan stories with the world through film and music, leveraging digital and social media, which have

a tremendous global reach and impact – especially among Generation Z and millennials. Language was once a restrictive barrier, but now, with Artificial intelligence language models available online, it's easy to translate Balkan content creators' messages and influence the world to visit this region and immerse themselves in the culture. To sum up, the Balkan states should adopt international film and music industry awards, and open up their language and culture to the world through music, arts, tourism, social cohesion, artefacts, and openness to foreign cultures as a means to advance their international relations goals. Through contemporary tools such as the digitization of soft power and young people's power, cultural diplomacy has proven valuable to Africa – and it can be equally impactful for the Balkan states, in ways beyond imagination. Hence, cultural diplomacy should complement economic, defence, and other forms of traditional diplomacy to enhance international relations.[11]

This study, therefore, has provided recommendations that include investing and leveraging cultural and creative industries to grow and link-local and worldwide markets for innovation. In addition, cultural diplomacy can be promoted and made more widely known at all levels, from government officials to individuals in the diaspora. The study advocates for more inclusion of the private sector in cultural diplomacy activities in Africa and the Balkans (Muchira, 168-193).

[11] The Balkan states have to leverage cultural diplomacy to ensure their influence on the international stage is elevated. There should be collaboration of the Balkan states with African states, which have excelled in using cultural diplomacy to learn and adopt soft power policies and actions. Further, awareness on the use of cultural diplomacy should be enhanced for the nations to realize the potential available within cultural diplomacy and soft power in general to enhance their international image, presence and recognition.

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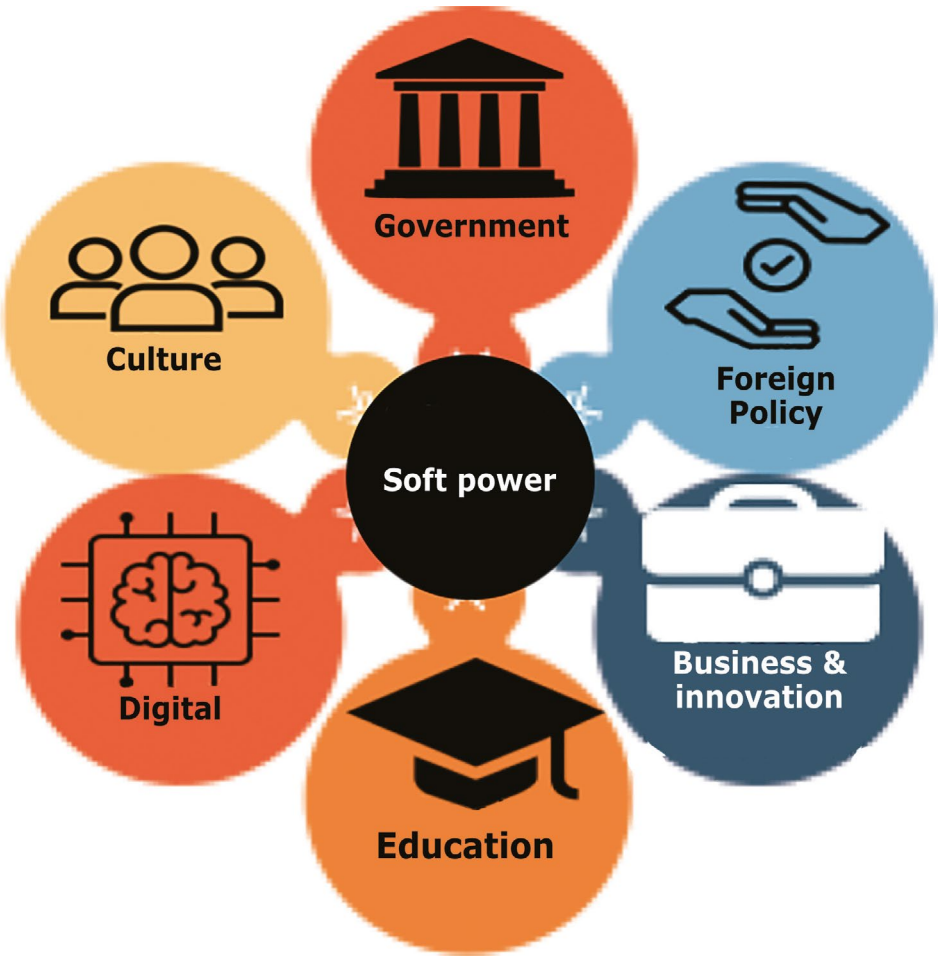
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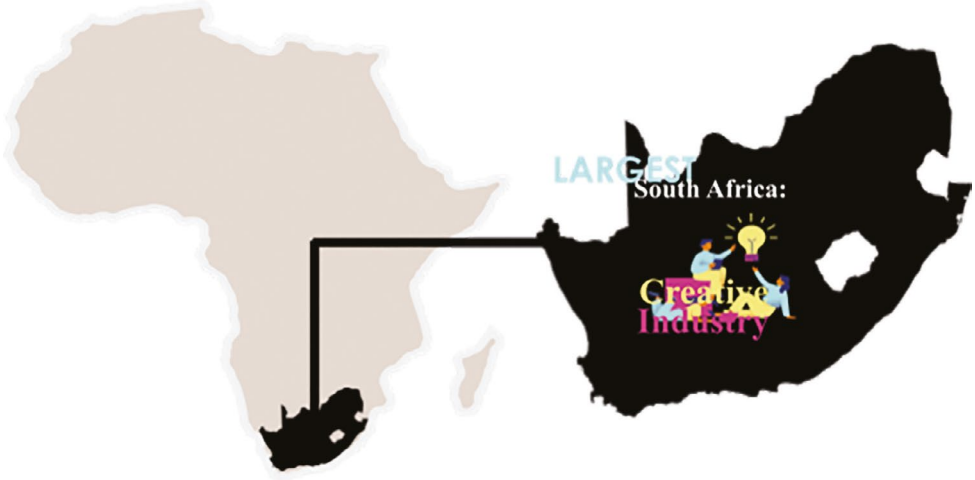
Appendices



Picture 1: *Cultural diplomacy framework*



Picture 2: *Chinese BRI project in Kenya*



Picture 3: *South Africa's largest creative industry on the African continent*



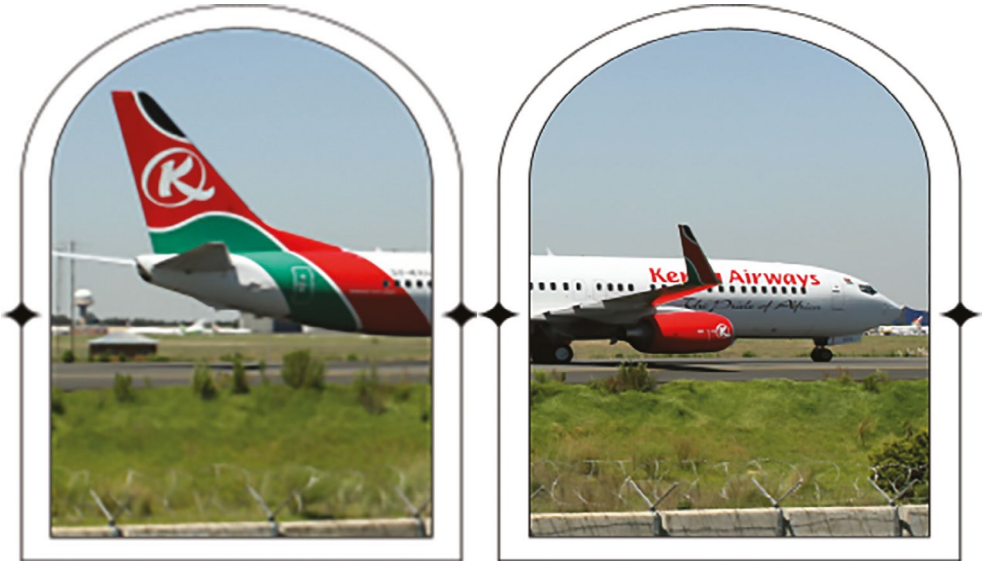
Picture 4: *Mt. Kilimanjaro National Park*



Picture 5: *Lalibela's rock-hewn traditional churches in Ethiopia*



Picture 6: *Lalibela's rock-hewn traditional churches in Ethiopia*



Picture 7: *Kenya Airways' colors and slogan*



Picture 8: *Matoke and Waragi of Uganda*



Picture 9: *Ethiopian Anjera/Injera*





Picture 10:
Springboks and Proteas of South Africa



Picture 11: Kisima Film and Music Festivals in Kenya (Fashion show)



Picture 12: *Kisima Film and Music Festivals Awards Ceremony Gallery in Kenya*



Picture 13: *Kenya's sporting events*

