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PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA



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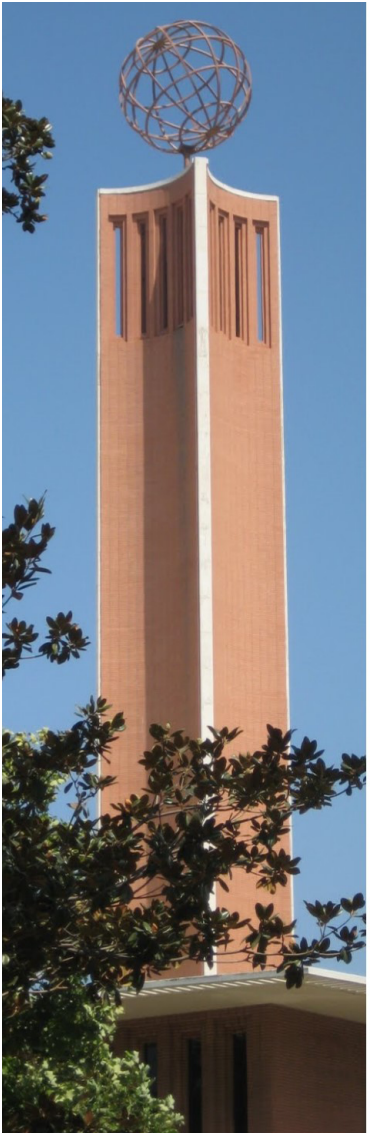
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

ISSUE 15, WINTER 2016

This issue of Public Diplomacy Magazine showcases public diplomacy in Africa: its practice and possibilities. It is our first regional issue, and one that we hope will serve as a starting point for further dialogue about the continent.

The remnants of colonization have created a popular conception of Africa as a continent ravaged by poverty, starvation, and war; a region consistently being aided by the wealthy West. However, the twenty first century has seen a grand stand against this impression. The formation of the African Union in 2001 sought to combat misconceptions about the region and take a stand against ineffectual Western aid programs. In 2010, President Barack Obama's Young African Leader's Initiative formally recognized the need for dynamic and different involvement in Sub-Saharan Africa. Many non-profit agencies, government aid programs, and non-governmental agencies have since begun to refocus their missions to rebuff the view of a "helpless Africa." These are two examples among many that demonstrate how African nations have begun demanding that the world looks at them differently and how the U.S.

INTRODUCING OUR
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and others have adjusted their public diplomacy efforts in response.

In this issue, we present case studies highlighting both the successes and failures of public diplomacy efforts in Sub-Saharan Africa. We feature pieces on various forms of film diplomacy, the NBA's sports diplomacy, and an examination of China's public diplomacy efforts in sub-Saharan Africa, among other key examples.

We would like to thank the USC Center on Public Diplomacy, the USC Dornsife School of International Relations, and the USC Master of Public Diplomacy program for their continued support and shared interest in our mission. We would also like to express our deepest gratitude to all of the authors for their contributions; it is with their help that we are able to help further the study of and interest in public diplomacy.



Sarah Valeria Salceda

Sarah Valeria Salceda
Editor-in-Chief

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CAN THE VAST ETHIOPIAN DIASPORA IN AMERICA BE ACTIVATED TO SERVE AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN THE U.S. & ETHIOPIA?

A CASE STUDY ON ETHIOPIAN-AMERICANS RETURNING TO THEIR HOME COUNTRY FOR SERVICE-ORIENTED PROJECTS WITH THE 501(c)3 ORGANIZATION ETHIOPIAN DIASPORA FELLOWSHIP

ETHIOPIAN DIASPORA FELLOWSHIP & PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

HARNESSING THE POWER OF DIASPORA MILLENNIALS FOR ETHIOPIA

Rediate Tekeste & Meseret Hailu

INTRODUCTION

When exploring the various diplomatic efforts between Sub-Saharan Africa and America, the influence of the African migrants within the United States of America cannot be overlooked. Diaspora diplomacy utilizes individuals residing outside of their original homeland for their knowledge sharing ability and taps into their deep desire to connect to their country of origin.¹ Consequently, diplomatic engagement through diaspora communities is a transnational dimension of public diplomacy.² As migration increases—especially from countries experiencing low economic opportunity, high conflict areas, and various open avenues of migration (places with diversity visas and asylum programs for refugees, for example)—diaspora diplomacy becomes an integral part of public diplomacy, international security, and international development conversations.³ Ethiopia is particularly noteworthy for being home to the second largest population in Africa. Similarly, the Ethiopian diaspora is the second largest African diaspora in the U.S. and plays an increasingly important role in diaspora diplomacy between the U.S. and Sub-Saharan Africa.⁴

Within the context of the Ethiopian Diaspora Fellowship, the term “diaspora” is defined as the dispersion of any people from their original homeland.⁵ Ethiopian Diaspora Fellowship (EDF) is a 501(c)(3) organization that equips young Ethiopian professionals residing in the U.S. with leadership, service, and creative storytelling skills before sending them to Ethiopia to serve with partner organizations for five-month fellowships. EDF serves as an agent for positive change by connecting these talented professionals with organizations and people in Ethiopia through transformative service opportunities. Through the scope of its work, EDF serves as an organizational bridge between the Ethiopian

diaspora and Ethiopia.

DIASPORA DIPLOMACY UTILIZES INDIVIDUALS RESIDING OUTSIDE OF THEIR ORIGINAL HOMELAND FOR THEIR KNOWLEDGE SHARING ABILITIES AND TAPS INTO THEIR DEEP DESIRE TO CONNECT TO THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN. CONSEQUENTLY, DIPLOMATIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH DIASPORA COMMUNITIES IS A TRANSNATIONAL DIMENSION OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY.

BACKGROUND

Ethiopia has the 13th largest population in the world with an estimated 98 million people.⁶ Through visible development projects including the new (and first) train in Sub-Saharan Africa and the substantial Nile Dam Project, which promises an estimated 6,000 megawatts of electricity for domestic use and for export, Ethiopia is currently making headlines as one of the fastest growing economies in the world.^{7,8} Due to its rapid economic growth and efforts from the current government, Ethiopia has the potential to become a middle-income country by 2025, having dubbed itself the new “African Lion”.⁹ However, despite current growth, the decades of prior conflict, lack of investment, and isolation from the global economy have kept Ethiopia’s per capita income 173 (out of 189) in the world.^{10,11} This dissonance between current growth and far-reaching poverty, compounded with various other factors, keeps the Ethiopian people and the diaspora in a state of fluctuation between economic migration and a desire to return for economic opportunity back home.

Ethiopians have migrated to the U.S. for generations due to a long list of

push factors, including war, famine, and two major regime changes. Due in part to these factors, Ethiopia lost 75% of its skilled workers between 1980 and 1991, one of the starkest examples of “brain drain” ever recorded.^{12,13,14} In effect, these factors have led to global expansion of the Ethiopian diaspora. Conservative estimates state that 300,000 first and second generation Ethiopians currently live in the United States.¹⁵ The other end of that range estimates the diaspora population to be around 400,000, making Ethiopia second only to the Nigerian diaspora in terms of overall population in the United States, and even then only by a few thousand people.^{16,17} Though the Ethiopian diaspora has grown over the years at a rapid rate, they are still considered one of the youngest immigrant groups in the U.S.¹⁸

THE NEW GENERATION

EDF capitalizes on the new generation of millennial diaspora who were raised as the Ethiopian narrative began to change. Experientially, these individuals are a step removed from the memories and experiences of famine and conflict-ridden regime changes. Prior to launching in December of 2014, the EDF team sent a 23-item survey designed for Ethiopian-American diasporas between the ages of 20 and 33. These items included questions about diaspora members’ places of birth, education, desire to return to Ethiopia, previous experience returning to Ethiopia, barriers to serving and living in Ethiopia, and how they culturally and professionally self-identify. Analysis of about 400 responses received within two weeks supported the anecdotal responses the EDF team had been receiving, confirming that the new generation was ready, able, and willing to be cultural and service-oriented ambassadors to their country of origin.

In the survey, 84% of respondents said they would consider a fellowship

opportunity and 72% identified as belonging to two or more cultures with a strong desire to maintain ties to their country of origin.¹⁹ The new generation of Ethiopian-Americans self-identified as service-oriented leaders: 86% of respondents reported having served or volunteered in their schools, communities, or professional lives. Meanwhile, 77% of the surveyed diaspora considered leadership a skill or quality they possessed. Additionally, 89% of the respondents engaged with the social and political affairs of Ethiopia by regularly reading news about the country. Additionally, many were also able to list 2-3 news sources that were distinct from American mass media. A common sentiment drawn from the survey showed that many were looking for an experience to engage with Ethiopia in a personal or meaningful way.

ANALYSIS OF ABOUT 400 RESPONSES RECEIVED WITHIN TWO WEEKS SUPPORTED THE ANECDOTAL RESPONSES THE EDF TEAM HAD BEEN RECEIVING, CONFIRMING THAT THE NEW GENERATION WAS READY, ABLE, AND WILLING TO BE CULTURAL AND SERVICE-ORIENTED AMBASSADORS TO THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN.

THE FELLOWSHIP

The Ethiopian Diaspora Fellowship was created in response to the need to address a human resource capacity issue, to engage Ethiopian diaspora to help understand their diaspora identity, and to build a platform and network for the diaspora to play a role in developing bridges between Ethiopia and the United States. The fellowship is built on three organizational pillars: leadership, service, and creative storytelling. These pillars are used to frame and process the experience of returning to Ethiopia as an

asset, instead of a risk. Additionally, EDF curriculum is designed to invest and teach a new generation that they are culturally empowered as opposed to culturally deficient, which is a common discourse about immigrant children.²⁰ As Kivama explains in her work, historically marginalized communities—like immigrants and children of immigrants—actually exist in a place of tremendous advantage and cultural wealth because they have had the opportunity to live, learn, and work in multiple nations.²¹ In addition, they have the unique perspectives and experiences for solving problems in a constantly changing world. With this asset-based framework in mind, the staff of EDF built a program highlighting the strength of the diaspora and their knowledge sharing opportunities, their skills as service-oriented leaders, and their ability to serve as cultural translators.

Currently, there are five Ethiopian Diaspora Fellows in Addis Ababa serving at five different partner organizations. The fellows are from all over the U.S. and are 22-31 years old with varying levels of familiarity with Ethiopia. For instance, one fellow was born and raised in Ethiopia until he was 15 year old; another had not been to Ethiopia until the first day of her fellowship experience. Partner organizations include Telemed Services LLC, a tele-medical healthcare provider; the International Leadership Academy of Ethiopia, a school focused on educating through culturally relevant, locally rooted, globally minded curriculum; Endurance Youth Association, an organization focused on providing income generating and micro financing opportunities for young people; Selamta Family Project, a new model of family integration through placing orphans with marginalized women to create stable families; and Whiz Kids Workshop, an award-winning USAID-funded, entertainment-education station with shows focused on topics like the promotion of health and character growth. The fellows are all placed in different organizations based on their skills and interests.

PEOPLE & PARTNERS

Currently, the fellowship embraces people-to-people diplomacy, where the fellows participate in everyday work activities alongside the permanent staff. They ride public transportation, eat lunch, and are generally integrated into local life in a way that members of the diaspora seldom do during short, vacation-oriented visits. Partner organizations are commonly surprised by the fellows’ ability and willingness to integrate into local customs as well as speak the local language (even if at minimal levels). Local staff and managers are also often surprised to hear about the fellows’ family lives in America, the struggles of growing up as immigrant children, and their intrinsic desire to be “Ethiopian.” Additionally, fellows working at organizations with international and local staff often see themselves as “cultural translators” who can interpret social cues and help communication between people of vastly different cultures.

As an organization, EDF staff supports local partner organizations looking to network and reach the diaspora population by providing brief overviews of the culture, desire, and differences within the Ethiopian-American diaspora. Additionally, for many partner organizations, the fellows are their organizations’ first long-term contact with the diaspora community, as most volunteers or interns in Ethiopia tend to be White Americans or White, European professionals. Overall, EDF partner organizations are beginning to see the benefit of utilizing the diaspora population as agents of change within their organizations due to their diversified knowledge and experience.

FUTURE & GOVERNMENT

Though EDF is a non-governmental organization, the Ethiopian government

has shown an interest in the program and its curriculum. In October 2015, the EDF Executive Director and the class of 2015 fellows met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Tedros Adhanom; his Chief of Staff, Ambassador Mulie; and Mr. Demeke Atnafu Ambulo, the Minister Counselor of Diaspora Affairs. The meeting was an opportunity for EDF fellows to share their experience as young diaspora members, as well as their experience with the program. Though the government has multiple initiatives focused on supporting and encouraging the diaspora, young millennial professionals have often been left out of the conversation. As EDF continues to grow, a strategic relationship with the Ethiopian government can help reach the diaspora globally and provide a program and curriculum that supports service to the country, as well as a better understanding of the diaspora's collective identity.

FOOTNOTES

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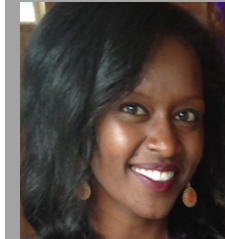
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Rediate Tekeste
Founder
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Rediate is a first generation Ethiopian-American and founder of Ethiopian Diaspora Fellowship. She started EDF as a medium to build bridges between the young educated diaspora and Ethiopia. Rediate has worked for social action organizations including the Clinton Initiative, America Reads Program leading education efforts through community partnerships in low-income areas. She spent time in Ethiopia working as a journalist for World Vision Ethiopia, and then building a communication department at Selam Children's Village. Rediate discovered her passion for storytelling while working as an international Field Producer/Production Coordinator for Girl Rising, and completing an internship in Uganda and Ethiopia with the renowned Population Media Center. She currently combines her interest for communication and culture as a Communication Consultant for Integrate Africa. She received her B.A in Interpersonal and Intercultural Communications at Arizona State University and her Master of Communication Management degree at University of Southern California.



Meseret Hailu
Program Director

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Meseret is originally from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and the program director of the Ethiopian Diaspora Fellowship program. After receiving her BS and BA from the University of Denver, Meseret attended Regis University, where she received her MS in Biomedical Sciences. She then went on to work as an affiliate faculty member at two institutions: Regis University and Red Rocks Community College. As a faculty member, she discovered her love of teaching and mentoring students. Currently, Meseret is a Ph.D student in the Morgridge College of Education at the University of Denver, where she is researching access to education for marginalized women in Ethiopia. After graduation, Meseret is interested in working as a professor and researcher. Through EDF, Meseret hopes to equip Ethiopians in the Diaspora with the skills and opportunity to serve their country of origin in a meaningful way. She is particularly excited to see how Fellows and organizations dedicated to women's advocacy will mutually benefit from one another.

HOW IS THE NBA USING BASKETBALL AS A DIPLOMATIC TOOL IN AFRICA?

AN EVALUATION OF BASKETBALL WITHOUT BORDERS

BASKETBALL DIPLOMACY IN AFRICA

AN INTERVIEW WITH
AMADOU GALLO FALL

Bret Schafer



Amadou Gallo Fall, a native of Senegal, is leading the NBA's efforts to expand and build the NBA and basketball in Africa. Previously, he worked for the Dallas Mavericks as the Director of Player Personnel and Vice President of International Affairs. Fall now oversees the NBA's grassroots basketball development initiatives and its partnerships with marketing, media, and consumer product companies. This position has allowed him to work with Basketball Without Borders, the NBA and FIBA's global elite basketball development program, to bring social change in the areas of health, education, and wellness. *Public Diplomacy Magazine* editor, Bret Schafer, had the opportunity to interview Mr. Fall about his experience working at the NBA Africa office in Johannesburg, his work with Basketball Without Borders, and the August 2015 NBA game in Johannesburg.

In 2010, the NBA opened an office in Johannesburg. Why did the NBA decide the time was right to establish a permanent presence in Africa?

Gallo Fall: A number of players like Hakeem Olajuwon and Dikembe Mutombo have joined the league and changed the NBA's history with the continent, going back to Hakeem being drafted number one overall. So we always knew that there was tremendous talent in the continent. Then in 2003, we launched the Basketball Without Borders campaign. Fast-forward 10 years and we have seen the potential, hunger, and passion young people across the continent have for our sport. There are an increasing number of young players coming into our league through programs like Basketball Without Borders, providing the perfect opportunity for us to better work with these passionate young athletes and to connect with our fans. At the end of the day, our number one priority is to grow our fan base globally. The NBA has opened offices in all corners of the world, but Africa is rising and we have always felt a connection with the continent.

How did you first become involved in the NBA in Africa?

GF: I worked for the Dallas Mavericks for 12 years prior to moving to the league [office]. I was part of Basketball Without Borders from the very beginning. I have always had a passion for the continent, its youth, and basketball. When the position was created and the thought process matured, I was asked while I was still with the Mavs if I would have interest. I said that this was a job I would take even if I was not being paid a dime because it combines all my interests. My interests are (1) having an impact in Africa and its future development; and (2) using sport as a tool for connecting with

CULTURE PUBLIC-PRIVATE GOVERNMENT

youth and community building. This job provided opportunities to do both. It is exciting, what we have been able to achieve. The future remains very bright. I moved to Johannesburg in May 2010, but I started the position in January 2010.

Growing up in soccer-crazed Senegal, how were you first exposed to basketball? And how did that eventually translate into you coming to the U.S. on a basketball scholarship?

GF: I literally stumbled on the game. We all grow up playing soccer. I had a brother who was studying in France and came back one summer and brought me a basketball. He was being harassed in the streets by clubs wanting him to play – he’s taller than me. He thought he was too tall for soccer and decided to try this game. When I got exposed to it, I realized that my size was an asset. I started late and made up for it a little with my size. I met a Peace Corps volunteer who suggested that I should try to go to the U.S. and play basketball at the college level. He facilitated everything. A coach from the University of the District of Columbia sent me a letter having never seen me play – he just saw that I was 6’8. I made it to DC and it was an eye-opening experience and obviously a game changer for me. That is when I discovered the real power of sport: basketball allowed me to achieve at a high level and put me in a position to have an impact on the lives of young people.

Can you explain the cultural challenges you faced in the United States and how basketball helped to bridge cultural divides?

GF: When I arrived, I barely spoke English. I could read it better than I could speak it.

When I got to DC and my school, it was complicated. My coaches would speak to me and I couldn’t understand a word. But experience is the best teacher and I had no other choice. I was thrown into the fire, so to speak. I remember my coach picking me up at 11pm at DC International Airport and saying “Hey, see you tomorrow at school.” It is a huge wake-up call when you realize you just have to adjust.

The cultural differences were huge because I came from a French-speaking country. Nothing prepares you for having to write a dissertation in English. Language is always something that you overcome with time and experience. But I took any cultural challenge as an opportunity. I realized that it all really depends on the mindset you have. If you are driven to succeed, you are focusing on what you are trying to achieve rather than what may be standing in the way. So any challenges that may come can be opportunities to grow. I was so excited to be in the position I was in: playing basketball, going to school, meeting people from all over the world, and of course being in a city like Washington, DC.

In a broader sense, do you think sports can and should play a role in diplomacy?

GF: They do. Based on my personal experience, every day has shown me the role and the significance of sport as a conduit to bring people together and resolve conflict. Our game exposes young people to the character traits of respect, perseverance, and tolerance because you are supposed to work within a team and sometimes you have to forget your own individuality in order to work as a group.

The NBA teaches these values through a partnership with the U.S. State Department. Our Sports Envoy program has been running since 2005. Players, team personnel, and coaches from the NBA and WNBA are trained as ambassadors who

travel all over the world to spread goodwill and teach the values of the game. I think this is helping bring different cultures together.

What programs does the NBA employ in Africa to help facilitate cultural exchanges?

GF: Basketball Without Borders remains our flagship basketball development program. The first one in Africa was in 2003. Essentially, we take 100 kids from over 35 countries across the continent to Johannesburg for a week where we teach them fundamentals of the game. Our NBA players, coaches, and team personnel serve as mentors and coaches. We also integrate life skill elements and seminars so that children can learn these very important life lessons. Some of our players share important past experiences, talking about trials and tribulations and how they got to where they are. We also partner with local and global NGOs who are working in the health field, for example, to help amplify their message. That is what Basketball Without Borders really does. We also do a lot of work in the community, building legacy projects such as hospitals and playgrounds. We want to provide places where children can learn and play.

We have launched other programs since arriving in South Africa, such as the Royal Bafokeng Jr. NBA partnership here in the North West Province of South Africa. Essentially, it is again about basketball as a tool to engage people around positive social activities using the game and its values as pillars. We also partnered with ExxonMobil and launched a program in Abuja, Nigeria called Power Forward. Same objectives: a youth, school-based program teaching the fundamentals of the game but at the same time teaching them life skills. In partnership with USAID, we also launched a program in Senegal called Live, Learn, and Play, where we partnered with local NGOs to use basketball as a conduit to promote

citizenship and push young people to take education seriously.

Across the continent, our focus now is to really spread the Jr. NBA league into as many countries as possible. It is school based and the objectives remain the same: it is about offering young people the opportunity to participate in basketball while learning life lessons.

As the NBA’s ambassador to Africa, obviously your main job is to promote the game on the continent. But do you also feel that you’re somewhat of a cultural ambassador – both in terms of explaining the U.S. to Africans and, conversely, explaining Africa to Americans?

GF: By staging games like the NBA Africa Game we had in August, which brought a team made up of players from all over the world to play against NBA players from Africa right here in Johannesburg, we expose players to the culture here and the vibrancy of a city like Johannesburg. Most of the participants left saying that this was a life-changing experience. That is usually the case: players and coaches that travel to the continent tend to feel that way. So we are ambassadors, so to speak. Our role remains about empowering young people, contributing to youth development using our game as a platform. I am very fortunate to be able to have an impact working for the NBA.

The NBA held its first ever game in Africa this summer. Can you talk about that experience, and the reaction of both the NBA players who participated and the local fans?

GF: For the local fans, it was a spectacle. For me, it was the culmination of more than three decades of the NBA being involved in

Africa. Hakeem, Manute, and Dikembe laid the groundwork. All the players and coaches who have visited the continent since 2003 through Basketball Without Borders have come to the continent, visited multiple countries, and really contributed to the growth of the popularity of the NBA in Africa. Also, having an increasing number of players from the continent playing in the league – a few of them have actually gone through the Basketball Without Borders program. That is really created an unbelievable level of interest. Among the players that have come to Africa through the program are Chris Paul, Bradley Beal, Kenneth Faried, just to name a few on the world team – they all have the same testaments to make: it is a good experience and they would love to do it again.

The players from Africa come almost every year and they are very proud to welcome their colleagues in the NBA and to be a part of history. Nowadays, there are not a lot of things you can consider historic, but here we have a unique opportunity to do something truly historic and authentic that the NBA is very proud of. Just looking at the number of people who attended the game or were able to watch it on television—it was aired in 215 countries around the world—it was amazing. Here on the ground, it was a sold-out arena shortly after we made tickets available. That speaks to peoples' interests: fans have a heart for basketball and the NBA. We are looking forward to bringing bigger events to the continent for a long time to come.

Do you think sending more African players to the NBA might help the perception of Africa in the U.S.?

GF: Times are different. A lot has changed since I went to the U.S. for the first time in the early 90s and, honestly, I do not want to speak to perceptions necessarily. It is more of an education process. People will realize that Africa is 54 countries and territories. It is not

just one entity where everyone thinks and acts the same. There are a lot of things going on, a lot of exciting places to visit. We just came back this weekend from Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, where we launched our sixth Jr. NBA program on the continent. From there, we went to Rwanda to talk about doing the same thing. It is amazing, the growth I see every time I travel to one of these countries. They are vibrant and excited about all the things that are possible to achieve. For me, that is the exciting piece—to be in front of these young people and help them see that basketball combined with education can enable them to achieve great things. We have the opportunity to instill a sense of responsibility toward their community—to make them understand that they are the ones who are going to build Africa. The same thing that Luol Deng, Serge Ibaka, all these guys from Africa are doing. They are coming back every summer and doing programs in their home countries that are geared toward this model: using their life experience to inspire the next generation and give back to their communities. The number of players from Africa is going to continue to rise in our league because we are truly committed to growing the sport on the continent.

What is next for the NBA in Africa? Where do you see the program five years from now?

GF: We are going to continue to grow. We are going to focus on grassroots, one country at a time. We are going to launch our Jr. NBA leagues in all 54 countries. We are going to continue to invest in youth participation among both boys and girls. We are going to continue to increase our television footprint and grow the number of fans that enjoy watching the best athletes in the world on a daily basis. Certainly, as the number of fans and participants grow, our business is going to grow. We came here and we decided to lead with basketball because the game is at the center of everything we do.

THE COMPLEX RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AFRICA AND THE WEST IS EXPLORED ON A HUMAN SCALE THROUGH THE PERSONAL EXPERIENCES.

A DOCUMENTARY FILM THAT TAKES VIEWERS ON A JOURNEY THROUGH THE WESTERN IMAGINATION OF AFRICA

FRAMED: REPRESENTATIONS OF THE WESTERN IMAGINATION OF AFRICA

Kathryn Mathers

CULTURE PUBLIC-PRIVATE GOVERNMENT

FRAMED is a documentary film that takes viewers on a journey through the Western imagination of Africa, exploring why the media rarely shows Africans changing their own societies and what it means to erase images of African agency.¹ This complex relationship between Africa and the West is explored on a human scale through the personal experiences of Boniface Mwangi, a dynamic young Kenyan photojournalist-turned-activist, and a young American blogger, Pippa who transforms from a high schooler star struck with Africa to an outspoken critic of “voluntourism” after a revealing trip to Tanzania.

Woven into their drama are scenes and interviews with Kenyan writer Binyavanga Wainaina and South African-born sociologist Zine Magubane, who bring alive the impact of Western misrepresentations. Binyavanga grew up in post-colonial Kenya and experienced the negative impact of increasing humanitarian interventions in the lives of Kenyans. Zine, the film’s pop culture provocateur, unveils the archive of Africa’s portrayals in Hollywood films, news, and advertising, and shows us how the marketing of suffering plays out. Zine describes in depth the processes by which Africans are made invisible in a diverse range of images, especially those meant to evoke sentiment and help for these same people.²

THAT THE MORE PRESENT AFRICA AND AFRICANS ARE IN PUBLIC DIPLOMACY DRIVEN BY POPULAR CULTURE AND THE GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS OF YOUNG AMERICANS, THE MORE ABSENT THEY BECOME IN THE WORKINGS OF GOVERNMENT AND IN LEGISLATURE THAT CAN ADDRESS THE STRUCTURAL

CAUSES OF INEQUALITY.

Here I want to explore just why such representations matter. Like Zine, I have previously written about the ways that the presence of Africans in most representations of or about the continent are positioned to create an absence of African agency.³ This absence suggests important questions when considering the impact of representations of Africa on various foreign policy and public diplomacy initiatives. I argue that the more present Africa and Africans are in public diplomacy driven by popular culture and the goals and aspirations of young Americans, the more absent they become in the workings of government and in legislature that can address the structural causes of inequality.

While I cannot test this proposition here, it is this relationship that has driven my own research and the desire to make a film like FRAMED. It is a film that seeks to re-imagine Africans in the American psyche and possibly even in American policy and diplomacy.

CELEBRITY DIPLOMACY

It is hard to imagine a conversation about development and humanitarian aid, especially in Africa, without considering the impact of something now called celebrity diplomacy.⁴ While there are questions about when such forms of intervention began, it is hard to dispute the central role of Bob Geldoff in forging a peculiar relationship between the politics of aid, development, and celebrity in the late 20th century.⁵ Geldoff’s relationship with foreign aid began in the mid-1980s and relied heavily on the image of the starving child, entirely isolated from any form of familial or social support and dependent on the good will of outsiders for salvation.⁶ From this image, he generated real traction in a fight against famine in Ethiopia: he founded Live AID with the enormously popular Band Aid single, *Do*

They Know It’s Christmas which was followed by an American’s version, USA for Africa’s *We are the World*. The success of Band Aid led to the massive fundraising concert Live AID, which exemplified the power that celebrity diplomacy has for creating buzz and fundraising around an issue. The same representational tropes about Africa, especially the image of the starving child would also inform Geldoff and Bono’s campaign in 2000 against third world debt.

Fifteen years ago the unlikely alliance of Bob Geldoff and Bono ultimately did push American representatives to stand across party and political lines to support debt reduction, if not debt cancellation, for poor nations around the world.⁷ Their success might appear to be a success for celebrity engagement in political activism, and for the power of images to change policy and influence foreign relations and the ways that national governments engage with each other. But this particular moment of celebrity diplomacy did not stand alone. It was a part of Jubilee 2000, a global struggle to end third world debt by mobilizing activists from across the global South. The “end the debt” campaign was just one part of a major North-South anti-globalization movement that brought together players from all sides of the political spectrum to fight against the perceived figure head of global labor outsourcing, the World Trade Organization.⁸ In other words, Geldoff and Bono were part of a serious and highly politicized global movement. Their goal to cancel third world debt was informed by and supported by a multitude of diverse players.

YOUTH ACTIVISM

More than a decade after the partial success of the anti-debt campaign, another image of an isolated child generated a policy decision, or at least the appearance of one, in the U.S. This was an all too familiar image in American representations of Africa: a child holding a gun, the equally pathetic isolated

young African standing alone and, despite being armed, fundamentally defenseless and in need of outside support.⁹ Jason Russell and the Invisible Children campaign mobilized this image in a new form of political activism, “clicktivism,” through their KONY 2012 campaign.¹⁰ This was ostensibly a political lobbying movement focused on getting the American government’s commitment to a man hunt for Joseph Kony who, according to Russell’s narrative, was the reason why so many Ugandan children had been recruited as child soldiers and then abandoned to the streets of Kampala where he “discovered” them. These dual images of an isolated child with a gun and an evil man rode KONY 2012 through social media and poster/sticker campaigns all the way to the Capitol. This prompted U.S. leaders to commit forces to hunting down Kony in a short-lived burst of action. The effort was highly misdirected, as so many Ugandan and other commentators who know the region pointed out at the time.¹¹

THIS WAS THE DECADE OF AFRICA IN AMERICA. THIS, THOUGH, WAS AN AFRICA THAT HAD VERY LITTLE TO DO WITH THE PEOPLE OR SOCIAL AND POLITICAL REALITIES ON THE CONTINENT ITSELF AT THIS OR ANY OTHER TIME.

The decade separating these two campaigns had a real, albeit limited, social and political impact. This was the decade of AmericanS in Africa. This, though, was an Africa that had very little to do with the people or social and political realities on the continent itself at this or any other time. Representations of Africa could be seen in the most unexpected places, from reality television shows like *Survivor* and *American Idol* to the ways celebrities and everyday people were thinking about adoption

and the responsibilities of motherhood; big screen productions like *The Constant Gardner*, *Blood Diamond*, *Sahara*, *Machine Gun Preacher*; on the small screen, where *ER* went to the Sudan; and magazines like *Vanity Fair* edited by Bono.¹² In fact Bono and Oprah were everywhere talking about Product (RED)TM starting in 2006. Americans were bombarded with image of Africa as a place of simultaneous beauty and disaster. What all of these representations had in common was the idea that Africa was a place of helplessness and Africans needed our help.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The decade between Jubilee 2000 and KONY 2012 saw an increasing distancing from serious political discussion on Africa. In my book, *Travel Humanitarianism and Becoming American in Africa*, I describe a powerful shift in the conversation about Africa in the United States post 9/11. In 2000, Bono and Geldoff could make their plea to the United States' congress for debt relief especially for African nations. They could speak to a Washington that had at least watched Secretary of State Albright and President Bill Clinton travel widely in Africa and talk about growing democracies and better yet new consumers of middle class life. African nations seemed to have a seat if not at the table at least in the room where policy conversations were taking place. By 2002, it was almost impossible to hear about Africa except in relation to HIV/AIDS. Linked to that of course were the familiar and comfortable images of poverty, lack of education, and cultural traditionalism. HIV/AIDS was linked primarily to the latter two factors. This lent itself to a lack of discussion about the structural and political causes of the struggles Africans were facing. This shift was reflected in PEPFAR, an aid program that, despite a great deal of criticism, has come to be seen as the highlight of George W. Bush's presidency.¹³

AFRICAN NATIONS SEEMED TO HAVE A SEAT IF NOT AT THE TABLE AT LEAST IN THE ROOM WHERE POLICY CONVERSATIONS WERE TAKING PLACE.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic on the continent should of course have been a priority but the extent to which it dominated discourse about Africans might very well have done more harm than good.

THE IMPACT LOOP

This reliance on tropes of suffering and helplessness linked to the AIDS pandemic helped make Africa the perfect place to save. So it was not just that HIV/AIDS dominated the airwaves when it came to Africa but that Africa itself became a hot commodity. At least Africa as an imagined space on which Americans could discover themselves and find ways to be good, even great, global citizens. I suggest that this was partly made possible by the ways that Africa – always homogeneous and singular – was everywhere on television screens, in movie theaters, online, in school fundraisers, and in the lives of young Americans who flocked to places like Kenya, Tanzania, and South Africa to volunteer and to study. Superstars in film, literature, technology, and even diplomacy went to the continent to show how much they cared. Simply put, Africa was “HOT!”

WHILE AFRICA IS NO LONGER THE HOT TOPIC IT HAS BEEN, THE LASTING EFFECT OF THIS EXPLOSION OF POP CULTURE AROUND THE IDEA OF A HOPELESS CONTINENT IS THE TAKEN FOR GRANTED REPLACEMENT OF SUBSTANTIVE

POLICY AND DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND AFRICAN NATIONS WITH THE DO-GOODING PROJECTS OF YOUNG AMERICANS.

There was a clear love affair being forged between the American public and Africa via celebrities from fields as diverse as entertainment, environmentalism, the academy, and public policy. Images of Africa both reflected and created this love affair. This engagement was, however, marked by a remarkable ability to sideline and ignore African specificities let alone African initiatives, political activism and engagements, and local social and technological solutions to the problems Americans were trying to solve. In fact more often than not those problems Americans were “solving” had very little to do with the reality of lived experiences on the continents and so, “solutions” found almost no traction.

Here is where the problem of images becomes clearly a problem of policy and international relations far outside the orbit of image-makers and media agencies. Africa is consistently represented as being without people who have agency. The problems of the continent have no history or specificity. Identifying people to work with, local agencies already working on the ground, requires support or even just understanding what exactly is needed in any given place on the continent. But that is now irrelevant because the story has already been told through this onslaught of popular media and forms of activism. Yet even while the popular culture heyday for the continent died down soon after KONY 2012, the desire to help this place has simply grown stronger and more determined.

While Africa is no longer the hot topic it has been, the lasting effect of this explosion of pop culture around the idea of a hopeless continent is the taken for

granted replacement of substantive policy and diplomatic initiatives between the United States and African nations with the do-gooding projects of young Americans. Here again is an absence made possible by a kind of presence. Not only have Africans been relegated to the backdrop of projects for solving African problems but the work of the state both in the West and in Africa has become a backdrop to the multiple, isolated individual projects of driven and compassionate young Americans. This has been ably supported by college level funding opportunities and other forms of collegiate support for spending summers, semesters, and even years while at college abroad, counting towards service credit for various programs in anything from global health to international relations, to public policy and social entrepreneurship certificates, etc.

SOCIAL MEDIA BASED ACTIVISM (CLICKTIVISM) IS REPLACING MORE POLITICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL DIPLOMATIC AND POLICY RELATIONS IS EMBODIED IN THE IMAGE OF MICHELLE OBAMA IN THE WHITE HOUSE HOLDING UP A #BRINGBACKOURGIRLS SIGN.

In the years that we have been developing FRAMED in order to challenge the disappearances of Africans and African initiatives in global conversations about African aid and development, the conversation with my students has changed. I have gone from asking students to critically evaluate the use of certain images about Africa, to the way celebrity has functioned to interpret supposedly African needs, to looking critically at their own profiles on social media and their own travel and service plans. As Africa's profile rose and fell in social and news media, the idea that

one young committed person could make a change in the lives of Africans has remained consistent and in fact seems to have grown. So students are forming their own non-profits, running their own research and primary care projects, evaluating the needs of Africans all from a relatively comfortable and well-funded position in their colleges.

The idea that committed individuals' social media based activism (clicktivism) is replacing more political and institutional diplomatic and policy relations is embodied in the image of Michelle Obama in the White House holding up a #bringbackourgirls sign. This was a compelling example of clicktivism, one that had a grassroots foundation in Nigeria as young Nigerians themselves rose against their own government's inaction against Boko Haram and other forms of violence against young girls. Yet the adoption of this hashtag in the West not only did little to construct a genuine political response to this problem but, I would argue, undermined the original campaign itself. Instead it turned a politically rooted and motivated protest against a specific government into a generic 'global' campaign based entirely on sentiment.

I do not want to suggest that the current White House has no policy, diplomatic or otherwise, in relation to Africa. I argue, however, that the presence of sentimental, social media, and youth based projects in Africa works to make the real structural issues underlying these causes invisible. Yet they may well be solvable through actual political and policy shifts within western governments. This is familiar work when it comes to images, as FRAMED explores in depth. But the current iteration essentially works to prevent constructive and real engagement with African states and on the ground organizers and organizations.

FRAMED: DEVELOPING A PATHWAY FORWARD

FRAMED is not seeking to replace the images of Africa that abound, especially since we are ironically in an era of multiple representations, multiple sources from the West and the South of images of Africa and Africans. Even a little work online finds numerous ways in which Africans themselves are representing their lives and spaces. Such attempts to subvert dominant discourses through new or different imaginaries seldom work to shift the idea of Africa, as with other places condemned to existing almost entirely for the stories westerners tell about their own actions and personalities. It is not the image we are trying to change, so much as the relationship between the westerner in that image to the people around them. This is why FRAMED is so much about a particular conversation between one African and one American, rooted in the analytical work of Zine Magubane and Binyavanga Wainaina. Through this challenging set of relationships and journeys between the U.S. and Kenya, especially, we hope to shift that narrative, reframe the story so that young Americans who think that saving Africans is about going there to help consider that perhaps the work needs to be done at home.

WE HOPE TO SHIFT THAT NARRATIVE, REFRAME THE STORY SO THAT YOUNG AMERICANS WHO THINK THAT SAVING AFRICANS IS ABOUT GOING THERE TO HELP CONSIDER THAT PERHAPS THE WORK NEEDS TO BE DONE AT HOME.

In a pivotal act of the film Boniface takes the "reverse journey" taken by so many young Americans, from Africa to America, where he presents a provocative, powerful challenge to young people to think about their motives for going overseas and

pushes them to focus on problems in their own country first, often uncomfortable ones like racism and income inequality. And in the end we find Boniface on the coast of Kenya, taking part in a unique photography workshop between high school kids in Mombasa and in Chicago. This is how FRAMED will show that it is possible to change perceptions and spark new conversations between the next generation of Africans and Americans, and inspire more informed and effective choices about social change.

FOOTNOTES

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Kathryn Mathers
Senior Lecturing Fellow

Kathryn Mathers is a Senior Lecturing Fellow in the International and Comparative Studies Program, Duke University. Her writing on the cultural politics of humanitarianism appears in both scholarly and popular forums. She is researching ideas of Africanness and whiteness in encounters between South African artists and western audiences. She has a BA Honors in African Studies and an M.Phil. in Archaeology and Sociology from the University of Cape Town and a PhD in Socio-Cultural Anthropology from UC Berkeley. Her work in South Africa included voted education and evaluation of educational and cultural programs during profound political and social change.

A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE EVOLVING ROLE OF
GASTRODIPLOMACY IN AFRICAN CUISINE

PRESIDENT OF THE WILBERT JONES COMPANY,
A GOODS AND BEVERAGE PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT
AND MARKETING BUSINESS, FOUNDED IN 1993

GASTRO- DIPLOMACY IN AFRICA

AN INTERVIEW WITH WILBERT JONES

Jung-Hwa Kang & Erica McNamara



Wilbert Jones is the President of The Wilbert Jones Company, a goods and beverage product development and marketing business, founded in 1993. Jones was formerly a food scientist at Kraft Foods' biotechnology department from 1985–1993. He received a B.S. in chemistry from Loyola University of Chicago and studied at the Ecole de Gastronomique Francasie Ritz-Escoffier in Paris, France. Jones is the author of several cookbooks and in 2015 published, *Images of America: Chicago Blues*. *Public Diplomacy Magazine* editors Jung-Hwa Kang and Erica McNamara interviewed Mr. Jones to discuss the evolving role of gastrodiplomacy in African cuisine.

You have been doing a lot of lectures, seminars, and teaching particularly on African cuisine. How do you differentiate your

teaching style from the way that you were educated? Do you focus more on culture or teaching the technique?

Wilbert Jones: When I do my lectures and seminars with students and faculty, I like to meet them where they are. What I mean by that is that, of course they are in a structured academic environment, but if I am going to Kendall College (Chicago, IL) to teach, most of my class is basically just feeding them, seeing where their heads are, and asking them questions such as where were you born? Where were you raised? What inspired you to cook? Did you learn to do things from your grandmother? Why do you really want to be a chef? And it is amazing, because I think this transformation comes when you get 30–40 people in the room and you have that approach. If I am talking about a region in Africa that they are not familiar with or either a certain kind of ingredient, then I will bring that ingredient to start talking to each of the students based on their history: whether they are from Louisiana or upstate of New York. From that angle, the students would start really feeling that they are thinking out of the box. I think this is very good approach to take because then everyone has something to contribute.

What type of food culture have you seen in Africa?

WJ: Well, it depends again on your connection. Are you Muslim? Sitting down with your family? Is it a feast? Will there be several dishes? If you are urban, such as in Dakar, Senegal, you are probably eating the way we do in America: breakfast, lunch, and dinner. You are eating on the run or you might go out to dinner and have a few courses here and there, so it just depends on your background. If you go more into the rural pockets, you might have just two meals a day: you have something in the morning and something later in the day. There

are lots of root vegetables, grains, and, to some extent, it depends on the region you are in. There might not be a lot of game in pockets that are desert driven, so they are getting their proteins from non-meat. So it depends on where you are, the economic background, and what's available.

When you went to Africa, a lot of their great cuisine was not introduced to the West or other countries. Knowing that, when you are working in the United States or other Western countries, do you find any stereotyped representations of African food that you want to change or correct?

WJ: One of the biggest issues when I am doing lectures about Africa is that so many ingredients are not available in the United States, so we have to substitute a lot of those things in our recipes, especially for West African and Senegalese recipes. So I find myself substituting a lot of spices and other ingredients and, consequently, we do not get the dish as authentic as we want students to taste it. But at the same time, they will understand the technique and they will understand the background of some of the cultures.

A working definition of gastrodiplomacy is communicating culture and national identity through food. You were just discussing the importance of ingredients and how you lose a lot of that nuance and authenticity because you are substituting ingredients. When you are lecturing, do you find that people have any idea what constitutes African food? And do you find there are certain stereotypes that they perceive about African food or your work

in general as a gastrodiplomat?

WJ: People have misconceptions about what the cuisine is all about. For one, they just do not know a whole a lot about it. Most people do not really go to Africa for the culinary experience as they would go to Europe or Asia or South America. In Africa, you worry about street food, about eating something safe, and about reactions to certain ingredients you are not familiar with.

ETHIOPIA WAS PART OF THE SPICE TRADE ALONG WITH MOZAMBIQUE AND DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA, COMING IN FROM THE INDIAN OCEAN ALL THE WAY BACK ALONG TO THE ATLANTIC PART, SO ALL OF THOSE SPICES WERE SO INFLUENCED BY INDIA.

For example, looking at Kenya, they have very little vegetables but there is lots of game there. I remember when I was putting together my lectures for Kendall College, I was just so overwhelmed, because you need a two-year course to actually cover all the territories and cuisines because there is just so much! You try to cherry pick the best cases so that there will be enough information for the students and the faculty to walk away with, but Africa is just huge.

We cannot even say "African cuisine," because we are talking about 57 countries on the second largest land on earth, and there is so much within that. For example, if you look at South Africa, there are probably 15 different kinds of cuisines within the 12 different regions there. Africa is huge! It is almost like looping together America by saying "America only has one type of cooking." But in America, you have Cajun Creole, Southern traditional, East Coast, New England, West, and South West cooking.

Does your knowledge of the



continent influence the way you present your information when you give lectures on Kenyan cuisine, for example?

WJ: Absolutely, from a cultural standpoint, not many recipes are written down, so we would go to villages or markets to watch what they cook and how they prepare items, and those recipes go back hundreds and hundreds of years. The way people do certain techniques, eat certain things with certain kinds of seasonings, and use certain spices and ingredients for certain products are all tied to culture. In North Africa, it is heavily Muslim, so clearly, that is a reflection of the culture there, where alcohol is not consumed and pork is forbidden. When you start looking and cherry picking countries, such as Morocco and places like that, you are just not going to find those ingredients. For the most part,

culture drives a lot of what is available.

You have already mentioned the importance of ingredients and spices in African foods. Are there any other components you want to emphasize that are necessary to understand African cuisine?

WJ: I would also look at what the youth are doing. They are doing a lot of what we are doing in this country. A lot of the millennials in the United States, unless you have gone into culinary school, have no interest in cooking. In the United States, you have prepared food everywhere—no one is really cooking from scratch. You have all these youths who are not expressing an interest in keeping their cuisine going. And the question would be, after the cuisine falls apart, what about the culture? The youth do not want to look at old, traditional customs and how things were done a certain way, so all of this kind of falls by the wayside. Since there are not a lot of cookbooks and publications about Africa to begin with—you basically hand down recipes from one generation to another—so if the youth are not picking that up, that is going to be gone too.

There are a lot of travel shows to Africa, advertising safaris and the stereotypical image of Africa. However, you do not see many food-based programs or cookbooks coming to or from the continent. Do you think there is perceived lack of interest in African cuisine that affects the lack of information available?

WJ: I think it is because of fear. Typically one is afraid of even going to the market. Street food has a very big presence throughout the continent, but you have tourists who do not want to be a part of that. So what do they

do? They check themselves into a luxurious hotel and have heavily European-inspired food, and not African cuisine. So they do not get a chance to be exposed to culture at that level because of the lack of understanding and the fear that's in place.

Your new book is on African street food. What inspired you to choose this theme?

WJ: I was going to write a book on African cuisine. However, on my last trip to Africa, I noticed that some of the most authentic experiences were coming from the street food. I found that some of the chefs at the resorts were going out to eat the street food after they cooked for their hotel patrons. So I joined some of the chefs at the hotels and

went to the market safely, and it was almost like an Anthony Bourdain experience, getting the real inside track on what the authentic cuisine is about. It would be the same caliber if you go to the Caribbean—you have these beautiful resorts, with heavily European-inspired food, but you get a local person at the resort to take you to experience what the locals eat and get an understanding of the customs of the locals as well as what the cuisine is about; so that inspired me. We are still in the proposal stage; I am still pulling recipes and doing research.

From your travel and experience, what are three types of cuisine or emerging markets for gastro-cuisine and gastro-tourism that could introduce the Western world to the African palette?

WJ: You know, you can always tell when a trend is about to come on when you see what stores like Crate and Barrel and Sur la Table have available. And all of them have their own brand of a tagine. Tagine is Moroccan cuisine, a signature style of cooking. People are obviously buying them in America, because they keep making and selling them. So I think the tagine technique will really kick off. I recently did a post about a chicken tagine, with great photos, which you can probably find on my Facebook.

I am also starting to see an interest in Ethiopian honey wine that is infused and very easy to make. I am hoping that will be something. It is very popular in Ethiopian restaurants. In terms of Ethiopian food you see in American restaurants, it is probably their samosas—pastries that are wrapped and filled with savory fillings such as chicken and vegetables or just straight lentils. Ethiopia was part of the spice trade along with Mozambique and Durban, South Africa, coming in from the Indian Ocean all the way back along to the Atlantic part,

so all of those spices were so influenced by India. So when you have samosas, whether it is in Ethiopia or in Durban, South Africa, when you open up these pastries, you say, “This tastes just like Indian cuisine.”

Do you think that diaspora communities are one of the reasons we have more ethnic cuisines or is it just global business?

WJ: It is not a completely a black and white answer. I would say if we went Nando's today, it would probably be 30% more South Africans there than other people. There will be some who are there because they want to try, it because of the write-ups. But, I think it comes down to marketing and business. In the case of Nando's in South Africa, the restaurateurs are asking: “How would our product go over if the local people from your country did not support it? How can we have a global presence that works?” It could be seen as an incredible opportunity to educate people and let them see the cuisine from your eyes.

USC recently had a visit from the President of Ghana. During his visit, President John Mahama spoke about nation branding using the example of Ghanaian chocolate, which has relatively less international recognition than, for example, Swiss chocolate, where they import cocoa from Ghana. As a food product developer and a marketing consultant, how would you advise the Sub-Saharan African countries to market their national cuisines?

WJ: When asking questions like this, one must always remember the level of wealth disparity within the continent. Nation branding and cuisine branding are simply

not possible in some places. Still, South Africa is doing a great job. They are tied into a lot of the global food trade shows, including a really big one called the SIAL (www.sial.fr), one of the world's largest food/beverage trade shows, an excellent place to explore food/beverage trends and innovation of new ideas. Kenya has come on board and is promoting their tea. Ethiopia is promoting their coffee.

I think the countries need to start looking at things from a legal standpoint. What I mean by that is to obtain an international patent or claim to what they are doing. For example, you can only use the term “Champagne” when a product is from France; products originating from other countries have to be called something else. If African nations were able to do that kind of thing, it would give them a global presence and it would go a long way in terms of national cuisine branding.

What is your future plan for African gastrodiplomacy?

WJ: I will continue to educate myself. I have another planned trip to Africa from May to June, 2016, where I will go, for the first time, to the Kalahari Desert. I am going to be with the bushmen and see up close, up front, what fruits they are eating, what animals they are eating and I will be with them in the Kalahari Desert for about 3-4 days. So that will be very exciting to see what the bushmen have been eating to have survived for thousands of years. I will also be doing more lectures. As I continue along with the African street food book, there will be lectures and workshops I will be giving, and I am also going to get back into television, in addition to doing some YouTube videos.



AFRICA'S DIVERSE CULTURAL MAKE-UP IS EXHIBITED IN FILMS OF MULTIPLE GENRES THAT TACKLE THE MYRIAD ISSUES FACING THE CONTINENT

FILMS ARE A MEDIUM THROUGH WHICH CULTURAL DIPLOMACY & INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS CAN BE CONDUCTED, SINCE THEY REFLECT & CONVEY SOCIETAL VALUES & PROMOTE UNDERSTANDING

FILM & CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

THE NOLLYWOOD CASE

Hope Obioma Opara

The continent of Africa is made up of a great number of ethnic cultures, each of which encompasses different tribes and languages. This diverse cultural make-up is exhibited in films of multiple genres that tackle the myriad issues facing the continent. Films are a medium through which cultural diplomacy and international relations can be conducted because they reflect and convey cultural and societal values and promote understanding of the other when presented before large audiences at film festivals and the like. A good example of the transformative value of film can be seen in the case of Nollywood and its impact on Nigerian foreign policy.

FILM AS CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

Each year, filmmakers around Africa produce thousands of films, confirming the key position film holds as a product of strategic and artistic relevance. It is an artistic medium that imbibes and conveys the values and beliefs of the culture within which and for which it is made. Because of the significant cultural diversity in Africa, filmmakers there have a multitude of approaches to film production and storytelling.

Films can be used as a tool of cultural diplomacy, which is defined as the exchange of ideas, information, art, and other aspects of culture among nations and their people in order to foster mutual understanding. Popular culture and art play important roles in how a country is perceived by the world, but film is unique because it is easily accessible and often watched by people who might otherwise have no contact with art. Unlike other art forms, film produces a sense of immediacy because the pictures tell stories that viewers can see unfolding.

Film's unique ability to create the illusion of life and reality can offer the world new perspectives, especially those from cultures and places that have traditionally been marginalized. It is an extremely

powerful medium. For example, film can depict human rights abuses and repression in a way that challenges audience members to empathize and consider how justice could be served and wounds healed. Cinema brings people together and creates a forum for individuals on both sides of the lens. Film can empower the audience with the knowledge that personal commitment can make a difference.

Often, films bring up issues that cannot be reached through other, more traditional mediums of discourse. They often revolve around new issues and help to start a discussion in societies around them, a discussion that can lead to change. Films can foster the growth of civil society, mutual cooperation, and understanding by serving as a flexible, universally accepted vehicle for rapprochement, even between countries where diplomatic relations have been strained or are absent.

FILM FESTIVALS AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Film festivals are a platform for cross-cultural dialogue, bringing together professionals from different countries to exchange ideas and experiences. They juxtapose works by revolutionaries, cultural figures, environmentalists, and political advocates of all types. Exhibiting the continent's cultural diversity is often a motivation that unites directors from every corner of Africa, pushing them to produce their work.

FILMS OFTEN EXPLORE DIFFICULT SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ISSUES THROUGH VARYING VIEWPOINTS. THIS CONTRIBUTES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF CROSS-CULTURAL DIALOGUE AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN COMMUNITIES,

WHICH REINFORCES THEIR PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE.

To fully evaluate the role of film festivals, one must look at the contribution they make to a country's soft power, and its efficacy as a method for cultural engagement and exchange. These festivals usually feature films that were produced in the previous year, and welcome entries from different genres, including documentary, short film, religious, political, and cultural. In screening such a diverse range of films, festivals can act as an instrument for positive change by encouraging conversation around social, political, and cultural problems.

FILM AND CULTURE

A community's culture consists of conventional patterns of thought and behavior, including values, beliefs, rules of conduct, political organization, economic activities, and the like, which are passed on from one generation to the next by learning – not by biological inheritance. Culture is learned and dependent on being brought up within a framework – a cultural space. Many film festivals present works that reflect the traditions, customs, and rituals of the inhabitants of different countries and in doing so, influence the host audience's cultural development and understanding of the other.

In this sense, cinema presents inexhaustible possibilities for getting acquainted and sympathizing with people of other nationalities and religions. Looking at the screen and into another, sometimes foreign world, audiences can recognize what all humans share – joys, sorrows, hopes, and adversities.

Films often explore difficult social and political issues through varying viewpoints. This contributes to the development of cross-cultural dialogue and mutual understanding between communities, which reinforces their peaceful co-existence.

To know someone else means to see oneself in him or her. Film allows people to understand the values and culture of a community. People often take for granted the cultural spaces in which they move around, because in such familiar terrain, they understand what is going on and why. It can be hard to imagine that someone from a different culture, stepping into one's own, might find it strange and confusing. It can also be hard to recognize that someone's lack of experience and understanding about one's cultural space limits their ability to make their own choices and express themselves. This is because in a foreign cultural space, one tends to feel a loss of control that only returns when one has become familiar with the new surroundings. This is why film festivals play a pivotal role for real cultural exchange.

IN A FOREIGN CULTURAL SPACE ONE TENDS TO FEEL A LOSS OF CONTROL THAT ONLY RETURNS WHEN ONE HAS BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE NEW SURROUNDINGS. THIS IS WHY FILM FESTIVALS PLAY A PIVOTAL ROLE FOR REAL CULTURAL EXCHANGE.

The culture of a nation may only develop in a dialogue with other cultures. Such films, while observing closely the life of strangers, may be imbued with common human problems, troubles, joys, and adversities. They will play a role in exploring the most difficult socio-political problems, encouraging tolerance, and emphasizing the shared human experience. These films can also be a tool of advocacy, reconciling with the past to shape a better present and future.

In Africa, some harmful traditions that have been practiced for hundreds of years are no longer in step with modern civilization's values and beliefs. Some of the

films submitted to film festivals in Africa explore these issues and work through soft power to bring change.

For instance, *B for Boy*, a film produced by the Nigerian director Chika Anadu and set in his home country, is a contemporary drama about one woman's desperate need for a male child. It explores the discrimination of women in the name of culture and religion. This mindset is predominant in eastern Nigeria where women are not allowed to inherit properties from their father; however, legislators are now in the process of passing a law that would allow women to inherit. Another film, *I CRY*, deals with the issue of female genital mutilation, a harmful cultural tradition that is still being practiced in secret in Nigeria.

The Clan's Wife is a film produced by a Ugandan filmmaker Hassan Mageye. This piece contributed a major push for the fight against wives being inherited. This is a common practice in Uganda where widows are forcibly inherited, along with other property, by male in-laws upon the death of a husband. *The Clan's Wife* tells a compelling story of how the practice of wife inheritance claimed many lives in the area of Ankole in a time when AIDS was less well understood. The storyline revolves around one tragic family who contracts the deadly disease through the forced sharing of a wife. Films of this sort attempt to discourage some of these harmful traditions and encourage change by bringing these issues into the public spotlight.

FILM AND NATION-BRANDING: A NOLLYWOOD CASE STUDY

Film can also be a tool for re-branding a country, as the Nollywood film industry has been for Nigeria. The Nigerian government has made citizen diplomacy a central part of its foreign policy strategy – the first time it has enunciated a clear-cut foreign policy objective. Nigeria's image abroad has been battered by corruption, abject poverty, and

crimes such as bunkering, kidnapping, fraud, and electoral manipulation. Previously, movies had portrayed Nigeria in a bad light. To counter this, the government evaluated the movies produced in Nigeria and encouraged filmmakers to showcase the country's value systems, rather than supernatural rituals. With a clear message and actions in terms of what it does and does not support in Nigerian film content, the government hopes that its cultural diplomacy work will enhance the country's image in the international arena, expedite the government's initiatives for national progress, and add value to Nigerian society.

FILM CAN ALSO BE A TOOL FOR RE-BRANDING A COUNTRY, AS THE NOLLYWOOD FILM INDUSTRY HAS BEEN FOR NIGERIA.

Nigeria's successful motion picture industry enhances the country's image abroad through both formal and informal means. Nollywood contributes to Nigeria's GDP and is one of the largest employers in the country, as well as being the second highest-producing film industry in the world. People from all over Africa and the world watch Nollywood films. Often, Nollywood stars are invited to attend special events outside Nigeria as representatives of the country and the industry. This has given the industry a staggering amount of soft power.

THIS UNILATERAL BROADCASTING IS TRANSFORMED INTO AN AVENUE OF MULTILATERAL LEARNING THROUGH THE USE OF FILM FESTIVALS, WHICH SERVE TO INFORM AND INFLUENCE AN AUDIENCE WITHIN AND WITHOUT AFRICA, AND BECOMING A MAJOR ELEMENT

OF CULTURAL DIPLOMACY WORLDWIDE.

Some Nollywood stars have enhanced Nigeria's image through their philanthropic efforts. For example, Stephanie Okereke Linus works in collaboration with corporations to provide treatment for women with vesicovaginal fistula, a medical condition that has ravaged many women in Nigeria. Many other Nollywood stars advocate fighting violence against women, an end to child marriage, against rape, and campaigning for each girl's right to an education. The Nollywood film industry has also attracted major Hollywood talent, for example, the American comedian and actor Danny Glover, also known as Childish Gambino, took part in an upcoming film about the Ebola virus.

THE NIGERIAN FILM INDUSTRY HAVE ENHANCED THE WORLD'S UNDERSTANDING AND RESPECT FOR NIGERIA, BUT THIS UNILATERAL BROADCASTING IS TRANSFORMED INTO AN AVENUE OF MULTILATERAL LEARNING THROUGH THE USE OF FILM FESTIVALS

Nollywood has also produced some international ambassadors who represent the Nigerian people for nongovernmental agencies such as UNICEF and Amnesty International, and major corporations such as Land Rover motor manufacturing company and Unilever consumer goods company. The industry also contributes content to multi-national cable networks like MultiChoice Africa, the biggest cable TV network in South Africa, and StarTimes, cable TV based in China. Movies hailing from Nollywood can be found on popular online platforms such as Iroko TV, Afrinolly, and Netflix, as well as search engines such

as Google and Yahoo, etc.

Nigerian films and the Nigerian film industry have enhanced the world's understanding and respect for Nigeria, but this unilateral broadcasting is transformed into an avenue of multilateral learning through the use of film festivals, which serve to inform and influence an audience within and without Africa, and becoming a major element of cultural diplomacy worldwide.



Hope Obioma Opara President

Hope Obioma Opara is the President/ Founder of the Eko International Film Festival (www.ekoiff.org), and the Managing Director of Supple Communications Limited and Flonnal Limited. He holds a Masters of Business Administration and he is a member of the Nigerian Institute of Management (NIM). He is also an Associate Registered Practitioner in Advertising (ARPA) in the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria. Having attended film festivals across Europe, Hope was inspired to establish a film festival in Nigeria in order to foster the growth and development of the "Nollywood" film industry. In addition, he founded Supple Magazine (www.supplemagazine.org), a publication devoted to covering the global film industry and international film festivals.

HOW DOES THE IGBO USE NOLLYWOOD AS A TOOL OF CULTURAL DIPLOMACY?

EXAMINING HOW THE IGBO LANGUAGE AND CULTURE HAVE HELPED SHAOPE NIGERIA'S FILM INDUSTRY AND ADVANCED INTERACTIONS WITH OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES.

IGBO, NOLLYWOOD, & DIPLOMACY

THE ROLE OF THE IGBO IN NOLLYWOOD

Uchenna Onuzulike

INTRODUCTION

This article explores how the Igbo, an ethnic group located in the Southeastern part of Nigeria, construct their ethnic identities using Nollywood within the framework of cultural diplomacy.^{1,2} This article uses cultural diplomacy as a lens to underline how the Igbo and their culture have contributed to Nollywood. The Igbo have been stereotyped regarding their love of wealth as well as their entrepreneurship. Ironically, they used this spirit of entrepreneurship to transform the Nigerian film industry and propel it to the world stage. Examining the role of Nollywood as a form of Igbo cultural diplomacy demonstrates how the second-generation Igbo children who use Nollywood movies to connect to their ancestral home and culture and how the Igbo language and culture have helped shape the Nigerian film industry. It highlights how Nollywood facilitates and advances interactions between Igbo culture and other

African cultures. It is not uncommon for Igbo filmmakers to collaborate with other ethnic groups in Nigeria in order to make a film. In the same vein, Nollywood filmmakers have collaborated with other African countries, especially with Ghana, in producing movies. These collaborations allow for cultural exchange and dialogue among Africans. They also advance and promote inter-ethnic and intercultural competence among Africans.

AN IGBO PRIMER

The Igbo are one of three major ethnic groups in Nigeria. The other two are the Hausa-Fulani and the Yoruba. Even though the Igbo people can be found in every state in Nigeria, their primordial or ancestral homeland is concentrated in the states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo, all of which are in Southeastern Nigeria. Other areas of homeland are the Aniocha and Ika areas of the Delta state,

while some Igbo speakers can be found in parts of the Cross River, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, and Rivers states. The spoken language is specifically Igbo, although there are a variety of dialects. The Igbo population is estimated to be over 25.2 million.³ The Igbo are not new to migration and their lives and identity have long been impacted by the diaspora.⁴

IGBO ENTREPRENEURSHIP

“The Igbo admire ‘the man of energy, the gogetter...’ and that the qualities stressed in children’s upbringing are property, money, honesty, and loyalty to kinsmen.”⁵ Ndigbo “are the most energetic parvenus who have successfully challenged the established order of supremacy which the Yoruba occupied in the elitist professional civil service establishments.”⁶ The phrase Igbo Entrepreneurship was derived from Igbo (culture) and entrepreneurship. This simply means planning, organizing, coordinating, and controlling other factors of production, and production processes in Igbo learning culture. Therefore, an Igbo entrepreneur is a person who does not only coordinate other factors of production, but who from time to time seeks opportunities to make profit through his/her innovativeness, creativity, customers’ satisfaction, and efficient utilization of scarce resources in a consistent cultural pattern.⁷ In addition, “The Igbo entrepreneurs have dominated Nigeria and even across the national boundary, such as South Africa, Cameroon, Ghana, Mali, and Gambia, China, and so on.”⁸

THE EMERGENCE OF NOLLYWOOD

The first film screening in Nigeria took place at Glover Memorial Hall in Lagos in August 1903. Since then, film productions in Nigeria have continued to evolve through the colonial period, the independence period, the indigenization

period, and the Nollywood era.^{9,10} The emergence of Nollywood has been credited to the 1992 film *Living in Bondage*, but earlier accomplishments set the stage.^{11,12,13,14,15} The Yoruba travelling theatre movement of the 1980s, led by director Chief Hubert Ogunde and his contemporary Ola Balogun, foregrounded Nollywood.^{16,17} Also, Onitsha Market Literature helped set the stage for some notable Nollywood genres such as the supernatural, which was evidenced in *Living in Bondage*.

ALTHOUGH DATED, A 2006 SURVEY CONDUCTED BY THE UNESCO INSTITUTE FOR STATISTICS (UIS) RANKED NOLLYWOOD AS THE SECOND-LARGEST FILM PRODUCER IN THE WORLD, JUST BEHIND BOLLYWOOD. HOLLYWOOD WAS PLACED THIRD. THE SURVEY ACCOUNTED THAT BOLLYWOOD PRODUCED 1,091 FEATURE LENGTH FILMS, NOLLYWOOD MADE 872 (ALL IN VIDEO FORMAT) WHILE HOLLYWOOD MADE 485 MAJOR FILM PRODUCTIONS.

The film was developed by a trio of indigenous Igbo. It was produced by Okechukwu Ogunjiofor, directed by Chris Obi Rapu [as Vic Mordi], and marketed by Kenneth Nnebue’s Nek Video Links Limited. Even though this film was made in the Igbo language, it catapulted Nigeria’s film industry across the globe. Nnebue’s marketing entrepreneurship is particularly notable: he used videocassettes he imported from Taiwan to dub *Living in Bondage* for mass production. He marketed what became a household movie and then he made subsequent movies. This led to other cinematographers – both professionals





and amateurs – to engage in video film productions. Now, other African countries are emulating Nneke in making movies in video format.

New technologies, such as video technology, have provided the Nigerian film industry with the tools to engage in cultural diplomacy, including interactions between various Nigerian and other African ethnic and cultural groups. Nollywood portrays Africa both in positive and negative ways. Nonetheless, one of the most important things is that the proliferation of video technology has made it possible for the Igbo and Africans in general to tell their own stories.

Right now, making Nollywood movies has been transforming from videocassettes, to analog video, and to digital equipment. The Nigerian forms of film production have been tagged “home video,” “video,” and “video film.” The term “video film” is the outcome of combining television and cinema.¹⁸ Expanding Haynes’s definition,

Onuzulike articulates the term “video film” as “any movie or motion picture produced mainly in video format while adhering to particular cinematic values and conventions.”¹⁹ However, Nollywood has produced movies on celluloid including *The Amazing Grace* (2006)²⁰ and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2013).²¹ Due to the high cost of celluloid, Nigerian filmmakers resort to video.

Although dated, a 2006 survey conducted by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) ranked Nollywood as the second-largest film producer in the world, just behind Bollywood. Hollywood was placed third. The survey accounted that Bollywood produced 1,091 feature length films, Nollywood made 872 (all in video format) while Hollywood made 485 major film productions.²²

Due to the Igbo entrepreneurial quest, “the video film phenomenon has created an environment in which [Igbo], Nigerian and other African cultural contexts

can be reproduced.”²³ “Video film has transformed how contemporary African filmmakers tell their stories.”²⁴ The Igbo oral communication and material culture are ever-present in both in Igbo-language and English version movies. Some of the facets are attire, artifacts, proverbs, idioms, and Igbo sound bites. Igbo proverbs are not only vital to the propagation of Igbo culture in all its implications; they are a factor in formal and familiar speeches and in other forms of popular communication.

The almost compulsory use of Igbo idioms (*akpaalaokwu*), proverbs (*ilu*), and parables (*ukabuilu*) “has elevated the language to the status of a living art of popular communication.”²⁵ In the Igbo traditional setting, when people come to talk, especially about important issues, they use idioms, proverbs, and other forms of expression to introduce or explain their matters. Often, the speakers expect the listener to understand these forms of speech without being explicit.²⁶

THE IGBO IMPACT ON NOLLYWOOD

Igbo-language films and Igbo English movies help advance Igbo across Africa and beyond. Igbo film productions

help provide inter-ethnic and inter-cultural communication. For example, different ethnic and cultural groups appear on the set at the same time. They work together producing movies and it increases their inter-ethnic and inter-cultural competency.

Two of the most prominent Nollywood films, *Living in Bondage* (1992) and *Osuofia in London* (2003/2004), are based on Igbo culture and people. As indicated earlier, *Living in Bondage* is credited by many as the film that made the Nigerian film industry successful. *Osuofia in London* is arguably the most popular Nollywood movie ever made.²⁷ Many Nollywood audiences are familiar with *Osuofia in London*, one of the most popular Nollywood films, and can relate to it. Even though the film was made in English, it is full of Igbo aesthetics, culture, and sound bites. The film was shot in Nigeria and in London representing the transnational lives of the Igbo. Igbo culture is manifested in their language, mode of dress, food, belief system, norms and value system, etc. Many people of African descent that are familiar with Nollywood movies tend to imitate the Igbo cultural cues that are common in them.

Igbo culture encompasses religious objects; art, artifacts, and symbols; music and dance; proverbs, idioms, riddles, and



CULTURE PUBLIC-PRIVATE GOVERNMENT

imageries. Some of them are the observation of Igbo traditional rites including "Ime ego" (bride price) as well as "Igba nkwu" (also known as 'wine carrying') and the observation of Kola. "The kola nut[s] ... are eaten at every formal gathering and during family and social visits. As Ndigbo would say, 'He who brings kola brings life.'

Also, Igbo presence in Nollywood helps disseminate Igbo culture to second-generation Igbo children living in the diaspora who want to reconnect with their own culture. Since many Nollywood movies are made in the English language yet contain a strong presence of Igbo cultural cues, young viewers can identify with the Igbo cultural elements in the movies. These remarks correspond with a research project done in the Washington, DC area by this author in 2014. I interviewed 12 young Igbo residing in the DC area in order to ascertain how they construct and negotiate their ethnic and transnational identities in the United States. The participants indicated that they use Nollywood movies to maintain ties to Igbo culture and heritage.²⁸ The participants identified with the culture because they live and experience Igbo culture through their parents, through Igbo organizations, through peers, through social interactions, as well as in their own respective homes.²⁹

IGBO PRESENCE IN NOLLYWOOD HELPS DISSEMINATE IGBO CULTURE TO SECOND-GENERATION IGBO CHILDREN LIVING IN THE DIASPORA WHO WANT TO RECONNECT WITH THEIR OWN CULTURE.

Diaspora Igbo have been engaging in Nollywood production. For example, Igbo London-based Nollywood film producer Obi Emelonye made an Igbo-language film *Onye Ozi* (*The Messenger*, 2013);³⁰ it is

subtitled in English and is set in London. The film received the 2015 Africa Magic Viewer's Choice Awards (AMVCA) Best Local Language Igbo award. This is another boost for our Igbo-language film producers. Also, the film won the 2014 Africa Movie Academy Awards (AMAA) for Achievement in Soundtrack and the 2014 Nollywood Movies Awards (NMA) for Best Indigenous Movies and the Best Diaspora Movie. Also in 2010, Chineze Anyaene, an Igbo residing in the United States, produced the Nollywood film *Ije: the Journey*, which was shot on 35mm celluloid.³¹

IGBO NOLLYWOOD STARS

Some notable Igbo male stars include Pete Edochie; Anayo Modestus Onyekwere, popularly known as Kanayo O. Kanayo; Nonso Diobi; Mike Ezuruonye; James Ikechukwu Esomugha, widely known as Jim lyke; Nkem Owoh, popularly known as Osuofia; John Okafor, widely known as Mr. Ibu; Kenneth Okonkwo is widely known as Andy Okeke from his very popular movie *Living in Bondage*; Osita theme is popularly known for playing the role of 'Pawpaw' in the breakthrough film *Aki na Ukwa*, and his co-star, Chinedu Ikedieze, is widely known for playing alongside Ithem in several other movies.³²

Some of the notable Igbo film female stars include Genevieve Nnaji; Stephanie Okereke; Patience Ozokwor (aka Mama G); Uche Jumbo, Ashley Nwosu, Clarion Chukwurah; Ngozi Ezeonu; Omoni Oboli; Judith "AfroCandy" Mazagwu; and so many others. On September 2009, Nneji made an appearance on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* as one of the most famous people in the world and was featured amongst popular stars in sports and entertainment.³³ "The highlight of the show was when Oprah played a montage of movies featuring the popular actress Genevieve Nnaji, whom she called 'the Julia Roberts of Africa.'"³⁴ This is one of the great examples of the Igbo's



cultural diplomacy.
THE CHALLENGES

There are some challenges facing Igbo Nollywood producers. Specifically, Igbo filmmakers prefer producing films in English. This has led to accusations about the Igbo's lack of loyalty to their language and culture. Igbo filmmakers argue that there is no market for Igbo-language films. Another concern is the portrayal of Igbo culture. Due to the hasty production and small budgets of most Nollywood movies, the producers are likely to overlook depicting Igbo culture correctly; they may improvise elements that are not a true representation of Igbo or African cultures in general. Also, they may reinforce some negative stereotypes of the Igbo, Nigeria, and other African cultures. These types of issues may hinder cultural diplomacy. The Igbo are best portrayed to the world in their

Igbo language. Such movies such as *Living in Bondage* (1992), *Ikuku* (1995) and *Rattle Snake* (1994) reflect the evolving Igbo culture.^{35,36} Productions in Igbo language illuminate the beauty of Igbo language and culture.

CONCLUSION

Nollywood has become the highest sector of employment besides the government in Nigeria for the Igbo. Commercial success of English-language Nollywood films was engineered by Igbo entrepreneurship. At the same time, by producing Nollywood films in English in order to reach a global audience, Igbo-language film production is undermined. The production of English-language films was targeted for a wider audience across

Africa. Even though the Igbo have played a tremendous role in establishing Nollywood, on the other hand they have been faulted for not using Igbo language or promoting it in their movies.

PRODUCTIONS IN IGBO LANGUAGE ILLUMINATE THE BEAUTY OF IGBO LANGUAGE AND CULTURE.

In conclusion, Igbo entrepreneurship helped produce the film that is credited for ushering in Nollywood as well as subsequent movies. The Igbo producers used Igbo-language and English-language Nollywood movies to showcase Igbo language, cues, sound bites, cultural codes, and values. Even though Nollywood may reinforce some negative stereotypes, it can also enable people to highlight their culture, heritage, and identity for themselves.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 According to Nicholas Cull, "Cultural diplomacy may be defined as an actor's attempt to manage the international environment through making its cultural resources and achievements known overseas and/or facilitating cultural transmission abroad." See Cull, N. J. (2009). *Public diplomacy: Lessons from the past*. USC Center on Public Diplomacy at the Annenberg School University of Southern California. Los Angeles, CA: Figueroa Press for more.
- 2 Nollywood, Nigeria's booming film industry, is the world's third largest producer of feature films. For more see <http://www.thisisnollywood.com/nollywood.htm>.
- 3 Minorityrights.com, Nigeria-Igbo. <http://minorityrights.org/minorities/igbo/>
- 4 Onuzulike, U. (2010). *Nollywood Video Film: Nigerian Movies as Indigenous*. VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, Germany.
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IMAGES OF AFRICA:

KENYA, SENEGAL, & UGANDA
A PHOTO ESSAY

Johnathan Torgovnik

Photography is a powerful medium for storytelling, social activism, and public diplomacy, capable of documenting not only the lives of distant peoples and cultures, but also encouraging us, the viewer, to think differently about certain issues or themes. In the following pages, Public Diplomacy Magazine has curated a collection of images by international photographer Jonathan Torgovnik, of Reportage by Getty Images, who traveled to Kenya, Senegal, and Uganda to showcase empowered women in sub-Saharan Africa. His photographs reveal women in charge of their lives, and offer a counter-narrative to stereotypical imagery of women's marginalization and oppression. The images reprinted below (under Creative Commons license: CC BY NC 4.0) represent notable examples of the power of visual storytelling to inform, inspire and influence global perceptions of women in Africa.

SHOMPOLE, KENYA

MAASAI TRIBE ELDERS AND WOMEN GATHER FOR A FORUM ON SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH METHODS AND ALTERNATIVE RIGHTS OF PASSAGE FOR YOUNG GIRLS THAT WOULD STOP FEMALE CIRCUMCISION.



KWALE, KENYA

A WOMEN'S COOPERATIVE GROUP USES OXEN FOR PLOWING LAND, A JOB TRADITIONALLY PERFORMED BY MEN, AS AN INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITY. THIS INCOME ENABLES WOMEN TO DECIDE FOR THEMSELVES HOW TO SPEND MONEY ON FAMILY PLANNING OPTIONS, HEALTH SERVICES, AND EDUCATION FOR THEIR CHILDREN.

CULTURE PUBLIC-PRIVATE GOVERNMENT

MOMBASA, KENYA

A MOBILE CLINIC PROVIDES WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS FAMILY PLANNING OPTIONS LIKE CONTRACEPTIVE IMPLANTS AND CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING.



NAIROBI, KENYA

MEMBERS OF THE NAIROBI YOUNG AND OLD COOPERATIVE MAKE INCOME GENERATING PRODUCTS THAT ARE SOLD AT LOCAL MARKETS, ENABLING THE WOMEN TO HAVE SOME FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE AND MAKE THEIR OWN DECISIONS ON FAMILY PLANNING OPTIONS.

KEURMASSAR, SENEGAL

FEMALE COMMUNITY LEADERS MEET WITH LOCAL RELIGIOUS LEADERS TO DISCUSS ISSUES RELATING TO WOMEN'S RIGHTS, REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING. THIS IS PART OF AN ADVOCACY PROJECT TO SENSITIZE THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS TO WOMEN'S ISSUES.



SAHRE BOGAR, SENEGAL

WOMEN PARTICIPATING IN THE TOSTAN COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM LEARN ABOUT THEIR RIGHTS TO HEALTH CARE, FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE, AND HOW DISEASES ARE SPREAD AND PREVENTED. THEY ALSO DISCUSS THE HEALTH RISKS OF HARMFUL PRACTICES SUCH AS FEMALE GENITAL CUTTING AND CHILD MARRIAGE.

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MBALE, UGANDA

A COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER VISITS A WOMAN AT HOME TO PROVIDE FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES AND INFORMATION TO WOMEN IN THE COMMUNITY. THIS PROACTIVE PROGRAM IS SUPPORTED BY REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH UGANDA.



APAC, UGANDA

WOMEN FROM THE YOUNG MOTHERS GROUP LEARN FAMILY PLANNING INFORMATION FROM A COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER. THE PROGRAM IS SUPPORTED BY REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH UGANDA, A PROGRAM FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT.

KAMPALA, UGANDA:

MEMBERS OF THE MUVUBUKA AGUNJUSE YOUTH CLUB PROVIDE OUTREACH IN KAMPALA'S SLUMS; HERE THEY ARE SEEN VISITING A GROUP OF MECHANICS THEY MET ON THE STREET TO DISCUSS FAMILY PLANNING ISSUES AND SEX EDUCATION.



KAMPALA, UGANDA

MEMBERS OF THE MUVUBUKA AGUNJUSE YOUTH CLUB PROVIDE OUTREACH IN KAMPALA'S SLUMS; HERE THEY ARE SEEN VISITING A GROUP OF MECHANICS THEY MET ON THE STREET TO DISCUSS FAMILY PLANNING ISSUES AND SEX EDUCATION.



WHAT IS THE ULWAZI PROGRAM & HOW IS IT BENEFITING THE COMMUNITIES IN DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA?

THE AUTHOR GATHERED INFORMATION THROUGH INTERVIEWS, GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS, CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS, AND THE PROGRAM WEBSITE.

ULWAZI PROGRAM:

A MODEL FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION THROUGH DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY & CROSS-CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Niall & Grant McNulty

OVERVIEW

Born of political shifts and a changing, post-apartheid policy environment that advanced a participatory approach to heritage, the Ulwazi Program is a South African library initiative set up by the eThekweni Municipality's Libraries and Heritage Department to "preserve and disseminate indigenous knowledge of local communities in the greater Durban area."¹ It creates a collaborative online database of local indigenous knowledge as part of the public library's digital resources, relying on community participation for delivering content and posting the content on the web.² The project is a collaborative, online, local knowledge resource in English and Zulu (the most commonly used languages in Durban), in the form of a "Wiki," much like Wikipedia, but localized for the eThekweni Municipality.

The program was established in 2008 in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. It was the brainchild of a former senior librarian for software applications at the eThekweni Municipal Library, Betsie Greyling. Greyling worked with McNulty Consulting to translate her conceptual thinking into a practical project.³ The Ulwazi Program is the first project of its kind in South Africa because it promotes a "democratized collection policy" through the library with the use of basic digital media tools and community participation.⁴

THE ULWAZI PROGRAM MODEL

The Ulwazi Program model uses the existing public library infrastructure, social technologies, and volunteer "fieldworkers" from local communities served by the library. Fieldworkers are trained in digital media skills, digital media management, and oral history methodology. To get the program started, Greyling selected fieldworkers from communities within the municipality and, with the help of McNulty

Consulting, trained them to create digital audio and visual material such as recorded oral histories and photographs. Together with library staff, fieldworkers were then taught to add this content, in both English and Zulu, to the Ulwazi Program Wiki, using their local libraries and the Ulwazi Program's central office at the municipal library in Durban as submission points. The libraries also serve as Internet access points where communities can browse the Ulwazi Wiki and the Internet. They can also contribute to the Wiki if they have user accounts. Since 2010, the Ulwazi Wiki has allowed for submissions via cell phone through a program where contributors are paid in cell phone credit if their submissions are accepted.⁵

AIMS OF THE ULWAZI PROGRAM

Greyling designed the Ulwazi Program model based on her experience as a librarian. The primary aims of the Ulwazi Program, as a library-affiliated initiative, are thus the preservation, organization, and dissemination of knowledge on a wide scale, which as Greyling explained, "is what libraries do." She also expressed concern about "losing young people from the libraries" and saw a program that provided locally-generated content, delivered via a medium that was attractive to youth, namely the Internet and cell phones, as a drawcard. She believed that if she could implement a program that included these aspects, it would entice people back to the library.⁶

THE PROGRAM PROMOTES A "DEMOCRATIZED COLLECTION OF POLICY" THROUGH THE LIBRARY WITH THE USE OF BASIC DIGITAL MEDIA TOOLS AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION.

Key to the program is the use of new technologies to preserve and circulate local knowledge. It achieves this through an online repository to which local communities contribute digital content. The program thus deals with both preservation and the provision of access to resources. In an article that Greyling co-authored, she mentioned that, by “providing an online, contextually-based information service to local communities, public libraries in Africa will ensure future-oriented access to cultural heritage resources through twenty-first century information communication technologies (ICTs).”⁷ In another article, she argued that the Ulwazi Program seeks to enable local communities to become part of the global information society. The program’s model is based on the idea that access to a digital knowledge resource of local relevance facilitates the growth of digital and information literacy skills, promotes the preservation of local knowledge, and creates potential economic empowerment of communities through skills development and knowledge provision.⁸

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENTS AND POLICY

The Ulwazi Program model is based on community needs as identified by the municipal library, inputs from a number of stakeholders, and various national and international policies. According to Greyling, through library surveys from various library-using communities, the municipal library was “made aware of the needs in the communities: their lack of digital literacy, their lack of empowerment, the lack of digital skills, their lack of knowledge of their own communities, the fact that their indigenous knowledge was getting lost at an alarming rate.”⁹ The program follows the eThekweni Municipality’s Integrated Development Plan (IDP). The Municipal Systems Act 132 of 2000 requires that all municipalities in South Africa develop IDPs, which are

five-year strategic documents that direct all municipal activities and are reviewed annually in consultation with stakeholders and communities. Municipal IDPs are informed by both national governmental policy and local circumstances. The plans are implemented at the municipal level and aim to address locally-defined needs but must also follow the national government’s policy.¹⁰ In this way, the Ulwazi Program promoted, and was the product of, multi-stakeholder engagements.

THE ULWAZI PROGRAMME STROVE TO ENABLE LOCAL COMMUNITIES TO BECOME PART OF THE GLOBAL INFORMATION SOCIETY. THE PROGRAMME MODEL IS BASED ON THE IDEA THAT ACCESS TO A DIGITAL KNOWLEDGE RESOURCE OF LOCAL RELEVANCE FACILITATES THE GROWTH OF DIGITAL AND INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS, THE PRESERVATION OF LOCAL KNOWLEDGE, AS WELL AS POTENTIAL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF COMMUNITIES THROUGH SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND KNOWLEDGE PROVISION.

The Ulwazi Program model was also informed by various national and international policy documents such as the Geneva Plan of Action, generated by the World Summit on the Information Society, which called for:

- Free or affordable access to information and knowledge via community access points (such as a digital library service);
- The development of Information Communication Technology (ICT) skills;

- The empowerment of local communities to use ICTs; and
- Policies that support the respect, preservation and promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity, and the generation of local content to suit the linguistic and cultural context of the users.¹¹

Indigenous knowledge as a concept and formal policy only came to Greyling’s attention after she had conceptualized the Ulwazi Program. However, she no doubt saw synergies between what she hoped to achieve with the program and the mandate for museums and libraries, as detailed in the national Indigenous Knowledge Systems Policy. The policy encourages indigenous and local communities to “actively record and share their contemporary history, culture and language” and emphasizes the creative use of new technologies to “support indigenous and local community development.”¹²

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE?

The Ulwazi Program’s interpretation of indigenous knowledge is loosely defined and flexible, although it is limited to the geographic boundaries of eThekweni Municipality.¹³ It offers the potential to promote cross-cultural understanding and inclusivity, and to accommodate a broad array of materials. The program has recorded numerous aspects of local history and culture including personal, family, and group histories, aspects of material culture unique to the Durban area, and a wealth of cultural practices relating to food, rites of passage, ceremonies, and celebrations, among other things. It is seen, and used, as a valuable source of local information representing the different cultural groupings found within the municipal borders, and as a platform for digital dialogue and cross-cultural and linguistic exchange of knowledge. The program currently receives over 60,000 visitors per month.

IT OFFERS THE POTENTIAL TO PROMOTE CROSS-CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING, INCLUSIVITY AND ACCOMMODATE A BROAD ARRAY OF MATERIALS

ACHIEVEMENTS

The Ulwazi Program has had many accomplishments. It has established a digital library of local history and knowledge in English and Zulu. This library comprises over 800 articles and is currently larger than the Zulu Wikipedia. The project has trained over 20 fieldworkers in digital media management and digital skills and has collaborated with, and given training to students at four underserved peri-urban and rural schools. By providing access to a locally relevant resource in a local language, the program has promoted and supported digital and reading literacy. In recognition of the project’s efforts, in 2012 it received a Telkom Highway Award for Community Engagement through Technology.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ “About the Programme.” *About the Programme*. Ulwazi Programme, 8 January 2012. Web.
- ² Ibid.
- ³ ‘eThekweni’ is the Zulu name for Durban. eThekweni Municipality is the municipality that runs the city of Durban.
- ⁴ Following the establishment of the program, the Presidential National Commission on the Information Society and Development (PNC on ISAD) aimed to create a similar project on a national level, the National Digital Repository (NDR), and approached Betsie Greyling to elicit her perspective on how the national project should function. Through community participation, the NDR aimed to “collect, preserve, promote and disseminate South Africa’s cultural heritage” (National Digital Repository, n.d.).
- ⁵ “About the Programme.” *About the Programme*. Ulwazi Programme, 8 January 2012. Web.

6 Betsie Greyling, interview, 2009 December 02

7 Greyling E. H. and S. Zulu. "Content Development in an Indigenous Digital Library: A Case Study in Community Participation." IFLA Journal 36.1 (2010): 30-39. Print.

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9 Betsie Greyling, interview, 2009 October 08

10 Deputy Head of eThekweni Libraries and Heritage, interview, 2009 October 30

11 Presidential National Commission on the

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12 *Indigenous Knowledge Systems: Visions and goals for an Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) Policy for South Africa*. Pretoria: Department of Science and Technology, 2005. Print.

13 Betsie Greyling, interview, 2009 October 08

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Niall McNulty is an experienced manager and consultant (McNulty Consulting) with a background in the implementation of innovative technology solutions for academic and local government initiatives. As co-founder of the Ulwazi Programme, Niall worked for several developing a community-based digital library of indigenous knowledge. His focus is now on transforming education in Africa through the use of relevant technology. Niall is a 2016 fellow of the Institute for Open Leadership (Creative Commons).

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS TO BUILD MORE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

FROM A FORMER NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC EMERGING EXPLORER

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE AFRICA

AN INTERVIEW WITH JENNIFER BURNEY

Sarah Chung & Bret Schafer

CULTURE

PUBLIC-PRIVATE

GOVERNMENT



Jennifer Burney is an Assistant Professor at the School of Global Policy and Strategy at the University of California at San Diego and a former National Geographic Emerging Explorer. She is a physicist-turned-environmental scientist whose research focuses on simultaneously achieving global food security and mitigating climate change. Burney designs, implements, and evaluates technologies for poverty alleviation and agricultural adaptation and studies the links between energy, poverty, and food and nutrition security; the mechanisms by which energy services can help alleviate poverty; the environmental impacts of food production and consumption; and climate impacts on agriculture. Much of her current research focuses on the developing world.

In October 2015, Burney sat down with *Public Diplomacy Magazine* editor Bret Schafer to discuss her current fieldwork, which studies the impacts of solar irrigation on smallholder farmers and their environment in the West African nation of Benin. Her research and work in food security, land use dynamics, and climate adaptation highlight the need for public-private partnerships to build more

sustainable development programs in Sub-Saharan Africa. In particular, her work has demonstrated the need for greater cross-cultural understanding of labor between developed and developing economies and countries.

Your research largely focuses on achieving global food security and mitigating climate change. How would you describe the biggest environmental problems facing Sub-Saharan Africa due to climate change, and how is this impacting domestic agriculture?

Jennifer Burney: There are many big environmental issues at play in Sub-Saharan Africa. Of the ones attributable to climate change, the biggest is taking place in the semi-arid regions. The semi arid tropics have seen greater temperature changes relative to the global average, and precipitation changes that are mostly negative relative to other places over the past 50 or 60 years. The semi-arid regions worldwide are home to most of the world's poorest populations, almost all of which are dependent on rain-fed agriculture. The confluence of poverty, low productivity, and climate change outpaces any autonomous adaptation. This is the major issue at the moment.

Using examples from your fieldwork, can you define smallholder irrigation and what factors you took into consideration to evaluate and develop sustainable strategies?

JB: There is no one definition, but the term smallholder agriculture usually involves family health farms of a few hectares or less. Smallholder irrigation is a system where the water source is either co-located with or very close to the field. This is typically a

small source that is held and maintained by the household, or a group of households.

How do you see this as a sustainable solution to the larger social issue of economic development?

JB: Smallholder agricultural productivity can be addressed in several ways, and I certainly would not claim that any one strategy is the sole solution. Smallholder irrigation has several characteristics that are well matched to the particular realities of Sub-Saharan Africa. From a physical point of view, Sub-Saharan Africa has a lot of groundwater that could likely be used in a sustainable manner. What is remarkable is that the more we learn about the region's physical hydrology, the more it seems suited to a smallholder irrigation system.

For farmers with either their own little wells or a common neighborhood well to irrigate their plots, smallholder irrigation is suitable because the water yields in the region are not very high – unlike what is necessary in giant irrigation schemes. The physical reality is that there is water available, which is the first step.

Some people might ask, why bother with agriculture at all? It is important to remember that agriculture is a big part of life in Sub-Saharan Africa that cannot be skipped over, even though some governments have historically tried. The bottom line is that large segments of the population are either principally or partially agricultural, and this sector is a large component of the GDP.

There are many advantages to irrigation, beginning with the fact that it allows for year-long production. Semi-arid regions are monsoonal, which means that there is one dry season and one rainy season. With most people growing rain-fed crops, production is limited. Irrigation allows for production during the dry season, which means that farmers can both consume produce and sell it all year long.

The second benefit of irrigation is slightly more complex. With irrigation, people are able to produce crops that they could not farm otherwise. The nutritional value of fruits and vegetables, for example, means that they are in high demand and sell for high prices, even in extremely poor areas. Ultimately, producing these sorts of crops helps to create market linkages that eventually put the rural sector in touch with urban consumers. Basic marketing, even through cellphones, can give these people higher profits. The combination of counter-season production and linking higher-value crops to local nutrition outcomes and higher prices lead to a higher return on both land and labor in these systems – and it's all based on smallholder irrigation.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT AGRICULTURE IS A BIG PART OF LIFE IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA. THE BOTTOM LINE IS THAT LARGE SEGMENTS OF THE POPULATION ARE EITHER PRINCIPALLY OR PARTIALLY AGRICULTURAL, AND THIS SECTOR IS A LARGE COMPONENT OF THE GDP.

In your research, you have brought up the success of the Green Revolution in Asia, where governments and international agencies responded to major famines of the 1960-1970s with large-scale investments in irrigation, improved crop varieties, fertilizer, and modern crop technology. How would you compare this approach to the "African Green Revolution" in terms of similarities and disadvantages? What strategies from the Green Revolution in Asia

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were applicable in Sub-Saharan Africa and what strategies were inapplicable?

JB: The crops of the Green Revolution were rice and wheat, which was at least in part the secret to their success. Those two staples alone were farmed over an enormous area by an incredible number of people drawing from that land base. What began as centralized development of new cultivars was able to be rolled out to a very large area and many people. The same opportunity does not exist in Sub-Saharan Africa. For one thing, the range of diets across Sub-Saharan Africa is more diverse, and people depend on a wider range of cereal and root crops. There is also a regional variation to take into consideration, from western to eastern to southern Africa. So there is no one-size-fits-all.

AGRICULTURE IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA IS NOT JUST CROPS. YOU HAVE A LOT OF PASTORALISTS OR SEMI-PASTORALISTS – PEOPLE WHO ENGAGE WITH A MIX OF CROPS AND LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION. THIS IS ONE OF THE WAYS IN WHICH THE REGION IS MORE DIVERSE THAN SOME OTHER PLACES.

The so-called “orphan” crops such as plantains, sweet potatoes, yams, and millet are staples in most regions in Sub-Saharan Africa, but there has not been much effort to invest in them, which is unfortunate. Large swaths of eastern and southern Africa grow corn, and work currently being done by the Alliance of Green Revolution in Africa is looking to breed and make accessible new varieties of corn specifically suited to Sub-Saharan Africa, following the model developed in Asia to its limits. While it is still a little too early to tell, this effort seems

to be going well. My hope is that these larger actors become involved in different orphan crops in addition to corn.

Another issue is that agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa is not just crops. You have a lot of pastoralists or semi-pastoralists – people who engage with a mix of crops and livestock production. This is one of the ways in which the region is more diverse than some other places. There has been a recent focus on the growth of protein crops, such as soy, and an integration of smallholder pastoral activities including herd resilience and chicken and egg production and I think this will be an important point for development and investment focus.

How can international agencies and governments play a role in investing in these initiatives without hindering the opportunity for farmers to become economically independent?

JB: One of the most difficult aspects of thinking about how to promote smallholder irrigation is getting a clear view of the groundwater hydrology. Normally, private firms or bilateral aid agencies that drill wells may have some knowledge of the local lay of the land, but it depends on the company and the area in which they work. In any case, this knowledge, most of which is held by oil firms, tends to be held very closely. In a low-capacity government setting, there often isn’t a lot of knowledge about the hydrology at very local scales.

In my opinion, hydrological mapping would be an investment to the public good that could be done either by international organizations, or even by government investment or bilateral aid branches. This would mean that individual farmers (or farmer groups, or community development organizations) would no longer have to bear the cost of hiring a hydrogeophysicist to come survey. Costs, knowledge, and access are restrictive, and the more available this

information is, the more economically efficient it becomes. Having this kind of information available would also enable private investment, reduce risks, drive costs down for shareholders, and aid entrepreneurial ventures. Some actors have begun to work on this matter, but I think that making the mapping of this resource clear and publicly available would be a mechanism that would benefit all the parties involved.

In the communities you have researched, have smallholder irrigation strategies provided continuous socioeconomic growth?

JB: We have found that the solar irrigation project in Benin has had positive and significant impacts on overall standards of living, economic activity, and a range of food security and nutrition metrics. The other thing we find is that in this implementation, smallholder irrigation seems to be saving labor and time. The system allows people to spend less time to get the same or larger amounts of water. We’ve learned a lot of exciting things about what happens when people who have been time constrained suddenly have more time—they start other little businesses.

FARMERS ARE SIMPLY MORE CONNECTED TO THE ENVIRONMENT THAN JUST ABOUT ANYONE ELSE, ON A DAY-TO-DAY LEVEL. WHAT WE BRING TO THESE COLLABORATIONS IS SIMPLY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, SO THAT THEY CAN SURMOUNT ANY INFORMATIONAL BARRIERS.

This actually stands in contrast to other agricultural innovations. One issue that has come up in the past is that we often

do not have a very good understanding of how labor is being spent in smallholder agricultural communities. Researchers and aid agencies spend a lot of time discussing technology and strategies to raise productivity and incomes, but these solutions are more labor intensive than what farmers are already doing. This failure to account for labor and time costs probably explains why lots of seeming winner ideas have not been widely successful.

What have you learned from working with Sub-Saharan communities to implement these strategies, and in reverse, what have they learned from the process of working with your team to introduce a new irrigational method in their communities?

JB: It is worth keeping in mind that almost all of this work has been done in Benin, which is admittedly a small slice of West Africa, but I have found that the important things do not change. There are a lot of similarities in values that are important to people: prioritizing health, taking care of family members, and wanting to secure health, happiness, and success for their children. Working here has also taught me a tremendous amount about dryland agriculture and ecology.

Do you think that these similarities are unique to Africa?

JB: I have found that it is more of a developed vs. developing world context, but one which is not necessarily unique to Africa. In the developed world, most people are used to living their lives, and their jobs don’t usually connect them in any deep way to the local flora and fauna.

But farmers are simply more connected to the environment than just about anyone else, on a day-to-day level. They

have the knowledge of what grows and what can be eaten, where it can be sold and for what price. What we bring to these collaborations is simply technical assistance, so that they can surmount any informational barriers. Discussions are participatory and collaborative because there would be no point to any of this if people couldn't grow what they choose, and benefit from it.

Do you think the work you have done in Benin can be expanded to different regions in Sub-Saharan Africa to provoke greater socioeconomic growth within the entire region?

JB: Yes, we do. We spend a lot of time thinking about what it would look like to do this elsewhere and we think it can be achieved.

What can other developing countries facing similar circumstances take away from the Sub-Saharan African communities that have developed and implemented these sustainable tools?

JB: There is an interesting way to answer this question, and it lies in government "silozation." What this means is that individual ministries or departments are carrying out their own cost-benefit analyses within silos, which takes place in both developing and developed countries. The end result of this is a lot of cross-sectoral benefits. For example, solar-powered water pumping could be considered an agricultural or a rural energy project. The energy from that can be used for lighting or even to power systems for drinking and irrigating water. That impact will raise productivity, which will improve nutritional metrics and which becomes a health intervention. Spillovers in this vein have improved nutrition, and had benefits far beyond the

original intent. Other communities can think about the broad scale co-benefits that come from these projects, but this comes with an understanding that a cost-benefit analysis is inherently limited when it comes to considering the impact of projects.

Would you evaluate your work in the region as having improved awareness of the issues surrounding climate change?

JB: As I mentioned earlier, farmers are very well-connected to the physical environment and any changes therein. When it comes to causes and attributions of those trends, everyone traces it back to the developed world and people know a surprising amount about climate change. It's just not political or controversial in the same way there. There is a pervasive belief that developing communities should be allowed to develop without being hampered by economically restrictive climate regulations, but also an understanding of what's at the root of the problem. Having said that, we have been very surprised by how excited people are about solar power, even though their response is not necessarily based on carbon dioxide levels. Diesel generators are seen as disgusting and foul smelling, and people try not to inhale those fumes. This reaction is visceral and driven by the now as opposed to a desire for mitigation, but it's been very interesting to gauge the response to energy sources.

TOURISM IS THE WORLD'S LARGEST JOB CREATOR FORMING THE BASIS FOR OPEN AFRICA'S MODEL

HELPING RURAL PEOPLE RECOGNIZE THEIR POTENTIAL BY IMPROVING THEIR ATTRACTIVENESS, BRANDING WHAT THEY HAVE, & PROFESSIONALLY GIVING IT EXPOSURE ON THE WEB

OPEN AFRICA
RECOGNIZING THE POWER OF BRANDING AS A UNIFYING PROCESS

Claire Allison

Despite being blessed with stunning natural wonders, most of Africa's vast rural areas are sorely lacking in economic opportunity. Of the limited income earning options available to them, tourism is one of the best, except that entrepreneurs on their own are individually insufficiently strong to draw customers to remotely located destinations. Open Africa is a social enterprise that inspires people to come together through a systematized method that allows them to combine their products into more easily marketable routes that are then networked for the purpose of constantly managed ascendancy.

Tourism is the world's largest job creator and forms the basis for Open Africa's model. Africa is in a unique position to capitalize on tourism. It is the birthplace of humankind and hosts most of the world's animal and plant species within magnificent landscapes and climate. The continent's people are extraordinarily friendly and hospitable, yet, despite occupying one quarter of the earth's land surface area, Africa hosts less than 5% of global tourists.

ABOUT OPEN AFRICA

The organization was established in 1995 under the patronage of former South African President Nelson Mandela to meet the increasingly urgent need for job creation in rural Africa. Rural entrepreneurs are largely excluded from the economic mainstream and the unemployment rate is as high as 70% in some areas. With little hope and few opportunities, many migrate to cities, placing additional stress on urban areas where living conditions are less than ideal.

The founder, Noel de Villiers, conceptualized Open Africa in 1993. The concept was elegantly simple. Following the example of the famous Western Cape wine routes, he aimed to cluster community level tourism products into branded collectives that increase their appeal and ability to

attract customers. Although at the time the Internet was only in its infancy, de Villiers had the foresight to see the role technology could play in changing people's lives. The initiative thus went the web route, starting by integrating geographic information system (GIS) technology with the Internet. This integration, which at the time was groundbreaking, was achieved in 1999 and resulted in the first Open Africa route being launched that year.

AFRICA IS IN A UNIQUE POSITION TO CAPITALIZE ON TOURISM. IT IS THE BIRTH-PLACE OF HUMANKIND AND HOSTS MOST OF THE WORLD'S ANIMAL AND PLANT SPECIES WITHIN MAGNIFICENT LANDSCAPES AND CLIMATE. THE CONTINENT'S PEOPLE ARE EXTRAORDINARILY FRIENDLY AND HOSPITABLE, YET, DESPITE OCCUPYING ONE QUARTER OF THE EARTH'S LAND SURFACE AREA, AFRICA HOSTS LESS THAN 5% OF GLOBAL TOURISTS.

Today there are 64 routes in a network that spans the six countries of South Africa, Namibia, Zambia, Swaziland, Mozambique and Lesotho, and includes more than 2,500 enterprises that employ over 28,000 people.

Open Africa believes that rural areas in Africa with their biodiversity, stunning beauty, and spiritual equanimity have immense potential as attractive visitor destinations for city dwellers. Furthermore, materialising this potential requires little more than the existing indigenous knowledge and skills available within remote communities.

By providing a framework within which people can collaborate, Open Africa

helps rural people recognize their potential and improve their attractiveness through clustering their products, branding what they have, and professionally giving this exposure on the web and via social media.

The process starts with the Big Five, named after Africa being famous for hosting the world's largest mammals. This entails asking those gathered in a community to name their biggest features of interest. Initially this is usually met with blank stares in what is generally a depressed environment, until with prompting someone remembers why the place was inhabited in the first instance; this triggers more thoughts and still more, until in no time a list of 15 to 20 items of unique characteristics have been identified amidst mounting excitement. These are distilled into their meaningfulness as potential attractors and with it a mindset change among locals develops into prideful recognition that they are not as badly off as they thought they were.

The focus is on strengths rather than weaknesses and in this way many a remotely located community rediscovers assets either forgotten or overlooked as having any commercial value culturally, historically, aesthetically, in terms of biodiversity or any number of other interesting reasons. Basically, this puts their feet on the first rung of the tourism ladder.

Recognizing the power of branding as a unifying process, Open Africa assists routes to develop a clear identity that not only helps to distinguish them in the market, but also brings them together. The process is interesting and after they have identified their main attractions and strengths consideration is given how these compete with other tourist destinations. A route brand is the outcome, which leads to an increased feeling of solidarity and unity among community members across different age and ethnic groups.

Thereafter, Open Africa mentors local route associations and helps build their

capacity through a tailor-made program. It also enables routes to implement local tourism development projects that range from hiking trails to packaged experiences utilizing whatever features are competitively unique to given areas.

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS & NATION BRANDING

A key element of the program is the promotion of trade within the network, done through the www.openafrica.org website. Every route is profiled, along with the key attractions of the region, and all of the businesses that form part of the route. In addition to online marketing, routes are assisted with brochures, signage, and other marketing material and campaigns that put them at the forefront in utilising modern technology's benefits.

To achieve its objectives, Open Africa enters into a range of partnerships at both a local and a national level, and has developed a particular skill in facilitating public-private partnerships. Projects are often implemented in partnership with local and provincial governments through funds sourced from corporations and elsewhere. At a local level, partnerships are also facilitated between the private sector-driven route associations and local governments. These partnerships often lead to new and innovative development initiatives that would not be possible without collaboration.

RECOGNIZING THE POWER OF BRANDING AS A UNIFYING PROCESS, OPEN AFRICA ASSISTS ROUTES TO DEVELOP A CLEAR IDENTITY THAT NOT ONLY HELPS TO DISTINGUISH THEM IN THE MARKET, BUT ALSO BRINGS THEM TOGETHER.

One example of this is in the rural town of Howick, Kwazulu-Natal funded jointly by a local corporate Barclays Absa and the Embassy of Finland. Open Africa facilitated a process where the route association went into partnership with the local Umngeni Municipality. The association wanted to exploit the tourism potential of the town's main attraction, the Howick Falls, while the municipality realized they could benefit from the expertise of the private sector. The municipality offered the association the opportunity to lease the land where the falls are located and the association developed a new tourism product that allows visitors access to the base of the falls through a guided walk. The Howick Gorge Walk employs two local youths and the income generated from this is used for other local development projects.

INSTITUTIONALIZING THE OPEN AFRICA MODEL

The Open Africa model has been recognized throughout southern Africa as a tool for sustainable rural development, and the Namibian government adopted it in 2013 as part of a bigger rural development program. The reason why it is favored is that it works from the bottom up, imposes nothing from the outside, and focuses on a region's strengths rather than its weaknesses. It has proved to be transformative in many ways, and brings a variety of role-players together in a unified way to focus their energy on revitalizing their culture and heritage, and to conserve their biodiversity as the underlying asset that attracts customers.

The entire process contributes to a community, and ultimately, a nation's soft power by identifying and celebrating what makes them unique in an increasingly globalized world. It allows different stakeholders to be unified behind a common vision whilst retaining their sovereign identities. It provides a way of showcasing the best of what a community or nation has

to offer, in particular within their remote areas.

In the case of Namibia, the national government knew that tourism was one of the few sectors where they had a distinct competitive advantage. Also realizing the potential the sector has for development, they wanted to find ways of spreading these benefits to rural communities. To do this they initiated a regional route development program thus enhancing and diversify experiences in Namibia while enhancing their competitive position globally. Thereafter they went even further in extending the collaborative theme by developing a route that spans adjacent area in four neighbouring countries, thus to enhance the attractiveness of the surrounding region as a whole.

For more information about Open Africa and the work it does in southern Africa, visit www.openafrica.org



Claire Allison
Marketing Manager
Open Africa

Claire is Open Africa's marketing manager. As a trained journalist also with PR skills and a passion for social issues and desire to play a role in driving change, what she does here allows her to apply her talents in favor of marginalized communities to whom such skills are usually unavailable.

THEY WILL HAVE TO KILL US FIRST

AN INFOGRAPHIC DESCRIBING THE MUSIC BAN IN MALI

Leah Takele

Leah Takele is a graphic designer + creative director based in Los Angeles. She has spent her professional career working to expand her creative versatility in a variety of industries ranging from fashion to entertainment to restaurant marketing. Leah has a passion for communicating about social issues through design for the purpose of spreading awareness and sparking creative motivation.

More information can be found by visiting leahtakele.com

THEY WILL HAVE TO KILL US FIRST

They Will Have To Kill Us First: Malian music in exile is a feature-length documentary following musicians in Mali in the wake of a jihadist takeover and subsequent banning of music. Music, one of the most important forms of communication in Mali, disappeared overnight in 2012 when Islamic extremists groups rose up to capture an area the size of the UK and France combined. But rather than lay down their instruments, Mali's musicians fought back. Declared "essential viewing" (Dazed & Confused), and "A gripping, powerful documentary" (Indiewire), *They Will Have to Kill us First* screens in UK cinemas October 2015.

THE MUSIC IN EXILE FUND

The Music in Exile will provide support to musicians on the African continent who have found themselves targeted, censored, attacked, or threatened. It is for musicians who have been told that they are not allowed to sing, to DJ, to rap, or play musical instruments.

In partnership with the Freedom of Expression Awards, it will participate in a year-long assistance program to assist with career development of the arts award fellows. The Freedom of Expression award also provides advocacy, fundraising, networking, and digital security training.

JAN 2012
The MNLA (Movement National pour la Libération de l'Azawad), a mostly Touareg group of separatists rise up against Mali's government.

APR 2012
The MNLA seize control of northern Mali, and declare independence for a new state which they call "Azawad".

JUN-JUL 2012
Ansar Dine and its Al Qaida allies turn on the MNLA and capture the main northern cities of Timbuktu, Kidal and Gao. They begin to destroy many Muslim shrines.

AUTUMN-WINTER 2012
Ansar Dine, MUJAO and AQIM consolidate their hold on the north. They seize strategically important town of Douentza in September, crossing into the central part of Mali and closer to the government-held south-west.

JAN 2013
The Islamist groups plan to march on the capital. President Traore asks France for help. French troops arrive and rapidly capture Gao and Timbuktu, and even Kidal, the last major MNLA held town.

MAY 2014 (onwards)
Fragile truce between Touareg MNLA separatists and Malian army breaks down in north. Separatists seize control of Kidal and the town of Menaka, Agelhoc, Anefis & Tessalit. Extremists continue to mount attacks across the country, though in fewer numbers.

JUN 2015
A peace treaty between the MNLA and Mali's government is signed, though there is anger and opposition on both sides. The extremist attacks show no sign of abating.



MAR 2012
Military officers depose President Toure in a coup ahead of the April presidential elections, accusing him of failing to deal effectively with the MNLA rebellion.

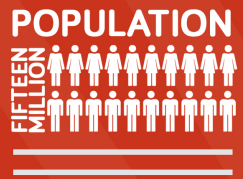
MAY 2012
The MNLA joins forces with extremist Islamist group Ansar Dine, and together declare northern Mali as an Islamic state. Ansar Dine begin to impose sharia law in Timbuktu. Two further extremist groups, Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) and Al Qaida in the Islamic Mahgreb (AQIM) endorse the deal.

AUG 2012
Oussama Ould Abdel Kader, a spokesman for MUJAO, makes the official announcement, music is banned. Radio stations, mobile phone towers and recording studios are destroyed. Musicians are targeted with violence.

APR 2013
France begins withdrawal of troops. A regional African force helps the Malian army provide security.

JUL-AUG 2013
Ibrahim Boubacar Keita wins presidential elections. France formally hands over responsibility for security in the north to the Minusma UN force.

FEB 2015 (onwards)
Number of extremist attacks escalates. For the first time, attacks are staged in the south of Mali.



475 THOUSANDS DISPLACED

SCREENING DATES



"IF YOU KILL ME I WON'T BE ABLE TO PLAY ANYMORE. BUT AS LONG AS I'M ALIVE, I WILL DO IT. THEY WILL HAVE TO KILL US FIRST."

-FADIMATA "DISCO" WALETT OUMAR

- OCTOBER 4, 2015 - CALGARY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
- OCTOBER 10, 2015 - RIO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
- OCTOBER 13 - 14, 2015 - LONDON FILM FESTIVAL
- OCTOBER 15, 2015 - OSLO FILMS FROM THE SOUTH FESTIVAL
- OCTOBER 20, 2015 - SOHO HOUSE, LONDON
- OCTOBER 22, 2015 - GLASGOW FILM THEATRE
- OCTOBER 23, 2015 - WOMEX FESTIVAL, BUDAPEST
- OCTOBER 23 - 29, 2015 - PICTUREHOUSE CENTRAL, LONDON
- OCTOBER 24, 2015 - CINE LUMIERE, LONDON
- OCTOBER 24, 2015 - HACKNEY PICTUREHOUSE, LONDON
- OCTOBER 24, 2015 - RITZY PICTUREHOUSE, LONDON
- OCTOBER 25 - 30, 2015 - QUEENS FILM THEATRE, BELFAST
- OCTOBER 29, 2015 - CPH DOX, COPENHAGEN
- OCTOBER 30, 2015 - DOC LISBOA, LISBON
- OCTOBER 30 - NOVEMBER 5, 2015 - CHAPTER CARDIFF, CARDIFF
- NOVEMBER 1, 2015 - BRITISH LIBRARY, LONDON
- NOVEMBER 1, 2015 - LIDO, BERLIN
- NOVEMBER 2, 2015 - ETHNOMUSICOLOGICAL FILM FEST, FLORENCE
- NOVEMBER 3, 2015 - HYDE PARK PICTUREHOUSE, LEEDS
- NOVEMBER 4, 2015 - PHOENIX PICTUREHOUSE, OXFORD
- NOVEMBER 5, 2015 - INEDIT, BARCELONA
- NOVEMBER 7, 2015 - DRIFTLESS FILM FESTIVAL, WISCONSIN, USA
- NOVEMBER 8, 2015 - CORK FILM FESTIVAL, IRELAND
- NOVEMBER 12, 2015 - RIDM, MONTREAL
- NOVEMBER 12 & 18, 2015 - BAFTA, LONDON
- NOVEMBER 14, 2015 - UNDERWIRE FILM FESTIVAL, UK
- NOVEMBER 18, 2015 - LENS POLITICA FESTIVAL, HELSINKI
- NOVEMBER 26, 2015 - SINGAPORE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
- NOVEMBER 29, 2015 - INTERNATIONAL FOLK MUSIC AND FILM FESTIVAL, NEPAL
- DECEMBER 5, 2015 - GIMME TRUTH FESTIVAL, AUSTRALIA
- JANUARY 2016 - SINGING THE WAR FESTIVAL - BERLIN, GERMANY
 - TV BROADCAST - FINLAND
 - GOTEBURG FILM FESTIVAL - SWEDEN
 - CINEMA SHOWING - GREAT TORRINGTON, UK
 - CINEMA SHOWING - LIVERPOOL, UK
- FEBRUARY 2016 - SHEFFIELD, UK
 - SEVOUSOUND INTERNATIONAL MUSIC AND FILM FESTIVAL - TURIN, ITALY
- MARCH 2016 - CINEMA SHOWING - STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN
 - ONE WORLD INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL - PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC
 - CENSURADOS FILM FESTIVAL - LIMA, PERU
 - FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE FILMS DE FEMMES - CRETEIL, FRANCE
 - MOVIES THAT MATTER - THE HAGUE, NETHERLANDS
- MAY 2016 - AGAINST GRAVITY FILM FESTIVAL - PORTLAND, OREGON
 - CINEMA SHOWING - LONDON, UK
 - HUMAN RIGHTS ARTS & FILM FESTIVAL - MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA
- SPRING 2016 - UNITED STATES RELEASE
- WINTER 2016 | @PD_Mag

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ARE PUBLIC DIPLOMACY STRATEGIES CURRENTLY
EMPLOYED BY THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT
EFFECTIVE TOOLS IN ENGAGING
THE AFRICAN CONTINENT?

MANY OF THE MECHANISMS SET UP BY WESTERN POWERS DURING THEIR
INITIAL APPEAL TO FOREIGN PUBLICS DURING THE LATE NINETEENTH
AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY HAVE INFLUENCED
CHINA'S OUTREACH TO AFRICA

CHINA'S PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN AFRICA

CHALLENGING OUR IDEAS OF
PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Cobus van Staden

INTRODUCTION

The discussion of public diplomacy has to include the acknowledgement that the core concepts underlying it emanate from Western liberal ideas of the state and its relationship with the public. Formal public diplomacy as it is currently exercised by non-Western emerging powers uses many of the same mechanisms set up by Western powers during the twentieth century. This is true when one looks at non-Western public diplomacy among non-Western publics as well. Indeed, many of the mechanisms set up by Western powers during their initial appeal to foreign publics during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century have influenced China's outreach to Africa. These include the use of language teaching, student scholarships, agricultural and medical aid, and the establishment of an official media presence to communicate directly with the target public.

A ROOT CAUSE OF CHINA'S DISCURSIVE CENTRALITY IN AFRICA'S CONVERSATION ABOUT ITS 21ST CENTURY OPTIONS SHOULD BE SOUGHT IN THE CONTINENT'S TOXIC RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WEST, AND CHINA'S ROLE AS A DEVELOPMENT MODEL THAT REFUTES WESTERN IDEAS ABOUT DEVELOPMENT.

However, one can also argue that China's symbolic presence in Africa far outstrips the influence generated by these tools. For all the funds directed at Confucius Institutes and malaria centers by the Chinese government, and for all their undoubtedly useful work, they cannot be said to dominate or even fundamentally affect the way China's engagement is narrated in Africa and how that narrative affects Africa's understanding of its options

in the 21st century. After all, except for China, several other rising powers are setting up partnerships in Africa. These include Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and Malaysia. The fact that China shapes these options and occupies a central place in Africa's discussion of its own future indicates that China occupies a position of soft power in Africa.

According to Joseph Nye's classic definition, soft power is the ability of a country to structure a situation so that other countries develop preferences or define their interests in ways consistent with its own.¹ However, I would argue that this position of influence does not primarily come from formal public diplomacy tools. Nor does it come from key factors Nye saw as constituting soft power: the appeal of a country's domestic culture, political values, and foreign policy.²

All of these are arguably either controversial or unknown among Africans. In addition, as I illustrate below, even when opportunities come up to promote Chinese domestic culture directly to African audiences, the People's Republic of China (PRC) government tends to eschew them in favor of elite engagement.

Instead, I argue that a root cause of China's discursive centrality in Africa's conversation about its 21st century options should be sought in the continent's toxic relationship with the West, and China's role as a development model that refutes Western ideas about development. China-Africa relations should therefore lie at the heart of current discussions about public diplomacy and smart power, not only because China is an emerging power in African geopolitics, but also because its presence throws Africa's relations with traditional Western powers into sharp relief.

**CHINESE POPULAR CULTURE
& PUBLIC DIPLOMACY: THE
ROAD NOT TAKEN**

CULTURE PUBLIC-PRIVATE GOVERNMENT

As I mentioned above, the formal mechanisms of Chinese public diplomacy in Africa are not fundamentally different from those of Western powers. One notable difference lies in media. Chinese state-owned media has been present on the African continent since the Cold War, but it has rapidly expanded its presence over the last few years. As Western news outlets were shrinking their bureaus, China Central Television (CCTV) established a sizeable new studio in Nairobi and hired prominent African journalists and anchors to work alongside Chinese reporters. The official state news agency, Xinhua, has 24 bureaus across the continent and China Radio International broadcasts in English, Swahili, Hausa, and French.

CHINA-AFRICA ENGAGEMENT TAKES PLACE OVER SUCH A WIDE ARRAY OF FIELDS THAT DRAWING ON KUNG-FU FILMS AS A FORM OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY WOULD ONLY HAVE AUGMENTED AN ALREADY RICH FIELD OF ENGAGEMENT COVERING EVERYTHING FROM MALARIA TO SOCCER STADIUMS.

The more pertinent question, however, is whether this media expansion is having any impact. While official audience numbers for these services in Sub-Saharan Africa are difficult to obtain, all indications are that Chinese media is not connecting with audiences. For an upcoming book project I conducted an interview with an executive at Multichoice – a South African satellite TV provider that carries CCTV and maintains a strong presence across Africa. He acknowledged that the two CCTV channels they carry on their Digital Satellite Television (DSTV) network in Southern Africa are not profitable. He said Multichoice

carries them as a friendly gesture, and that they operate as a loss leader to facilitate Chinese investments by Multichoice’s parent company, Naspers.

In fact, far from standing as proof of the popular appeal of Chinese media in Africa, the presence of these channels on the DSTV network should be seen as a form of engagement with the African elite. The DSTV package offering the service costs about \$60 per month, which is outside the reach of most African viewers. This is further borne out by the Chinese government’s response to Chinese media that is actually popular in Africa. Since the heyday of Bruce Lee, kung-fu films have enjoyed wide popularity in Africa. I conducted research into the history of kung-fu films in South Africa and found that kung-fu film fandom provided many Africans with their first encounter with China, and that they continue to inform popular African perceptions of China to this day.³ These films were accessible and entertaining, while also addressing the experience of oppression. As a result, martial arts became a popular hobby in many township communities. Both as a sport and a film genre, martial arts also created rare spaces of shared enjoyment among working class white and black communities during and after apartheid.

THE CHOICE OF HUMORLESS NEWS MEDIA OVER ACTION ENTERTAINMENT – WHETHER CONSCIOUS OR THROUGH CONTINGENCY – REVEALS THAT CHINA IS NOT NECESSARILY THAT INTERESTED IN DIRECT ENGAGEMENT WITH AFRICAN PUBLICS.

From my outsider perspective, kung-fu seemed to provide a promising opportunity for the Chinese government to connect with local African publics. It offered

a chance for the Chinese government to draw on pre-existing positive perceptions of China (however fictional), while providing a relatively inexpensive and crowd-pleasing forum for popular engagement. Engaging with African martial arts fans could have also provided markets for new Chinese media content. However, none of this happened. Whether this was a result of ignorance regarding kung-fu’s popularity among Chinese embassy staff, embarrassment about the pulpy narrative and exoticizing clunkiness of early kung-fu films, or a suspicion of entertainment media as a whole, Chinese authorities chose not to focus on kung-fu film and rather to focus their energies on positioning news media as the face of China.

The PRC government is not fundamentally opposed to using entertainment in its diplomacy. It has funded the dubbing of Chinese soap operas into Swahili for broadcast in East Africa. In addition, China-Africa engagement takes place over such a wide array of fields that drawing on kung-fu films as a form of public diplomacy would only have augmented an already rich field of engagement covering everything from malaria to soccer stadiums. Corporate Chinese entertainment companies – notably StarTimes and the Hong Kong conglomerate PCCW – also already have a notable presence in Africa.

ELITE ENGAGEMENT

The choice of humorless news media over action entertainment – whether conscious or through contingency – reveals that China is not necessarily that interested in direct engagement with African publics. It echoes China’s preference for direct government-to-government links over the broad arsenal of tools characterizing US public diplomacy in the age of smart power. As Tara D. Sonenshine put it in this magazine:

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY TODAY IS "ESSENTIALLY" A GIANT TOOL BOX FROM WHICH PRACTITIONERS PULL THE EQUIVALENT OF HAMMERS AND NAILS, TWEETS AND BLOGS, CARROTS AND STICKS, AND A FULL RANGE OF DIPLOMATIC ECONOMIC, MILITARY, POLITICAL, LEGAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND CULTURAL INSTRUMENTS TO ACHEIEVE THE GOAL OF ADVANCING NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFINING OUR VALUES AND OBJECTIVES IN THE WORLD.⁴

Compared to this approach, China seems relatively dated, with state media dutifully reporting on official state visits. So where does China’s centrality in the current African conversation come from? I would argue that one core cause is the emotional impact of Chinese economic success in Africa. Scholars of China-Africa relations, especially as they relate to media, have taken different approaches to articulating this influence. For example, Jaroslaw Jura and Kaja Kaluzynska have shown that East African press coverage of China-Africa relations overwhelmingly tend towards the coverage of economic issues, and that this coverage tends towards positive framing of China as a whole.⁵ They argue that economic reporting about China exceeds purely informational needs and contributes to narratives of China as an economic and development role model.

These narratives far exceed Nye’s conception of economic power as hard power. Rather, the narrative of China’s development should be seen as a form of soft power. Iginio Gagliardone, Nicole Stremlau and Daniel Nkrumah have argued that Chinese media communicates three

interlinking roles for China in Africa: that of partner, prototype, and persuader.⁶ In each case, China occupies a complex position of being at once ahead of Africa and yet equal to it. This narrative underlies the rhetoric of win-win development and the oft-repeated reminder from the Chinese government that China is a developing country. China occupies a complicated space of being at once developed and developing and as such it offers an alternative narrative of development from the West's – and, importantly, the funds to achieve it.

China therefore occupies a powerful position in African discourse: that of the anti-West. It represents an objective example of a non-Western country that developed itself not through implementation of Western paradigms, but by following development paradigms based on indigenous culture. According to this narrative, China serves as a powerful refutation of the idea that the West is the source of all development and modernity and that nobody can pass into modernity if they do not also pass through the West and adopt its standards.

There are many holes to pick in this narrative, not least of which is that it tends to conflate disparate Western actors. However, that does not diminish the narrative's power in African elite discourse. In addition to the idea that the West will not fund African development is the post-2008 perception that it simply cannot. U.S. President Barack Obama's stalled Power Africa electrification project is a stark reminder that even if one does not believe anti-Western conspiracy theories and accepts that the West sincerely wants to invest in African development, numerous institutional and financial barriers exist that make that dream impossible.

CHINA'S REAL PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IMPACT LIES IN THE WAY IT ACTIVATES AND CHANGES CERTAIN NARRATIVES THAT UNDER-

LIE AFRICA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WEST.

In this context, China's role as a funder of African infrastructure is far from a simple economic role, and its influence in public diplomacy should also be read outside of pure economic discourse. China's real public diplomacy impact lies in the way it activates and changes certain narratives that underlie Africa's relationship with the West.

While China's interaction with Africa goes back to the 1700s, constant day-to-day interaction is a relatively recent phenomenon. In its partnership with Africa, China stepped into a landscape largely shaped and despoiled by Europe and the West. This is not only true for the physical landscape, where Chinese companies' appetite for investment in high-risk high-return environments like South Sudan was due to the fact that oil and mineral reserves in stable countries had long before been locked up by Western companies, mostly to no great development outcomes for their African hosts.

CHINA THEREFORE OCCUPIES A POWERFUL POSITION IN AFRICAN DISCOURSE: THAT OF THE ANTI-WEST.

It is also true for a discursive landscape where countries are constructed as singular actors with national identities, rather than as chaotic assemblages of individuals, governments, and corporations. In other words, the space where public diplomacy shapes perceptions of countries. In this space, China's status as the anti-West becomes especially important.

While this plays out among African publics, it is a particularly powerful among elites. In fact, while recent Pew surveys have shown that China is more popular among Africans than among residents of other

regions, it still lags behind the United States in many African countries. For example, a recent poll in South Africa showed that while China enjoyed 52% approval, 74% of South Africans approved of the United States.^{7,8,9} This disparity is not reflected in the South African government's relationship with China, which is rapidly growing on both the government and party level. For example, the Chinese Communist Party has reportedly agreed to build an African National Congress party academy based on its own facility for the training of junior party leaders. While this has the potential to cement high-level ties between elites, it has very little potential to cement positive perceptions about China among ordinary South Africans.

ONE OF THE PITFALLS OF CHINESE ELITE ENGAGEMENT IS EXACTLY THIS PERCEPTION THAT ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH AFRICA IS ESSENTIALLY A RELATIONSHIP WITH AFRICA'S LEADERS.

In fact, the opposite is frequently true. One of the pitfalls of Chinese elite engagement is exactly this perception that its relationship with Africa is essentially a relationship with Africa's leaders. This is due to the fact that many African societies are structured by a breakdown of trust between governments and publics. This breakdown of trust is clearly seen in South African debates around wildlife poaching. In current research, I am in the process of tracing the construction of China in online comments about elephant and rhino poaching, which has gained momentum due to Chinese demand for illegal wildlife products. In these comments, China is not only blamed for fuelling the trade (whereas the world's second main market for illegal ivory – the United States – is almost never mentioned), but it is also portrayed as colluding with an essentially corrupt and untrustworthy South African government in order to funnel

more of South Africa's patrimony out of the country. A series of recent controversies related to China in South Africa, including the government's refusal to grant a visa to the Dalai Lama and the proposed inclusion of Mandarin in South African school curricula, have essentially used China as a stick with which to beat the South African government. In these cases China finds itself defined by anti-government resentments because it essentially gave up the chance to communicate directly with African publics.

The more pertinent issue, however, is whether China cares. Is China's weak relationship with African publics a problem for China as long as it has a strong relationship with African elites? At present, the kind of high-level engagement that drives Chinese engagement in African infrastructure, extraction, and banking sectors does not seem to demand much popular engagement. However, I would argue that this weak relationship might well become a problem for China. In 2013, a riot took place in Tanzania, which disrupted the building of a Chinese-constructed gas pipeline between the rural Mtwara Province and the capital Dar Es Salaam. Local reports blamed a breakdown of trust between the Tanzanian government and the impoverished local communities that wanted a larger stake in the profits from the natural gas extracted in their province, rather than having that gas refined in Dar Es Salaam. However, much reporting about the incident framed it as protests against a Chinese-funded (rather than a government-driven) project.¹⁰ In many of these cases, China is dragged into conflicts rooted in lapses in local governance or conflicts between local stakeholders.

THE FIRST STEP TO ANSWERING THIS QUESTION IS TO TAKE A HARD LOOK AT THE REALITIES OF AFRICAN POLITICAL CULTURE, AND TO STOP THINKING

ABOUT AFRICA AS ANYONE'S BACK YARD.

As more and more Chinese nationals move to Africa, and Chinese business engagement with the continent becomes more complex, the impact of this kind of China-baiting becomes more serious. The Chinese government has already been forced to physically rescue Chinese nationals from various African trouble zones. Therefore, directly engaging with African publics and building relationships based on the experiences of non-elite Africans could be seen as a new form of smart power: using the power of China as a non-Western development model to minimize anti-China stereotyping in Africa.

However, the more fundamental question that confronts both Chinese and Western practitioners of public diplomacy in Africa is how to overcome the breakdown of trust between African governments and African publics. How does one avoid one's direct appeal to publics either being obstructed by governments, or tainted through association with them? The first step to answering this question is to take a hard look at the realities of African political culture, and to stop thinking about Africa as anyone's back yard.

FOOTNOTES

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- 2 *ibid.*
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7 A survey dated 23 July 2015 found that China enjoyed a 70% approval rating in Africa, compared to 57% in the Asia/Pacific region and Latin America, 52% in the Middle East and 41% in Europe. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/07/23/5-charts-on-americas-very-positive-image-in-africa/>

8 <http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/06/23/2-views-of-china-and-the-global-balance-of-power/>

9 <http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/06/23/1-americas-global-image/>

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HOW CAN BRITISH EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS WITH NIGERIA HELP IMPROVE THE NIGERIAN MILITARY'S DEFENSE AND COUNTERINSURGENCY ABILITIES?

A LOOK AT BRITISH & NIGERIAN MILITARY OFFICER UNIVERSITY EXCHANGES PROGRAMS & PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE DIPLOMACY.

BRITISH MILITARY DIPLOMACY

BRITISH MILITARY DIPLOMACY IN NIGERIA

James Hall

CULTURE PUBLIC-PRIVATE GOVERNMENT

In June 2013, the telephone rang in the office of the British Defense Adviser (DA) in Abuja.

“Colonel Hall,” said a voice down the line, “Smithers here at the Ministry of Defense. What are you doing about Boko Haram?”

Smithers was a senior civil servant in London’s Ministry of Defense (MOD), and a man with whom I had never previously spoken. I explained that with no political or military direction to do otherwise, no particular financial or military resources, and a sum total of four uniformed but unarmed British staff based in the country, I was not currently proposing to do anything about Boko Haram. Smithers seemed disappointed. London was, apparently, “concerned.” I agreed that events in the north were indeed concerning. We parted cordially with a shared agreement to remain concerned.

There is no easy means to balance support to a friendly nation like Nigeria with the desire to sanction behavior that, seen from the West, is unpalatable. In a complex world it is sometimes inevitable that two sets of logic collide; unscrambling such contradictions is a task to tax the toughest politicians and diplomats. This indeed was the core conundrum facing British diplomats in Nigeria as the nation faced the emerging horrors of Boko Haram: how to help a friendly power nation, whilst simultaneously managing the pressure to condemn the unacceptable. Military diplomacy played its role in navigating the divide.

THE MACHINERY OF BRITISH MILITARY DIPLOMACY

Military diplomats occupy a fascinating place within the machinery of Western diplomacy. National approaches vary in detail but for most nations the principles are similar. In the British model, the Defense Adviser (DA) is paid for and

answers to his military masters.¹ However, when deployed to a country he works for the High Commissioner, who directs his work and oversees his diplomatic impact.^{2,3} The High Commissioner is the leading voice for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and sets the overall parameters. All other government agencies bow to his coordinating authority. The DA supports the direction of Her Majesty’s Government (HMG) as expressed by the High Commissioner.

One consequence is that the resources available for use by defense diplomats can be very much out of line with the aspirations for military activity. The Government funds the MOD for peacetime and the defense budget is provided only in order to make military assets available for operations. When real wars occur extra resources are allocated by the Treasury to support them. The MOD uses its core money to man, train and equip the military, not to act in support of broader diplomatic aims.

THIS INDEED WAS THE CORE CONUNDRUM FACING BRITISH DIPLOMATS IN NIGERIA AS THE NATION FACED THE EMERGING HORRORS OF BOKO HARAM: HOW TO HELP A FRIENDLY POWER NATION, WHILST SIMULTANEOUSLY MANAGING THE PRESSURE TO CONDEMN THE UNACCEPTABLE.

This sound financial logic can make life hard for the DA. When the FCO wanted MOD to act in support of policy in Nigeria there was no military budget for the purpose. Money had to come from specialist funds designed to meet the need. The best known of these was the Conflict Pool, a fund jointly managed by the FCO, DFID (Department for International Development), and MOD with the purpose of reducing instability around

the world. In theory, this financial approach is thoroughly logical, forcing inter-departmental cooperation and providing clear guidelines on the use of scarce resources. In practice, the use of such funds is unavoidably bureaucratic and subject both to the whims of government ministers and the vagaries of inter-departmental politics. Obtaining money from them can be ludicrously hard early in the financial year when money is tight and excessively simple at the end when an embarrassment of riches emphasizes earlier over-optimism.

In addition to the routine difficulty of resourcing military activities, the British DA operated under a second constraint. As a matter of policy, it was extremely difficult to provide military equipment or training to foreign armed forces thought to have been guilty of human rights abuses. The Nigerian military, for all their close relations with the British, had been routinely accused of abuses, in particular during the suppression of dissent in the Niger Delta. The security response to Boko Haram had only worsened these concerns and several human rights organizations issued reports on reported atrocities.⁴ For HMG, the consequences were clear. The export of military equipment that could be used for abuse was never licensed. Military training was rarely authorized and, when it was, came with caveats designed to reduce the risk that support might contribute to further abuses.

Such policy guidance is a matter of critical importance for HMG, and therefore, to the DA and there is no question of the necessity of such direction; the consequences, however, can sometimes be faintly ludicrous. On one occasion, London turned down a license to export 75 rifles to the Nigerian Mobile Police, an organization whose human rights reputation is deservedly poor. The FCO’s own rules simultaneously required that armed Mobile Policemen should guard diplomats travelling to high-risk areas. In consequence, the DA often moved under the armed protection of

Nigerians he was unable to train or equip.

BRITISH ENGAGEMENT IN NIGERIA

Within the constraints of politics and resources, the British military was engaged in Nigeria to a significant extent in the years before Chibok.⁵ The activity orchestrated by the DA was driven by the policy goals of the FCO. These in turn reflected the HMG view of Nigeria: a vast and accelerating market offering an important commercial opportunity to a Britain mired in recession. It was access to Nigeria’s wider economy, dominated by oil and corruption as it was, that formed one key objective. At the same time, the Nigerian diaspora, reportedly numbering over a million, played a key role in life in the UK. Nigerians retain a generous love for the UK and deeply resent the widely held view that they are simply a source of telephone scams and corruption. For HMG, Nigeria therefore represented both a significant trading partner, a diplomatic ally at the UN, and a threat resulting from internal instability, large scale corruption and population movement.

All these factors coincided in HMG policy dominated by trade and by the need to encourage stability. Because of the constraints of human rights rules, the DA had little role in the trade mission; defense sales were almost non-existent. Economic growth was an area of deep concern to the FCO and to DFID, but not an area of defense expertise. The MOD’s main role was therefore in promoting stability.

BRITISH MILITARY & PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN NIGERIA

As 2011 and 2012 passed, there was general agreement amongst most Western diplomats that the Nigerian military, far from being a part of the solution to Boko Haram, was part of the problem. Police had lost control of large areas and the military,

routinely used as internal security forces, was the only force able to operate with any effect. The excesses of behavior by both police and military were, to a Western eye, responsible for a growing radicalization of the population. Boko Haram was moving rapidly from being a thoroughly unpleasant terrorist organization to being a very significant paramilitary force. The Nigerian Army saw the battle as a fight for national survival, a war in which military victory was a necessity and physical defeat of the enemy a practical possibility. To the British mind, educated or embittered by years of engagement in Iraq and Afghanistan, this looked simplistic. With Boko Haram easily able to recruit new fighters and operating from the remote north, the idea that it would all be over by Christmas (a phrase used with unconscious irony by an Army Brigadier in August 2011) seemed at best naïve. From a British perspective, the complexity was compounded by the successive kidnap and murder of two British citizens.

ONE CONSEQUENCE IS THAT THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR USE BY DEFENSE DIPLOMATS CAN BE VERY MUCH OUT OF LINE WITH THE ASPIRATIONS FOR MILITARY ACTIVITY.

Apart from the three departments discussed so far (FCO, DFID, and MOD), a number of other UK agencies were present and involved in issues of security. On the cultural side of public diplomacy, the British Council made key contributions, encouraging links to the UK, funding exchanges and education programs and supporting stabilization programs. Several Nigerian military officers benefitted from funding to undertake academic courses in the UK, particularly in counter-terrorism studies. Another, particularly good, example of the Council's more direct work is the Nigerian Stabilisation and Reconciliation

Program still running today.⁶ Amongst other tasks, NSRP brings together separated parties to the conflict to discuss ways to address the violence. The DA helped NSRP to link Nigerian officers with key community leaders.

DFID and the British Council worked particularly closely together. DFID, mostly as a result of the legal limitations on funding military activity, tended not to work directly with host armed forces. The DA spent long hours discussing how best to make complimentary the spending of Overseas Development Aid funds with those of the Conflict Pool. Usually, such efforts were advisory; DFID would bring together NGOs, civil leaders, and military men to discuss the issues and look for solutions, assisting the Nigerian military with an education process that would help change the nature of the battle and bring Nigerian tactics into line with the doctrine of the Western militaries. The limitations of ODA funding made it impossible for DFID to contribute directly to Nigerian military training, but great strides were taken to reach out to the military and several pioneering efforts were made to bring leading civilian experts on counterinsurgency in front of military audiences.

The DA played a coordinating role in all this. The British military team in Nigeria consisted of just four men. The DA and his assistant worked in the High Commission; the second pair were funded by the Conflict Pool as a Training Team (BMATT) and worked from within the Nigerian Defense Headquarters. While the DA's role was to advise the High Commissioner on military affairs and diplomatic links, the BMATT's role was to provide training, an activity driven by one principle: that the UK would have greatest effect by contributing to military education with the specific intent of improving the behavior of troops in conflict environments. Passing the message was not easy: the Nigerians were not keen on receiving human rights lectures and largely

rejected the idea of soft effects and the need to encourage the cooperation of the local population. Their natural approach was to use conventional force to achieve physical destruction of an enemy; British military efforts were designed to counter this thinking.

To achieve this, two types of military activity were enabled by MOD UK. Most important for the long-term relationship between the two countries, Nigerian officers of all ranks were offered the chance to undertake military education courses in the UK. All of these courses were based on leadership and academic study, all participants did their best to encourage a Western approach to the challenges of counterinsurgency. Most critical was the attendance of young officers to initial training, in particular at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. At a more senior level, the Royal College of Defense Studies hosted one Nigerian officer every year, many of whom went on to senior commands. The Nigerian Chief of Defense Staff of the time, Admiral Ola Ibrahim, was himself an alumnus. The importance of the resulting personal relationships was critical and the value of his friendship in particular was considerable. The UK was able to pass diplomatically difficult messages through a genuinely close friend. There is no doubt the investment in such courses paid dividends.

The British military also dispatched a small number of training teams into Nigeria. Without exception, these were intended to educate rather than train. Examples included instruction in counterinsurgency doctrine, disaster management, and wider defense management processes. Civilians presented many of these courses. Once again, the constraints of human rights rules meant that there was little tactical training provided to troops.

Of particular diplomatic importance, a number of British warships visited Lagos during the period providing significant opportunities for defense diplomacy. British

sailors spent long hours demonstrating non-combat skills such as first aid, fire-fighting, and boarding drills designed for counter piracy and fisheries protection roles. Often such visits also allowed outreach to local communities, particularly schools and orphanages. Apart from generating good public relations, ship visits also enabled high-level diplomacy. Both the Nigerian CDS and the National Security Adviser attended lunches on board Royal Navy vessels, allowing the High Commissioner opportunities to talk privately and at length with senior leaders whose time was often hard to obtain.

SERVICEMEN CAN COMMUNICATE AND SHARE TRUTHS THAT PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMATS OFTEN CANNOT.

For a paper on public diplomacy, there has been precious little so far that is specific to the concept. There is a good reason for this: the DA had never heard of public diplomacy! British DAs receive an excellent general training for their business but, amidst the months of preparation, I have no memory of the topic being raised; and in all honesty, I doubt this matters. The role of Defense diplomats varies as widely as the relationships between nations, but for the British in Nigeria, the relationship was one of sometimes irritable but deep friendship. Whilst the UK was often frustrated by the corruption and violence, our Nigerian hosts were equally irritated by our constant lecturing and a widespread perception that we were unwilling to help them face down the existential threat posed by Boko Haram. Despite this, the nations remained close friends. Parts of HMG sometimes seemed to feel, as poor Smithers demonstrated, that the UK should be able to solve all these complications. The truth, of course, was that the problem was almost completely out of our hands; we could tinker

and influence, but we could not and did not try to direct events.

Finally, there is one advantage for the defense diplomat over his civilian counterpart that the diplomatic profession would do well to remember. The shared profession of arms allows for human relationships between servicemen of different nations that are hard to explain to the non-military audience. Open and frank conversations are common amongst DAs from countries separated by deep political disagreements. Servicemen can communicate and share truths that professional diplomats often cannot. In my third week in Nigeria I attended a barbeque with a number of fellow officers, amongst them men from Britain, Nigeria, America, Russia, China, Iran, Pakistan, and India. We enjoyed, to use an English phrase, a “cracking evening.” I liked them all, although I trusted some more than others. We were able to talk, to share common experiences, and to enjoy the company. I am still in touch with all of them. Just possibly, such human relationships somewhere, one day, will help stop a misunderstanding, save a life, or even stop a war. I like to think so.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 British Defense Attachés deployed to Commonwealth Nations are referred to as Defence Advisers.
- 2 To date British Defense Attaches and Advisers have almost universally been men.
- 3 British Ambassadors to Commonwealth Nations are referred to as High Commissioners.
- 4 Nigeria: Stars on their shoulders: Blood on their hands: War crimes committed by the Nigerian military. A report by Amnesty International, 2 June 2015, Index number: AFR 44/1657/2015.
- 5 257 schoolgirls were kidnapped from the town of Chibok in Borno State on the night

of the 14 April 2014.
 6 Nigerian Stability and Reconciliation Program - <http://www.nsrp-nigeria.org/>



James Hall
 Retired Colonel

Colonel (Retired) James Hall was born in Tanzania and brought up in the United Kingdom. He was educated at Pembroke College, Oxford where he read Modern History before attending the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and commissioning into the Light Infantry. Colonel Hall has served as a Battalion Commanding Officer and has undertaken operational tours that include the Falklands Islands, Northern Ireland, the Balkans as well as Iraq and Afghanistan. His last military appointment was as Defence Adviser at the British High Commission in Nigeria between 2010 and 2013. Now retired he is working on defence related issues in the Middle East and Africa.

DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS: CONVERSATIONS WITH WORLD LEADERS

Amanda Lester

CULTURE PUBLIC-PRIVATE GOVERNMENT

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, an intergovernmental organization devoted to supporting democratic institutions and processes throughout the world, commissioned a collection of interviews with political leaders to commemorate its 20th anniversary in 2015. The interview subjects include thirteen leaders from nine countries that recently transitioned from authoritarian rule to democratic governance.

Democratic Transitions: Conversations with World Leaders, edited by Sergio Bitar, former Chilean senator and Minister of Mining, Education, and Public Works, and Abraham F. Lowenthal, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and Professor of International Relations at the University of Southern California. *Democratic Transitions* explores the role of political leadership in a nation's transition to democracy. The collection is intended to be an inspiration and guide for contemporary leaders. Two chapters of the book focus on Sub-Saharan Africa, with cursory treatment of public diplomacy issues.

A GHANAIAN CASE STUDY

The chapter covering Ghana's transition to democracy includes interviews with President John Agyekum Kufuor (in office 2001–2009) and his predecessor Jerry J. Rawlings (in office 1993–2001). After gaining independence from Britain in March 1957, Ghanaians elected Kwame Nkrumah prime minister of Ghana, but Nkrumah turned authoritarian, restricting free speech and banning opposition parties. He was overthrown in a military coup in February 1966 and replaced by Kofi Abrefa Busia, whose administration lasted only three years. In 1979 and 1981, as the economy deteriorated, Rawlings led coups first against the military government and then against the democratically elected Prime Minister, Hilla Limann.

THIS IS ONE OF THE WAYS IN WHICH THE REGION IS MORE DIVERSE THAN SOME OTHER PLACES. LEADERS "COULD NO LONGER GET AWAY WITH 'FOOLISHNESS' OR HARDHEADEDNESS BY REFUSING TO LISTEN TO THE PEOPLE."

In the interview, Rawlings describes the international pressure on Ghana to create a multiparty system, most notably from the U.S. State Department. Rawlings argues that the one-party system in place between 1981 and 1991 in Ghana was a participatory democracy, albeit without a formal constitution, in spite of the fact that Western governments regarded it as non-democratic. Similar pressure came from neighboring countries in Africa, where democratic movements were picking up momentum and gaining regional influence, so that leaders "could no longer get away with 'foolishness' or hardheadedness by refusing to listen to the people."¹ This should be acknowledged as an example of public diplomacy. In the late 1990s, Rawlings established multiparty elections, agreed to presidential term limits, and eventually ceded power to the winner of the 2000 election, Kufuor.

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, IN ITS ATTEMPTS TO SPREAD DEMOCRACY, OFTEN "[UNDERMINES] THE VERY OBJECTIVE THAT THEY ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE."

Interestingly, Rawlings claims that the architects of the new governmental structure in Ghana adopted the English language terms of democracy, but not the corresponding functions. He may have seen this as a missed opportunity to incorporate

traditional elements of the culture into Ghana's political infrastructure. Rawlings argues that the international community, in its attempts to spread democracy, often "[undermines] the very objective that they are trying to achieve."² For example he claims that, post-transition, Western governments and the media manipulated Ghana's image so as to market it as a "success story" to Africa and the world, while corruption still ran rampant.³ This can be seen as public diplomacy efforts attempting to positively influence world opinion of the Western push for democratization in Ghana, which according to Rawlings contributed to a gap between image and reality.

Kufuor, a founding member of the New Patriotic Party, was elected president in 2000. He attempted to reconcile the political divisions haunting Ghana by establishing a National Reconciliation Commission and repealing the Criminal Libel Law that had restricted media freedom. However, several of Kufuor's actions set unfortunate precedents, such as excluding members of certain opposition parties from cabinet positions and intervening in judicial appointments and processes. After his re-election in 2004, Kufuor completed his second and final term as president and, per Ghana's 1992 constitution, peacefully turned over power to the new president, John Atta Mills. In his interview, Kufuor acknowledges the impact of international pressures on Ghana's initial movements toward democracy, particularly after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the spread of the "forces of liberalism."⁴ Kufuor is less critical than Rawlings of the Western powers' desire to spread democracy, but he emphasizes the importance of first bolstering the foundations of democracy by encouraging the creation of political parties and educating citizens about their rights, which is a clear call for increased public diplomacy efforts.

A SOUTH AFRICAN CASE STUDY

The chapter covering South Africa's transition to democracy contains interviews with President F. W. de Klerk (in office 1989–1994) and President Thabo Mbeki (in office 1999–2008). De Klerk succeeded P. W. Botha as President of South Africa in 1989 and soon ended a ban on opposition parties, freed political prisoners, and began negotiations with newly-liberated Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress (ANC). Both De Klerk and Mandela were eventually awarded Nobel Prizes for finding a compromise that would end apartheid in South Africa. In his interview, De Klerk emphasizes the importance of intranational dialogue to South Africa's transition to democracy, and criticizes the imposition of Western models on other countries without regard to their traditions and religions. He also makes the case that it is a duty of countries neighboring other countries mired in conflict to use their power and influence to push conflicting sides towards compromise.

In his interview, Mbeki, who succeeded Mandela in 1999 as leader of the ANC and president of South Africa, details the extent to which the ANC cultivated international solidarity against apartheid, reaching out to governments, religious groups, trade unions, and private citizens all over the world using public diplomacy tools. This international solidarity, Mbeki explains, was instigated by the ANC, but spread mostly by people outside South Africa, such as those in Britain and Sweden who "felt a responsibility" to take a stand.⁵ This international public support for the anti-apartheid movement was a critical factor in South Africa's "negotiated transition."⁶ Additional pressure on apartheid South Africa from economic sanctions imposed by governments was compounded by international corporate divestment and boycotts by private citizens.

Unmentioned in this book is the extent to which these leaders' participation in international exchange programs may

have impacted their political activities and their countries' democratic transitions. Early in their careers, both Kufuor and De Klerk participated in the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), the U.S. State Department's premier international exchange program. Designed for mid-career professionals who exhibit leadership qualities, participants of the IVLP visit Washington, D.C. for a primer on democracy and American history, then meet with their counterparts in other American cities of their choosing. Mbeki also studied abroad—in Moscow, London, and Manchester—before becoming president of South Africa. In fact, four of the thirteen political leaders interviewed for this book participated in IVLP, another was a Fulbright scholar, and nine total studied abroad in Europe and the United States before becoming a driving political force at home. With such a strong connection between many of these leaders and the United States, another layer of U.S. public diplomacy's influence emerges. By overlooking this factor, the authors miss the opportunity to draw a connection between U.S. public diplomacy efforts and the decision of each nation to transition to democracy.

Although the editors do not use public diplomacy terms to describe the forces driving democratization in Ghana or South Africa, public diplomacy tools played a significant role in laying the foundations for democracy and inspiring these political transitions. Likewise, although the editors do not characterize these movements in such terms, their conclusions demonstrate the continued need for public diplomacy efforts to ensure smooth and full transitions to democracy. The editors also argue that all democracies are unfinished projects and that leadership plays an important role in shaping their futures. De Klerk claims that he does not want to “present [him]self as a hero,” but this collection of interviews does precisely that for each of its subjects.⁷ This

book in itself is an instrument of public diplomacy, adding depth to our understanding of each featured country and its leaders, and attempting to shape our perception of their national narratives.

FOOTNOTE:

- 1 *Democratic Transitions: Conversations with World Leaders*. Eds. Sergio Bitar and Abraham F. Lowenthal. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. 2015.
- 2 *Democratic Transitions*.
- 3 *Democratic Transitions*.
- 4 *Democratic Transitions*.
- 5 *Democratic Transitions*.
- 6 *Democratic Transitions*.
- 7 *Democratic Transitions*.



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AN INTRODUCTION TO CRISIS DIPLOMACY & ENDNOTE

JUSTIFYING PAUL KAGAME

GENOCIDE, TRAUMA, HISTORICAL MEMORY & PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Douglas Becker

CULTURE PUBLIC-PRIVATE GOVERNMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Reverend Rick Warren has called Paul Kagame “the face of emerging African leadership.” In his April 30, 2009 *Time Magazine* hagiography of Kagame, the liberal evangelist minister also considered the Rwandan President as embodying reconciliation, and unique in his willingness to listen to opposition and learn from it. This would come as a surprise to Victoire Ingabire, who was imprisoned by the Rwandan President for suggesting that Hutus also suffered as a result of the 1994 Genocide. Ingabire, a political rival of Kagame’s, was prosecuted under the Anti-Genocide Law that charged that her speech was a “coded message meant to appeal to ethnic Hutu,” and that she was intending to overthrow the government.¹

Kagame is lauded both as a savior of the nation and as an autocrat with an iron fist on the nation. The iron fist is considered necessary by his supporters because the nation experienced the 1994 Genocide of Tutsi and moderate Hutu at the hands of the political parties of Hutu Power, the Interahamwe militia, the institutions of the state such as the military, and a huge number of ordinary Hutu citizens. The 3-month genocide resulted in the deaths of over 1 million Rwandans, the vast majority of whom were the Tutsi minority.

KAGAME IS LAUDED BOTH AS A SAVIOR OF THE NATION AND AS AN AUTOCRAT WITH AN IRON FIST ON THE NATION.

Yet for Rwandans, the enduring legacy of the genocide remains an ongoing crisis. Crises often have an immediate and emerging quality. For Rwandans, however, the genocide and its memory is an ongoing crisis. It is a gnawing fear that remains for a traumatized society. In many ways,

the nature of the genocide as historical memory is itself crisis diplomacy. But this article presumes the crisis is not the genocide, but the ongoing challenge of Rwandan interventionist foreign policy and the growing authoritarianism of its current President. By citing the crisis of the Genocide, Kagame is seeking to justify his own rule. Fear of one crisis is to defuse the other. The crisis that is the democracy deficit in Rwanda is masked by the crisis of a potential future genocide—a future based on the historical memory of Kagame as savior of the nation. It will serve as a case study in understanding the importance of historical memory as a means to mask one crisis behind the veil of a previous crisis.

HISTORICAL MEMORY

Memory can play two distinct roles in the formulation and legitimation of foreign policy. First, it is a lens through which leaders view their interests and policy preferences. These experiences—either directly experienced or as narratives passed down through generations—play an essential role in understanding why certain states choose their policies. Rwandan policy preferences are clearly influenced by its recent memory of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide. International inaction, the military victory of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (which ended the killing), and Kagame’s personal role in that victory all cast a significant shadow over Rwandan policy preferences.

But memory is also used instrumentally as an element of public diplomacy. It often is cited as an alternative to international law to justify actions. For example, Rwanda’s militarily intervened in the ongoing civil war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). This is a violation of the DRC’s sovereignty and therefore is illegal. But Kagame’s justification for this intervention is that Hutu living in Eastern Congo, who could be

future genocidaires, pose a security risk for Rwanda. Therefore, as a victim of genocide, Rwanda is justified in violating a neighbor’s sovereignty to pursue those who have or could in the future commit genocide.

In this case, Kagame is what Elizabeth Jelin terms a “memory entrepreneur.”² What is at stake in this memory is the justification of Kagame’s own government (and increasingly autocratic behavior), and Rwandan military aggression against the DRC. Memory entrepreneurship is a central element of the instrumentality of memory discourse. There is a specific goal in mind in the citation of the memory. Memory is even potentially altered (with a typical contestation of this memory alteration) to support the new policy. The constant emphasis on the physicality of the Genocide, with both its corporality and physicality on display through the presence of dead bodies as memorials, has compelled Jessica Aughter to argue that Rwanda is haunted by the Genocide.³

PEACEKEEPING & HISTORICAL MEMORY: RWANDA’S ROLE IN DARFUR

Rwanda has sought to use its position as a unique victim of genocide to demonstrate its commitment to opposing it on the African continent through its reaction to crises across the continent. One example is how Paul Kagame has made use of his nation’s involvement in the peacekeeping mission in Darfur. Rwandan troops were the first African Union troops on the ground there, and Rwanda has maintained the largest contingent in the joint AU/UN peacekeeping force in the embattled region.

Rwanda’s ability to highlight Sudanese atrocities certainly serves its interests in the region. Its support for the new state of South Sudan and its desire to curtail Sudanese aggression in that region motivates its interest in the nation. But to consider the intervention in Darfur as

being merely motivated by power politics is to miss the key element of Rwanda as an international “spokes-nation” against genocide. Based on its ability to influence Sudanese politics, it seems to adopt a fight role, albeit under the normative principles of countering genocide.

As a memory entrepreneur, Kagame has carved out a Rwandan brand that highlights its unique position as a survivor of the Genocide. Its involvement in Darfur is conditioned by its palpable sense of abandonment and neglect during the 1994 Genocide. Indeed, the West did not save Rwanda from the Genocide; Kagame did. That Kagame not only committed numerous atrocities during the war, that there are allegations of atrocities in the widening war in eastern Congo following the Rwandan Genocide, and that his rule is increasingly autocratic, is not a part of this narrative. Kagame as savior of the nation, as an American ally and proxy, and as the one leader willing to ensure that “never again” is not just a slogan, presents him with a space within his foreign policy that enables more aggressive use of Rwanda’s military.

AS A MEMORY ENTREPRENEUR, KAGAME HAS CARVED OUT A RWANDAN BRAND THAT HIGHLIGHTS ITS UNIQUE POSITION AS A SURVIVOR OF THE GENOCIDE. ITS INVOLVEMENT IN DARFUR IS CONDITIONED BY ITS PALPABLE SENSE OF ABANDONMENT AND NEGLECT DURING THE 1994 GENOCIDE. INDEED, THE WEST DID NOT SAVE RWANDA FROM THE GENOCIDE; KAGAME DID.

For example, Kagame uses the memory of the Genocide to blunt any potential human rights cases against him and his allies. When a French court

charged the old RPF general with shooting down President Habriyimana's plane (the event which triggered the 1994 Rwandan Genocide), Kagame charged the French Prime Minister, Dominique de Villepan, with complicity and alliance with the Hutus during the Genocide.⁴ He then condemned the French magistrate who accused him of shooting down the plane, stating, "France gave the then government of Rwanda money to commit Genocide. If he (Bruguere) is credible, why doesn't he investigate the role of the French government and officials in the Genocide?"⁵

Additionally, the International Criminal Court is investigating war crimes and other violations of international humanitarian law in the Congo. Rwanda, whose military is heavily involved in the fighting there, faces potential judicial exposure at the court. These moves were in part political hardball played against an African President who has shown a willingness to challenge international organizations and European leaders alike. But the support Kagame has received throughout Africa and in the United States is partially driven by the desire to respect the historical memory of Rwanda. Kagame sees the opportunity to raise Rwanda's profile and have the constraints on his state lifted as a result of the trauma. But this is only with the tacit support of the more powerful nation: the United States.

SECURITY THROUGH INTERVENTION: KAGAME'S CONGO PLUNDER THROUGH THE EYES OF THE GENOCIDE

Following the Genocide, a mass exodus of Rwandans out of the nation into camps in Eastern Congo developed into one of the modern world's greatest humanitarian disasters. The images from these camps even compelled some western observers to conclude that the Genocide was exactly the opposite of what actually happened. Phillip

Gourvetich argues that the crisis, with its Hutu faces (largely people fleeing reprisals as well as legitimate justice), convinced many in the West that the Hutu were the true victims.⁶ That Kagame, allied with Ugandan President Museveni, armed Congolese rebel Laurent Kabila to eventually overthrow the Mobutu Sese Seko regime in Kinshasa in the Congo, adds to this image.

Three successive rounds of civil war in Congo (the first overthrowing Mobutu, the second overthrowing Kabila, and the third the ongoing war in Eastern Congo) all have Rwandan fingerprints on them. Kagame has justified these interventions with the same historical memory argument. First, Hutu genocidaires fled to Eastern Congo in the hopes of returning to Rwanda to finish their genocide. The ethnic killing continued in the camps as well. Kagame cited Mobutu's support for the Hutu government as his justification to intervene and aid Kabila's coup. But the Rwandans also take advantage of the resource rich Eastern Congo (with its gold, coltan, copper, silver, and rare earth minerals) and even deprive the Kabila government of much needed resources to rebuild the nation. Kabila ordered Rwandans to leave the country. Kagame responded by overthrowing Kabila's government (the DRC is currently led by Kabila's son Joseph) in the Second Civil War. Rwandan forces remain in the Eastern Congo, ostensibly to protect the nation from reprisal Hutu killing, but the plunder continues.

There are signs that Kagame's use of genocide as a historical memory discourse justifying intervention in the Congo is fraying. In 2013, Rwandan support for the group M-23 drove it directly against two of its more powerful allies: South Africa and the United States. South Africa, which had deployed a large segment of the UN peacekeeping force in the DRC, used this force to engage and defeat the Rwandan backed rebels. Citing Kagame's increased support for the rebels and the increase in expropriation of resources from the

region, South Africa accused the Rwandan President of aggression. Rwanda denied this accusation, but the United States withdrew a military aid package to the country. U.S. President Barack Obama dispatched his Special Envoy to the Great Lakes region, Russ Feingold, to mitigate this split. But the U.S.'s harder line has compelled Kagame to tread more lightly on this issue.

SQUASHING INTERNAL DISSENT: THE ANTI-GENOCIDE LAW

The essential tool that Kagame has used to quash internal criticism of his government is the Anti-Genocide law. It is enshrined in Article 13 of the Rwandan Constitution. It states that "Revisionism, negationism and trivialisation of genocide are punishable by the law." Modelled on the European principle that denial of the Holocaust is illegal and punishable, Rwanda has passed a law to outlaw "Genocide Ideology." The Rwandan President has stated that the law, which carries a jail sentence of between ten and twenty-five years, is necessary to ensure that genocide ideologies, including the denial of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide, are not allowed to flourish. It ostensibly is intended to ensure a non-repetition of genocide. Human rights groups such as Human Rights Watch have countered that the Anti-Genocide law has been increasingly used to "target and discredit [the government's] critics." Amnesty International has weighed in that it is "vague and ambiguous," meaning the government is granted considerable latitude to determine when speech runs afoul of the law.

Kagame's defense of the law, which he begrudgingly admitted has been too strict (a 2013 revision of the law lowered the maximum sentence to nine years and requires a higher burden of proof for prosecution), has increasingly resided in the historical memory of the Genocide.

Specifically, he dismisses criticism of the law as Westerners not understanding Rwanda and presuming political underdevelopment. Yakaré-Oulé Jansen, in a 2014 piece in the *Northwestern Journal of Human Rights*, has argued that the law is a violation of free press principles under international law. Several important test cases, particularly Agnès Uwimana-Nkusi and Saidati Mukakibibi (which were eventually adjudicated at the Rwandan Supreme Court), illustrate this point well. And journalists critical of the President Paul Kagame have increasingly found themselves targets of this law.⁷ Citing the role of racist journalism in the days prior to the Genocide, the President, Paul Kagame, is using the historical memory of the violence as a means to imprison potential opponents and critics.

One reason this tactic is so effective is that the Tutsi community in Rwanda is largely comprised of ex-patriates from before the Genocide. Considering the number of Tutsi killed in the Genocide, coupled with a large in-migration of Tutsi from neighboring Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania, and the Congo, the impact of Tutsi who did not live in Rwanda during the Genocide is even more significant. This is an imagined trauma more than an actual trauma, creating much more space for the government to define and determine the nature of memory. This includes a climate where Hutu are less likely to return to Rwanda, in part because the expatriate Tutsi community has benefitted economically (assuming ownership of homes, businesses, and other property) from Hutus who fled the country (regardless of their role in the Genocide). But most importantly, memories are more malleable in people who did not actually experience the trauma.

KAGAME'S LEGACY AND POLITICAL FUTURE

The key question with Kagame's future is a potential third term and the

continued state-driven harassment of political opposition. Kagame is constitutionally barred from running for a third term in 2017. The most consistent question Rwanda-watchers get is whether the President will in fact suspend the Constitution and run for a third term. His plans are unclear as of 2015. But the outlawing of political parties that the President deems as “pro-genocide” (which often are simply critical of his rule) ensures that the next President will be one of Kagame’s choosing. It is a concern that increasingly draws the ire of the international community.

Part of the concern is the manner in which Kagame cites his own specific role in ending the 1994 Rwandan Genocide as justification for his rule. It is not his only credential. He also speaks of turning Rwanda into a middle-level economy (he often compares it both to an African Silicon Valley as well as a Rwandan Singapore). But his March 2011 trial in absentia against his own former Ambassador to the U.S, Theogene Rudasingwa, which subsequently led to a 24 year prison term, is one of many cases that demonstrate Kagame’s use of his government’s security forces and court system against his opponents. What is at stake is the dominant Tutsi narrative that the Hutu would even kill their own President in order to carry out genocide. This new evidence, calling for a new memory, challenges the image of President Kagame as the “man of peace” Rick Warren described. It also demonstrates the importance of historical memory and narrative in legitimating rule, in supporting specific policies, and in the public diplomacy and discourses which accompany them.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Warren, Rick. Leaders and Revolutionaries: Paul Kagame. *Time Magazine*. April 30, 2009.
- 2 Jelin, Elizabeth. State Repression and the Labors of Memory. University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

3 Auchter, Jessica. The Politics of Haunting and Memory in International Relations. Routledge, 2014.

4 Munyaneza, James. “French Premier Backed Genocide—Kagame.” *The New Times*. December 8, 2006.

5 Ibid.

6 Gourevitch, Phillip. We Regret to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda. Picador, 1999.

7 Jansen, Yakaré-Oulé (Nani). “Denying Genocide or Denying Free Speech? A Case Study of the Application of Rwanda’s Genocide Denial Laws”, 12 Nw. J. Int’l Hum. Rts. 191 (2014).



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