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Nigeria's Soft Power and Economic Diplomacy in Africa

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Abstract

The world is more fragile than it used to be as recently as three decades ago. With many countries developing sophisticated weaponry to counter possible external threats, states' capacity to match each other's military strength has been greatly enhanced with some going so far as to undermine the code of conduct in international peace politics. However, the descent of the multipolar world order has raised the credibility of soft power as a preferred alternative to hard power politics. This entails the use of economic diplomacy, negotiations, dialogue and persuasions instead of military capabilities. This study raises the need to revert from the traditional hard power display in global politics to a soft power approach. Nigeria in the West African sub-region is a major player in Africa and to a lesser extent in the world. It possesses a range of soft power potential and competences to negotiate with any player in Africa and globally through the plank of soft diplomacy. This study examines the articulation of Nigeria's soft power in the arena of economic diplomacy and probes how the state marshals its economic engagement (especially in Africa) in the present multi-polar order. The authors further consider the extent to which economic diplomacy satisfies the foreign policy objectives of Nigeria and meets the demands of the Nigerian populace. Using descriptive analysis, the methodology

utilizes data from Afrobarometer time series (2002-2014) on how satisfied Nigerians are in the handling of its economy. The realist theoretical framework is utilized to buttress power interplay in international politics and the imperative for soft power utilization by Nigeria and for the success of peaceful politics among nations of the world.

Keywords: *economy diplomacy, peace, regional power, soft power*

Introduction

The development and constructive delivery of foreign policy is a core obligation of the modern state. Over the years, this fundamental responsibility has been driven by the mechanisms of the power matrix. The power matrix is a configuration of hard power and the soft power with the former being mostly dominant after the First and Second World Wars. Nevertheless, the trend and reality of soft power in global politics is still very recent, especially in the dispensation of the multi-polar world order. Soft power was more emphatically used by Harvard professor Joseph Nye in 1990 although the occurrence of the use of the phenomenon dates back to centuries and cut across cultures and societies (Ogunnubi and Amao, 2016). It is safe to point out that the idea and display of soft power is neither new in international politics, nor is its use limited to the western world. It encompasses the ability of a country to use attraction and persuasion in the pursuit of foreign policy objectives, as opposed to force, coercion or financial inducements.

Soft power is often defined as the “ability to affect others to obtain perceived better outcomes by the use of collaborative means of framing an encompassing agenda to the parties concern, the use of persuasion and positive progressive attraction”. In essence, soft power strategies eschew the traditional hard power foreign policy tools of carrot and stick. Instead, there is preference for a mild and subtle persuasion through the use of networks, developing compelling and attractive narratives, establishing international norms, building coalitions, and drawing on the key resources that is germane to one country or the other. Hard power is the exercise of influence through coercion, relying on tactics such as military intervention, coercive diplomacy, inducements of forceful payment, and economic sanctions. In simple terms, ‘hard power is push; soft power is pull’. The third law of motion holds that actions and reactions are equal and opposite. Therefore, when power is coercively wielded, the repercussion will as well be coercive.

Either with soft power or hard power, the notion of power is much debated and theorized in international relations, but a standard idea is that power is the ability to steer the behaviour of others in a perceived premeditated desired direction. Nye (2008; 2011) identifies three key ways to wield power: sticks, carrots and persuasion. Sticks entails the use of threats and punishments to achieve an end in intergovernmental and international relations. Parties can seek to change the behaviour of a target entity by threatening punishments and actually inflicting damage. For example, Nigeria in West Africa threatened to forcefully eject any junta military government in Africa (West Africa) and to severely punish the culprits. To date, no West Africa nation is totally anti-democratic in practice. As with this instance, punishments may not be directly related to the central matter in dispute. The carrots metaphor is used to illustrate the numerous promises and purported rewards. Definitely, countries can seek to alter the behaviour of others by offering promises of good things in the future and even providing benefits to signal that more might be forthcoming. For example, as a regional power, Nigeria provides economic assistance to many African countries without attaching serious conditions relating to democracy or economic kickbacks. Nigeria only hopes that recipient nations will align their future decisions with the Republic's interests in international forums in order to assure continued access to such aid. A noted case of Nigeria's aid is the end of the civil war in Liberia, restoration of democracy and the pledge to support and reconstruct the war-ravaged country.

Persuasion in the same vein occurs when one party moves the position of another in a desired direction by pointing out the likely or possible consequences of different behavioural options. Persuasion is more likely to be effective when the party seeking to move the behaviour of the other is trusted and recognised as informed and intelligent. For example, through the provision of evidence, non-governmental bodies and the United Nations team of experts concerned with peculiar societal projects like the protection of the environment seek to change the behaviour of governments and people, making them aware of the need to reduce the emission of carbon monoxide and the burning of fossil fuel in order to slow the rate of environmental damage and climate change.

The western conception of soft power is summarized by Hill and Beadle (2013) as "the ability to influence the behaviour of others and obtain desired outcomes through attraction and co-option". The Asian countries, especially China, summarise soft power as the gentle inclusion of socialist and Marxian principles coupled with Confucian philosophy to

break the monopoly of western democracy and capitalism in the present world. In light of the above, this study is concerned with investigating the relevance of the trend of soft power utilization in Nigeria's foreign policy focusing on its economic diplomacy. How has Nigeria been utilizing its soft power of economic diplomacy in Africa in the present multi-polar order? To what extent have Nigerians benefitted from Nigeria's economic diplomacy over the years? In other words, how has Nigeria's soft power positively impacted the economy and its people? The methodology of the paper relies on data from Afrobarometer on the current status of the economic handling or management as perceived by Nigerians. The data utilised covers from 2002 until 2014, round two to six time series survey among Nigerians which were descriptively analysed. In each round, two thousand four hundred participants were observed. The realist theoretical framework is further utilized to buttress the importance of power and the need for soft power utilization by Nigeria for the success of peaceful politics among nations of the world.

The rest of the study is divided into four parts. The first part provides conceptual insights on the dimension of global soft power prowess in terms of its utilization by global and middle powers. In the second section, we consider the variety of literature on Nigeria's economic diplomacy to be able to foreground the relevance of this study's proposition. The next section is a critical examination of Nigeria's soft power as part of its economic diplomacy in Africa. In the fourth section, the authors delve into an analysis of Nigeria's economic strength from the lens of the Afrobarometer time series. The study concludes on the need to build a synergy of Nigeria soft power with the country's foreign policy ambitions.

Global Soft Power Prowess

Nye (2008; 2015) stresses that a government's influence can be increased if the target entity admires important aspects of its own country in relation to the other influencing nation. However, the resources that contribute to the cultural dimension of soft power include many elements that may be ignored or isolated by some governments but which are very germane to international politics and diplomacy. These stem from wider forces within society such as literature, art, film, television, music, sport and scholarship. As such, a country's novelists, musicians, athletes, entertainers and even academics can contribute to a government's soft power when they attain a major and positive international reputation.

In this sense, it can be seen that the US has various soft-power resources. In terms of culture, it has the Hollywood, music stars, artists and identifiably ‘American’ sports like basketball, baseball and the customised American football. In terms of political values it promotes democracy, human rights and freedom of speech including through its renowned universities education system that accommodates many international students and its world-class think tanks bodies of institutions. In terms of its national diplomatic effort, the US emphasise its natural-disaster relief volunteer work and the number of refugees it accepts.

China, on the other hand, was initially concerned with the infiltration of and dilution of ‘American core values’ among the comity of states. However, over the last two decades, it has developed a more comprehensive conception of Chinese values, based on a mixture of modern Marxist values – so-called ‘socialist core values’ – and traditional Confucian values (Jintao 2007; Huang 2013). While the values central to Confucianism are relatively uncontested which include; loving others, devotion to parents and older siblings, harmony in thought and conduct – there is still much debate on the precise meaning and content of the core values of socialism as it varies in different social climes and context of the world.

As international competition for soft power becomes visible in part as a competition among ideas, in trying to strengthen the foundations of its own position China needs to weaken the foundations of Western soft power. Thus, it emphasises global harmony rather than allegedly universal values such as democracy, human rights or freedom of speech. For Zhan Dexiong, China’s Marxism and Confucianism stand in opposition to American values. The Middle East ideology of soft power is largely embedded in the western core values of new democracy and freedom of speech and expressions. The region still expresses its main soft power strength by placing large premium on religious harmony as a common language of persuasion for peace and unity.

The second interlinked megatrend driving global soft power is the digital era wherein the world increasingly lives online. There are now over three billion internet users across the world; this is nearly half of the global population. In economic terms, Dean et al. (2012) noted that the internet economy became about £2.7 trillion (\$4.2 trillion) in 2016 in the G-20 economies alone. Millions of transactions take place online every day, with news and entertainment increasingly delivered via web-based

channels. More of day-to-day life has gone digital. There are now over two billion active social media accounts.

Governments are as well joining the online conversation as a means of monitoring what the needs of the people are, to know the trending opinion of the people on governance and to monitor other countries international moves. According to initial internal estimates, there are currently one hundred and ninety (190) countries that have a world leader or ministry of foreign affairs with an active online media account (Twiplomacy 2015). Many major NGOs and multilateral organisations have followed suit, or in many cases led the way. The growth in computing power, the speed with which information is disseminated around the globe and the spread of the smartphone have enhanced the rapid movement of information across borders, proliferation of platforms to share that information which lead to the creation of individuals more powerful than they have been at any point in history. This has also transformed the way information is shared, throwing up a new form of e-democracy defined by increasingly activist–global public in the form of the Arab Spring, the rise of Wikileaks, the #Occupy movement, citizen-journalism, and even the #BringBackOurGirls campaign.

The world's major powers no doubt are in desperate need of a comprehensive code of conduct on cyber security, electronic warfare and building a universally accepted set of rules of engagement so as to stem the tide of cyber terrorism and crime is a global imperative. The recent hacking of the US Office of Personnel Management's records of four million federal employees has been described as the American 'Cyber Pearl Harbor' (Geraghty 2015). To overcome this notorious challenge, world leaders will require leadership, collaboration, and a great deal of soft power to shape and secure global agreement. While foreign policy engagements with soft power will grease the wheels of collaboration and collective action, the attraction afforded by soft power is also increasingly crucial in meeting the more localised challenges that countries face. Looking at the zero sum challenges, nations need to rally others to their cause even when it is ultimately a bilateral conflict (McClory, 2015).

The Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) also influence some important measures of global soft power. With its ten member-states, ASEAN is the most well-established and influential network in the region. A prominent example of soft power demonstration in the region was the code of conduct agreement reached in 2002 by China and ASEAN to establish a framework for maritime comportment in the region. There is still much to be done to solve the South China Sea

dispute, but ASEAN using their soft power embedded in their foreign policy and diplomacy will be crucial if the interests of the smaller states in the dispute will not be swept aside. Moreover, the states in question could benefit from leveraging their soft power to appeal to outside powers and multi-lateral organisations.

Another global demonstration of soft power is South Africa's membership in BRICS. The group is projected to allow the country to promote economic development through enhanced trade and investment and expand sectors in which the country already holds a comparative advantage. Despite a low economic presence which is far below that of the other BRICS members, South Africa has a per capita income that is higher than those of both China and India and one of the highest ratios of market capitalization in the world (Sehlapelo, 2012). Martins (2011) also notes that South Africa joins the group not as a middle-income country but as the most advanced economy on a fast-growing continent. To former President Zuma, South Africa's participation in the BRICS group means that the entire continent of Africa, with a population of over 1 billion, is now represented in the group (Wong, 2010; Sehlapelo, 2012).

South Africa is described as Africa's economic powerhouse, with a GDP averaging around 25 percent of the entire continent's GDP. South Africa's formal sector, based on services, mining, and manufacturing, can rival those of the majority of those of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) states. As a middle-income country, with a per capita gross national income (GNI) of US\$7,610, South Africa's largely affluent white population has long reaped the benefits of controlling a competitive and robust economy characterized by an abundant supply of mineral resources; well-developed legal, energy, financial, communications, and transportation sectors; modern infrastructures that support the efficient distribution of goods and services to major urban centres throughout the country; and an active stock exchange that ranks among the top 20 in the world. If all of these soft powers economic diplomatic features are harnessed, South Africa and indeed Africa will return to global reckoning faster than anticipated.

Literature on Nigeria's Economic Diplomacy

For many years, international relations scholars have debated the nature and form of Nigeria's economic diplomacy. Although the literature is not new, no study has attempted to engage Nigeria's economic diplomatic

engagement from the prism of soft power. In the emerging studies on Nigeria's soft power potential and sources, it is important to consider the remit of economic engagement in ways that have secured the payoffs of soft power for the country. In this section, we briefly examine some of the literature on economic diplomacy and use the discussion to justify the crux of our study. To begin, Saliu's (1997) study presents two opposing scholarly contestations about the origin and thrust of Nigeria's economic diplomatic engagement. According to him, while some studies suggest that Nigeria's economic diplomacy was originally initiated by the Ibrahim Babangida administration (1985-1993) in 1988 as a counter-measure to the forces of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) adopted in 1986, other authors conclude that economic diplomacy has always featured in the implementation of Nigeria's foreign policy dating back to 1983. Acknowledging the strength of both arguments, Saliu however concludes that what is important is to reaffirm the historical familiarity of economic diplomacy with the Nigerian foreign policy.

Another interesting study by Pogoson (2011) examines the challenges and issues of a decade of Nigeria's economic diplomacy practice. Her study examined the effect of economic factors on Nigeria's foreign policy dynamics under Obasanjo's regime (1999-2007). She also considered how Nigeria used the forces of international economic policies to advance its national interest globally. The worsening state of the economy from the early 1980s necessitated the intervention of a new foreign policy approach rooted in economic diplomacy. Pogoson (2011) argues that between 1999 and 2007, economic diplomacy became an indispensable foreign policy thrust for Nigeria to improve its reputation, secure respect and relevance in the international community as direct benefits of its diplomatic interaction (see Mohammed, 2001). A major positive effect of economic diplomacy at the time included a dramatic fall in inflation to single digits in 2006 from an average of 16% between 2001 and 2005. Also, foreign reserves reached about US\$41.9 billion as of March, 2007 while monetary and fiscal policies were introduced to strengthen the financial sector and enhance the creditability of the private sector. As a result, Nigeria successfully renegotiated its foreign debt of over \$35.9 billion and secured a positive credit rating of BB- from Fitch and Poor in February 2007 (Pogoson 2007). Essentially, as Pogoson's study notes, Nigeria's foreign policy during this period emphasised economic diplomacy as a way to address the "perceived failure of the previous foreign policy endeavours to deliver in economic terms" and place Nigerians as the direct recipients of Nigeria's foreign policy engagements.

Lawal and Aluko (2016) claim that economic diplomacy and citizen diplomacy are two main issues that have dominated Nigeria's foreign policy since 1960. However, with little evidence of its effect on its people, Nigeria's foreign policy, they suggest, needs to redeem the country's bastardized image by focusing on improving the domestic challenges of the country which include corruption, insecurity, poverty and illiteracy. All of these internal setbacks threaten Nigeria's foreign policy and tend to challenge the country's self-acclaimed status as 'giant of Africa' (Ogunnubi and Okeke-Uzodike, 2016).

Osaigbovo (2014) argues that competing states in the global arena recognise the pivotal role of food security as an instrument of national power which Nigeria must pursue in order to meet its foreign policy goals. He attempts to establish a link between the global challenge of food security and Nigeria's economic diplomatic engagement in the new world order by contesting the reliance on a monolithic oil-based economy as well as the failure to maximize the country's tremendous human and natural resources of Nigeria, leaving its people agriculturally deprived. Examining the enormous potential of agriculture in Nigeria, Osaigbovo's analysis suggests that Nigeria will continue to be recognised merely as a country with great potential to transform into a major economy in future until it directs its economic diplomacy to address domestic problems of food security. In his view, the prioritisation of agricultural self-sufficiency with an emphasis on economic diversification is crucial to a successful foreign policy. Achieving this result, however, would require the mobilisation of diplomatic resources through collaborative efforts with international organisations and development partners to reposition agricultural policies that address the country's food crisis. Also, there is the imperative for government at all levels to establish agricultural research centres and institutes that will enhance agricultural production and achieve sustainable economic growth. As the largest importer of all food products in Africa, a focus on agriculture can help to develop Nigeria's capacity to not only feed its population but also cater to the needs of the rest of the region. Furthermore, decriing the lacuna between Nigeria's foreign policy forays in Africa and the lack of economic presence in many of the African countries that have received its benevolence, Ojeme's (2011) commentary sounded the need to include the Organised Private Sector (OPS) in the country's future diplomatic engagements.

From the above literature, what is evident is that economic diplomacy has always featured in the rhetoric of Nigerian foreign policy

makers though it is hard to trace any real impact of such stance. The recent launch of the Nigerian Economic Diplomacy Initiative (NEDI) in April 2018 by the Buhari government is another of such foreign policy rhetoric.

Nigeria's Economic Diplomacy as Soft Power

Nigeria's soft power is concerned with influencing the hearts and minds of the foreign public and also with improving its image among their leaders, who are the main focus of soft power. At the same time, Nigeria's foreign policy has become more ambitious, shifting from being reactive – 'keeping a low profile while accumulating power' – to proactive – 'hardworking and promising'. The intention is to minimise the impression that Nigeria constitutes a threat to others, and thus seeks to convey a peaceful image to its neighbours and other international friends (Ogunnubi 2014).

The formation and execution of Nigeria's foreign policy from independence has been carried out in no fewer than fourteen different administrations through the external affairs ministry. From Tafawa Balewa's administration in 1960 to President Obasanjo's administration in 2003; from the administration of President Musa Yar'Adua to the current administration of President Muhammed Buhari, Nigeria's foreign policy projection has been fluctuating with the international politics rather than with the country's core strategic priorities and national interest. The consequence of the fluxy nature of Nigeria's foreign policy is the plethora of conceptual and ideological transitions often displaying an inconsistent schizophrenic outlook at the international front.

Section 19 of 1979 and 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria set the foreign policy objectives of the Nigerian state thus:

The foreign policy shall be:

- Promotion and protection of national interest,
- Promotion of African integration and support of African unity
- Promotion of international cooperation for consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect among all nations and elimination in all its manifestation;
- Respect for international law and treaty. Obligations as well as the seeking of settlement of international disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and adjudication and;

- Promotion of a just world economic order.

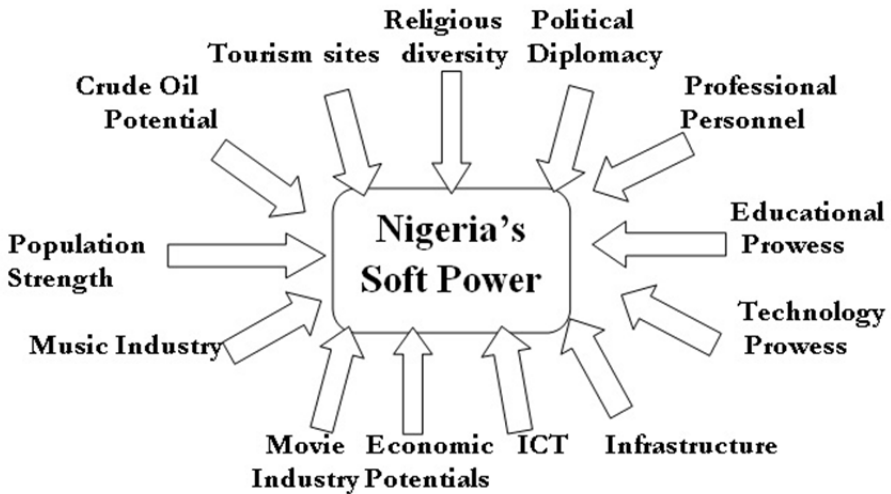
However, the concept of economic diplomacy as a foreign policy plank was introduced into Nigeria's foreign policy during the Ibrahim Babangida administration (1986-1993). It is, however, important to note that Nigeria has always used its economic resources to project a diplomatic course for itself especially among its immediate neighbours. In essence, economic diplomacy has remained a major component of Nigeria's foreign policy endeavours. The government conceptualized economic diplomacy policy as, "the promotion of export trade, investment and increased financial assistance from friendly countries". Building on this, the then Foreign Affairs Minister, Ike Nwachukwu in his June 1988 speech, *The Dynamics of Nigeria's Foreign Policy*, provided the policy direction when he stated that, "it is the responsibility of our foreign policy apparatus to advance the course of our national economic recovery" (Pine, 2011). The imperative of an economic foreign policy framework was inspired by the economic pressures that were exerted on the Nigerian economy as a result of the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) which eventually failed to yield the needed dividends.

The focus of Nigeria's economic diplomacy was on export promotion, encouragement of direct foreign investment, debt rescheduling, embracing of neo-liberal economic measures and deep involvement in the interplay of the capitalist international political economy. The political wing of economic diplomacy agenda was anchored on the idea that Nigeria will ingratiate itself and cultivate the goodwill and friendship of the leading countries of Europe, North America and Japan.

Opportunities still exist for states of every size to achieve their aims, but success depends more than ever on the ability to attract, persuade, and mobilise others. In this new complex world, a critical foreign policy lever is soft power. As the conduct of foreign policy increasingly operates not along traditional state-to-state lines, but through complex, multi-level, interdependent, and fluid networks, governments and their diplomats must adapt. Countries with the ability to form and mobilise networks will be the ones driving change and shaping the key outcomes of global affairs.

The economic diplomacy of Nigeria contains the following soft powers features which can be used to liaise, dialogue and negotiate with other countries of the world.

Figure I: Showing Soft Powers Prowess



Source: Authors' compilation

The population of Nigeria is a unique soft power and a measure of her economic diplomatic negotiation tool among the comity of states. At present, the Nigerian population is put at about 160 million people. It is the largest black nation in the world and a co-lead actor in African foreign diplomacy along with South Africa. The population is the market negotiation strength for any country to buy into for gross economic largesse. The large crude oil reserve of Nigeria is another soft power negotiating tool. Nigeria has a very large crude oil reserve and it is rated as one of the top four largest exporter of crude oil in the world. This has been the mainstay of Nigeria's economy since late 1980s. Many African nations and indeed the world depend on the constant supply of Nigeria's crude oil to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) for balance of supply in the world market. Whenever Nigeria's quota fall shorts or rises, the global economy and markets are affected.

Tourism and nature preservation is another soft power potential for Nigeria. This is indeed a form of soft power for negotiation with international organizations and individuals who have keen interest in harnessing, investing and conserving the natural reserves. Religion is another source of soft power for Nigeria. Nigeria is a multi-religious country that has influence on many religious inclined countries of the world. It has the prowess to relate and negotiate with many religious

groups of the world. The Christian countries of the Western world are free to negotiate and interact with Nigeria's huge Christian population just as is the case with Muslims.

Nigeria's political diplomacy is firmly inscribed in her foreign policy statement which is to live in peace and harmony with all countries of the world and as well to ensure equality among all nations. This implies that Nigeria could align with any nation of the world regardless of her ideology or policy so as to enhance global peace, equity and harmony in the international relations system. Also Nigeria's huge resource pool of professional personnel is a soft power negotiation tool. Nigeria's highly intelligent personnel are found in many regions of the world, occupying sensitive positions. If Nigeria should decide to withdraw such intelligence from any country it will definitely create a vacuum, therefore negotiation and mutual understanding are maintained in such circumstances.

Nigeria's economic potential is another arsenal of soft power. Nigeria has so wide an economic strength that in few decades it still might not have fully harnessed. Nigeria's GDP is almost twice that of most African countries. The readily available market can accommodate many finished goods from other places thus it is a point of negotiation among competing producing countries. The music and the movie industries are another source of soft power Nigeria uses as a negotiating tool with countries and other international organizations. These sectors have a large expanse of coverage that can project the image of any country or government either positively or negatively, both within and outside Nigeria. Therefore international organizations advocating for causes such as 'child abuse', 'prostitution', 'refugee' 'human rights' among others find them to be important vehicles that can be used to portray and project their agenda to the larger society within Nigeria and the sub-region.

Afrobarometer Data Analysis on Nigeria's Economic Strength

The data presented in Table I and Figure II below show how effective Nigeria has been utilizing her soft powers among nations in the present multi-polar order. It answers the question of how satisfying it is to the teeming Nigeria populace. It reveals that in a 2002/2003 survey, thirty eight percent (38%) of Nigerians opined that the Nigerian government has handled the economy poorly. This figure rose to forty-five percent (45%) in a 2005/2006 survey. The proportion of people that opined that the handling of the economy was fairly bad in the 2002/2003 survey

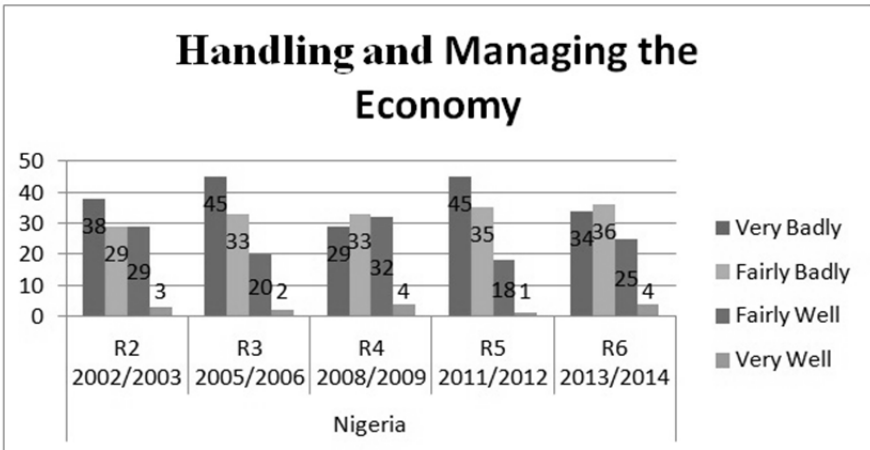
were twenty-nine percent (29%), a figure which increased to thirty-three percent (33%) in the 2005/2006 survey.

Table 1:

	TOTAL	Nigeria				
		R2 2002/2003	R3 2005/2006	R4 2008/2009	R5 2011/2012	R6 2013/2014
Handling Managing the Economy						
Very Badly	38	38	45	29	45	34
Fairly Badly	33	29	33	33	35	36
Fairly Well	25	29	20	32	18	25
Very Well	3	3	2	4	1	4
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Don't know	1	1	1	2	0	1
(N)	11.754	2.428	2.202	2.324	2.4	2.4

Source: Afrobarometer Data Round 6

Figure II: Handling and Managing the Nigeria’s Economy



However, in the 2002/2003 survey, twenty-nine percent (29%) of Nigerians opined that the economy was fairly well managed as compared to twenty percent (20%) in the 2005/2006 survey. A very low percentage, three percent (3%) and two percent (2%) respectively for 2002/2003 and 2005/2006 surveys, believed that Nigeria’s economy was very well managed. In summation, a total of sixty-seven percent (67%) and seventy-eight percent (78%) of respondents in the 2002/2003 and

2005/2006 surveys remarked that Nigeria's economy was badly managed (a combination of very badly and fairly badly). Also a total of thirty-two percent (32%) and twenty-two percent (22%) remarked that Nigeria's economy was well managed (a combination of fairly badly and very badly).

In a 2008/2009 survey, twenty-nine percent (29%) of respondents opined that the Nigerian government had done very badly in handling the economy. This figure rose to forty-five percent (45%) in a 2011/2012 survey. The proportion of people that opined that the economy handling was fairly bad in 2008/2009 survey were thirty-three percent (33%) and thirty five percent (35%) in the 2011/2012 survey. However, in 2008/2009, thirty two percent (32%) of respondents opined that the economy was fairly well managed as opposed to eighteen percent (18%) in the 2011/2012 survey. A very low percentage, four percent (4%) and one percent (1%) respectively for 2008/2009 and 2011/2012 survey opined that Nigeria's economy was very well managed. In summation, a total of sixty-two percent (62%) and eighty percent (80%) of respondents in the 2008/2009 and 2011/2012 surveys remarked that Nigeria's economy was badly managed (a combination of very badly and fairly badly). Also a total of thirty -percent (36%) and nineteen percent (19%) remarked that Nigeria's economy was well-managed (a combination of fairly badly and very badly).

In a 2013/2014 survey, thirty-four percent (34%) of Nigerian opined that the Nigeria government had done very badly in handling the economy. The proportion of people that opined that the economy handling was fairly bad in 2013/2014 survey was thirty-six percent (36%). However, twenty-five percent of respondents (25%) opined that the economy was fairly well managed as compared to eighteen percent (18%) in a 2011/2012 survey. A very low percentage, four percent (4%), in the 2013/2014 survey opined that Nigeria's economy was very well managed. In total summation of rounds two to six (2002-2014), a total of thirty-eight percent (38%) of respondents remarked that Nigeria's economy was very badly managed. While thirty-three percent (33%) remarked that the economy was fairly bad. This gives a total of seventy-one percent (71%). Also twenty-five percent (25%) of respondents opined that the economy was fairly well managed while three percent (3%) remarked that the economy was very well managed. This means a total of twenty-eight percent (28%) believe the economy is well-managed (a combination of fairly well and very well surveys).

Conclusion

Arguably, no other African country has contributed more to the continent in terms of human capital, finance and military resources than Nigeria. However, despite these laudable endeavours of a strong Afrocentric and pan-African foreign policy, Nigeria's 'big brother' role has often yielded hardly any reciprocal benefit for its people. Despite Nigeria's sustained assistance and leadership role in the continent, some African countries still subject Nigerians living in their country to hostility and humiliation.

For too long, Nigerians have gained very little benefit from the country's foreign policy interests in Africa compared to its numerous investment in the continent. A foreign policy approach that improves the quality of life of Nigeria and prioritises the improvement of the domestic situation of the country is needed to take Nigeria's regional hegemonic claim seriously. Nigeria's foreign policy must serve an economic development purpose by seeking to initiate practical economic agendas for the business growth and human capital development of its people. Although Nigeria's foreign policy in Africa has been branded as altruistic, intending to providing greater good for the African people, and sometimes to the disadvantage of its own people, the reality is that other African countries will positively regard Nigeria and its people on the strength of the quality of life and economic buoyancy of Nigeria. Again, while the rest of Africa can benefit immensely from Nigeria's human capital resources, it cannot be denied that Nigeria's economic diplomacy can be built on the diplomatic principle of reciprocity.

A citizen-focused economic diplomacy agenda will go a long way to improving the negative perception of Nigeria in Africa and globally. In Africa, the research and interest on soft power and economic diplomacy is still in its infancy. Although some studies have been conducted on the substance of soft power for the foreign policy of regional powers, these studies have focused mainly on South Africa with just a few on Nigeria. It is hoped that this contribution on the usefulness of Nigeria's economic diplomacy as an instrument of soft power will initiate a needed conversation on the need for an economic diplomatic approach for Nigeria that prioritises its citizens and secures tangible soft power benefits.

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