

---

**| RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## **Cultural Diplomacy: Enhancing Morocco's Image and Reputation Worldwide**

**Rachid Enaim**

*Ibn Tofail University, Kenitra, Morocco*

**Corresponding Author:** Rachid Enaim, **E-mail:** [rachid.enaim@taalim.ma](mailto:rachid.enaim@taalim.ma)

---

**| ABSTRACT**

Morocco's use of cultural diplomacy becomes apparent as a key tactic in enhancing its standing and perception internationally. Morocco has a rich cultural heritage ready for diplomatic use, with a diverse cultural tapestry firmly influenced by Berber, Arab, and European cultures. In an age of globalization and intense rivalry between nations, Morocco can effectively portray its distinct character and promote understanding among people from different backgrounds through cultural diplomacy. Morocco can establish sustainable partnerships with countries across the globe by actively participating in cultural exchanges, encouraging artistic collaborations, and safeguarding its rich cultural legacy. This aggressive stance promotes tourism, international investment, and socioeconomic growth and strengthens Morocco's soft power. Furthermore, it reinforces Morocco's standing as a world leader in creative, tolerant, and innovative culture, which increases its impact and notoriety abroad.

**| KEYWORDS**

Cultural diplomacy; soft power; mutual understanding; reputation; image projection

**| ARTICLE INFORMATION**

**ACCEPTED:** 01 December 2021

**PUBLISHED:** 25 December 2021

**DOI:** 10.32996/jgcs.2021.1.1.10

---

**1. Introduction**

Morocco presents many advantages ready for diplomatic leverage, resembling a lively tapestry of culture, history, and tradition in the mosaic of international relations. Morocco has a complex blend of Arab, European, and Berber influences, creating a fascinating and varied cultural landscape. However, the necessity of cultural diplomacy has grown more crucial in a time of increased global interconnectedness and struggle for attention and influence. Morocco can present its world-class artistic, culinary, and architectural creations and promote meaningful cross-border communication, understanding, and cooperation by carefully utilizing its cultural legacy. Morocco can enhance its soft power and positively influence global opinions by implementing programs like creative partnerships, cultural exchanges, and historical preservation activities. By doing this, it will be able to project an image of cultural diversity, tolerance, and innovation that will advance its diplomatic ties, draw investment and tourists, and eventually cement its place on the international scene.

**2. Morocco's Potential Applications of Cultural Diplomacy to Sell its Image Worldwide**

This study assumes that sharing Moroccan culture with foreign audiences builds mutual cross-cultural understanding with foreigners. The country has a cultural appeal that attracts people from around the world. Once the country's image is well-branded, trust and mutual understanding can be easily attained. The image of Morocco and its attraction to foreigners have been controversial issues with contradictory opinions and attitudes. Some think Morocco can rely on its culture to create an impact overseas; others strongly believe Morocco should focus on economic power. Culturally, Morocco has a rich artistic and musical heritage. The country promotes its culture by organizing events inside and outside the country. Mohamed V theatre has received plenty of ballet dancers, rap musicians, and artists as a symbol of cultural openness. There is agreement among theorists that Morocco has effective soft power resources that can be used to influence foreign audiences. Cultural diplomacy is an instrument for influencing foreign audiences, particularly strategic audiences beyond borders, to counterattack defamation threats the country suffers from. Facilitating intercultural understanding cannot take place outside the cultural strata. Cultural diplomacy has become

an important part of countries' foreign policy. It is an effective instrument that countries use to build mutual cross-cultural understanding. According to Schneider, "cultural diplomacy does not compensate for, or explain away unpopular policies; rather, cultural diplomacy increases understanding and builds respect as part of a long-term relationship" (4). A nation's culture can be communicated to the world in many ways, such as through cultural activities, educational exchange programs, TV shows, and so on. Face-to-face meetings, dialogue, and persuasion are key to changing foreigners' opinions and attitudes toward the country. Morocco's culture is nowadays inhabited by plenty of ideas, images, and values that have never been Moroccan. They are coming from foreign cultures. We live in an age dominated by global ideas that have brought benefits and great challenges to Morocco as a member of the global community. For this reason, cultural appropriation is urgently needed in our society to be a part of the world. Nye argues that "countries that are likely to be more attractive in postmodern international relations are those that help to frame issues, whose culture and ideas are closer to prevailing international norms, and whose credibility abroad is reinforced by their values and policies" (qtd. Melissen 29). Using cultural diplomacy in Morocco's foreign policies is a perfect way to raise Morocco's international profile. Economic prosperity is essential in any nation's development; however, it should not be the only motive behind all actions. To eliminate the negative reputation Morocco suffers from worldwide, the latter should invest massively in cultural diplomacy programs that aim to sell Morocco's image as a modern country that respects cultural diversity/differences. Morocco should explore the potential of cultural diplomacy to sell its image overseas by building trusting relationships with foreign audiences. Cultural diplomacy goes beyond influencing foreign audiences to build long-lasting relationships by planting trust among nations with different cultural strata. Cultural diplomacy may include "broadcasting, subsidizing cultural exports, arranging exchanges, and so forth" (Nye 2). Morocco's economic plans in sub-Saharan Africa lack targeting people's cultural needs. No matter the economic growth rate Morocco will achieve in Africa, it will always risk losing everything if it does not cater to the cultural identity of the target societies. Countries that prioritize economic benefits without considering the target audiences' cultural specificities have failed. This happened to the Soviet Union because it focused on economic and political issues without reference to peoples' specificities. Therefore, we can say that any development must be found in culture. If we are not fully aware of the cultural structure of the target group, we will not manage to get the desired results because a misreading of the group can lead to unwanted results. Implementing culture as an instrument of soft power has always been at the core of Morocco's foreign policies. From the womb of history, Morocco has sent many ambassadors to different places. Those ambassadors have represented Morocco's ways of life wherever they might happen to be. Moroccan government departments should rethink their view of culture as the latter can help the country trespass or even change the stereotypes and prejudices that Morocco has been facing for a long time. Morocco has all the potential to show the world that it has always celebrated cultural differences. In this thesis, cultural diplomacy should be a substantive part of Morocco's foreign policy as it seeks to enhance mutual understanding, eliminate ethnocentric beliefs, and prevent real or potential conflicts.

One of the negative aspects of Moroccan foreign relations management is the over-emphasis on official institutions. Single-vision programs restrict the potential of cultural diplomacy activities. People shine activities forwarded by governments only. For instance, the failure of the international community to effectively deal with terrorism is due to the reliance on governmental interventions only without considering people's power. Authoritarian governance has never led to positive outcomes. Governments' over-control of cultural diplomacy programs hampers the enthusiasm of other actors. Enhancing the country's image should not be the government's responsibility only. Non-governmental organizations should be encouraged because "a non-governmental voice lends credibility and honesty to cultural relations than the voice of governments. The authenticity of cultural relations, made possible by independence from government, helps establish trust with others" (Boyle 166). Simplifying administrative procedures to conduct cultural diplomacy activities can be a handy tool to sell Morocco's image internationally. Official diplomacy instruments have long hindered the potential of soft power as foreign audiences do not feel secure when governments target them. People's resistance rate becomes very high. As a result, cultural diplomacy activities do not yield the desired outcomes. Nye argues that "postmodern publics are generally skeptical of authority, and governments are often mistrusted.... Some NGOs enjoy more trust than governments do... they can be useful channels of communication" (113). Over-emphasis on censorship hinders countries' image overseas as audiences, especially nowadays, do not trust a country that forbids or restricts mass media. Some countries could have succeeded, yet states' intervention has led to total failure. Many people worldwide do not appreciate some countries' cultural events since the government failed to use the country's soft power to convince others successfully.

Some countries have started changing their attitudes about cultural diplomacy. China, for instance, has changed its views of cultural diplomacy as the country used to be sensitive to cultural flows from the West. However, now it is becoming one of the leading nations in cultural diplomacy practices. Lihua 2005 says that "the National Congress and top party leader began emphasizing cultural diplomacy as a means of promoting Chinese cultural ideas abroad and enhancing the country's soft power" (qtd. In Boyle 169). Many years ago, China severely censored every detail of its citizens' lives. However, with the establishment of the Confucius Institute, the nation has started reaching the world and bringing new cultural flows domestically. The institute receives a huge budget from the Chinese government every year. Despite being criticized, the Confucius Institution is a government asset and has managed to promote China's image worldwide. In this context, Stilwell, assistant secretary of state for East Asia and Pacific Affairs,

argues that “we are not kicking them out. We’re just highlighting the fact that these folks do work for the Ministry of Education of the (Chinese) Communist Party” (qtd. in Riechman).

It would be completely wrong to assume that popular culture must be central to cultural events. They ought to focus on contemporary cultural values. If we keep representing a colorful exotic country, we will unconsciously reproduce orientalist’s visions. The primary and challenging question is which elements of culture are relevant in cultural diplomacy activities/ practices. Morocco can gain credibility by being part of the countries debating global climate change, international law, human rights, peacemaking, etc. All these issues are good sources of Morocco’s soft power and attractiveness, especially in countries unfamiliar with Moroccan cultural values. The influence of attraction and persuasion has become the power of nowadays. Countries with positive reputations have more impact on foreign citizens worldwide. In brief, there is no universal model for cultural diplomacy application to enhance countries’ images and boost mutual understanding, yet there are some examples from which to draw conclusions. The best way to sell a positive image of Morocco is to learn from others’ experiences, as there are many successful examples to follow, namely the UK, Japan, China, and so on. Morocco can resort to cultural diplomacy for several reasons. First and foremost, it is an instrument to advance government interests and boost mutual understanding among people from different cultures. Cultural diplomacy also helps counterattack the negative images Morocco suffers from abroad. Bringing a foreign cultural event to Morocco will boost bilateral and multilateral relations with guest cultures. Hosting a cultural event of another country is at the core of cultural diplomacy. This helps Morocco raise its international profile and enhance its reputation overseas. Morocco should target the foreign public to acquire some global values that make Morocco a part of the world. Cultural diplomacy can bring people together because intercultural familiarity with each other will help Morocco:

- ✓ Pave the way for mutual understanding with others.
- ✓ Connect the country with others worldwide.
- ✓ Highlight differences and similarities with others.
- ✓ Sell a good image internationally.

Morocco’s cultural ties are the central power that relates it to other countries. It is closely attached to Maghreb, Arab, Mediterranean, and African countries. The country can benefit from the practices employed by other countries. It would be essential to make groups of intellectuals, politicians, and cultural studies scholars study cultural diplomacy philosophies, programs, and funding. Some leading countries have implemented cultural diplomacy in foreign policies. Some are Canada, Japan, the Netherlands, France, and the United Kingdom. The choice of these countries can be ascribed to the fact that they have well-structured cultural diplomacy programs. They can be good allies for Morocco to collaborate with them, and examples to follow. Nonetheless, putting cultural diplomacy into practice is not an easy task as many might deem it, yet it calls for a lot of infrastructure and personnel:

- Infrastructure may include:
  - ◆ Foreign service centers
  - ◆ Cultural institutes
  - ◆ Libraries
  - ◆ Offices
- Personnel may include:
  - ◆ Cultural attaches
  - ◆ Ministerial staff
  - ◆ Intellectuals/ theorists

### 3. Morocco’s Reputation Worldwide

As the country is culturally diverse, cultural goods can be Morocco’s foremost ambassador. Mtougui states, “Morocco has the advantage of being a geographical and cultural mosaic. Arabs, Berbers and people of Sub-Saharan, Jewish and Andalusian origins have been living together peacefully for centuries, and shaping the country’s unique land and culture” (44). Promoting a positive reputation internationally is the key to succeeding in foreign policy making. Countries have resorted to various instruments, each one according to its abilities. Melissen believes that “many ministries of foreign affairs of large and small states ranging from the United States to *Liechtenstein*, either democratic or authoritarian regimes such as Singapore or China, or even the poorest states such as Ethiopia, have shown a great interest in cultural diplomacy (qtd in Mtougui 21). Many countries have managed to sell their image thanks to the soft power arsenal as it can persuade foreign publics to accept specific values without resorting to hard power, which always faces strong resistance. Nye argues that:

If I am persuaded to go along with your purposes without any explicit or exchange taking place\_ in short, if my behavior is determined by an observable but intangible attraction, soft power is at work. Soft power uses a different type of currency, not

force, not money\_ to engender cooperation\_ an attraction to shared values and the justness and duty contributing to the achievement of those values. (13)

Historically, Morocco's reputation has been at the core of the government's policies. Reputation is the primary source of countries' soft power. That is why opponents of Morocco try their best to negatively affect its reputation by targeting foreign audiences, particularly in societies where Morocco has a positive reputation. Polisario Front supporters organized many demonstrations in some European countries, showing the world that Morocco has been occupying a land that does not belong to it. Cultural diplomacy helps Morocco sell a positive image and maintain long-term relationships with other countries. However, building a good reputation is difficult, as many people might believe. It calls for many techniques and strategies, such as talking to foreign audiences through foreign press to spread Morocco's causes worldwide. Academicians and political leaders are essential in enhancing the country's reputation beyond borders. A good case in point is Nelson Mandela. He has been a great source of South African soft power. How things would be if he were born in another country? Many people in the world associate South Africa with Mandela. They might not know anything about the country, yet they are familiar with him. Morocco is not well-branded in many countries. More than that, it is considered as a colonizer, terrorism producer, and so on. There are some practical tools Morocco can rely on to enhance its image overseas. The country can take part in initiatives that seek the world's well-being, such as fighting global poverty, protecting the environment, and maintaining international peace. This way, Morocco will be a part of the world as the already-mentioned tools tackle common interests of the world. Morocco has to establish a solid commitment to cultural diplomacy practices to promote a positive image overseas, providing funds, the expertise of writers and artists, and time to get the desired outcomes.

The assassination of the two Scandinavian hikers, Louisa Vesterager Jespersen, 24, from Denmark, and Maren Ueland, 28, from Norway, in the High Atlas Mountains has had a negative influence on Morocco's reputation worldwide, especially in Europe. Some European countries have published brochures to warn their citizens from visiting the country. For instance, the Commonwealth and Development Office tries hard to reduce the number of its citizens heading to Morocco. It has provided guidelines for the British people planning to visit Morocco. It was formulated as the following:

1. "Terrorists are likely to try to carry out attacks in Morocco. You should be always vigilant.
2. Morocco has a poor road safety record" (UK\_foriegn-trave-advice/Morocco).

This communiqué was published in many newspapers, such as the Guardian and the New York Times, and broadcasted on some TV channels, such as BBC World News. The incident massively deteriorated the reputation of Morocco as many people across Europe started looking at Morocco as an unsafe country where one might be attacked at any time. This event creates a xenophobic attitude against Morocco. Politicians' intervention is crucial to rectify this damage, but addressing ordinary people is also of great help to overcome this image problem. It is in this context that cultural diplomacy can come into display. Media is an excellent means for Morocco to strengthen its ties with other countries/ nations and sell its image overseas. Morocco can rely on its population to brand its image. Ordinary citizens affect foreign policy management due to their influential role in contemporary international relations. Morocco should include all its components to defend its reputation beyond borders, for cultural diplomacy can "comprise all a nation does to explain itself to the world" (Schneider 1). Generally, boosting mutual understanding and good image projection are pivotal to solving Morocco's many problems. This can help Morocco defend its deals as gaining the hearts and minds of foreign audiences paves the way for getting the desired outcomes targeted by official foreign policymakers.

#### **4. Why Morocco Needs Cultural Diplomacy?**

Selling a positive image has become crucial in current foreign policy strategies as countries aim to win foreign audiences' hearts and minds. To Nye, the effectiveness of cultural diplomacy is measured by the number of minds and hearts won, not the amount of money spent (8). The efficacy of cultural diplomacy can be "verified and substantiated by empirical evidence of audience behavior after reception; there should be evidence of changes in attitude in the audience towards the exporting nation" (Chua136). Cultural diplomacy has become a pivotal department in ministries of foreign affairs in many countries for several reasons. Government-to-government contacts have not had the desired outcomes. Pure political negotiations are too ideologically overloaded. It is not possible to separate political issues from their cultural backgrounds. "It is not easy, of course, to detangle the cultural from the political in any given country" (Jehan 291). Ordinary people tend to show a great deal of resistance against politics as they believe it is a means to exercise power and domination. In this context, Nye claims that "postmodern publics are generally skeptical of authority, and governments are often mistrusted" (12). Cultural diplomacy is an effective tool that helps nations sell themselves to the world. It is an example of soft power use to persuade the Other through culture: values, norms, ideas, etc. Cultural attraction is a soft power resource, not soft power per se. Many thinkers have warned governments of the threats of ignoring cultural diplomacy. One of them who has tried to give cultural diplomacy its proper position is Laqueur. The latter states that:

Nor can it seriously be argued- as some have- that these tools of US diplomacy foreign policy are no longer needed now that the Cold War is over. America no longer faces significant threats and is far from being on the verge of a new order. The world has entered a period of significant disorder. In facing these new dangers, a re-examination of old priorities is needed. Cultural diplomacy, in the broadest sense, has increased in importance, whereas traditional diplomacy and military power of limited use in coping with most of these dangers. (qtd. in Schneider 173)

This means that cultural diplomacy, using cultural variables while addressing foreign audiences, is gaining more importance for many reasons. Morocco should use culture in conducting its foreign affairs for five key motives. They can be summarized as the following:

### **1) To enhance economy**

Cultural diplomacy is an effective instrument for attracting foreign investors and boosting tourism. Morocco has tremendous tourist potential; that is, tourism can be a great source of income if the country's image is well-promoted. Thanks to cultural diplomacy practices, Morocco can fight the lousy reputation displayed by the country on social media.

### **2) To attain long-term aims in foreign policy**

Cultural diplomacy will help Morocco play strategic roles in Africa. It can also help gain international consensus on the Sahara problem. Many people see Morocco as a colonizer. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs can use culture to promote the "Moroccan-ness" of southern provinces by gaining the voices of foreign audiences. It would be of great use if Moroccan political participants built ties, boosted communication with other parties from all parts of the world, and facilitated encounters to sell a good image of Morocco worldwide. It is crucial to achieve foreign policy purposes smoothly. Gilboa writes "favorable image and reputation around the world, achieved through attraction and persuasion, have become more important than territory, access, at raw materials, traditionally acquired through military and economic measures" (56).

### **3) To enhance international visibility**

Morocco is not well known in many parts of the world. Even the people familiar with the country associate it with deserts, virgin lands, etc. They have orientalist images because Morocco is presented as a folkloric hot culture. Cultural diplomacy is the most effective means to sell a positive image. Cultural practices can travel beyond borders to impact people, as cultural diplomacy focuses on people-to-people interactions. Person-to-person contacts can be "commercial interchange (trade, transportation), personal interchange (tourists, immigrants), media (movies, books, magazines, TV), information conveyed by through friends and relatives" (Liland 20). That is why many practitioners believe that cultural diplomacy is a citizen-oriented form. The target groups are no longer official institutions or governmental corps only. Brazil, for instance, is well known for its carnivals and Samba dances, which are organized worldwide. Cultural diplomacy can increase familiarity by making foreigners think about the country, and, more importantly, they may update the image they hold of it.

### **4) To avoid negative perceptions abroad**

Morocco does suffer from an overly bad reputation in many countries, be they Arab, Muslim, European, or American. Cultural diplomacy can be an excellent tool to ward off that through engaging state and non-state actors. Some promising initiatives are doing their very best to promote the image of Morocco as a nation of diversity, tolerance, collaboration, and so on. These initiatives need training and education about cultural diplomacy to represent the country as it should be.

### **5) To enhance state trust**

One of the main arguments this study defends is that cultural diplomacy can sell a good image of Morocco overseas. Once a suitable image is well sold, state trust can be attained. Morocco should develop its soft power to keep up with the new changes international relations are witnessing. Nye believes that soft power is based on three main elements: culture, politics, and foreign policies (212). Many developed and developing countries have recently realized the importance of cultural diplomacy in solving severe problems/conflicts and, ultimately, enhancing mutual understanding among states and individuals. State trust can be easily attained if Moroccan diplomats incorporate culture in foreign policy because culture can change others' views of Morocco. In this realm, Nye argues that cultural diplomacy can be seen as "the ability to persuade through culture, values, and ideas" (22). Many intellectuals and practitioners have always emphasized cultural diplomacy's crucial role in building trust among nations. Seib has stated that "nearly everyone likes cultural diplomacy in principle, but some remain skeptical about its value. Trust may seem an ephemeral quality, but it is at the heart of state relations and is a principal goal of public diplomacy. Cultural diplomacy can remove the mystery and debunk mythology about a country and its people, and by doing so, it can allow that country's policies to receive attention without distractions" (<https://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/cultural-diplomacy-and-construction-trust>, Par1). In communication with foreign audiences, interpersonal communication is the most crucial means of building trust, mutual understanding, and lasting relationships (Snow 5).

## **5. Lessons for Morocco**

Morocco's foreign policymakers should consider the following ideas for implementing culture in its foreign relations management. These ideas are not new, but they have already been practiced by other countries that have successfully promoted a good image beyond borders. In today's information age, Morocco's attractiveness is an essential factor that should be well-promoted to attain the desired outcomes. The country will benefit if foreign policy designers/makers attract foreign audiences. Exchange programs must be encouraged as they are good platforms to pave the way for interaction among people from different parts of the world. Face-to-face encounters can facilitate mutual understanding among nations so that people can get to know each other closely. Morocco can launch some educational programs that will enhance its reputation worldwide. Exchange programs are practical tools for selling countries' images worldwide. The Fulbright program, for instance, is one of the most influential programs designed to promote America's image overseas and boost mutual cross-cultural understanding. It has been meant to:

To increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries using educational and cultural exchange; to strengthen the ties that unite us with other nations by demonstrating the academic and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other countries and the contributions being made toward a peaceful and more fruitful life for people throughout the world; to promote international cooperation for educational and cultural advancement; and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic, and peaceful relations between the United States and other countries of the world. (qtd. in Snow 6)

The best representatives of a country are its citizens, not only governments. Blinken says:

To be credible to the so-called Arab street, public diplomacy should be directed mainly at spheres of everyday life. Washington should put its money into helping American doctors, teachers, businesses, religious leaders, athletic teams, and entertainers go abroad and provide the sort of services the people in the Middle East are eager for. (qtd. in Nye 143).

Terrorist attacks and some local policies like the penal law and prisoners' punishment cut down Morocco's attractiveness to foreign audiences. After the death of two tourists in Marrakech, many people, especially from Norway and Denmark, became reluctant about visiting the country. Worse than that, some people use social media to speak ill against Morocco. As a result, Morocco's reputation went down. Morocco can benefit from cultural diplomacy by adopting Moroccan culture to fit in and match universal values. Having access to information and communication technology helps create global credibility. Morocco must boost its international competitiveness as countries progressively advance their national cultures overseas to enjoy a positive reputation. An excellent way to achieve this is to conduct touring of visual arts exhibitions worldwide to showcase Moroccan culture. Official agents should work with others whose focus is promoting Morocco's image, like tourism agencies, cultural centers, national branding actors, etc.

Countries have always learned from each other. Countries with successful stories in cultural diplomacy are good examples to follow and benefit from their experiences. Some policies must be revised to maintain cultural diplomacy's potential and credibility. For instance, media coverage of people protesting about human rights can damage the image of Morocco among foreign audiences, especially if authorities resort to violence. Another lesson Morocco can benefit from is consecrating a budget for cultural diplomacy. Spontaneous and unplanned events organization will lead to failures. Advertising campaigns need to be well-studied before launching any event. A TV or YouTube commercial showing good images about human rights, gender equality, freedom, and tolerance is more helpful in image branding than spending much money on complex events that may achieve nothing. Melissen writes: "to be sure, throwing money at self-advertising campaigns in countries with a skeptical public opinion is based on underestimation of assertive postmodern publics.... The simplistic practice of selling images and peddling messages to foreign audiences has little chance of paying off" (7).

Following other countries' experiences does not mean being mindlessly dependent. Each country should develop its cultural diplomacy policies depending on its specificities. Respecting a society's values is the key to success in targeting foreign audiences. Nye believes that "exporting Hollywood films full of nudity and violence to conservative Muslim countries may produce repulsion rather than soft power" (2). The practices used in China will not work, or at least will not lead to the same results, in Norway because of the political and social differences between the two societies. The war on terror should not be the same strategy used in Morocco for many reasons. The overwhelming majority of countries suffer from image problems. France is seen as an African predator, Germany is the holder of the Nazi legacy, Spain holds Franco's heritage, and so forth. At the same time, Indonesia is an excellent example to follow. After the Bali bombing in 2002, Indonesian foreign and cultural policymakers have resorted to cultural diplomacy activities to embrace all societal components and social and cultural integration. The first thing they did was to offer local language classes for sojourners to facilitate communication processes. In this case, cultural diplomacy is an image-building tool because it teaches people language with cultural derivations. Cultural diplomacy does not have to be practiced in isolation from the country's main foreign policy objectives; instead, they should go hand in hand to attain the same aim\_ a favorable

international reputation. Strong people-to-people ties pave the way for mutual understanding among nations and, ultimately, governments. Yurdishthir and Mar believe “the national interest emerges not as a top-down target imposed by government decree, but as a generative mechanism for overcoming narrow exclusionary notions of the nation, in favor of more relational and open understanding” (15).

### 6. Some Solutions to Rectify Morocco’s Image Overseas

To remedy the reputational damage Morocco faces, there should be a department of external affairs within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation, and Moroccan Expatriates that makes cultural promotion and understanding its priorities. Such a department will be able to organize meetings with foreign countries’ cultural institutions by boosting a better understanding and appreciation of Morocco: its values and ways of living and thinking. This department should be founded in response to the rise of hatred against Morocco, especially in Africa and Latin America, where the nation does not enjoy a good reputation. Morocco should work on promoting a friendly knowledge and understanding of their ways of life and thoughts. The suggested department can foster Morocco’s soft power worldwide by raising its attractiveness in the eyes of foreigners worldwide. Partnerships with other institutions and centers in countries are some of the most prominent cultural diplomacy projects, and they will enhance the knowledge of Moroccan culture. Cooperation facilitates networking of Moroccan cultural centers that organize cultural events to promote Morocco’s image overseas through organizing cultural programs like music and film festivals worldwide. Bound, Briggs, Holden, and Jones strongly believe “we must create more mechanisms for engaging cultural institutions and professionals in the policymaking process so that we do not miss important opportunities” (qtd. In Boyle 171). Collaboration among national and international institutions is crucial for promoting the country’s image beyond borders. Another effective way to raise Morocco’s familiarity and appreciation in the world is providing funds for research papers about Moroccan culture for students living abroad and organizing round tables on the theme of Moroccan culture, inviting foreigners to widen their knowledge of Morocco.

2016, the Royal Institute for Strategic Studies published a “Morocco Panorama in the World International Relations” report. The report revolves around pivotal elements, namely the economy, challenges, and, more importantly, foreign policy to promote Morocco’s issues. Moroccan foreign policy focuses on looking for a final settlement of the artificial dispute over Moroccan Southern Provinces. Culture can be a fascinating tool that shows the world that these provinces have always been essential territories of the kingdom. Cultural flows have no well-defined territories. They move from one place to another. If nations deal effectively with cultural relations, international relations can be enhanced. Foreign affairs cannot be conducted by targeting politicians and diplomats only. Culture can defend Morocco’s territories by promoting its cultural heritage and consolidating close links between Morocco and its Southern provinces. Cultural diplomacy is becoming an essential practice throughout the globe. Nye states that “the changing nature of international politics has made intangible forms of power more important. National cohesion, universalistic culture, and international institutions are taking on additional significance” (164). This is what the institute calls unity within diversity because cultural differences should not be seen as a negative point as it is wrong to assume that people belonging to the same culture react in the same ways; in other words, Morocco can resort to a new cultural politics of difference to stress the Moroccan-ness of Sahara region through focusing on language variation that can be a sign of diversity. The Hassani dialect enriches the Moroccan linguistic repertoire. One crucial step Morocco can take is organizing meetings, seminars, and conferences among international civil societies to pave the way for mutual cultural understanding. Morocco can use its intangible capital to solidify its claims regarding the Sahara conflict with the Polisario Front. The Royal Institute for Strategic Studies published a report that insists on giving the cultural side the same status as political and economic negotiation means. Morocco has to start including some new concepts in its foreign policy, namely culture, intangible capital, etc. Ambassadors, cultural attaches, and scholars can use the kingdom’s cultural heritage to change the country’s image in different areas like Latin America and West Africa. Integrating cultural diplomacy is a crucial lever for the country’s foreign policy, especially in countries where Morocco’s reputation is unfavorable.

An overly effective means to enhance Morocco’s image overseas is to fund broadcasting to launch some radio stations abroad, particularly in countries where Morocco has an image problem. Broadcasting in local languages and dialects will boost knowledge about Morocco. Through airing Moroccan music, food, and fashion, radio stations ultimately raise familiarity with Moroccan culture in those countries. Also, Morocco can establish libraries abroad inside cultural institutions and universities. Access to these libraries should be easy so that visitors can pay a visit whenever they want. They are efficient tools to maintain appreciation for Moroccan values.

Organizing Morocco Day in many parts of the world promotes a favorable reputation for the country or at least raises its familiarity overseas. Morocco Day, which took place in Washington DC on March 29th, 2019, is a good practice that aims to promote a good image of the nation in America. Organizers of the celebration, According to Kasraoui, believe “the symposium is symbolic as it represents an opportunity for US decision-makers and American citizens to learn about Morocco as a country of diversity and a haven for security and safety” (<https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2019/03/267626/washington-march-29-morocco-day>).

The ways the Moroccan government targets its audiences should be renewed as audiences are no longer the same due to the social and economic changes the world has witnessed:

Don't we want to maintain control of our message? Perhaps. But in this new world of communications, any government that resists new Internet techniques faces a greater risk: being ignored. Our major target audiences – especially the young – don't want to listen to us lecture them or tell them what to think or how wonderful we are... But our broad mandate in public diplomacy is to understand, inform, engage, and influence foreign publics. All of these activities work best by conversation rather than dictation. (qtd. in Hayden 6).

Contemporary diplomacy is inclusive with a collateral perspective as it touches upon new actors, networks, and communication technologies. It has become apparent that network technologies devolve power away from nation-states and official entities to new actors. Mass media, for instance, is an efficient tool for political change. It decentralizes state actors in foreign policy-making. Traditional diplomacy only does not function well in today's digital age. Media networks can link conventional diplomats with new players. All constituents communicate with each other either locally or globally. New media provides room for connecting cultural diplomacy stakeholders to work collaboratively to achieve the desired outcomes.

## **7. Conclusion**

In conclusion, Morocco must use cultural diplomacy to improve its standing internationally and project a favorable image. Morocco has the chance to actively connect with the international community, promote understanding among people, and fortify diplomatic ties because of its rich and varied cultural history, which also serves as a potent diplomatic asset. Through programs like creative partnerships, cultural exchanges, and historic preservation initiatives, Morocco can successfully showcase its distinct personality worldwide, drawing in tourists and foreign capital while promoting socio-economic growth. It is impossible to overestimate the importance of cultural diplomacy for Morocco to improve its standing internationally. By carefully utilizing its rich cultural legacy, Morocco has a singular chance to influence opinions, promote goodwill, and create long-lasting relationships with countries worldwide. Morocco can effectively demonstrate its diversified character, values, and traditions to the globe through cultural exchanges, artistic partnerships, and heritage preservation activities. Morocco's adoption of cultural diplomacy bolsters its soft power while establishing it as a model of innovation, tolerance, and cultural diversity. Moreover, cultural diplomacy becomes a powerful instrument for fostering international understanding, communication, and collaboration in a world growing more interconnected by the day and where opinions count just as much as laws. Morocco is still a developing country, and cultural diplomacy is one of its most important tools for building a good reputation and winning the respect and admiration of other countries.

**Funding:** This research received no external funding.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

**Publisher's Note:** All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers.

## **References**

- [1] Ang, I (2015). Cultural Diplomacy: Beyond the National Interest? *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 21(4) 365–381., doi:10.1080/10286632.2015.1042474.
- [2] Aude J R. (2015). The Soft Side of War: Cultural Factors in Conflicts and Security Issues. Center for Transatlantic Relations, SAIS –Johns Hopkins University. 286–301.
- [3] Boyle, L C. (2018). Future Visions of Cultural Diplomacy in the Age of Globalization: Are Non-State Actors Poised to Lead the Field? *CISD Yearbook of Global Studies*, 5(4). 147–183.
- [4] Chua, B H. (2012). Structure, Audience and Soft Power in East Asian Pop Culture. Hong Kong University Press.
- [5] Face-Time. (n.d). Building Trust in International Affairs. USC Center on Public Diplomacy, 27 Feb. 2020, [uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/face-time-building-trust-international-affairs](https://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/face-time-building-trust-international-affairs).
- [6] Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (2021). Morocco Travel Advice. GOV.UK, GOV.UK, [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/morocco](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/morocco).
- [7] Gilboa, E (2008). Searching for a theory of public diplomacy. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616(1). 55–77, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716207312142>.
- [8] Hayden, C. (2012). Social Media at State: Power, Practice, and Conceptual Limits for US Public Diplomacy. *Global Media Journal*, 11(21), 2012). 1–21.
- [9] Kasraoui, S. (2019). Washington D.C. to Host First Morocco Days. 9 Mar. 2019, [www.morocoworldnews.com/2019/03/267626/washington-march-29-morocco-day/](http://www.morocoworldnews.com/2019/03/267626/washington-march-29-morocco-day/).
- [10] Liland, F. (1993). Culture and Foreign Policy: An Introduction to Approaches and Theory. *IFS Info Institut for forsvarstudier*, 1(1). 1–32.
- [11] Melissen, J (2003). The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations. Palgrave Macmillan.
- [12] Morocco's Reputation in the World in 2020. (n.d). Executive Summary, [www.ires.ma/index.php/en/publications-english/general-reports/7290-morocco%E2%80%99s-reputation-in-the-world-in-2020-executive-summary](http://www.ires.ma/index.php/en/publications-english/general-reports/7290-morocco%E2%80%99s-reputation-in-the-world-in-2020-executive-summary). Accessed 20 Mar. 2021.
- [13] Mtougui, R. (2012). Public Diplomacy and Nation Brand: A Roadmap for Morocco. *University of Malta, Faculty of Arts*. 1–97.



- [14] Nye, J and Joseph S. J. (2004). *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. Public Affairs, 2004.
- [15] Riechmann, D. (n.d). Trump Administration: Confucius Institute Is Arm of Beijing. The Washington Post, WP Company, 13 Aug. 2020, [www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/trump-administration-confucius-institute-is-arm-of-beijing/2020/08/13/37418da0-dd8a-11ea-b4f1-25b762cbbf4\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/trump-administration-confucius-institute-is-arm-of-beijing/2020/08/13/37418da0-dd8a-11ea-b4f1-25b762cbbf4_story.html).
- [16] Schneider, C. P. (2004). Culture Communicates: US Diplomacy That Works. *The New Public Diplomacy*, 327(43). 172–193., doi:10.1057/9780230554931\_8.
- [17] Snow, N and Philip M. T. (2009). *The Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy*. Routledge.
- [18] Snow, N. (2009). *Rethinking Public Diplomacy* Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy. 3–12., doi:10.4324/9780429465543-2.