
REORDERING DIPLOMACY AMIDST THE COVID-19; AFRICA AND THE REST OF THE WORLD

Toyin Cotties Adetiba

Department of Political & International Studies, University of Zululand, South Africa

oluwatoyin9ja_333@outlook.com or AdetibaT@unizulu.ac.za

Abstract : The Covid-19 pandemic will certainly affect the direction and development of new human civilisation as it marks the history of the 21st century like the Spanish flu of 1918. Although Covid-19 has brought the world to its knees but has at the same time united the seemingly different world. With Covid-19 the world has had to adapt to a new kind of normal, and as a global phenomenon, the pandemic has for once diplomatically re-ordered the entire world where every country has had to choose which side of the diplomatic coin it belongs. The virus has potentially grouped countries of the world into the rich, with strong and more efficient health and political institutions, scientific knowledge and innovation, and the poor, whose economy cannot adequately support its citizens. The Covid-19 has challenged the modern diplomacy, forcing every state to consider the pandemic as a top priority owing to its crippling impact on the global economy. Amidst the political tension in Africa between groups and individual needs vis-à-vis state and international requirements, will Africa be able to diplomatically navigate its way through the Covid-19 “world”? This work uses the lens of innovative diplomacy, thematic content analysis, and a critical discourse approach to unpack the relevance of innovative diplomacy to Africa amidst the pandemic and conclude that Africa need to understand the contemporary diplomatic environment vis-à-vis the importance of innovation diplomacy.

Keywords: Diplomacy, Africa, Pandemic, Politics, Innovation.

Submission	:	Jan, 20 th 2021
Revision	:	March 30 th 2021
Publication	:	May 28 th 2021

INTRODUCTION

Often, it has always been said that almost all the developing nations with particular reference to countries in Africa, as a result of their socio-political and economic woes [which has been their central problem] may not be able to adapt to or respond to the changes that Covid-19 pandemic may likely bring their ways. More pressing than that of their economic development today, is how to mitigate the devastating effect of the pandemic on human development.

Dramatically, the Covid-19 pandemic has altered the terrain and dynamics of global politics. Lee and Lederer (2020) concurred that while the disruptions of the international environments may seem to many like inconsequential inconveniences for a wealthy and well-to-do states, the probability that they may have a devastating effect on matters of war and peace, arms control, terrorism and human rights is significantly high. The Covid-

19 pandemic, without mincing words can be classified as a global crisis with its threat to alter the world balance of power. What this suggests is that if the pandemic is not brought under control timeously, the post-World War II diplomatic environment could be laid on the line. Surmise to say that the unannounced arrival of Covid-19 pandemic, seems to have ended the diplomatic lifestyles that has existed for decades among states.

The Covid-19 pandemic is a reminder of 1918 flu pandemic, where the loss of innocents, or the complacent, taught humanity a new way of being-in-the-world where men and women, old and young are expected to change their doing-in-the-world. The pandemic has, as a catalyst accelerated the diplomatic trends that were underway before Covid-19 with reference to the relationship between Africa and the West.

Across the globe, it has become a norm that touching things, surfaces, shaking of hands, being with other people, sneezing and breathing the air in an enclosed space can be dangerous if not a risky adventure. If the memory of 1918 flu still lingers, then it will be a herculean task to easily forget the memories of Covid-19 completely for anyone who lived through the year (s) of the pandemic. Arguably, having the mind-set that one could be infected with Covid-19 virus could unconsciously become a norm to withdrawal from shaking hands or touching our faces. In fact, one might intuitively discover that one can't stop washing of hands.

Tannen (2020) comment that the comfort of being in the presence of others might be a greater compensation for their absence, particularly those we don't know intimately. Instead of asking, is there a reason to do this online? one might be asking, is there any good reason to do this in person? In one way or the other, one might need to be reminded and convinced that it is needful. Regrettably, those without access to internet facility are likely to be disadvantaged further as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Ironically, online communication will be heightened thus creating more distance, as well as, more connection because it is safer notwithstanding the distance.

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought with it a shift in the dynamics of international system and thus having the potential to break, escalate socio-economic, political and cultural schism across the globe, thus helping states to change course towards greater national solidarity and functionality in their foreign relations.

The Covid-19 pandemic has presented the global community with a formidable enemy that does not know the differences between developed, underdeveloped or developing states while encouraging global alliance of singular purpose and action and has made people and states alike to begin to look past their differences. Although the waves of the diplomatic cum political shock that Covid-19 brought can make or mar the international political system. Given the current level of tension it is imperative that states begin to promote more constructive patterns of change in their cultural and political discourse.

Overtly, the economic consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic were what hit Africans the most with the closure of several sectors of its hitherto underperforming economy after the introduction of a lock down in 2020. However, Africa is faced with other, equally pressing issues, these includes restoration of its economy, restructuring of government parastatals, and creation of jobs and maintenance of robust relations with the outside world during and “after” Covid-19 pandemic which requires maximum coordination from the authorities to maintain socio-political stability amid the continuing social and economic crisis in the continent. Central to this is the place of innovative diplomacy while trying to access the complexity of the modern diplomatic environment amidst Covid-19 pandemic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Innovation in modern diplomacy can be of great diplomatic instrument in the hands of states if properly used. Diplomatically, every state has had to adapt to international political environment that is fast-changing. Although the need for innovative diplomacy might be faced with numerous socio-political limitations particularly among the underdeveloped states of Africa. However, the dynamics of the need for innovation in diplomacy and its challenges is a function of its influence on international relations.

The Foreign Department of Foreign Affairs (Switzerland) (2008:3) defines diplomacy as the means by which Independent States conduct their affairs in ways to ensure peaceful relations. Historically, the art of diplomacy has been deeply entrenched in the communication between man, tribes, communities and, thereafter states. the term is a derivation of the 18th century French word “diplomate” (he who was authorized to lead conversations on behalf of a state) Kalvins (2011). Diplomacy has been defined as the conduct of human affairs by peaceful means, where diplomatic techniques of persuasion and negotiation are employed. It is a method of managing international affairs using the weapon of negotiation which is usually done by diplomats, thus making it is an essentially political activity, a major ingredient of [international] power that enable independents states to achieve the goals and targets of their foreign policies while avoiding the use of force (Hocking, 2011, Berridge, 2010, Kalvins, 2011).

Diplomacy concerns as much the promotion of socio-economic, economic, scientific or cultural relations as it does international commitment to defend human rights as well as peaceful settlement of disputes. Traditionally, diplomacy is hierarchical, and somewhat secretive. O’Gorman (2015:6) writes that one of the inherent, characteristics of diplomacy, has been the use of confidentiality or secrecy in its relations and negotiations, and it underpinned the very essence of the polities and diplomacy of states.

Hence the assertion that secrecy is an essential element of diplomacy (Berridge, Keens-Soper and Otte, 2001). According to Berridge (2010) secret diplomacy can be interpreted

as holding unto the secrecy of the contents of a negotiation between states, knowledge of ongoing negotiations, the content of any [bi-lateral or multi-lateral] agreement resulting from negotiations, or that any agreement has been reached.

The culture of diplomacy is shaped by avoiding diplomatic errors and being diplomatically cautious about international change. Cited in O'Gorman (2015) Shale (2006) allude that since that nations and their governments is yet to see the last of international and internal conflicts, the best and the only available tool to reach agreements, compromises, and settlements is diplomacy.

Bound (2016) believe that actors in international diplomacy to some extent have not been able to monopolise their influence on IR. The reason might be because every state goes through critical junctures (Matambo, 2020), a situation of diplomatic uncertainty where the decision taken by state actors are causally pivotal to the selection of one diplomatic goal of institutional development over other possible diplomatic goals. These junctures are usually fundamental in a country's diplomatic history and fundamentally enough to change the course of that country's relations with other countries. Bound further argued that the power to change from sidestepping politics to helping avoid military conflict has been demonstrated as early as the 18th century just as the power of the international scientific community has been able and still transforming international relationships. Griset (2020) concurred that, the concept of innovative diplomacy emerged after economic diplomacy as one of the major areas of diplomatic reflection on new global diplomatic practices.

Leijten (2017: 3) advance that theoretically, innovation diplomacy should build on and/or combine the fields of international relations [with its orientation on power] and innovation policy [with its orientation on economic opportunities and learning]. The use of the soft powers of scientific cooperation amongst states to grease their socio-economic and political relations has been conceived as science diplomacy. The Royal Society and AAAS (2010) refer to this as science for diplomacy, which must be differentiated from diplomacy for science. Diplomacy for science connotes the establishment of scientific cooperation which may be bilateral or multilateral aiming at addressing common scientific problems.

Therefore, innovative diplomacy through science can be seen as a diplomatic channel through which healthy diplomatic relations can be maintained in times of global tension often offered by situations such as the Covid-19 pandemic that threatens the existentiality of humanity. As such innovative diplomacy acts as the link to peace that promotes bringing people of different socio-economic, political, and cultural background together. The goals and practices of innovation diplomacy [driven by science and technology] has continue to change. This is as a result of the increasing importance of innovation in international, regional, national, and foreign policies. And thus, with the

growing importance of knowledge driven innovation as an important factor that drives socio-economic growth, competitive thinking has therefore become more influential globally (Royal Society and AAAS, 2010).

According to Skolnikoff (1993) innovation and economics can hardly be separated just as innovation seems inseparable to successful diplomatic interactions. Debatably, [scientific] innovation depends on economic activity to provide the means while bringing light to the problems that will enable it to answer the right questions but of a certainty, it generates economic activity which is why the interactions between science which is a product of innovation, and economy constitute multifaceted elements when analysing global affairs.

Leijten (2017) had argued that diplomacy for innovation is lodged between two extremes of [international] political economy, the neo-liberal theory that every state benefit from the key means of production in developed economies through free exchange of knowledge and capital. Internationally, this can be realised through bilateral and multilateral agreements, innovative driven coalitions and cooperation. The other extreme according to Leijten dwells on short-term self-interest driven approaches. This approach focus on the protection of states' national companies, the markets as well as employment, which may include import taxes and other means to protect the markets and employment. Between these two extreme, the driven factor of innovation systems is thinking. Of course, this helps to identify series of innovative processes cum developments, as a guide to the development of diplomacy for innovation.

To Griset (2020:384) the concept of innovation can be one of the keys to dynamically take the link between science and economy into account. As such innovation can be connected to the world of knowledge and ideas, on the one hand, and material civilisation on the other. By implication, innovation appears as an element in diplomacy after economics and science. This can be of help to better delineate, as well as characterise, detailed diplomatic practices. Hence, Leijten (2017) assertion that the definite silhouette of science, technology and innovation diplomacy is the outcome of developments in science, technology and innovation and positive bilateral and multilateral developments in international relations.

Although the term innovation has always been used to frequently refers to scientific innovations, however innovation in broad sense and in many respects, includes and can be associated with many forms of organisational, commercial, political, cultural or even social creativities. Kahn (2007) opine that one rule that has become the absolute rule in the business world is innovate or perish. In a much far-reaching way, this has become the stimulating diplomatic factor that can serve as a new impetus to opening the borders of [Africa's] diplomacy to new ideas. Thus a stronger top-level designing diplomacy and

strategic planning in diplomatic work among states should include the bottom line thinking with a view to upholding state's essential interests.

In public debate, the idea of innovation has become conventional where it has asserted itself as a fundamental value of modern society, which could not be claimed by states as crucial to their diplomatic policies. Innovative diplomacy has therefore emerged as a concept that is based on an observation of diplomatic practices argued (Griset, 2020). He further argued that communication which is an element of innovative diplomacy allows states to assert itself on the international scene which can be linked to a form of soft power that relies solely on the positive public image which make it easier for states to generate sympathy from other states.

Innovation to some extent is an imaginative ability of states to adapt to future diplomatic challenges, it is a tool for promoting international partnerships that support the dynamism of the international economy that underpins the appeal of a space to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). In the face of major diplomatic challenges, innovation can be the pedestal to building the socio-economic [and political] alliances that transcends resentments or cultural differences while dealing globally with issues such as the Covid-19 pandemic. Hence the need for global collaborations through research in dealing with challenges that easily threatens the existentiality of humanity such as Covid-19 pandemic.

Understanding innovation system therefore, will help to influence socio-economic policies to improve the wider conditions for collaboration with innovative relationships with decision-makers while developing and co-developing socio-economic resources for innovative collaborations that will help diffuse and transform the gains of innovation.

One country that has been highly successful through innovative diplomacy is China. Bound, Saunders, Wilsdon and Adams (2013) points out that strategically, China's approach to international collaboration has continue to increase. A process that was opened up in 1978 as part of the Chinese foreign policy, and has been constantly used to advance China's economic development (Breznitz and Murphree, 2013). Further to this, Breznitz, and Murphree advance that Chinese influence through international connections/innovative diplomacy has spread across every aspect of its system such that it cut across joint academic research to technology transfer and licensing, foreign direct investment, and mergers and acquisitions.

Based on the Chinese innovation system, its socio-economic system is overt and covertly connected to sources of expertise internationally. Breznitz, and Murphree (2013) concurred that one aspect of the Chinese foreign policy that extricates its innovation pathway from others is its willingness, where necessary, to buy expertise off the shelf. Hence Segal's (2011) conclusion that one Chinese' great diplomatic strengths has been

its consistent ability to aligning its diplomatic thoughts, belief, and actions with its goals on shaping foreign interactions to serve national innovation goals.

From the Chinese innovation experience in foreign policy, it thus means that change and modernity are the major foreign policy tools states can use when it comes to promoting and benefiting from their foreign policy actions. Basically, Africa needs to re-evaluate the relevance of its diplomatic mental maps they have relied on to make sense of its capability to innovate while dealing with the rest of the world. Central to reevaluating Africa's diplomatic mental maps is questioning the relevance and adequacy of existing diplomatic practices to account for the complexity of the modern diplomatic environment. Hence the need to understand the contemporary diplomatic environment vis-à-vis the importance of innovation diplomacy.

METHOD

This paper used a thematic content analysis, and a critical discourse approach to unpack the relevance of innovative diplomacy to Africa amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. When research, when this type of method is used in research, the researcher intends to gather information from a wide range of sources/viewpoint regarding the subject. Thus the data used in this work were drawn from sources made up of journal articles, credible and reliable online sources, books, newspapers, and academia vis-à-vis the Covid-19 pandemic.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Which way Africa amidst Covid-19 pandemic? Navigating through the challenges

In many countries, particularly Africa, it may be a bit challenging to determine a far-reaching diplomatic strategies and a growing prioritization of innovation diplomacy. By implication what works in some countries may not work in some for obvious reasons. Specifically, the link between a particular diplomatic intervention and its outcome may not be the same from one region to the other. In the modern world, the global interconnectedness of health is unquestionable (Chattu and Chami, 2020:1). Evidently, the state of health of one state may likely affect the health and well-being of others globally, if adequate precaution is not taken hence, the fast spread of Covid-19 virus. As a result, every country needless say must be determined and address any health concerns in its foreign policy just as they do with their domestic policies.

In the evolving [innovative] diplomatic agenda, health issues have always been dominant and persistent. Within this locale, Chattu and Chami (2020) believe that diplomatically, there are competing interests of [state and non-state] actors, as well as other relevant

diplomatic players that cannot be jettisoned but must be taken into consideration as they directly or indirectly influence and determine the global health agenda.

It is important to appreciate the effects of diplomacy on health as a result of which appropriate and collective diplomatic response must be developed while trying to maintain global as well as regional peace and order, although health at the global or regional level have not been given the same diplomatic position as politics and economics. However, the dreaded Covid-19 pandemic seems to have change and reorder diplomatic relationships thus forcing every [developed, developing and underdeveloped] economies to consider the Covid-19 as a top priority in their relations owing to its crippling impact on global economy. Amidst this global turmoil, will Africa be able to diplomatically navigate its way through the political tensions at home between groups and individual needs vis-à-vis state and international requirements, without any socio-economic harm to the state?

As part of global health diplomacy, the relations between developed and developing economies according to Rubbini (2018) is at risk as the developed economies can adopt a diplomatic behaviours induced by the financial needs of overcoming their socio-economic predicament, ethically if the developing states is to have a say, it will be most likely be on the premise of a global society where there is a respect of human rights while driving growth and harmonization of relations between governments. This is where Africa found itself and must navigate through this.

Conceptually, the idea of states; joining together in the diplomatic environments to wrestle states from the hand of public health problem such as Covid-19 pandemic is a diplomatic plus to participating states. Evidently, the need for an appropriate and effective practice of Innovation Diplomacy (ID) has since been demonstrated with the global response to the Covid-19 pandemic since its outbreak in 2020. In this area, there have been a significant development towards fighting the dreaded pandemic. Debatably, the entire globe has demonstrated that with one goal there can be global peace if the international community [both rich and poor] will embrace innovation diplomacy. Using the power of innovation, Cuba though a small country has been able to diplomatically use its medical expertise to convince the world that where big economies have failed they can succeed there.

It is pertinent to ask the question could the advent of Covid-19 pandemic help the international community to act as one community? Irrespective of the power of the economies of each state it is significantly important for states to come together as one as no state can on its own fight the pandemic. The Covid-19 no doubt has strongly affects both the rich and the poor states. Saucó (2020) had argued that every pandemic has always been accomplished by enormous uncertainty, notwithstanding there are two certainties from the previous experiences. Firstly, pandemics spread very fast and

therefore requires immediate and urgent innovative action to avert its destructive tendencies, secondly as a global crisis it also requires a global responses and by interpretation it requires international cooperation.

Further to this the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic revealed the level of the lack of cooperation among states vis-à-vis the ineffectiveness of international response to the spread of the pandemic in terms of time and action thus, turning the entire globe into a virtual world. Overtly, the historical enemies such as China and Japan, Germany, Italy, France, and Spain must forget their differences and fight the upsurge of Covid-19, just as African states must forget about their colonial past and come to the aid of one another.

Sauco (2020) however comments that the opposite has been the case in that there is more tension between the superpowers, conspiracy theories against one another. The outbreak of Covid-19 coincided with when reactionary [nationalistic] leaders and populist leaders were in office and when the values of international cooperation as well as mutual aid were no longer consider as important thus hampering early response to the devastating effects of Covid-19 on the international socio-economic and political space.

The 'arrival' of Covid-19 in 2020, has brought with it a new diplomatic stands amongst states with international borders reshaped and under strict surveillance, a thick network of threats where economic protectionism and diplomatic unilateralism has become the order of the day. By implications the old hard power systematically, displaced the ever supportive and inclusive soft power. Thus, sailing in the opposite direction to the detriment of other [smaller] economies.

Overtly, the fear of the devastating effect of the pandemic also go along with the impression that the pandemic could allay the fears of some of the anti-innovative developments in states' 'selfish nationalism, ideological disposition, economic greed, and cultural differences' (Alvarez, 2020).

Dominant among the discourse about Covid-19 pandemic was the emotions that surrounds global health management and, the different diplomatic policies adopted by states to cope with the crisis coupled with fear and mistrust within the international domain. This is where innovation comes in, where African leaders must support science diplomacy [as it is done in Europe] for the benefit of African capacities, and its foreign policy objectives with particular reference to the development of scientific cum diplomatic solutions for the myriad of Africa's health challenges.

Taking a que from the European model, there should be provision for a new insights and a better understanding of the contributions of science and technological partnerships to foreign policy objectives, thus facilitating effective and well-organized interfaces for African science diplomacy to take better advantage of African sciences.

However, there should be provision for policy guidance as to where and how Africa science diplomacy can be active. This is imperative because many African states still have

diplomatic alliance with their former colonial masters who overtly or covertly control their economy which may hinder its expansion global visibility. Hence the need for better preparation, increased scientific capacities and knowledge resources as well as clearer diplomatic mandate and a very strong identity of African science diplomacy.

The challenge posed by the Covid-19 pandemic to global [health] community and particularly Africa cannot be overemphasised. Significantly, these challenges present itself to countries across geographical, political and social contexts in various forms and this is underpinned by the robustness of the individual states' economy. African continent is therefore, facing a possible public health crisis owing to its poor state.

This is borne out of the fact that Africa has always been relegated to the back seat during inventions of, and access to, new technologies and its production. This is capable of undermining equitable distribution and quick access to the Covid-19 vaccines by Africans. For example, African states have been struggling to secure sufficient vaccines to inoculate its approximately 1.3 billion people, the South African President, Cyril Ramaphosa once urged wealthy economies not hoard surplus vaccine supplies instead share global production equally. According to News24 (2021) Britain for example has ordered 367 million doses of seven different vaccines for its population of 67 million while the EU has secured close to 2.3 billion doses for its 450 million people which the WHO described as catastrophic moral failure. In retrospect, the world and its arrays of big and plump economies are not safe if some countries are vaccinating their people and others are not. This is the reason why Africa has to endorsed and develop the establishment of a multilateral framework for African states to engage actively in the culture of developmental and scientific innovations.

The job of decision-makers according to Gardini (2020) is very tasking if not a very difficult one. The South African President Cyril Ramaphosa once said 'It's impossible to please everyone" (Fin24, 2021). As a leader, patience, strong nerves, and a variety of interpersonal, and diplomatic skills that have and are constantly tested is required in order to bargain appropriately and make compromise where needed. Therefore, a huge psychological pressure is put on anyone in a position of command either at normal or in times of socio-economic and political crisis (Gardini, 2020:15). The statement that uneasy lies the head that wears the crown is the appropriate statement that describes the enormous demands, pressures, and responsibilities that goes with the office of the policy-makers significantly those at top. The civil society, the media, the public, opposition parties, and so-called experts as well as various communication tools exercise a tremendous pressure on policy-makers. It thus means that their decisions [good or bad] may determine the fate of the populace from education, jobs, retirement, movement to their individual survival. This is the case with Covid-19 pandemic.

Within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, there is possibility that decision makers in Africa are likely going to face a unique problem. Unique, where the developed economies respond to the pandemic with sweeping unilateral actions and belligerent, threatening diplomatic language with Africa only waiting for the proverbial crumbs that falls from the table of the developed world. The menace of Covid-19 in Africa can only be overcome through international collaboration, that engenders strong and effective innovative diplomacy.

Gardini (2020:16) opines that there are technical times for good decision making as well as moral dilemmas. The period at which the world is struggling to find its feet owing to the outbreak of Covid-19 with its attendant challenges due to inadequate and non-availability of vaccines in poor African states falls under technical times and moral dilemmas which demands for a technical diplomatic move to douse the flame of Covid-19. And to do this there must be global ties through innovation.

With the space of the international environment, there is possibility to reorder Africa's diplomacy through scientific innovations where African states can form a long lasting relationships to get along. However, African states have to recognise the diplomatic value of such innovation which can possibly re-establish trust and diffuse tensions when political relations are strained.

Africa, being what we are; scientific innovations under normal socio-economic and political circumstances should not be overshadowed with individual or group political goals, neither should such innovation replace states' diplomatic and peace-building efforts. In the time past and sometimes vaccination programmes, for example, have brought about a short-term cessation of hostilities while paving the way for [local and international] medical teams to carry out their work. This does not necessarily lead to lasting peace as hostilities often resume after crisis.

Covid-19 pandemic is an unnecessary evil whose capacity to network from one state to another does not require any internet but simple contact. As a member of the international community every state is inter-dependent and therefore needs one another, hence the unsafe global world where some countries have the capacity to vaccinate their citizens and others do not. Carreiras, and Malamud (2020:21) had argued that overcoming the Covid-19 pandemic requires international cooperation, however, almost none of the international organisations were up to the task, except for the World Health Organisation (WHO) that has become a reference point for many states.

One fact that need to be emphasised is the fact that the pandemic does not affect every state equally. In Africa, for example, there more than 3.5 million cases in Africa with South Africa alone having more than 1.5 million cases. Again Carreiras, and Malamud (2020) explain that owing to the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, the developed and developing states faces different challenges. The developed faces double challenges (health and

economic), for the developing world where Africa belong, their challenges are in three fold (health, economic and social), thus challenging the power of states which are despotic and infrastructural deficient. The former speaks to the ability of the state to act decisively without any constitutional constraints while the latter speaks to the ability of states to penetrate and organise social relations. African states may be able to coercively control its citizens but the capability in terms of infrastructure to organise its citizen is inadequate as a result of which capacity building within a short period of time in between the Covid-19 pandemic may be challenging. Precisely, the Covid-19 pandemic has revealed the fragility and the poor level of Africa's public health system.

While the Covid-19 has increase the interdependence of states, it has also reinforced the power of states in that the pandemic has forced everyone to look unto the state as the last hope of getting out of the grip of the pandemic. Carreiras, and Malamud (2020) question the relationship between power and dependent, that how can one be stronger and at the same time more dependent? This has shown that no country can play the role of an isolationist in the face of Covid-19 pandemic, instead African states must come out with innovative ideas to manage and cage the pandemic.

In his contribution, Spedaletti (2020) opines that to combat the Covid-19 pandemic, states can adopt the Antarctic model (this treaty was signed in 1959), the treaty put forward the suspension of the sovereignty claims of states and work as one in terms of international cooperation. As established in Article 3 (a, b, and c) of the treaty, information regarding plans for scientific programs . . . shall be exchanged to permit maximum economy of and efficiency of operations, scientific personnel shall be exchanged . . . between expeditions and stations and scientific observations and results . . . shall be exchanged and made freely available (Center for International Law. National University of Singapore, nd). By interpretation, the treaty recognises the concept of humanity, understood as recognition of the right common to human beings. Unfortunately, Covid-19 does not recognise human right and neither does it distinguish black and white. If adopted it will act as a blue print or as containment mechanisms for the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the context of public health system and putting into consideration scientific innovations in this area, the health threat facing humanity in the wake of Covid-19 can be tacitly dealt with by states recognising and admitting the customary practices that every state has the legal and ethical obligation to recognise the need of other state where an orderly manner and modalities for innovative cooperation is set out. This would in no way give a degree of certainty to the exchange.

CONCLUSION

The connection between diplomacy and innovation is not new. It is probably right to say that competition and power always have been part of the set of drivers for diplomacy and in particular innovative diplomacy. However, diplomatic actions have been diversified as a result of the growth of knowledge based competition in the international system. This is a period in Africa where playing politics is not enough rather being innovative [and do what is best] to combat the menace of Covid-19 pandemic. Of utmost priority to Africa is the need for solidarity and international action against Covid-19 pandemic and by extension other dangerous pandemic, such as gender based violence, human right abuse, ethnic politics, and corruption which has eating deep into every sphere of African socio-economic system.

These must include a better and innovative way of exchange of information related to the Covid-19 pandemic, Innovative way of communicating complex facts to the public in clear and simple terms, and translating scientific texts into local languages and thus boosting trust with local communities to enable quick action.

At the international scene, there are many players engaged in what is regarded as the game of international politics. Of course, one of the oldest and universally acknowledged actors on the modern world stage is the state. However, within the international arena, are multiple and distinct non-state actors [who are entities that participate in or promote international relations] and, capable of challenging a world dominated by state actors. The activities of non-state actors cut across different geopolitical entities where they are capable of substituting nation states in many areas. For example, the South Africa based “Gift of the Givers” have contributed to the greater health needs of Africans and humanity within and outside Africa.

Innovative way of collaborating with none state actors. Traditionally, the realist in International Relations according to Gardini (2020) has maintained that the supremacy of the state as the main international actor (s) is not negotiable. However, there are some none state actors such as multinational corporations, transnational civil society, and international organisations whose actions overtly or covertly affect the international position of host country. In Africa, there are some multinational corporations with bigger turnover than the annual budgets of these states. Further to this, it is imperative to state that states have seeded part of their sovereignty to international and regional organisations such as African Union, SADC, ECOWAS etc. in addition to the fact that many NGOs in Africa now perform once reserved to states as multiple health stakeholders such as the “Gift of the Givers” while contributing to the greater health needs of Africans and humanity in general.

In a nut shell the time has come for Africa to begin to embrace what the non-state actors can offer. African leaders should begin to see Africa as the future as not all Western aid

are meant to sustain/build Africa but are meant to further impoverish if not totally enslave the continent through their carrot and stick diplomatic moves. Africa has the resources such as oil, gold, diamond, fertile farmland, abundance of water resources, minerals, forests, and minerals. All that Africa need is innovative minded leaders whose ideas can be developed into innovative diplomacy.

REFERENCES

- Alvarez, J. (2020). Public diplomacy, soft power and the narratives of Covid-19 in the initial phase of the pandemic. In G. L. Gardini, (ed.) *The world before and after Covid-19. Intellectual reflections on politics, diplomacy and international relations* pp11-14 Salamanca-Stockholm: European Institute of International Studies Press
- Berridge, G. R. (2010). *Diplomacy Theory and Practice*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Berridge, G. R., Keens-Soper, M & Otte, T. G. (2001). *Diplomatic Theory from Machiavelli to Kissinger*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bound, K., Saunders, T, Wilsdon, J. & Adams. J. (2013). *China's Absorptive State: Research, Innovation and the Prospects for China-UK Collaboration*. London: Nesta
- Breznitz, D. and Murphree, M. (2013). *China's Run: Economic Growth, Policy, Interdependences, and Implications for Diverse Innovation Policies in a World of Fragmented Production*. In D. Breznitz & J. Zysman (Eds.) *The Third Globalization: Can Wealthy Nations Stay Rich in the Twenty-First Century?* Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Carreiras, H and Malamud, A (2020). Cooperation, the state, and international organisations. In G. L. Gardini (ed) *The world before and after Covid-19. Intellectual reflections on politics, diplomacy and international relations* pp 15-18. Salamanca-Stockholm: European Institute of International Studies Press
- Center for International Law, National University of Singapore (nd). 1959 Antarctic Treaty Retrieved February 5, 2021 from <https://cil.nus.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/1959-Antarctic-Treaty-1.pdf>
- Chattu, V. K & Chami, G. (2020). Global Health Diplomacy Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Strategic Opportunity for Improving Health, Peace, and Well-Being in the CARICOM Region-A Systematic Review. *Social Sciences* 9(88), pp 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci9050088>
- Fin24 (2021). Ramaphosa on liquor sales ban: 'It's impossible to please everyone Retrieved March 2, 2021 from <https://www.news24.com/fin24/economy/south->

[africa/ramaphosa-on-liquor-sales-ban-its-impossible-to-please-everyone-20210204](#)

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (2008) ABC of Diplomacy. Bern: Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA)

Gardini, G. L. (2020). Myths and realities of politics, policy-making and the state in times of Covid-19. In G. L. Gardini (ed) The world before and after Covid-19. Intellectual reflections on politics, diplomacy and international relations pp 15-18. Salamanca-Stockholm: European Institute of International Studies Press

Griset, P. (2020). Innovation Diplomacy: A New Concept for Ancient Practices? The Hague *Journal of Diplomacy*, 15(3), 383-397. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1163/1871191X-BJA10036>

Hocking, B. (2011) Diplomacy. In Betrand, Berg-Schlosser, Morlino, International Encyclopedia of Political Science London: Sage

Kahn, E. (2007). Innovate or Perish: Managing the Enduring Technology Company in the Global Market. NJ: Wiley, 2007.

Kalvins, D. (2011). Understanding the Essence of Modern Diplomacy, Retrieved March 2, 2021 from <http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/academy/content/pdf/participant-papers/2011-12-cdac>

Lee, M. and Lederer, E. M. (2020). Global diplomacy under the gun in the time of coronavirus. Associated Press Retrieved March 15, 2021 from <https://apnews.com/article/d61a53d19d262c3cf604cec6f4e52fad>

Leijten, J (2017) Exploring the future of innovation diplomacy *European Journal of Futures Research* 5: 20 pp 1-13 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40309-017-0122-8>

Matambo, E. (2020). International Relations Theory after the Cold War: China, the Global South and Non-State Actors. Retrieved March 22, 2021 from <https://www.e-ir.info/2020/04/21/international-relations-theory-after-the-cold-war-china-the-global-south-and-non-state-actors/>

News24 (2021). Covid-19: Stop hoarding vaccines, Ramaphosa tells rich nations Retrieved March 15, 2021 from <https://www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/news/covid-19-stop-hoarding-vaccines-ramaphosa-tells-rich-nations-20210126>

O'Gorman, G. (2015). The Effectiveness of Secrecy in Diplomacy Thesis for: Masters in International Relations-Diplomatic Studies Project: Masters in Diplomatic Studies Dissertation, Sohar University, Oman

- Royal Society and AAAS (2010) *New Frontiers in Science Diplomacy*. Navigating the changing balance of power. London. Retrieved May 5, 2021 from https://www.aaas.org/sites/default/files/New_Frontiers.pdf
- Rubbini, M. (2018). Global health diplomacy: Between global society and neo-colonialism: The role and meaning of “ethical lens” in performing the six leadership priorities. *Journal of Epidemiology and Global Health* 8(3-4): 110–114. doi: 10.2991/j.jegh.2017.11.002
- Sauco A. N. G. (2020) Old and New Order. In G. L. Gardini (ed) *The world before and after Covid-19*. Intellectual reflections on politics, diplomacy and international relations pp 7-10. Salamanca-Stockholm: European Institute of International Studies Press
- Segal, A. (2011). *The United States, China, and the Globalization of Science and Technology*. Prepared statement before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Council on Foreign Relations, 2 November. Retrieved April 2, 2021 from <http://www.cfr.org/china/ united-states-chinaglobalization-science-technology/p26412>
- Shale, V. (2006). *Post-Cold War Diplomatic Training: The Importance of the Multi-stakeholder Approach to Inter- and Intra - State Conflicts*. Retrieved March 12, 2021 from http://www.diplomacy.edu/sites/default/files/MultistakeholderDiplomacy_Part_13.pdf
- Skolnikoff, E. (1993). *The Elusive Transformation: Science, Technology, and the Evolution of International Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Spedaletti, A. (2020). The subjects of Public International Law and Covid-19. In G. L. Gardini (ed) *The world before and after Covid-19*. Intellectual reflections on politics, diplomacy and international relations pp 15-18. Salamanca-Stockholm: European Institute of International Studies Press
- Tannen, D. (2020). The personal becomes dangerous. Coronavirus Will Change the World Permanently. Here’s How. *Politico Magazine* Retrieved January 16, 2021 from https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2020/03/19/coronavirus-effect-economy-life-society-analysis-covid-135579_03/19/2020