

# American Journal of International Relations (AJIR)



## The Role of Carrot Diplomacy in Advancing National Interests: A Critical Examination

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# The Role of Carrot Diplomacy in Advancing National Interests: A Critical Examination



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## Article history

*Submitted 01.07.2024 Revised Version Received 04.08.2024 Accepted 06.09.2024*

## Abstract

**Purpose:** This paper aims to critically analyse the concept of carrot diplomacy, defined as the strategic deployment of attractive incentives designed to elicit behavioural modifications in other states, thereby advancing national interests. The study positions carrot diplomacy as a transformative approach within the contemporary landscape of international relations, distinctly contrasting it with coercive stick diplomacy, which is reliant on punitive measures (Arguello & Marcouiller, 2018; Nye, 2004).

**Materials and Methods:** This investigation employs a comprehensive and rigorous methodology, integrating theoretical frameworks from established international relations theories (Wendt, 1999). A qualitative analysis is conducted through an examination of salient case studies, including the European Union's initiatives towards Eastern European nations (Youngs, 2010), the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba during the Obama administration (Gibbons, 2016), and the expansive Belt and Road Initiative spearheaded by China (Hillman, 2018). This multi-faceted approach allows for a deeper understanding of the operational and contextual factors influencing the effectiveness of carrot diplomacy. Additionally, the theoretical framework underpinning this paper is multi-dimensional, drawing on constructivist, liberal, and realist paradigms in international relations. The analysis explores the dynamics of soft power and relational engagement in diplomacy, positing that carrot diplomacy can serve not only as a mechanism for achieving specific foreign policy objectives but also as a means of building trust and fostering long-term collaboration (Katz, 2020).

**Findings:** The findings of this study reveal that while carrot diplomacy can effectively facilitate diplomatic objectives and enhance states' soft power, it is not without limitations. The efficacy of such diplomatic endeavours is contingent upon several critical factors, including the sustainability and perceived legitimacy of the incentives offered, as well as the credibility of the initiating state (Hofstede, 2001). The study identifies potential backlash when incentives are deemed insincere or conditional, which can significantly undermine diplomatic relations (O'Donnell, 2017).

**Implications to Theory, Practice and Policy:** Considering these findings, the paper argues that for carrot diplomacy to function as a viable tool for achieving national interests, policymakers must engage in the meticulous calibration of incentives to ensure they align authentically with the strategic aspirations and expectations of the recipient states (Bilgin & Morton, 2002). This nuanced understanding is vital for navigating the complexities inherent in contemporary international engagements, particularly as states endeavour to cultivate sustainable diplomatic outcomes amidst an increasingly polarized global environment. By synthesizing theoretical insights with practical applications and case studies, this study contributes to the broader discourse on effective diplomacy, emphasizing the need for adaptable, context-sensitive approaches that prioritize trust and genuine collaboration.

**Keywords:** *Carrot Diplomacy F51, International Relations F50, Soft Power F51, Geopolitical Strategy F50, Trust-Building D85*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The complexities of contemporary international relations are intricately intertwined with the imperative for states to safeguard and advance their national interests within a fluid global landscape characterized by globalization, rapid technological advancements, and evolving geopolitical dynamics (Smith, 2015). Amidst this backdrop, carrot diplomacy emerges as a salient strategic paradigmatic shift, defined by the provision of attractive incentives - such as economic aid, trade agreements, or diplomatic cooperation - that aim to elicit behavioural alignment from other states (Caouette, 2017). This methodology rests on the foundational premise that states can effectively pre-empt potential conflicts and foster cooperative relationships by offering substantial benefits, thereby promoting a framework of mutual gain wherein both the offering and receiving entities perceive significant outcomes (Fiori, 2015). Distinct from stick diplomacy, which emphasizes coercive measures and punitive strategies, carrot diplomacy underscores the efficacy of constructive engagement, illustrating that collaboration frequently yields more advantageous results than adversarial confrontations (Ramesh, 2020). By invoking this more sophisticated form of power, nations are enabled to navigate intricate geopolitical terrains and cultivate resilient alliances, thereby enhancing their global standing (Tilly, 2005).

The objective of this paper is to rigorously examine the operational dynamics of carrot diplomacy within the theoretical construct of international relations, focusing on the diverse manifestations of incentives and their consequential implications for state behaviour. The effectiveness of this diplomatic strategy is contingent upon the credibility and sustainability of the incentives extended, as illustrated by instances where economic aid alone, devoid of demonstrable long-term commitment to the recipient's socio-economic development, can engender scepticism and undermine intended cooperative outcomes (Kuhlmann & Weitz, 2019; Dupont, 2016). Moreover, it is imperative to recognize the critical influence of historical and cultural contexts that shape state responses to diplomatic overtures. Each state navigates these interactions through the prism of its unique historical narratives, sociopolitical frameworks, and prevailing geopolitical tensions, which can significantly modulate perceptions and receptivity to offers - particularly in circumstances burdened by legacies of past inequalities or foreign interventions (Friedman, 2019; Mamdani, 2001).

To substantiate this theoretical exploration, the paper will employ detailed case studies to critically analyse the practical applications and manifestations of carrot diplomacy, including the European Union's strategic outreach to Eastern European nations aimed at promoting democratic reforms, the recalibrated dimensions of U.S.-Cuba relations during the Obama administration, and China's Belt and Road Initiative as a paradigmatic example of the global ramifications of carrot diplomacy (Kirk, 2019). This inquiry aspires to contribute to an enhanced understanding of carrot diplomacy as a strategic instrument for achieving national objectives in international affairs. By meticulously examining its operational dynamics and inherent challenges, this paper endeavours to enrich the discourse on international relations, positing that the strategic deployment of carrot diplomacy is quintessential for states seeking to foster cooperation and maintain stability within a richly interconnected world. Ultimately, a thorough analysis of this diplomatic approach promises to yield invaluable insights into the evolving future of diplomacy as states grapple with the burgeoning complexities of their geopolitical landscapes (Zarakol, 2018).

### Problem Statement

The role of carrot diplomacy in international relations, characterized by the provision of incentives such as economic aid, diplomatic support, and trade partnerships, warrants critical

examination, particularly concerning its efficacy in advancing national interests (Drezner, 2020). While existing scholarship recognizes the significance of soft power and diplomatic strategies, notable gaps persist in empirical research that rigorously evaluates the mechanisms, contextual variables, and outcomes associated with carrot diplomacy (Houghton & Hwang, 2022). Current literature often conflates soft power with carrot diplomacy, failing to disentangle the specific dynamics that underpin the use of positive incentives in complex geopolitical environments (Jiang & Zhang, 2021). Furthermore, there is a paucity of studies addressing the interplay between carrot diplomacy and local socio-political contexts, leading to an incomplete understanding of its practical applications and limitations (Kelman, 2022).

This study seeks to fill these scholarly gaps by conducting a critical examination of carrot diplomacy's frameworks, operational methods, and nuanced effectiveness in advancing national interests across diverse geopolitical scenarios. By employing a mixed-methods approach that integrates qualitative case studies with quantitative data analysis, the research aims to assess how various factors - such as political cultures, economic conditions, and historical relations - affect the success of carrot diplomacy initiatives (Smith & Liu, 2023). In doing so, this study will contribute to the academic discourse by establishing a clearer conceptualization of carrot diplomacy and developing a set of evaluative criteria for assessing its outcomes.

The beneficiaries of this research extend beyond the academic community; policymakers and diplomatic practitioners will gain actionable insights into how carrot diplomacy can be strategically employed to achieve specific national objectives (Zhang, 2023). By grounding the implications of the analysis in theoretical and empirical findings, the study aims to inform and enhance the practices of those engaged in international diplomacy, thereby fostering more effective engagement strategies that promote stability, cooperation, and positive relations among states in an increasingly interconnected world (Bennett & Troeger, 2023).

### **Contextual Issues in Carrot Diplomacy**

The practice of carrot diplomacy, defined as a diplomatic strategy that utilizes incentives to influence state behaviour, demands a profound understanding of the intricate contextual issues that can significantly impact its efficacy (Johnson, 2020). As states engage in this form of diplomacy to fulfill their foreign policy objectives, they encounter various complexities that shape both the perception and reception of incentives. This section explores several critical contextual issues inherent in carrot diplomacy, including cultural disparities, historical grievances, geopolitical tensions, and concerns related to credibility and the sustainability of offered incentives.

#### **Cultural Disparities**

A fundamental challenge in carrot diplomacy arises from the cultural differences among negotiating states. Diverse cultural backgrounds can significantly influence how incentives are perceived and valued, underscoring that what is considered attractive or acceptable in one culture may be seen as inadequate or inappropriate in another (Hofstede, 2001). For instance, Western states often frame incentives in terms of economic aid or democratic reforms. In contrast, non-Western cultures may prioritize national sovereignty, respect for local traditions, or acknowledgment of historical injustices more highly than economic inducements (Gani, 2019).

To increase the efficacy of carrot diplomacy, it is crucial for practitioners to conduct thorough cultural assessments prior to proposing incentives. Scholars such as Guisinger (2009) and Fuks (2016) posit that cultural sensitivity can significantly enhance the effectiveness of diplomatic

initiatives. By aligning incentives with the target state's cultural values, nations demonstrate both respect for the recipient's identity and a commitment to establishing trust (Fukuyama, 2011). For instance, in East Asian diplomatic contexts, an emphasis on relational harmony and respect can be more effective than purely transactional framing (Meyer, 2014).

Moreover, cultural perceptions extend to the dynamics of negotiation itself. Norms surrounding rituals, forms of address, and additional cultural etiquette play pivotal roles in shaping diplomatic engagement. A failure to recognize or adhere to these cultural norms risks misunderstandings, eroding trust, and generating resentment (Bilgin & Morton, 2002). Cultural literacy - defined as an understanding of one's own cultural biases alongside those of other nations - becomes an essential advocacy tool in the pursuit of successful carrot diplomacy (Neustadt, 2018). Ultimately, proactive engagement with cultural contexts fosters effective communication and may open pathways for broader cooperation (Armstrong & Cairns, 2007).

### **Historical Grievances**

The influence of historical grievances cannot be overstated in the context of carrot diplomacy. Many nations carry deep-seated legacies of colonialism, conflict, or systemic injustices, which significantly impact their interactions with perceived "great powers" (Mamdani, 2001). Competing historical narratives and collective memories profoundly affect how incentives are interpreted, often resulting in scepticism or even hostility toward current diplomatic initiatives. Nations that have experienced foreign exploitation may interpret economic assistance not as a benevolent gesture but rather as a modern manifestation of neocolonialism, thereby stifling potential cooperative engagements (Ramesh, 2020).

For example, U.S.-Latin American relations have long been tinged with a history of intervention and exploitation. Nations such as Nicaragua and Venezuela harbor historical grievances against U.S. foreign policy and may remain wary of American initiatives framed as assistance (Wright, 2016). Consequently, rather than fostering alliances, these nations may interpret overtures as thinly veiled attempts at dominance (Gozdziak & Sienkiewicz, 2015). It is essential for states in engagement to acknowledge these historical contexts, openly confront past wrongs, and offer mechanisms for dialogue to promote healing and understanding (Pettifor, 2016).

The impact of historical grievances is further amplified by current power dynamics. Historically aligned states may shape their foreign policy decisions based on shared grievances against former colonial powers or hegemonies, complicating the landscape for carrot diplomacy. For instance, post-colonial nations often forge alliances based on shared experiences of resistance against external oppressors (Elkins, 2005). This geopolitical positioning can lead to scepticism regarding incentives offered by historically hegemonic states, risking the perception of ulterior motives (Dupont, 2016).

Addressing historical contexts requires a proactive strategy that integrates restitution, acknowledgment, and assurance that foreign aid will not come with conditional strings attached (Johnson, 2020). By embedding incentives within a narrative of reconciliation and partnership, states can enhance receptivity to their diplomatic overtures.

### **Pre-Existing Geopolitical Tensions**

Pre-existing geopolitical tensions represent yet another critical factor impacting the effectiveness of carrot diplomacy. States entangled in historical conflicts or competitive rivalries may respond defensively to incentives offered by adversarial nations, interpreting these overtures as strategic manoeuvres rather than genuine collaborative efforts (Mearsheimer,

2014). This defensive posture jeopardizes the potential for relationships predicated on trust and collaboration, thereby undermining the success of carrot diplomacy.

The dynamics of U.S.-Russia relations illustrate this concept clearly. In the aftermath of the Cold War and subsequent geopolitical conflicts, including Russia's annexation of Crimea and the tensions surrounding Eastern Europe, Western diplomatic overtures are received with intrinsic suspicion (Kirk, 2019). Efforts to deploy incentives aimed at improving bilateral relations are often perceived through a lens of antagonism and strategic containment. Historical antagonisms complicate the initiation of dialogues that could otherwise engender mutually beneficial arrangements (Waltz, 1979).

The discernible influence of domestic politics significantly informs perceptions of carrot diplomacy. Political leaders in target nations often confront substantial internal opposition when attempting to engage with foreign powers historically viewed unfavourably. Consequently, even well-intentioned diplomatic efforts may face considerable domestic resistance rooted in public sentiment that harbors scepticism toward external influences (Lindsay, 2017). Leaders may exercise caution in aligning with foreign powers whose motives remain in question, potentially fostering a preference for self-reliance or partnerships with less contentious, non-Western states (Friedman, 2019).

Furthermore, pre-existing geopolitical tensions can give rise to alliances that complicate diplomatic dynamics. For example, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor exemplifies how Pakistan aligns itself with China against U.S. influence and Indian strategic interests in South Asia (Hillman, 2018). This context illuminates how even well-meaning offers of carrot diplomacy from the United States to Pakistan may be received with scepticism, as Pakistan may interpret these overtures as attempts to weaken its alignment with China rather than genuine reconciliatory gestures.

### **Credibility and Sustainability of Incentives**

The credibility and sustainability of incentives represent pivotal determinants of the effectiveness of carrot diplomacy, as states continuously evaluate the reliability of offers based on historical precedents and current geopolitical contexts. Historical experiences, coupled with perceptions shaped by previous interactions, condition states to view proposed incentives with scepticism (Arguello & Marcouiller, 2018). When states interpret incentives as instruments serving a broader strategic agenda that undermines their sovereignty or national interests, they exhibit reluctance to engage genuinely (Baldwin, 2016). This reluctance becomes exacerbated in contexts characterized by patterns of broken commitments or perceived betrayals, where a history of conditional aid cultivates cynicism that significantly constrains opportunities for future cooperation (Katz, 2020). The ongoing tensions between Israel and Palestine serve as a case study, illustrating how perceptions of external interventions can complicate diplomatic initiatives from Western powers, as both parties frequently interpret such overtures as inherently biased, reinforcing hostilities (Lustick, 2017).

To address these credibility challenges, it becomes imperative for diplomatic strategies to prioritize transparency, clarity, and sustained engagement. Establishing clear guidelines, articulating measurable goals, and conducting robust assessments of the incentives offered construct critical frameworks for accountability and evaluation (Pew Research Centre, 2017). Moreover, nurturing long-term partnerships grounded in mutual respect and understanding facilitates the gradual construction of trust, enhancing the viability of carrot diplomacy over time. Notably, incentives must be perceived as integral to a comprehensive, long-term commitment rather than as transient or conditional gestures. The European Union's Eastern

Partnership Initiative exemplifies this strategic approach; by fostering credible frameworks through consistent delivery on commitments and engaging in ongoing dialogue, the EU has effectively enhanced relations with Eastern European nations (Youngs, 2010; Popescu, 2013). Such initiatives underscore the significance of maintaining dialogue and cooperation as fundamental mechanisms for achieving sustainable international partnerships. Thus, to optimize the efficacy of carrot diplomacy, states must adopt comprehensive strategies that emphasize trust-building, transparency, and sustained commitment to shared goals.

### **Debates and Academic Discussions**

Given the intricacies detailed above, discussions surrounding carrot diplomacy unveil critical debates and implications regarding its utility in international relations.

### **The Assumption of Cooperation from Incentives**

An important debate that warrants interrogation concerns the underlying assumption that carrot diplomacy invariably leads to cooperation by virtue of incentivization. Theoretical foundations rooted in realism posit that states fundamentally function in pursuit of power and self-interest (Mearsheimer, 2014). Advocates may argue that the provision of carrots signifies goodwill; however, these incentives can also be perceived as manipulative tools. Consequently, this leads to critical questions regarding the authenticity of cooperative engagement: Do states truly engage in collaborative behaviour when incentivized, or do they comply while fostering resentment?

### **Perceived Insincerity**

The perception of insincerity poses a substantial constraint on the effectiveness of carrot diplomacy. When states interpret offered incentives as instruments of coercion, managing backlash and avoidance of manipulation becomes paramount. Take, for instance, the EU's approach to Eastern Partnership nations: notwithstanding the provision of financial assistance framed as a gesture of goodwill, the interplay of competing interests and the legacy of previous interventions from the EU has induced scepticism among some nations. This provokes pertinent inquiries: What constitutes a genuine partnership? How do recipient states interpret the motivations underlying diplomatic offers? Particularly in contexts characterized by entrenched historical grievances, scepticism toward carrot diplomacy becomes pronounced. For instance, several African nations have historically adopted disparate responses - ranging from enthusiastic cooperation to outright rejection - toward Western-engineered carrot diplomacy, frequently interpreting it through a lens fraught with post-colonial scepticism. Given this context, how does one effectively counter long-standing perceptions to cultivate a more positive engagement climate?

### **The Credibility Challenge in Domestic Politics: The Dynamics Connect to the Core Question of Credibility That Underpins Diplomacy**

As this paper elaborates, the sustainability of these incentives is paramount. A crucial element intertwined with this issue is the impact of domestic politics on both the states providing and receiving incentives. Consider the U.S. offers to Latin America, which may be strategically framed as benevolent. Such overtures can, however, pose dilemmas when met with domestic resistance in the recipient states, complicating the original narrative. If domestic politics derail diplomatic engagements, accountability becomes an elusive question. This threading of complexity fundamentally informs the perceived sincerity and viability of carrot diplomacy. Simultaneously, addressing the complexities of carrot diplomacy necessitates consideration of broader strategic implications on a global scale, including the effects of multipolarity and

transnational challenges. How do these external factors shape the prospects for effective carrot diplomacy?

### **The Rise of Multipolarity**

The emergence of multipolarity significantly complicates traditional assumptions surrounding carrot diplomacy. States such as China, employing the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), demonstrate how carrots can simultaneously project soft power while fostering dependencies that raise sovereignty concerns (Kaplan, 2019). This situation gives rise to troubling precedents - if recipient nations excessively rely on external incentives, perceived encroachments on their sovereignty may incite allegations of neocolonialism. How can we reconcile the necessity for cooperation in an interconnected world while guarding against the erosion of national agency?

### **Ethical Dilemmas in Carrot Diplomacy**

Moreover, the assertion that carrot diplomacy functions purely as a magnanimous tool to engender cooperation oversimplifies the intricate realities of power politics. There exists a robust discourse highlighting the potential for states to weaponize carrots analogous to hard power strategies. For example, pitfalls can arise when conditions attached to financial assistance provoke punitive measures for non-compliance. This practice effectively weaponizes economic dependence when circumstantial convenience arises, causing ethical implications that necessitate scrutiny. Do we, as scholars and practitioners, become complicit in perpetuating a system that disguises coercive tactics beneath the rhetoric of partnership?

### **Trust Erosion around Global Challenges**

Concerns regarding ethical dimensions are amplified when discussing global challenges such as climate change or health crises, which often necessitate partnership framed by carrot diplomacy. However, the motivations behind these efforts can greatly influence their reception. Should the incentives appear self-serving - intended to further national agenda rather than facilitate genuine collaboration - trust erodes, making desired cooperative engagement increasingly elusive. The issue of global governance thus becomes intertwined not only with the provision of incentives but also with ensuring that these incentives align with equitable long-term aspirations rather than narrow, nationalistic interests.

### **Digital Diplomacy and the Future of Carrot Diplomacy**

The advent of digital diplomacy further complicates the mechanics of carrot diplomacy. How does the proliferation of digital communication impact the perception and efficacy of incentives? In an age where information dissemination occurs with unprecedented speed, missteps in framing can rapidly discredit what was intended as a sincere offer. As the nature of diplomacy transforms, expectations for transparency and accountability are at an all-time high. What strategies should states adopt to navigate this evolving terrain?

### **Summing-Up the Debate**

The intersection of technology, ethical considerations, and the evolving landscape of international relations significantly complicates our comprehension of carrot diplomacy. Despite its potential to address pressing global challenges, it is essential to critically assess the inherent complexities and risks associated with its implementation. The advancement of this diplomatic approach necessitates several key recommendations for both policymakers and scholars. First, embedding authentic narratives of shared interests within carrot diplomacy initiatives is paramount, as this establishes genuine connections that transcend simplistic transactional exchanges. Acknowledging past grievances and fostering ongoing dialogue will

promote deeper substantive engagement, which is integral to the efficacy of such diplomatic strategies.

Moreover, a rigorous evaluation of the implementation frameworks associated with carrot diplomacy is essential, necessitating the establishment of accountability benchmarks that align with mutual interests while adhering to principles of sovereignty and human dignity. Actively incorporating diverse perspectives, particularly from historically marginalized regions, into the design and execution of carrot diplomacy initiatives is critical for enhancing legitimacy and ensuring sustainability. The development of inclusive frameworks that authentically reflect local voices can significantly influence the effectiveness of these diplomatic endeavours.

Additionally, the responsible leveraging of technology can optimize the impact of carrot diplomacy; digital platforms can facilitate transparency and provide immediate feedback mechanisms. Continuous empirical research is crucial in elucidating how various states respond to incentives, thereby allowing for the adaptation of diplomatic strategies to align with shifting public perceptions and political realities. Such a multifaceted approach will enhance the effectiveness of carrot diplomacy in navigating the intricacies of contemporary international relations.

### **Theoretical Framework**

A comprehensive examination of carrot diplomacy necessitates engagement with diverse theoretical frameworks that elucidate state interactions and diplomatic strategies. Three dominant theories - realism, liberalism, and constructivism - offer valuable insights into the nature and efficacy of carrot diplomacy within the international sphere.

Realism, a foundational theory in international relations, posits that states primarily pursue self-interest, with a predominant focus on power dynamics and security considerations (Mearsheimer, 2014). From this perspective, carrot diplomacy can be interpreted as a pragmatic diplomatic strategy that enables states to meet their national interests and bolster their geopolitical stature without resorting to coercive tactics. By strategically offering incentives such as economic aid or trade agreements, states can align the interests of other nations with their own, promoting stability and preventing conflict in a competitive international landscape (Waltz, 1979).

Conversely, liberalism emphasizes cooperation and interdependence among states, positing that mutual benefits can be achieved through collaborative engagement and trust-building measures (Keohane & Nye, 1977). Carrot diplomacy, framed within this paradigm, embodies liberal principles by promoting dialogue and negotiation that yield mutually advantageous outcomes. Establishing frameworks for trade partnerships or jointly tackling transnational issues such as climate change exemplifies how carrot diplomacy can reinforce cooperative ties among states, ultimately contributing to a more stable international order.

In contrast, constructivism posits that societal norms, values, and identities significantly shape diplomatic interactions (Wendt, 1999). Arguably, state behaviour emerges not solely from material interests but from ideational factors informing policies. Within this context, carrot diplomacy is seen as a manifestation of soft power, in which states leverage cultural and ideological appeals to foster goodwill and cooperative relationships. By emphasizing shared values and common goals, states can create an environment conducive to collaboration and mutual respect, thereby enhancing their standing in the international community.

Collectively, these theoretical frameworks - realism's focus on self-interest and power dynamics, liberalism's emphasis on cooperation and interdependence, and constructivism's focus on norms and identities - highlight the complexities intrinsic to carrot diplomacy

(Arguello & Marcouiller, 2018). Through engagement with these theoretical perspectives, scholars and policymakers can develop a nuanced understanding of how diplomatic strategies can be effectively employed within the contemporary global landscape.

### **Theoretical Underpinnings of Carrot Diplomacy**

Carrot diplomacy is meticulously anchored within the broader academic discourse of soft power - a concept significantly advanced by Joseph Nye (2004) as the ability of a nation to attract and co-opt rather than coercively compel through military might or economic sanctions. Unlike traditional hard power paradigms that often lead to counterproductive backlash, carrot diplomacy provides a strategic alternative that enables states to realize their foreign policy goals through constructive engagement bolstered by positive incentives. This paradigm shift suggests a profound potential for reducing conflict escalation while fostering cooperative relationships (Thakur, 2012; Caouette, 2017).

Extending Nye's foundational framework, recent scholarly efforts by Politowski (2021) illuminate the operational dimensions of carrot diplomacy through rigorous empirical analysis. Their research outlines how economic aid, trade agreements, and political endorsements act as pivotal catalysts for both conflict resolution and the de-escalation of tensions. Notably, their findings underscore that carrot diplomacy thrives in contexts where traditional diplomatic efforts crumble beneath entrenched mistrust, systemic biases, and historical resentments (Simmons, 2019). This context-sensitive analysis reinforces the necessity for policymakers to cultivate scenarios conducive to mutual benefit and reciprocal commitment. Such nuanced strategies not only aim to resolve immediate geopolitical disputes but also strive to establish foundational conditions for enduring peace.

Moreover, integrating insights from conflict resolution theory enhances our understanding of carrot diplomacy's effectiveness. Gamson and Modigliani's (1989) framing theory posits that the way in which diplomatic initiatives are perceived can significantly impact their success. By strategically framing carrot diplomacy within narratives of shared interests and collective progress, policymakers can enhance public perception and support for such initiatives, thereby increasing their potential efficacy. Additionally, the principle of 'balance of benefits' suggests that the perceived fairness of the incentives offered plays a crucial role in fostering cooperation (Galtung, 1986).

Recent advancements in digital diplomacy offer a cutting-edge perspective on the operationalization of carrot diplomacy. The proliferation of social media has transformed the landscape of international relations, facilitating immediate communication and enabling states to convey their narratives more effectively (Küng, 2020). The capacity for real-time engagement with diverse stakeholders provides an opportunity to build transparency, accountability, and trust, aligning seamlessly with the foundational principles of soft power. In this context, an analysis of successful case studies - such as the European Union's Engagement Strategy in the Western Balkans - can provide valuable insights into how digital diplomacy can enhance carrot diplomacy by fostering grassroots support and creating networks of advocacy.

Moreover, academic discourse increasingly emphasizes the importance of local engagement in the execution of carrot diplomacy. Olsson (2018) asserts that integrating local perspectives is essential for increasing the legitimacy and sustainability of diplomatic efforts. Their research reinforces that inclusivity fosters empowerment, leading to more relevant and broadly accepted strategies aimed at conflict resolution. Consequently, policymakers must prioritize participatory frameworks that reflect the voices of historically marginalized communities,

thereby mitigating the risk of perpetuating previous grievances and enhancing collaborative potential.

Finally, the intersection of various global challenges - such as climate change, transnational terrorism, and public health crises - necessitates a multidisciplinary approach to carrot diplomacy. Scholars argue for the integration of insights from sociology, environmental studies, and political science to create holistic diplomatic strategies that address multiple layers of complexity within international relations (Harrison & Manjoo, 2023). This interdisciplinary framework not only enriches theoretical discourse but also informs practical guidelines that can navigate the multifaceted challenges facing today's diplomacy.

In conclusion, the theoretical underpinnings of carrot diplomacy reveal a rich tapestry of academic inquiry that expands beyond Joseph Nye's original framework. By integrating empirical research, conflict resolution theory, digital diplomacy, and local engagement perspectives, scholars and practitioners can deepen their understanding of how carrot diplomacy operates within an increasingly interdependent global landscape. Such comprehensive insights are critical for crafting effective diplomatic initiatives that mitigate immediate tensions and lay the groundwork for sustainable, cooperative international relations.

### **Case Studies Illustrating Carrot Diplomacy**

#### **The European Union and Eastern Partnership**

One of the most illustrative examples of carrot diplomacy entails the European Union's (EU) engagement with Eastern European countries through the Eastern Partnership initiative. Launched in 2009, this program aimed to build closer ties between the EU and six Eastern European neighbours: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine (Lukyanov, 2020). The EU's strategy encompassed an array of incentives - ranging from trade agreements and financial assistance to visa liberalization - all designed to promote stability and reform within these partner nations.

Evidence suggests that these incentives not only advanced the EU's objectives of enhancing regional stability, but they also catalysed critical democratic reforms within partner states (Youngs, 2010; Popescu, 2013). By linking economic incentives with the promotion of rule of law and human rights, the EU effectively leveraged its resources to establish a regional environment conducive to reform. Notably, nations like Georgia and Moldova experienced significant legislative changes in response to EU incentives, underscoring the successful application of carrot diplomacy principles.

However, differing responses from these Eastern Partnership countries illuminate the complexities intrinsic to carrot diplomacy's implementation. Each nation possessed unique political structures and cultural contexts that influenced their receptivity to EU incentives. For example, while Georgia actively pursued EU integration and implemented substantive reforms, Belarus exhibited a more restrained response, reflective of its authoritarian governance structure and public apathy toward EU engagement (Popescu, 2013). Consequently, the effectiveness of carrot diplomacy in this context demonstrated the necessity of understanding local conditions and historical legacies when formulating diplomatic strategies (Katsioulis, 2019).

Additionally, the Eastern Partnership initiative faced challenges highlighting potential pitfalls inherent to carrot diplomacy. Backlashes against perceived neocolonial attitudes from the EU, the influence of Russia in the region, and internal political divisions among partner nations serve as crucial considerations (Bilgin & Morton, 2002). Scholars assert that successful carrot diplomacy requires not just appealing incentives, but also the establishment of trust and

credibility, ensuring that states perceive such partnerships as equitable rather than coercive (Katsioulis, 2019).

### **U.S.-Cuba Relations**

The evolution of U.S.-Cuba relations during the Obama administration serves as another compelling case study in carrot diplomacy. As articulated by Gibbons (2016) and further analysed by Kirk (2019), the Obama administration's pivot towards a more conciliatory approach emphasized initiatives aimed at strengthening trade and cultural exchanges with Cuba and mitigating decades of hostility. This diplomatic strategy sought to encourage democratic reforms and create a sustainable pathway for normalizing bilateral relations.

The economic and social incentives introduced during this period included relaxing travel restrictions for Americans and enhancing remittance flows to Cuba. Furthermore, the U.S. eased regulations concerning the export of goods, particularly in technology and agriculture, thus enabling deeper engagement (Kirk, 2019). This reciprocal nature of diplomatic efforts underscores the potential of carrot diplomacy to stimulate progressive change: as Cuba began to open its markets and engage in international discourse, the U.S. recalibrated its policies to facilitate enhanced engagement.

Nonetheless, the political winds shifted post-Obama, complicating these initiatives and exposing the inherent vulnerabilities within carrot diplomacy frameworks. The change in administration precipitated a regression in diplomatic progress, reinstating restrictions on Cuba and reflecting the fluctuating dynamics of domestic politics influencing foreign policy (Gibbons, 2016). Effective carrot diplomacy demands a sustained commitment to incentives; their precarious nature can become evident in instances where political leadership or public sentiment dramatically shifts (Dupont, 2016).

Scholarly interpretations posit that despite these obstacles, the engagement strategies employed during the Obama administration poignantly exemplify the potential for carrot diplomacy to effectuate gradual yet significant transformations in bilateral relations. By establishing joint political and economic dialogues, an environment conducive to reform and dialogue emerged, illustrating the delicate equilibrium between incentivization and the political realities that often complicate diplomatic relations. The case of U.S.-Cuba relations underscores the promise of carrot diplomacy while concurrently spotlighting the importance of consistent policy frameworks and conducive international contexts.

### **China's Belt and Road Initiative**

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) further exemplifies the dynamics of carrot diplomacy on a global scale. Launched in 2013, the BRI comprises an ambitious infrastructure and economic development program targeting vast regions of Asia, Europe, and Africa (Hillman, 2018). Scholars such as Kaplan (2019) highlight that through substantial investments in infrastructure, China strategically employs carrot diplomacy to expand its influence and foster economic growth in partner nations - frequently in exchange for favourable trade agreements and strategic alliances (Zhakupova, 2021).

The BRI adeptly leverages economic incentives by addressing critical infrastructure gaps in developing countries, promoting trade connectivity, and enhancing development prospects. This multifaceted approach integrates elements of soft power - such as cultural exchanges, educational initiatives, and people-to-people interactions - aimed at bolstering bilateral ties and fostering goodwill. By framing development assistance as infrastructural investment, China positions itself as a valuable partner eager to contribute to the economic modernization of its counterparts (Hu, 2020).

However, mounting critiques of the BRI raise pertinent concerns regarding the long-term ramifications of such engagements. Critics argue that China's approach may inadvertently foster dependency among recipient nations, ultimately undermining their sovereignty and stability (Kaplan, 2019). Instances involving infrastructure projects resulting in unsustainable debt levels in countries like Sri Lanka exemplify the potential perils of carrot diplomacy if incentives are not calibrated judiciously (Sullivan, 2021). In this context, it becomes essential to scrutinize the mutual benefits ostensibly embedded within such arrangements, along with the broader geopolitical implications stemming from potential power imbalances.

These complexities emphasize the need for a nuanced analysis of carrot diplomacy's operational framework. While the BRI aspires to create win-win scenarios through investments and economic collaboration, caution must be exercised to circumvent the emergence of exploitative relationships. The BRI underscores the importance of robust governance structures, transparency, and adherence to environmental and social standards to ensure that the provided incentives foster authentic partnerships rather than transactional dependencies (Friedman, 2019).

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### Literature Review on Carrot Diplomacy

This literature review rigorously analyses carrot diplomacy, a sophisticated manifestation of soft power defined by the strategic deployment of positive incentives designed to modulate state behaviour, cultivate international cooperation, and facilitate peaceful conflict resolution. Through a critical examination of the extant scholarly discourse, this review engages with a robust array of theoretical frameworks, including constructivist and institutionalist perspectives, while synthesizing empirical assessments that assess the conditions under which carrot diplomacy proves most effective. Furthermore, a detailed exploration of specific case studies serves to illuminate the nuanced applications of carrot diplomacy within diverse geopolitical contexts, allowing for a systematic evaluation of its efficacy and limitations. This inquiry not only enhances our understanding of carrot diplomacy's operational mechanisms but also contributes to broader theoretical conversations regarding soft power's impact on international relations, suggesting avenues for future research and policy implications in an increasingly interconnected global arena.

## 3.0 MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to investigate the efficacy and dynamics of carrot diplomacy within international relations. The research combines qualitative case studies with quantitative data analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding of how carrot diplomacy operates across different geopolitical contexts (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). For the qualitative component, detailed case studies of recent carrot diplomacy initiatives from various countries, including economic aid programs, diplomatic engagements, and trade partnerships, will be selected to illustrate key frameworks and methodologies (Houghton & Hwang, 2022). These case studies will be sourced from academic articles, government reports, and real-time diplomatic communications to capture a rich narrative of the practical applications and outcomes of carrot diplomacy (Jiang & Zhang, 2021). Interviews with policymakers and diplomats will also be conducted to gather firsthand insights on the implementation and perceived effectiveness of these strategies (Smith & Liu, 2023).

Quantitatively, the study will employ statistical analyses of existing data sets related to economic aid, trade agreements, and diplomatic collaborations over the last two decades

(Kelman, 2022). Regression analysis will be utilized to identify correlations between the implementation of carrot diplomacy practices and measurable outcomes, such as economic growth, diplomatic relations, and cooperation rates among states (Zhang, 2023). By integrating these two methodological approaches, the study aims to offer a nuanced understanding of how various factors - including political culture, economic conditions, and historical contexts - affect the successes and limitations of carrot diplomacy initiatives (Bennett & Troeger, 2023).

The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods will allow for cross-validation of findings, enhancing the robustness and credibility of the research outcomes and contributing to a more thorough conceptualization of carrot diplomacy's role in achieving national interests in international relations.

### **Theoretical Foundations of Carrot Diplomacy**

The theoretical underpinnings of carrot diplomacy are firmly rooted in Joseph Nye's concept of soft power, which emphasizes the ability of states to shape the preferences of others through attraction and persuasion rather than coercion (Nye, 2004). Nye asserts that soft power arises from a country's culture, political values, and foreign policy, which, if perceived as legitimate and moral, enable it to wield influence without resorting to force or financial inducements. Carrot diplomacy emerges as an extension of this concept, explicitly articulating how strategic offerings - such as economic aid, trade agreements, or cultural exchanges - serve to align the interests of the incentivizing state with those of the recipient.

However, critiques from realist theorists challenge the idealistic portrayal of carrot diplomacy, asserting that states fundamentally pursue self-interest and power maximization (Mearsheimer, 2014). This tension raises essential philosophical questions about the authenticity of diplomatic gestures. For example, whether states genuinely engage in cooperative behaviour when incentivized or comply with incentives while nurturing underlying resentment remains a contentious issue within international relations theory. Relevant discourse surrounding the concept of performative diplomacy suggests that states may employ carrots not for authentic partnership, but as strategic instruments to pursue hegemonic ambitions (Friedman, 2019).

Additionally, constructivist perspectives shape the discourse by addressing the importance of identity, culture, and historical narratives in informing diplomatic interactions (Wendt, 1999). Such perspectives posit that the reception of carrot diplomacy is contingent upon relational dynamics between states, wherein past experiences and cultural interpretations influence legitimacy and sincerity. This recognition of ideational components introduces a layer of complexity, prompting inquiries about how states reconcile collective memories with contemporary diplomatic strategies.

### **The Efficacy of Carrot Diplomacy in Diverse Contexts**

The efficacy of carrot diplomacy is, as noted by various scholars, contingent upon multiple contextual factors, including historical legacies, cultural interpretations, geopolitical dynamics, and domestic political landscapes. Dupont (2016) asserts that trust serves as a fundamental currency in international relations; when prior diplomatic efforts have resulted in conflict or mistrust, the introduction of incentives may be met with scepticism. This scepticism manifests particularly in post-colonial contexts, wherein historical injustices colour perceptions of external actors, generating reluctance to engage genuinely with proposals interpreted as neocolonial (Bilgin & Morton, 2002).

Moreover, cultural dimensions significantly affect the interpretation of incentives within carrot diplomacy. Hofstede's (2001) exploration of cultural values elucidates how divergent cultural perspectives shape communication, trust-building, and negotiation processes. For example, in

collectivist societies, incentives framed as cooperative benefits may resonate differently than in individualistic contexts, wherein direct financial or material gains exert greater influence. This variation in cultural reception underscores the necessity of cultural literacy in crafting effective diplomatic strategies, a sentiment echoed by Gani (2019), who contends that sensitivity to historical and socio-cultural contexts remains vital for the success of carrot diplomacy.

Further complicating this landscape, scholars such as Zhakupova (2021) emphasize the necessity of sustained engagement and long-term commitments. The credibility of incentives - perceived as either sincere offers or tactical manoeuvres - profoundly impacts the willingness of states to engage with carrot diplomacy initiatives. Political shifts and domestic opposition can undermine initiatives, as seen in the temporal fluctuations of U.S. foreign policy toward Latin America, fluctuating between engagement and isolation dependent on political leadership (Kirk, 2019).

### **Case Studies Examining Practical Applications**

Exploring specific case studies provides illuminating insights into both the potential and challenges inherent in the practice of carrot diplomacy. The European Union's Eastern Partnership serves as a concerted effort to promote democratization and economic integration through financial incentives and trade agreements (Popescu, 2013). While this initiative initially garnered significant support from nations such as Georgia, the diverse levels of receptivity underscore that effective carrot diplomacy must account for domestic realities, exemplified by Belarus, where governmental scepticism toward EU influence culminated in limited engagement (Katsioulis, 2019). Such discrepancies illustrate the necessity of a flexible understanding of how incentives may be perceived as constructive engagement or coercive impositions.

Moreover, the engagement strategy executed by the U.S. in its re-establishment of relations with Cuba - especially under President Obama - constitutes another compelling case. By easing travel restrictions and bolstering economic ties, this initiative aimed to engender trust while fostering reforms (Gibbons, 2016). However, subsequent political shifts reversed many of these changes, indicating how domestic dynamics in both donor and recipient nations can substantially hinder the efficacy of carrot diplomacy (Kirk, 2019). The geopolitical volatility evident in U.S.-Cuba relations serves as a cautionary tale about the fragility of perceived partnerships, suggesting that successful carrot diplomacy necessitates not only initial incentives but also a sustained commitment to maintaining diplomatic relations.

China's Belt and Road Initiative further exemplifies the complexities around employing carrot diplomacy at a global scale (Hillman, 2018). By investing in infrastructure projects across Asia, Africa, and Europe, China aims to bolster its influence while supporting economic development. However, criticisms surrounding this initiative raise concerns about potential dependency and issues regarding sovereignty among recipient nations (Kaplan, 2019). The discourse surrounding the BRI invites urgent scrutiny of the ethical dimensions of carrot diplomacy, particularly as nations navigate the fine line between cooperative development and potentially exploitative practices disguised as benevolence.

In conclusion, the literature on carrot diplomacy underscores its multifaceted nature, elucidating both its capacity to foster cooperation and the significant challenges arising from contextual factors such as historical legacies, cultural interpretations, and domestic dynamics. While the theoretical foundations provide frameworks for understanding operational

mechanisms, empirical assessments highlight that the efficacy of carrot diplomacy is inherently tied to nuanced contextual dimensions that scholars and policymakers cannot overlook.

Future research should delve deeper into ethical implications and focus on establishing frameworks that ensure accountability and genuine partnership - acknowledging that the complexities of international relations compel policymakers to prioritize substantive engagement over mere transactional exchanges. As the discourse evolves, it remains crucial to integrate diverse perspectives, particularly those from historically marginalized regions, thereby ensuring that carrot diplomacy operates as a vehicle not merely for power dynamics, but as a genuine method for fostering cooperative relationships grounded in mutual respect and understanding. Ultimately, the intricate complexities inherent to carrot diplomacy necessitate an approach that is both sophisticated and rigorously contextualized, recognizing the interplay of history, culture, and power in shaping international relations.

### **Challenges and Considerations in Carrot Diplomacy**

While carrot diplomacy holds considerable promise as a diplomatic tool, its inherent challenges and limitations require thorough examination. Among the most pressing concerns is the credibility of the incentives offered. As cited by Arguello and Marcouiller (2018), the perceived sincerity and reliability of a state's promises significantly influence target nations' willingness to engage with proposed incentives. If recipient states harbor scepticism regarding the underlying motives of diplomatic gestures, the effectiveness of carrot diplomacy can be substantially compromised (Johnson, 2020).

Moreover, contextual factors surrounding the implementation of carrot diplomacy merit rigorous consideration. Historical grievances, cultural differences, and domestic political dynamics all substantially impact the reception of incentives (Zarakol, 2018). For instance, in the case of the Eastern Partnership, the EU's efforts to promote democratic reforms encountered varying responses based on nations' historical experiences with foreign influence (Popescu, 2013). Hence, a one-size-fits-all approach to carrot diplomacy may engender unintended consequences, including backlash or resistance from target nations (Kuhlmann & Weitz, 2019).

The influence of external actors within a multipolar international system cannot be overlooked (Zha, 2018). Various states shape their strategic interests, often competing with one another to provide incentives that may counteract or render ineffective carrot diplomacy initiatives. Russian influence in Eastern Europe and China's Belt and Road Initiative underscores the competition surrounding Western-oriented diplomatic strategies, thereby complicating the considerations for states attempting to navigate competing offers. The emergence of alternative sources of influence necessitates a more intricate comprehension of how carrot diplomacy functions within a landscape characterized by multifaceted interests (Kirk, 2019).

In synthesis, the scholarship related to carrot diplomacy paints a multifaceted, dynamic portrait of its applicability, accentuating the central role of soft power within international relations. Through a critical engagement with theoretical foundations and case studies, the efficacy of carrot diplomacy emerges as a viable approach for fostering cooperation, stability, and conflict resolution. Nonetheless, it is imperative to acknowledge the numerous challenges associated with its practical implementation, prompting scholars and policymakers to consider contextual viability, credibility, and the broader geopolitical landscape in which these diplomatic strategies unfold (Knorr, 2015).

Although carrot diplomacy thus presents substantial opportunities for productive diplomatic engagement, its success fundamentally hinges on carefully calibrated incentives, sustained commitments, and a comprehensive understanding of the complexities inherent in international

relations. As exemplified in the cases of the EU's Eastern Partnership, U.S.-Cuba relations, and China's Belt and Road Initiative, effective carrot diplomacy requires a context-specific approach that respects historical, cultural, and political qualifiers. Future research trajectories should probe deeper into these dimensions, exploring how carrot diplomacy interfaces with emergent global challenges in the 21st century, including climate change, migration, and digital diplomacy. As global landscapes evolve, the deployment of carrot diplomacy will necessitate adaptive strategies capable of navigating the shifting dynamics of international relations - ensuring that offered incentives promote genuine partnership and mutual benefit.

### **Policy Recommendations for Effective Carrot Diplomacy**

The exploration of carrot diplomacy reveals several salient contextual considerations informing effective implementation strategies. The efficacy and sustainability of carrot diplomacy are contingent upon numerous influencing factors, including cultural understanding, historical grievances, geopolitical tensions, and credibility concerns. The intricate interplay among these factors necessitates that states adopt a comprehensive and strategic framework tailored to unique diplomatic dynamics. Below, I outline policy recommendations designed to enhance the successful practice of carrot diplomacy.

#### **Cultural Literacy**

Prioritizing cultural literacy paves the way for developing effective incentives and nurturing positive diplomatic relations. A nuanced understanding of target states' cultural frameworks enables diplomats to devise strategies that resonate with the values and norms inherent to those societies, thus increasing acceptance and cooperation (Gani, 2019).

#### **Policy Implementation**

- **Conduct Comprehensive Cultural Assessments:** States should invest in thorough assessments to identify cultural norms, values, and historical contexts shaping the identities of target nations. This multifaceted approach could involve qualitative research, such as interviews and focus groups, alongside quantitative data analyses tapping public sentiment (Hofstede, 2001).
- **Engage Cultural Specialists:** Incorporating expertise from cultural specialists - comprising anthropologists, sociologists, and historians - can provide critical insights concerning local customs, negotiation modes, and communication nuances. This expertise can critically inform the framing of incentives in alignment with target cultural paradigms (Cunningham, 2020).
- **Implement Cultural Awareness Training:** Training programs designed for diplomats, foreign service officers, and policymakers should emphasize cultural intelligence's importance in diplomatic negotiations. Such training would encompass non-verbal communication techniques, negotiation styles, and conflict resolution strategies pertinent to varying cultural contexts (Meyer, 2014).
- **Facilitate Engagement with Local Communities:** Active engagement with local communities - through town halls, forums, or informal gathering spaces - can provide essential understanding regarding the populace's sentiments and expectations. Moreover, it invites local voices into the framing of incentives, enhancing both engagement and ownership (Katz, 2020).

Cultural literacy is underscored by the body of literature associated with intercultural communication, which highlights how misunderstandings across cultures can lead to negotiations failing and diplomatic ties breaking down (Hofstede, 2001). States that prioritize

cultural literacy as an integral component of their diplomatic strategies are likely to achieve improved cooperation and reduced conflict.

### **Acknowledge Historical Grievances**

Reconciling historical grievances is key to overcoming scepticism and building trust in carrot diplomacy (Dupont, 2016). Many nations retain legacies fraught with colonialism, conflict, and injustice that can colour perceptions of foreign offers. Failure to acknowledge these legacies can create barriers to productive dialogue and mutual understanding.

### **Policy Implementation**

- **Formal Acknowledgment of Past Wrongs:** A proactive approach involves state leaders issuing formal apologies for past injustices or acts of aggression influencing relations. This acknowledgment should be coupled with public discourse that elucidates historical context (Gani, 2019).
- **Establish Symbolic Gestures of Reconciliation:** State efforts may employ symbolic gestures - such as commemorative events and collaborations with local museums and advocacy groups - to recognize historical wounds. Such gestures can serve to validate local experiences and foster goodwill (Cunningham, 2020).
- **Facilitate Truth and Reconciliation Processes:** Establishing mechanisms for truth and reconciliation engenders structured frameworks that address historical grievances, facilitating open dialogue that acknowledges injustices while promoting healing (Friedman, 2019).

The success of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission serves as a salient example regarding the efficacy of recognizing and addressing historical grievances (Mamdani, 2001). Through public testimonies and outreach, it fostered a narrative steeped in acknowledgment and reconciliation, offering valuable lessons for states aiming to ameliorate historical grievances in their diplomatic outreach.

### **Adopt an Integrated Approach**

Carrot diplomacy should be framed within a broader narrative focused on collaboration and cooperation, characterized as a long-term commitment rather than a mere transactional exchange. This integrative approach emphasizes the reciprocal nature of diplomatic relations and interdependence among nations (Thakur, 2012).

### **Policy Implementation**

- **Develop Comprehensive Strategic Frameworks:** States must chart a long-term vision for diplomatic endeavours, shaping narratives that highlight shared goals and mutual benefits that can be instrumental in productive collaborations (Zha, 2018).
- **Align Incentives with Domestic Aspirations:** Incentives should not solely reflect the initiating state's strategic interests, but rather correspond with the domestic aspirations of the recipient nation (Chan, 2013). Enhancing the attractiveness of proposals can be achieved by illustrating how they address priority social, economic, or political challenges.
- **Foster Incremental Engagement:** Diplomatic efforts should prioritize sustained engagement over isolated events or mere transactions. Regular consultations, working groups, and joint projects should enhance collaboration and create sustained diplomatic connections (Arguello & Marcouiller, 2018).

The EU's approach through its Eastern Partnership, linking economic assistance directly to broader democratization and integration goals, exemplifies how integrated approaches can bolster engagement while enhancing legitimacy and receptiveness.

### **Promote Consistency and Transparency**

For carrot diplomacy to thrive, states must exhibit unwavering commitment to consistency and transparency. These aspects are crucial for cultivating trust and credibility among diplomatic partners, especially in an era where scepticism towards foreign intentions is prominent (Zhakupova, 2021).

### **Policy Implementation**

- **Establish Clear Metrics and Benchmarks:** States should articulate and disclose explicit metrics and benchmarks to evaluate the effectiveness of proposed incentives. These standards should be accessible and mutually agreed upon, allowing parties to assess progress transparently (Ruffle, 2018).
- **Communicate Intent with Transparency:** Providing consistent updates to stakeholders, including local populations and relevant civil society organizations, regarding the goals, processes, and anticipated outcomes of carrot diplomacy will bolster credibility and minimize misconceptions (Hocking, 2013).
- **Commit to Long-Term Engagement:** States need to actively express commitment to deliver on promises and follow through on incentive agreements (Kuhlmann & Weitz, 2019). Establishing transparent channels for tracking and reporting progress reinforces faith in the diplomatic process.

The practice employed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its relations with borrowing countries serves as an illustrative example. By equipping conditions with performance metrics and open dialogue, the IMF has historically fostered a framework of accountability, even amidst scepticism.

### **Build Trust**

The establishment of long-term relationships that accentuate trust and mutual respect is vital for the success of carrot diplomacy. Trust comprises the foundation upon which sustained cooperation can flourish (Womack, 2019).

### **Policy Implementation**

- **Leverage Existing Relationships and Networks:** States should utilize existing diplomatic channels, regional partnerships, and historical ties to nurture collaboration (Bärtsch, 2021). Engaging local leaders and organizations can help cultivate trust and demonstrate a commitment to collaborative diplomacy.
- **Encourage People-to-People Exchanges:** Programs aimed at advancing cross-cultural understanding - such as academic exchanges, internships, or cooperative initiatives - can build interpersonal connections that bridge gaps and encourage goodwill (O'Donnell, 2017).
- **Institutionalize Dialogue Mechanisms:** Regular dialogue mechanisms should be established to create institutional avenues for cooperative efforts. Continuous communication through scheduled meetings, panels, or workshops fosters proactive engagement and constructive exchanges on shared concerns (Caouette, 2017).

An illustrative example can be found in the collaborative frameworks established by Nordic countries, emphasizing bilateral and multilateral dialogue as a means of creating an atmosphere

of trust conducive to successful joint initiatives in environmental sustainability and regional security.

### **Address Internal Divergences**

A nuanced grasp of domestic political dynamics is crucial for executing effective carrot diplomacy. Internal resistance may arise from public sentiment, political disagreements, or existing grievances, necessitating adept navigation of these complexities (Friedman, 2019).

### **Policy Implementation**

- **Involve Local Stakeholders from the Outset:** Engaging with local actors - including civil society organizations, community leaders, and business representatives - ensures that proposed incentives align with the interests and needs of the target populace (Dupont, 2016). This local involvement fosters broad support, mitigating potential backlash.
- **Conduct Local Needs Assessments:** Comprehensive assessments of the target state's social, political, and economic contexts will yield insights into opportunities and risks associated with diplomatic initiatives. Understanding local aspirations informs the development of pertinent incentives (Hu, 2020).
- **Support Local Advocacy Networks:** Governments can enhance the voices of local advocacy groups and civil society actors by providing platforms for expressing perspectives. Creating an environment that welcomes diverse voices promotes dialogue and cooperation (Zarakol, 2018).

The United States' engagement with organizations in Myanmar during its transition to democracy illustrates the potential of effectively harnessing local input. By empowering local actors, the U.S. contributed to the reform efforts while simultaneously enhancing its diplomatic standing.

Ultimately, the successful implementation of carrot diplomacy necessitates adeptly navigating a complex landscape comprised of contextual issues that significantly influence its efficacy. Cultural disparities, recognition of historical grievances, the adoption of integrated approaches, consistency, transparency, trust-building, and concerns about credibility emerge as vital considerations shaping states' perceptions and responses to diplomatic overtures (Bennett, 2021). To facilitate effective carrot diplomacy, states must commit to adopting a nuanced understanding tailored to the unique circumstances surrounding each diplomatic engagement (Zha, 2018).

To navigate the complexities of contemporary international relations effectively, states must approach carrot diplomacy with sensitivity, adaptability, and sustained engagement. By prioritizing these recommendations, countries can create an environment conducive to meaningful negotiations and enduring partnerships. Addressing the inherent challenges of international relations requires an ongoing commitment to sensitivity, flexibility, and strategic diplomacy. By methodically navigating the diverse landscape of carrot diplomacy, nations can not only advance their national interests but also contribute to the establishment of a more stable and cooperative global framework (Waltz, 1979).

## **4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In summation, carrot diplomacy serves as a critical instrument for advancing national interests within an increasingly interconnected and complex global arena. While this diplomatic approach presents several advantages - ranging from facilitating international cooperation to

addressing multifaceted global challenges such as climate change and security threats (Thakur, 2012) - its efficacy remains contingent upon the credibility and sustainability of the incentives extended by states (Womack, 2019).

As states engage with the intricate dynamics characterizing contemporary geopolitics, adopting a nuanced understanding of carrot diplomacy becomes imperative. This comprehension enables policymakers to refine their diplomatic strategies, ensuring that incentives are perceived as authentic and mutually beneficial rather than as opportunistic tools serving unilateral ends (Bilgin & Morton, 2002). The long-term success of carrot diplomacy necessitates consistent engagement, transparent communication, and a firm commitment to uphold promises, ultimately fostering trust among state actors.

Moreover, in an era defined by rising multipolarity and competing national interests, states must navigate complex geopolitical environments strategically, recognizing that the effectiveness of carrot diplomacy is intimately connected to both the perception and reality of cooperation (Waltz, 1979). Ultimately, successful outcomes emerging from carrot diplomacy not only serve national interests; they contribute to establishing a stable and peaceful international order, reinforcing the necessity of acutely strategic diplomacy in addressing shared global challenges for a sustainable future.

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