

**Cultural Diplomacy and Indigenous Empowerment: Addressing Cultural  
Misappropriation and Exploitation**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis explores the evolving significance of cultural diplomacy in international relations, particularly its impact on Indigenous empowerment and efforts to counter-cultural exploitation. The Literature Review critically examines the multifaceted nature of cultural diplomacy and its intersection with the challenges faced by Indigenous communities, highlighting the urgent need for diplomatic interventions to address systemic injustices and colonial legacies. Based on a thorough analysis of 57 articles, the results section identifies key themes, including Indigenous knowledge and rights, cultural appropriation, (cultural) diplomacy, and colonialism. It also emphasises essential initiatives such as the TRIPS Agreement and grassroots movements. The discussion underscores the key role of cultural diplomacy initiatives in empowering Indigenous communities through dialogue, awareness-raising, and advocacy for policy changes at both national and international levels. It highlights the transformative potential of cultural diplomacy in honouring Indigenous knowledge, preserving cultural heritage, and fostering a more equitable global society. Ultimately, this thesis advocates for embracing cultural diplomacy to address systemic injustices, amplify Indigenous voices, and ensure Indigenous communities' cultural survival and well-being through collaborative action and solidarity.

## **Cultural Diplomacy and Indigenous Empowerment: Addressing Cultural Misappropriation and Exploitation**

### **1. Introduction**

Within the domain of international relations, cultural diplomacy, defined by Cummings as the “exchange of ideas, information, art, language and other aspects of culture among nations and peoples to foster mutual understanding” (Hemming, n.d.), has evolved into a strong force, facilitating dialogue, understanding, and collaboration among nations. However, its significance intensifies when considering Indigenous communities grappling with the persistent challenges of cultural misappropriation and exploitation. One example of exploitation is biopiracy—a phenomenon characterised by the exploitation of biological resources and associated traditional knowledge without consent (Correa, 2001, p. 18). This exploitation poses profound threats to Indigenous rights, sovereignty, and cultural integrity, necessitating comprehensive and practical solutions. While Indigenous communities have demonstrated resilience through various strategies to combat cultural misappropriation and exploitation, including legal action and community-based initiatives, the issue persists, underscoring the need for innovative approaches (UNESCO, 2023). Diplomatic initiatives present a promising avenue for addressing the root causes of cultural misappropriation and exploitation, fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders, and advocating for policy changes at both national and international levels (Clarke, 2020). However, the role of cultural diplomacy in empowering Indigenous communities and combating cultural misappropriation and exploitation remains underexplored in the existing literature. This thesis aims to bridge this gap by examining the intersection of cultural diplomacy, Indigenous empowerment, and the fight against cultural misappropriation and exploitation, elucidating the role of cultural diplomacy initiatives in amplifying Indigenous voices, preserving

cultural heritage, and advocating for policy changes, with the following research question: "How do cultural diplomacy initiatives contribute to the cultivation of strength and empowerment among Indigenous communities, particularly in their efforts to combat cultural misappropriation and exploitation?" To answer the research question, this thesis will start with a review of the existing literature, which examines critical concepts and previous studies on defining and conceptualising (cultural) diplomacy, Indigenous communities and their challenges, understanding cultural misappropriation and exploitation and its impact on Indigenous knowledge, colonialism and power dynamics in cultural diplomacy and initiatives on Indigenous empowerment. The methodology section then describes the databases and keywords employed in this thesis to find suitable articles. The results section presents the key findings of this thesis, detailing the data collected, the analyses performed, and the significant outcomes that address the research question outlined earlier. This is followed by a discussion section that analyses the findings in light of the theoretical framework and current literature. However, it's important to note certain limitations inherent in this thesis, including the scope of available literature and the complexities of cultural dynamics within Indigenous communities. The thesis finishes by summarising significant findings, noting the limitations, and making recommendations for future research.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **Definition and Conceptualisation of (Cultural) Diplomacy**

In its broadest sense, diplomacy refers to peaceful negotiations and discussions among nations to manage international relations. It is a crucial part of how countries interact, shaping how they work together on global issues (Lee & Hocking, 2011). The idea of diplomacy has been around for centuries, with its origins traced back to the Peace of Westphalia in 1684

(Patton, 2019). However, it is essential to note that "diplomacy" can mean different things to different people. Sometimes, it is used to talk about a country's foreign policies, while other times, it is about how those policies are implemented (Hart & Siniver, 2020).

Cultural diplomacy presents a nuanced aspect of international relations, involving the exchange of artistic ideas and traditions among nations to foster mutual understanding (Clarke, 2020). However, there needs to be more clarity surrounding cultural diplomacy's precise definition and scope to ensure a comprehensive understanding and effective implementation of its strategies. While some perceive it as a bilateral exchange of ideas, others interpret it as primarily serving the interests of a single nation on the global stage. This diversity of perspectives extends to categorising cultural elements that fall within the scope of "diplomacy," with opinions varying from art and language to encompassing exchange programs and public events (Grincheva, 2024, p. 177).

Despite the challenges in defining cultural diplomacy, it continues to hold significant importance in international discourse. Some scholars view it as a component of 'public diplomacy,' a broader concept encompassing how nations communicate and seek to influence each other's populations (Clarke, 2020). Others argue that cultural diplomacy has a historical foundation, citing examples such as the exchange of gifts between ancient rulers (Black, 2010, p. 19). While the exact boundaries of cultural diplomacy may be elusive, its enduring role in shaping international interactions is undeniable.

### **Overview of Indigenous Communities and their Challenges**

Indigenous communities, dispersed across 70 countries and encompassing over 370 million individuals, represent a mosaic of cultures, languages, and histories intricately tied to their ancestral lands and traditional knowledge systems (United Nations Permanent Forum on

Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), 2021). From the Navajo tribes of the United States to the Mayan civilisations of Guatemala and from the Saami reindeer herders of northern Europe to the Aboriginal peoples of Australia, Indigenous groups have endured centuries of adversity while preserving their distinct cultural identities in the face of globalisation and societal shifts. While "Indigenous" encapsulates self-identification, historical continuity, and cultural preservation, its use can sometimes carry negative connotations, deterring individuals from openly embracing their heritage (UNPFII, 2021). Nevertheless, Indigenous peoples serve as stewards of priceless traditional knowledge systems essential for sustainable resource management, with their ancestral lands serving as the cornerstone of their physical and cultural survival (UNPFII, 2021). The historical injustices inflicted upon Indigenous communities, including colonisation, forced assimilation through the deliberate suppression of Indigenous languages and spiritual beliefs, and land dispossession, have left unforgettable scars that continue to be felt through contemporary Indigenous societies (Domínguez & Luoma, 2020, p. 1).

### **Understanding of Cultural Misappropriation and Exploitation and its Impact on Indigenous Knowledge**

Understanding cultural misappropriation and exploitation requires thoroughly examining the diverse practices that form these phenomena. Cultural exploitation refers to the unjust or unethical use of elements of a culture for economic gain, often without proper compensation or recognition given to the originating culture (Rogers, 2006, p. 477).

Although cultural exploitation can be seen as a form of cultural appropriation, cultural appropriation is defined as utilising the symbols, artefacts, genres, rituals, or technologies of one culture by individuals belonging to another culture, often used inappropriately without proper understanding, acknowledgement, or respect for their significance. (Rogers, 2006, p. 474). This

thesis focuses on the misappropriation of culture. While appropriation is often perceived positively, misappropriation is universally condemned due to its dishonesty (Karkason, 2022). In essence, cultural exploitation focuses on the economic exploitation of cultural elements, whereas cultural misappropriation emphasises the inappropriate or disrespectful use of cultural elements regardless of economic motives (Rogers, 2006; Karkason, 2022).

Another form of exploitation commonly observed in Indigenous communities is biopiracy, which involves the unauthorised commercial use of biological resources and associated traditional knowledge without fair compensation (Correa, 2001, p. 18). To understand the concept of biopiracy it requires exploring its historical roots and the context in which it emerged. Oyemitan (2017) states, "Bioprospecting is defined as a systematic and organised search for useful products derived from bioresources including plants, microorganisms, animals, etc., that can be developed further for commercialisation and overall benefits of the society." Bioprospecting is not the same as biopiracy; biopiracy occurs when bioprospecting is used to obtain knowledge and biodiversity resources for exclusive control via intellectual property rights, neglecting to provide benefits to Indigenous populations (Mackey & Liang, 2012).

Initially, there were accusations from Western intellectual property owners against Third World countries and entities of "pirating" or wrongfully using their patents and copyrights (Ikechi, 2006, p. 12). However, as biotechnological advancements unfolded, Western entities began patenting Indigenous peoples' biocultural resources without their consent, prompting Third World countries to accuse them of "biopiracy." This term refers to the unauthorised commercial use of biological resources and associated traditional knowledge without fair compensation (Ikechi, 2006, p. 12). It also involves patenting inventions based on such knowledge without acknowledging its origin. Biopiracy highlights ethical and legal concerns regarding the

exploitation of Indigenous knowledge for profit, particularly in pharmaceutical and academic circles (Reid, 2009).

Biopiracy significantly impacts Indigenous communities worldwide. Indigenous groups possess extensive knowledge about plants, especially their medicinal properties, representing a valuable resource for modern medicine (Reid, 2009). This knowledge, often transmitted orally and shared within communities, holds considerable value for pharmaceutical companies and industries. However, the lack of legal protection leaves this knowledge vulnerable to exploitation by researchers and corporations, particularly those from developed countries, who capitalise on it for commercial gain without providing fair compensation to the Indigenous holders (Reid, 2009). For example, pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly developed drugs from the rosy periwinkle plant based on Indigenous knowledge, earning significant profits without sharing royalties with the Indigenous inhabitants of Madagascar (Reid, 2009).

Similarly, controversies have arisen over patenting products derived from traditional knowledge, such as the neem tree, highlighting the challenges Indigenous communities face in protecting their intellectual property. The prevalence of biopiracy underscores the urgent need for legal frameworks to safeguard traditional knowledge and ensure equitable sharing of benefits between researchers and Indigenous peoples to avoid the exploitation of these Indigenous communities. One framework addressing the exploitation of Indigenous knowledge is the TRIPS framework, which will be further elaborated on in the results section of this thesis (World Trade Organization, n.d.).

Another impact other than economic exploitation is cultural erosion. By commodifying cultural practices, rituals, and medicinal remedies, bioprospectors strip Indigenous communities of their cultural heritage, reducing sacred traditions to mere commodities for commercial gain



(Kendall, 2024). This cultural misappropriation undermines the self-governance and independence of Indigenous communities, thereby sustaining the historical patterns of colonial exploitation and marginalisation (Boucher, 2014).

Furthermore, environmental degradation and biodiversity loss are also at stake if cultural misappropriation and exploitation are not addressed. Indigenous communities are vital in preserving biodiversity and safeguarding the Earth's ecosystems. For millennia, they have served as custodians of the environment, nurturing their lands, respecting wildlife, and passing down traditional ecological knowledge through generations (Rights and Resources Initiative, 2020). Today, Indigenous communities continue to protect some of the most biodiverse regions worldwide, with nearly half of the Earth's landmass under their stewardship, of which around 40% is designated as protected or ecologically sustainable (Garnett et al., 2018). Remarkably, despite composing just 6% of the global population, Indigenous communities safeguard 80% of the world's remaining biodiversity (World Bank, 2023). However, many Indigenous communities face numerous threats, including disease outbreaks, poverty, environmental injustices, and human rights violations, putting their very existence at risk (Walker et al., 2016).

Furthermore, Indigenous communities also face social injustice as they often find themselves marginalised and excluded from decision-making processes regarding their resources and cultural heritage (Domínguez & Luoma, 2020, p. 15). This exclusion perpetuates a cycle of exploitation and reinforces historical patterns of colonialism, where the interests of Indigenous communities are disregarded in favour of economic gain by external actors (Domínguez & Luoma, 2020, p. 13). Additionally, the social injustice ingrained in cultural misappropriation and exploitation extends beyond economic exploitation to encompass the loss of cultural identity and the erosion of Indigenous languages, rituals, and spiritual practices (Kendall, 2024). As

Indigenous communities struggle to maintain their cultural heritage and assert their rights, they face systemic barriers that hinder their ability to protect their traditional knowledge and resources from exploitation (Pomeroy, 2009).

### **Colonialism and Power Dynamics in Cultural Diplomacy**

Colonialism, defined by Kohn & Reddy (2023) as “the practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another”, is considered to have shaped the realm of cultural diplomacy according to Clarke (2020, p. 8); they highlight how colonial powers' assertions of cultural superiority and clashes over cultural identity during historical conflicts like the First and Second World Wars, as well as the Cold War, directly influenced the realm of cultural diplomacy. During the Cold War, cultural diplomacy played a crucial role as both the United States and the Soviet Union sought to assert their ideological superiority and win the hearts and minds of people worldwide. This period saw an intensification of cultural exchanges, artistic collaborations, and propaganda efforts to promote each side's political and cultural values. By establishing cultural centres abroad, the United States has used cultural diplomacy to showcase American ideals such as freedom, democracy, and capitalism (Grincheva, 2024, p. 173). Similarly, the Soviet Union employed cultural diplomacy to propagate communist ideology and present itself as a champion of social justice and equality (Grincheva, 2024, p. 176). These cultural exchanges and competitions for influence shaped global perceptions, fostered international cooperation and influenced geopolitical alliances during the Cold War era (Clarke, 2020).

These events highlighted the centrality of cultural identity in international relations. They underscored the importance of cultural diplomacy in asserting influence, shaping perceptions, and promoting national interests on the global stage. Cultural diplomacy became a tool for

colonial powers and later superpowers to project their cultural values, ideals, and narratives, often as part of broader geopolitical strategies aimed at gaining influence and soft power (Grincheva, 2024, p. 178).

Furthermore, the colonial encounter, marked by exploitation, dispossession, and cultural erasure, established power dynamics that continue to resonate in contemporary diplomatic practices; Indigenous communities, in particular, have suffered the full impact of colonialism, experiencing not only the suppression of their resources but also the systematic misappropriation and exploitation of their cultural traditions and knowledge systems (Domínguez & Luoma, 2020, p. 15).

One example of cultural misappropriation is the Maoris of New Zealand. They experienced cultural misappropriation by misrepresenting their cultural practices, such as the haka dance. Although the haka is often described as a 'war dance', the most used haka by the Maori is the ceremonial haka, which is used to welcome, celebrate, entertain and challenge visiting tribes (Pettersen, 2007).

The haka has become synonymous with New Zealand's national rugby team, the All Blacks, who have popularised it globally (Frankel, 2017, p. 446). However, the widespread adoption and adaptation of the haka by various entities, often for commercial purposes or to evoke a sense of warrior-like strength, illustrate a significant issue of unauthorised exploitation of Indigenous culture, in this case, that of the Maori people. This exploitation is often justified under the "public domain," where traditional knowledge is considered fair game without legal restrictions (Frankel, 2017, p. 446). The lack of clear guidelines or consensus on what constitutes the public domain has allowed for the unchecked misappropriation of Indigenous cultural

expressions. This misappropriation often commodifies their traditions for commercial gain without proper acknowledgement or benefit to the Maori community (Frankel, 2017, p. 447).

Another case of cultural exploitation can be observed among Indigenous communities in the Amazon rainforest, such as the Shuar people, whose traditional knowledge of medicinal plants and biodiversity has been exploited without fair compensation or recognition (Nagan et al., 2010). In this specific case, the headman, typically overseeing multiple villages across Shuar territory, permitted a visitor, referred to as the "hit man," to set up camp in one of the villages under the guise of providing educational assistance. The "hit man" convinced the chief that the presence of teachers was beneficial for educating the children about their environment and heritage. Under the excuse of gathering knowledge about traditional plant uses, the children were instructed to collect plants from the forest, consulting their parents or the Shaman for information. This accumulated knowledge, amounting to 578 traditional items, was then compiled into reports and submitted to organisations like USAID (Nagan et al., 2010, p. 26). Eventually, the information reached institutions like the National Cancer Institute (NCI), which restricted access to pharmaceutical companies. This process, exemplified by exploiting the Shuar's traditional knowledge, illustrated the asymmetric distribution of benefits, favouring wealthy states, institutions, and corporations over Indigenous communities (Nagan et al., 2010, p. 27). This exploitation not only undermines the sovereignty of these Indigenous communities but also perpetuates inequalities by denying them control over their cultural resources.

Likewise, Vietnamese Aboriginals have faced similar challenges, with their traditional knowledge of medicinal plants and bush foods being exploited through Aboriginal Tourism without fair compensation or recognition (Yousufi & Thapak, 2020, p. 115). During a tour through the Tam Dao Nature Reserve and Ba Be National Park, tourists collected various

samples of plants and insects without authorisation from park administrators or local authorities. Later, it became apparent that the tourist's primary objective was to gather information about medicinal plants within the national park area, which turned the seemingly harmless typical tourist outing into an unconscious involvement in biopiracy (Yousufi & Thapak, 2020, p.115).

Knowledge about food and plants is not the only thing stolen from Indigenous communities. Traditional attire and symbols are also being commercialised. The Masaai People of Kenya and Tanzania fell victim to this type of misappropriation and exploitation for commercial gain. Companies around the world have used the famous Maasai brand to make their products seem more exotic and increase sales (Young, 2017). One notable example is Louis Vuitton's 2012 collection, which featured items inspired by the Maasai Shuka, a traditional African blanket adorned in vibrant red and blue hues. Despite generating billions of dollars in sales for luxury brands, the Maasai community receives no compensation for using their cultural heritage. According to estimates, approximately 80 companies are currently infringing on Maasai intellectual property rights, translating to potential annual licensing fees of \$10 million that rightfully belong to the Maasai people (Young, 2017).

Similarly to the Masaai, the Navajo people also face exploitation of their cultural heritage for commercial gain. The Navajo, renowned for their intricate weaving traditions, have seen their distinctive designs replicated and sold without proper compensation. One notable case involves the Urban Outfitters brand, which faced backlash for marketing Navajo-inspired clothing and accessories without permission (Woolf, 2017).

In all cases, the exploitation of Indigenous cultural heritage reflects a broader pattern of colonialism and power dynamics, where dominant societies profit from the cultural heritage of marginalised communities without their consent or fair compensation (Domínguez & Luoma,

2020, p. 13). This highlights the need for robust legal frameworks and ethical guidelines to protect Indigenous cultural heritage and ensure equitable treatment and representation in the global arena. This notion is impeccable for this thesis's research question and will be further elaborated on in the results section of this thesis.

### **Cultural Diplomacy Initiatives and Indigenous Empowerment**

Previous cultural diplomacy initiatives have had a profound impact in empowering Indigenous communities to protect themselves against cultural misappropriation and exploitation threats. By facilitating partnerships and dialogue among diverse stakeholders, these initiatives have enabled Indigenous peoples to assert their rights and preserve their cultural heritage. The following initiatives discussed in this section will form the basis for the thesis's findings. For example, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), adopted in 2007, stands as a milestone in recognising and promoting the rights of Indigenous communities globally, including the protection of their traditional knowledge and intellectual property against biopiracy (United Nations, 2018). Furthermore, initiatives such as the Indigenous Navigator program, supported by organisations like the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), have provided Indigenous communities with essential tools and resources to monitor and defend their rights effectively (*Indigenous Navigator*, 2014). Furthermore, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is a significant institution devoted to addressing issues related to biodiversity ecosystem services and combating illegal trading of biological resources (Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, 2024b).

### **Theoretical Frameworks**

Analysing diplomatic initiatives to empower Indigenous communities against cultural misappropriation and exploitation requires a nuanced understanding of the theoretical

underpinnings that guide such initiatives. Postcolonial theory is a critical framework that examines the enduring impacts of colonialism and imperialism on societies and cultures. It seeks to understand how colonial histories continue to shape contemporary realities, focusing on issues such as identity, power, and resistance (Childs & Williams, 2014). Central to postcolonial theory is recognising the agency and voices of formerly colonised peoples, challenging dominant narratives and advocating for diverse forms of knowledge and expression (Childs & Williams, 2014, p. 12). Overall, postcolonial theory encourages critical engagement with colonial legacies and aims to foster more inclusive and equitable societies by dismantling colonial hierarchies and centring marginalised perspectives (Dirlik, 1996).

As conceptualised by political scientist Joseph Nye (1990), soft power theory offers a comprehensive framework for understanding how nations exert influence in the international arena. Soft power operates on the principle of attraction and persuasion, highlighting the ability to shape preferences and perceptions through cultural means rather than coercion or force (Nye, 1990). In this dynamic, cultural diplomacy, a subset of soft power, plays a pivotal role. It involves the strategic use of cultural exchanges, artistic collaborations, and educational programs to foster mutual understanding, build trust, and cultivate positive relationships between nations (Clarke, 2020, p.1). Furthermore, soft power theory enhances our understanding of the complex mechanisms through which cultural diplomacy influences international relations. It underscores the importance of cultural values, narratives, and perceptions in shaping global outcomes, highlighting the power of storytelling, symbolic gestures, and cultural exchanges in shaping public opinion and policy decisions (Grincheva, 2024, p. 178).

## **Critiques and Gaps in Existing Literature**

During the exploration of gaps in the existing literature, it has become apparent that while numerous cases of biopiracy targeting Indigenous knowledge have been documented, there is a noticeable absence of scholarly attention, specifically on diplomatic initiatives aimed at empowering Indigenous communities in this context. While NGOs and other organisations have made efforts to address biopiracy, cultural misappropriation and exploitation, and advocate for Indigenous rights, there is limited research focusing explicitly on diplomatic strategies and interventions. While some countries have enacted new laws about the protection and storage of Indigenous knowledge to prevent unauthorised exploitation, the literature needs a comprehensive analysis of diplomatic initiatives specifically designed to combat cultural misappropriation and exploitation and empower Indigenous communities at the international level. This gap highlights the need for further research to explore the role of diplomatic engagement, international cooperation, and policy frameworks in addressing the systemic challenges of cultural misappropriation and exploitation and advancing Indigenous rights globally. By filling this gap, future research can contribute valuable insights into effective diplomatic strategies and mechanisms for protecting Indigenous knowledge and fostering sustainable development, offering a hopeful and inspired future for Indigenous rights and cultural preservation.

### **3. Methodology**

While formulating the research question and selecting keywords, careful consideration was given to capturing the essence of this thesis, which focuses on the intersection of Indigenous communities, diplomatic initiatives, and cultural misappropriation and exploitation issues. The chosen databases include Google Scholar, Smart Cat, JSTOR, and the Indigenous Navigator website. Furthermore, the following keywords were selected: “cultural diplomacy”, “diplomatic



initiatives”, “diplomacy”, “soft power”, “Indigenous communities/peoples/knowledge/rights”, “traditional knowledge”, “cultural exploitation”, “cultural (mis)appropriation”, “biopiracy”, “colonialism”, “resilience”, and “empowerment”. While the emphasis was placed on sourcing recent publications to ensure the relevance of information, it was also recognised that certain foundational concepts, like soft power, might be better elucidated in older sources. Therefore, a balance was struck between prioritising the latest research and acknowledging the historical evolution of key ideas. During the search process, each source's abstract was examined to estimate its relevance and potential contribution to the thesis. This approach helped streamline the selection process by providing a snapshot of the content and methodology of each publication. Only English-language documents were used for this analysis to ensure consistency in the evaluation process and to facilitate the accessibility and verification of sources by a broader academic audience. Furthermore, a preference was given to peer-reviewed articles and government-focused websites due to their strict review processes and authoritative nature. However, in cases where alternative sources were considered, additional efforts were made to verify their credibility through cross-referencing and evaluating the authors' and publishers' expertise and reputability.

## **4. Results**

### **Key Findings in the Existing Literature**

The findings from the literature involved a thorough selection and analysis of 57 relevant articles. These consisted of theoretical papers, case studies, and analyses of conducted case studies. These articles were categorised based on their primary focus into four distinct themes: Indigenous knowledge and rights, cultural appropriation and exploitation, (cultural) diplomacy, and colonialism. A total of 20 articles were identified that delve into various aspects of

Indigenous rights and Indigenous knowledge. Ten articles were identified discussing cultural appropriation and exploitation. Fourteen articles on cultural diplomacy were identified, exploring its historical and contemporary practices and the role of cultural understanding in diplomatic efforts, and five articles on colonialism.

Furthermore, some articles fell under multiple categories. Five sources fell under cultural appropriation and Indigenous knowledge, two on diplomacy and colonialism and one on colonialism and Indigenous knowledge and rights. Furthermore, one article fell under three themes: Indigenous knowledge and rights, cultural appropriation and exploitation and (cultural) diplomacy.

The analysis was conducted using only English-language sources, ensuring consistency and accessibility. The selected articles cover a broad geographical scope and include specific regions such as South America, Africa, Asia, and Oceania. Many of these articles have a global focus, providing a diverse geographical representation and a comprehensive overview of the existing research landscape. This global perspective underscores the widespread relevance and applicability of the research findings in the context of Indigenous knowledge, Indigenous rights, cultural appropriation and exploitation, cultural diplomacy, and colonialism.

### **Initiatives to Combat Cultural Misappropriation and Exploitation**

One example of a diplomatic initiative that holds significant importance is the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement. The TRIPS Agreement, established on January 1, 1995, is pivotal in Indigenous knowledge regulation. It sets out essential standards for safeguarding various forms of Indigenous knowledge, such as traditional medicine, agricultural practices, and cultural expressions (World Trade Organization, n.d.). By establishing these fundamental rules, the agreement strives to ensure fairness and

consistency in how countries protect Indigenous knowledge rights. It builds upon existing frameworks established by organisations like the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) while also introducing new provisions to address previously unregulated areas (Cottier, 2007). In essence, the TRIPS Agreement stands as a cornerstone in the global effort to protect and promote Indigenous knowledge and cultural heritage and combat the exploitation of Indigenous communities (World Trade Organization, n.d.).

However, besides diplomatic initiatives, Indigenous communities also use collaborative strategies themselves. One of these strategies is the partnership with Amazon Frontlines and the Ceibo Alliance. These partnerships have caused significant victories in land conservation and legal protection, particularly in regions where Indigenous communities face threats from activities like oil drilling, deforestation, and industrial-scale agriculture (Amazon Frontlines, 2023). On April 26, 2019, the Waorani people of Pastaza won a crucial legal battle in Ecuador, protecting 500,000 acres of their Amazon rainforest territory from oil drilling. The Pastaza Provincial Court nullified the flawed 2012 government consultation process, halting the auction of their lands to oil companies and establishing a significant precedent for Indigenous rights and rainforest protection. This ruling challenges the Ecuadorian Government's broader plans to exploit oil resources in the region, underscoring the conflict between governmental interests and Indigenous peoples' rights to free, prior, and informed consent (Amazon Frontlines, 2019).

Indigenous communities, particularly those among Andean Indigenous peoples, have demonstrated remarkable resilience and resourcefulness in their strategies to shield themselves from the hazards of cultural misappropriation and exploitation. Motivated by cultural convictions and financial constraints, Indigenous communities have devised innovative ways to protect their age-old knowledge, resources, and creations from biopiracy. The concept of patenting their

knowledge remains virtually alien, predominantly due to the exorbitant expenses involved and the cultural ethos deeply rooted in communal living and resource equity (Argumedo & Pimbert, 2006). Instead, they have turned to alternative measures, such as the meticulous compilation and formal registration of their knowledge in databases. These databases serve as storages of Indigenous knowledge, making it publicly accessible and establishing pre-existing knowledge, which can prevent false claims of novelty and inventiveness by patent applicants (*Indigenous Navigator*, 2014). One such initiative aiding Indigenous communities in this work is the Indigenous Navigator ([Indigenournavigator.org](http://Indigenournavigator.org)), which provides a framework and set of tools designed specifically for and by Indigenous peoples to monitor the recognition and implementation of their rights, including the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, fundamental human rights treaties, Sustainable Development Goals, and outcomes of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (Mamo, 2022, p. 747). Leveraging this platform, Indigenous communities can raise awareness, hold governing bodies accountable, steer developmental agendas, and contribute to global endeavours to safeguard Indigenous rights and foster development (*Indigenous Navigator*, 2014). Although these databases offer a pretence of defensive fortification, they fall short of securing legal recognition of Indigenous rights to their traditional knowledge. To address this gap, Indigenous communities are banding together to seek legal acknowledgement of their rights over traditional knowledge through established intellectual property rights (IPR) frameworks or sui generis systems, which acknowledge the rights of Indigenous peoples to their traditional wisdom (Argumedo & Pimbert, 2006).

### **Analysis of Cultural Diplomacy Initiatives**

Cultural diplomacy initiatives are crucial in empowering Indigenous communities by amplifying their voices, preserving their cultural heritage, and advocating for their rights on the

global stage (UNESCO, 2023). These initiatives provide platforms for Indigenous representatives to engage with policymakers, academics, and civil society actors, enabling them to articulate their concerns, share their knowledge, and shape discourse surrounding biopiracy and cultural misappropriation (UNESCO, 2023). One notable case study exemplifying the transformative impact of cultural diplomacy on Indigenous empowerment is the Maasai Intellectual Property Initiative (MIPI) in Kenya and Tanzania. The Maasai people, renowned for their rich cultural heritage and resilience, faced significant threats to their traditional knowledge and resources due to biopiracy, land dispossession and cultural misappropriation, as previously mentioned in the literature review (Brindle & Florman, 2021). Recognising these challenges, MIPI was established as a collaborative effort between Maasai community leaders, legal experts, and international NGOs, aiming to protect Maasai cultural heritage and intellectual property rights through cultural diplomacy strategies and legal frameworks (Brindle & Florman, 2021). MIPI facilitated partnerships between Maasai representatives and international organisations, including cultural institutions, legal advocacy groups, and governmental agencies, to raise awareness about the importance of Indigenous rights and advocate for policy changes at both national and international levels (Brindle & Florman, 2021). Through cultural exchange programs, public exhibitions, and educational campaigns, MIPI showcased Maasai cultural practices, traditional knowledge, and artistic expressions to global audiences, fostering mutual understanding and respect for Indigenous cultures (Brindle & Florman, 2021). Moreover, MIPI worked tirelessly to strengthen legal protections for Maasai intellectual property rights, advocating for the recognition of traditional knowledge in national legislation and international agreements (*Maasai Intellectual Property Initiative*, n.d.).

The impact of MIPI's efforts has been profound, empowering the Maasai people to assert their sovereignty over their cultural heritage and resources. By licensing their certification stamp to a select group of brands and collaborating with global businesses, the Maasai have generated sustainable income and regained control over their brand (*Maasai Intellectual Property Initiative*, n.d.). Significant research conducted by MIPI revealed that over 1,000 companies were using the Maasai name and image without proper licensing, highlighting the urgent need for legal protection and advocacy (Brindle & Florman, 2021). Through comprehensive training programs and community outreach initiatives, MIPI has reached nearly 1 million Maasai individuals across Kenya and Tanzania, equipping them with the knowledge and tools to collectively assert their intellectual property rights (*Maasai Intellectual Property Initiative*, n.d.).

The establishment of MIPI as a legal entity, including Maasai leaders and legal experts from Kenya and Tanzania, underscores the commitment to communal ownership and management of intellectual property revenue. The board of directors, comprising Maasai men and women, oversees MIPI's operations and ensures inclusivity and representation from both countries (*Maasai Intellectual Property Initiative*, n.d.). Furthermore, MIPI's advocacy efforts have accumulated international attention, with Maasai representatives speaking on national television and receiving coverage from prominent media outlets like the BBC and the Financial Times. The success of MIPI serves as a powerful testament to the transformative potential of cultural diplomacy initiatives in supporting Indigenous empowerment, fostering collaboration, raising awareness, and advocating for policy change on issues of critical importance to Indigenous communities worldwide (*Maasai Intellectual Property Initiative*, n.d.).

Furthermore, there have also been global frameworks and agreements. One framework is the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which was

approved in 2007. It addresses historical injustices, including colonialism and the appropriation of the lands and resources of Indigenous peoples, to acknowledge and defend the rights of Indigenous communities (United Nations, 2018). The UNDRIP highlights the value of sustaining indigenous peoples' cultures, customs, and right to self-determination, as well as their rights to healthcare, education, and involvement in political processes. To accomplish these objectives, it also urges collaboration between states and indigenous communities and advocates for the preservation of indigenous legacy and resources (United Nations, 2018).

Another essential framework is the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Established in 1992, the CBD provides a framework for international cooperation in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Through various programs and initiatives, such as the Nagoya Protocol, the CBD promotes the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources (Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, 2024a). The Nagoya Protocol is an extension of the CBD and focuses specifically on access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilisation. The protocol has been enforced since October 12, 2014, after its adoption on October 29, 2010, in Nagoya, Japan. It requires parties to establish clear legal procedures, issue permits, and encourage research while ensuring that resources are accessed with prior consent and agreed terms. It provides mechanisms like national focal points, an information-sharing clearinghouse, capacity-building tools, and financial aid through the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to support implementation (Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, 2024a).

Furthermore, grassroots movements have emerged as catalysts for collective action, mobilising Indigenous voices to challenge injustices, advocate for land rights, and promote

cultural preservation (Crick, 2020). Simultaneously, local, national, and international advocacy efforts amplify Indigenous voices in decision-making processes, demanding recognition, justice, and meaningful participation. Cultural revitalisation projects are vital in reclaiming and celebrating Indigenous identities, reinforcing cultural resilience and resistance against assimilation pressures (Crick, 2020). An example of an Indigenous community that played a central role in a grassroots movement against the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) is the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, located in North Dakota. The tribe opposed the pipeline due to its route crossing their ancestral lands, including sacred burial grounds, and its potential to contaminate their primary water source, the Missouri River. The movement began in early 2016 when tribal members and supporters set up camps near the proposed construction site, calling themselves "water protectors" (Penn-Roco, 2016, p. 176). The protests grew into one of the most significant Native American movements in recent history, with support from over 100 tribes and thousands of allies. Despite legal efforts, including filing a lawsuit in federal court, the initial injunction to halt construction was denied. However, the protests gained national attention, leading to temporary pauses in construction by the federal government. In December 2016, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers decided not to grant the easement for the pipeline to cross under Lake Oahe, opting for further environmental review and temporarily halting construction (Penn-Roco, 2016, p. 177).

## **5. Discussion**

The results underscore the critical role of cultural diplomacy initiatives in fostering the remarkable strength and resilience of Indigenous communities. By amplifying Indigenous voices, preserving cultural heritage, and advocating for rights, these initiatives contribute significantly to combating cultural misappropriation and exploitation. The interconnectedness of various themes



highlights the complexity of Indigenous issues and the importance of comprehensive, multi-faceted approaches to addressing them.

### **Cultural Diplomacy Initiatives and Indigenous Empowerment**

Within the context of diplomatic initiatives addressing cultural misappropriation and exploitation, cultural diplomacy emerges as a strategic tool for raising awareness about Indigenous rights and mobilising international aid for their cause, supporting Indigenous communities in their quest for the protection of their traditional knowledge, culture and raising awareness about the importance of Indigenous rights and advocating for policy changes at both national and international levels. (Clarke, 2020, p. 2). These initiatives underscore the necessity of diverse strategies to foster collaboration, promote cultural exchange, and nurture partnerships among various stakeholders, including Indigenous communities, governmental bodies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), corporations, and international institutions. Collaboration among stakeholders is not just crucial; combining resources, expertise, and influence is imperative to develop strategies for combating cultural misappropriation and exploitation (Wynberg, 2023). By bringing together diverse perspectives and capabilities, collaborative efforts can lead to innovative solutions and amplify the impact of individual initiatives. Through cultural exchange programs, diplomats can facilitate dialogues, workshops, and exhibitions celebrating Indigenous cultures, promoting mutual understanding, and cultivating respect for traditional knowledge systems (UNESCO, 2023).

Cultural diplomats, with their unique role in facilitating cross-cultural communication and understanding, can play a vital role in catalysing collaboration and partnership-building initiatives (Liang, 2011). Diplomats can build trust and enable cooperation among diverse stakeholders through their diplomatic networks and cultural expertise. By promoting inclusive

and participatory approaches, cultural diplomats can empower Indigenous communities through mutual understanding to actively participate in decision-making processes and shape policies that affect their lives and livelihoods (Muhia, 2023).

While power dynamics, conflicting interests, and legal complexities may pose obstacles to effective collaboration, cultural diplomats are well-equipped to navigate these challenges. They do so by promoting inclusive and transparent processes, fostering dialogue and consensus-building, and advocating for the rights and interests of Indigenous communities. By supporting the principles of equity, respect, and reciprocity, cultural diplomats can pave the way for meaningful and sustainable change in the fight against cultural misappropriation and exploitation and protect Indigenous knowledge, culture and resources (Muhia, 2023).

The impact of cultural diplomacy initiatives on Indigenous strength and empowerment in combating cultural misappropriation and exploitation is multi-dimensional, reaching far beyond legal protections. These initiatives encompass cultural preservation, community resilience, and economic development (UNESCO, 2023). They catalyse Indigenous communities to reclaim their agency and assert their rights over their traditional knowledge and resources. By amplifying Indigenous voices and raising awareness about cultural misappropriation and exploitation threats, cultural diplomacy initiatives foster a sense of solidarity and unity among Indigenous communities, strengthening their determination to resist exploitation and defend their cultural heritage (Muhia, 2023). Moreover, these initiatives contribute to cultural preservation by promoting the sharing of traditional knowledge and practices, ensuring their transmission to future generations. This preservation of cultural identity and heritage enhances community resilience, empowering Indigenous communities to navigate challenges and adapt to changing circumstances while maintaining cultural integrity (Pomeroy, 2009).

Additionally, cultural diplomacy initiatives facilitate economic development by providing opportunities for Indigenous communities to generate income through sustainable practices, such as licensing agreements and eco-tourism initiatives (*Maasai Intellectual Property Initiative*, n.d.). By leveraging their cultural heritage and intellectual property rights, Indigenous communities can create economic opportunities that benefit their communities and the broader society (Liang, 2011). Overall, the impact of cultural diplomacy initiatives on Indigenous strength and empowerment in combating cultural misappropriation and exploitation is profound, empowering communities to reclaim their agency, preserve their culture, and build sustainable futures for themselves and future generations.

### **Colonialism and Cultural Diplomacy**

Colonialism has significantly shaped the dynamics of cultural diplomacy, perpetuating inequalities and marginalising Indigenous cultures (Huju, 2023). However, cultural diplomacy also presents an opportunity to engage with colonialism in transformative ways, as Grincheva (2024) and UNESCO (2023) suggested. Cultural diplomacy can challenge colonial narratives and promote reconciliation by acknowledging historical injustices and advocating for Indigenous rights and sovereignty.

Colonial policies aimed at eradicating Indigenous cultures and languages have contributed to the erosion of cultural identity and intergenerational trauma within Indigenous communities. These experiences of colonial destructiveness continue to shape Indigenous experiences of marginalisation, exclusion, and disenfranchisement in contemporary society (Griffiths et al., 2016). The dominance of Western cultural norms and values in global diplomacy reflects colonial hierarchies that privilege certain cultures while marginalising others, particularly those of Indigenous communities (Huju, 2023). Consequently, cultural diplomacy often

perpetuates colonial narratives of superiority and inferiority, further marginalising Indigenous cultures and perpetuating systems of cultural misappropriation and exploitation (Huju, 2023, p. 40).

Therefore, the issues of cultural misappropriation and exploitation are deeply rooted in the historical legacy of colonialism and its ongoing impacts on Indigenous communities, perpetuating inequalities in the cultural diplomacy arena. Within this framework, when cultural misappropriation and exploitation occur, it disrupts the exchange of values, ideas and cultural practices by allowing dominant cultures to assert control over the cultural resources of marginalised communities (Griffiths et al., 2016, p. 17). This undermines the principles of cultural diplomacy, which aim to promote mutual respect and collaboration (Nye, 1990). Therefore, addressing cultural misappropriation and exploitation issues is crucial within cultural diplomacy to ensure equitable and respectful interactions between different cultures and communities.

Despite these ongoing struggles, cultural diplomacy has an opportunity to engage with colonialism in transformative ways, particularly concerning Indigenous communities. By acknowledging and addressing historical injustices, cultural diplomacy can serve as a platform for amplifying Indigenous voices, fostering mutual understanding, and promoting reconciliation (Grincheva, 2024, p. 178). Additionally, Indigenous communities demonstrate remarkable resilience and determination to safeguard their cultures, territories, and futures, contributing to the discourse on inclusivity, cultural preservation, and sustainable development in Indigenous contexts (Wesley-Esquimaux, 2009).

Therefore, cultural diplomacy can be crucial in challenging colonial narratives and social injustices, advocating for Indigenous rights and sovereignty, and promoting respect for

Indigenous cultural heritage (UNESCO, 2023). Embracing a decolonial approach to cultural diplomacy involves centring the experiences and perspectives of Indigenous communities, recognising their rights to self-determination and cultural autonomy, and actively working towards dismantling structures of colonial oppression (Domínguez & Luoma, 2020, p. 15). Addressing social injustice is critical to combat cultural misappropriation and exploitation, as it requires disassembling power structures that perpetuate inequality and ensuring that Indigenous communities are empowered to reclaim and preserve their cultural heritage for future generations. Through such efforts, cultural diplomacy can restore Indigenous rights, protect cultural heritage, and create a more just and equitable global order (Pennicino, 2023).

### **Combating Cultural Misappropriation and Exploitation**

Indigenous communities have developed various strategies to combat cultural misappropriation and exploitation, exemplified by their collaboration with organisations like Amazon Frontlines (Amazon Frontlines, 2023). By working with these organisations, Indigenous communities have leveraged legal mechanisms and advocacy campaigns to obtain protections for their ancestral lands and traditional knowledge. Through collaboration and advocacy, Indigenous communities and their allies are creating pathways towards sustainable development and fair treatment in the face of ongoing challenges posed by cultural misappropriation and exploitation (Amazon Frontlines, 2023).

Biopiracy is one significant example of this exploitation. Rooted in historical injustices and perpetuated by current global economic dynamics, biopiracy represents a complex issue with profound implications for Indigenous peoples worldwide. This exploitation deprives Indigenous communities of their rightful ownership and agency over their cultural heritage, perpetuating cycles of economic marginalisation (Portillo, 2023).

The historical and contemporary contexts of biopiracy reveal a troubling pattern of exploitation and disregard for Indigenous rights and sovereignty (Reid, 2009). From the colonial era to the present day, Indigenous communities have faced systemic dispossession of their lands and resources, coupled with the misappropriation of their traditional knowledge by external actors (Childs & Williams, 2014). This exploitation is exacerbated by unequal power dynamics, limited legal protections, and inadequate mechanisms for redress (Reid, 2009). Therefore, the discussion of biopiracy must interrogate its historical roots while critically assessing its contemporary manifestations and the urgent need for ethical frameworks and policy interventions to safeguard Indigenous knowledge systems and promote social justice.

The threats posed by cultural misappropriation and exploitation of Indigenous knowledge and resources are manifold, encompassing not only economic exploitation but also cultural misappropriation and environmental degradation (Drahos & Frankel, 2012, pp. 77–93). Addressing these issues requires holistic approaches that recognise and prioritise Indigenous rights, promote community-based governance, and foster equitable partnerships between Indigenous peoples and external stakeholders (Correa, 2001). Through these initiatives, leveraging legal mechanisms and advocacy campaigns, Indigenous communities obtain protections for their ancestral lands and traditional knowledge, thus creating pathways towards sustainable development and fair treatment.

### **Grassroots Movements and Indigenous Empowerment**

Grassroots movements, such as the Standing Rock protests, exemplify the mobilisation of Indigenous voices to protect their rights and land (Crick, 2020). These movements highlight the need for meaningful consultation and respect for tribal sovereignty in decision-making processes, reinforcing cultural resilience and resistance against assimilation pressures (Pomeroy, 2009).

Through the implementation of multifaceted strategies, Indigenous communities assert their autonomy in safeguarding their traditional knowledge from the grips of cultural misappropriation and exploitation, navigating the complexities of contemporary intellectual property paradigms with resilience and determination (Penn-Roco, 2016, p. 178).

The Standing Rock protests brought widespread attention to the ongoing struggles of Indigenous communities, emphasising the need for meaningful consultation and respect for Indigenous sovereignty. This aligns with Crick's (2020) observation that grassroots movements are crucial in advocating for justice, recognition, and cultural preservation, reinforcing cultural resilience and resistance against assimilation pressures. By engaging with the CBD and its initiatives, Indigenous communities can access tools for legal protection and recognition of their traditional knowledge, strengthening their ability to safeguard their cultural heritage and assert their rights in the face of threats such as biopiracy and exploitation (Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, 2024a). Collaborating with the CBD portrays a critical step in advancing cultural diplomacy efforts to empower Indigenous communities and promote biodiversity conservation on a global scale.

## **6. Recommendations for Cultural Diplomacy**

The discussion surrounding cultural diplomacy initiatives and their impact on Indigenous empowerment in combating cultural misappropriation and exploitation yields significant implications for policy, practice, and future research. Firstly, the findings highlight the transformative potential of cultural diplomacy in amplifying Indigenous voices, preserving cultural heritage, and advocating for policy changes at both national and international levels. By providing platforms for dialogue and exchange, cultural diplomacy initiatives facilitate meaningful engagement between diverse stakeholders, enabling them to address the root causes

of cultural misappropriation and exploitation and advance Indigenous rights. Therefore, policymakers and practitioners should recognise the importance of incorporating cultural diplomacy strategies into their approaches to address these issues.

Recommendations for policymakers, NGOs, and Indigenous communities emerge from the analysis of existing literature. Policymakers are urged to enact legislation and international agreements that safeguard Indigenous rights, promote equitable partnerships, and ensure fair and ethical use of traditional knowledge. However, it is the role of NGOs that plays a crucial part in this process. They are instrumental in supporting Indigenous communities through capacity-building initiatives, advocacy campaigns, and legal assistance. NGOs can effectively empower Indigenous communities to assert their rights and defend their cultural heritage by providing resources and expertise. Indigenous communities themselves are encouraged to leverage cultural diplomacy initiatives to raise awareness, build alliances, and advocate for their rights on the global stage. By participating in cultural exchange programs, showcasing their cultural heritage, and engaging with policymakers, Indigenous communities can amplify their voices and shape discourse surrounding cultural misappropriation, exploitation, and Indigenous empowerment.

## **7. Conclusion**

This thesis has delved into the intricate interplay between cultural diplomacy, Indigenous empowerment, and the ongoing struggle against cultural misappropriation and exploitation. A detailed analysis of existing literature and insightful case studies has revealed the diverse strategies Indigenous communities employ to combat exploitation and assert their rights.

The role of cultural diplomacy initiatives in empowering Indigenous communities, particularly in their efforts to combat cultural misappropriation and exploitation, cannot be



overstated. Cultural diplomacy initiatives serve as strong catalysts for amplifying Indigenous voices, preserving cultural heritage, and advocating for policy changes not only on national but also international stages.

In conclusion, this thesis underscores the paramount importance of cultural diplomacy in empowering Indigenous communities to confront cultural misappropriation and exploitation and assert their rights amidst systemic injustices. Cultural diplomacy initiatives foster collaboration, raise awareness, amplify Indigenous voices, and pave the way towards more significant equity, justice, and reconciliation in international relations.

In the future, policymakers, practitioners, and researchers should acknowledge and actively use the transformative power of cultural diplomacy. By embracing more inclusive and equitable approaches, we can collectively address global challenges while honouring and celebrating Indigenous knowledge. Through coordinated collective action and solidarity, we can envision and create a future where Indigenous knowledge is respected, protected, and celebrated, ensuring Indigenous communities' cultural survival and well-being for generations to come.

## **8. Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research**

Despite its contributions, this thesis has certain limitations. First, its scope is limited to a review of existing literature and case studies, which may not capture the full extent of cultural diplomacy initiatives in Indigenous contexts. Additionally, the thesis' reliance on secondary sources may introduce biases or overlook alternative perspectives, thereby limiting the comprehensiveness of its analysis.

While this thesis highlights the role of cultural diplomacy as a tool to empower Indigenous communities, it is crucial to analyse its applicability in other countries and contexts. Investigating how different nations address cultural diplomacy and Indigenous rights would be

an interesting area for future research. Although this topic is beyond the scope of this thesis, it presents a valuable direction for further exploration.

Future research should focus on evaluating the long-term impact of cultural diplomacy initiatives on Indigenous empowerment, explore their scalability and sustainability, and identify strategies for addressing systemic barriers to Indigenous rights and self-determination.

Additionally, research is needed to examine the role of multidirectional diplomacy in addressing cultural misappropriation and exploitation issues and fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders. Future research can provide valuable insights into effective diplomatic strategies for protecting Indigenous knowledge and fostering sustainable development in Indigenous communities by addressing these gaps. This underscores the necessity and potential of further exploration in this area.

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