# *NIGERIA'S USE OF CULTURAL DIPLOMACY IN FOREIGN POLICY: EVIDENCE FROM NOLLYWOOD AND THE MUSIC INDUSTRY*

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**Keywords**

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**Abstract**

***Research Problem:*** *The creative industry, especially Nollywood and the music industry, has gained significance in Nigeria's international cultural representation. But it's yet to be proven how cultural visibility will contribute to Nigeria's foreign policy goals. Hence, this study will look at cultural diplomacy in Nigeria's foreign policy with focus on Nollywood and the music industry, and the level to which cultural attraction can influence Nigeria's diplomatic engagements.*

***Methods/Theory:*** *The study employs a qualitative, theoretically structured literature review and a content analysis of policy documents and industry literature and is based on the theory of soft power by Joseph Nye to examine cultural attraction, digital platforms, state and institutional coordination.*

***Results:*** *The results reveal that Nollywood and Nigerian music create enormous cultural visibility and attractiveness to international audiences, but at the same time, it does not guarantee their diplomatic power.*

*Conclusion: The study concludes that Nigeria's creative industries have cultural resources that can be deployed for cultural diplomacy and soft power, but the diplomatic value of these creative industries is not only based on cultural popularity, but also on institutional support, relationship building and effective coordination.*

***Key Contribution to Knowledge:*** *the study differentiates between cultural circulation, potential soft power and actual results of foreign policy by pointing out the institutional pathways that are necessary to make privately produced cultural visibility count for foreign policy.*

***Recommendation:*** *It calls for building a coherent national cultural diplomacy framework and enhancing coordination of relevant government institutions that support the creative sector, while maintaining their autonomy.*

## Introduction

The question that often comes up is the Nigerian presence in the international arena in relation to its regional leadership, peacekeeping and diplomatic duties. But academics have also noted that the culture, media and entertainment exports of Nigeria are important but relatively under-researched sources of influence (Ogunnubi & Isike, 2018; Tella, 2021; Abowei, 2024). In recent years, Nollywood and the Nigerian music industry, especially Afrobeats, have become an integral part of Nigeria's new face globally. This event opens an interesting foreign affairs dilemma: Does cultural popularity lead to cultural influence? This is especially relevant in Nigeria as some of the aspects of its cultural attraction have grown beyond the diplomatic framework. Private people and organisations have their primary purposes creative and commercial, and this is where their films and music are produced. They circulate internationally, thus blurring the boundaries between cultural influence that is organic, operating through markets and through the diaspora, and cultural diplomacy which is intentional, organized by the state. An important consideration in understanding whether Nigeria has cultural tools to serve foreign policy goals, and whether Nigeria's cultural tools are indeed translated into diplomatic results. Soft power is used to analyze this relationship. Soft power is the power to attract people to your side instead of forcing them or bribing them, says Nye (2004).

Political values and foreign policies that are felt to be legitimate are two of the major sources of soft power, as is culture. Cultural resources can be utilized for communication, engagement, mutual understanding, and relationship building with foreign publics (Cull, 2008; Ang et al., 2015) through cultural diplomacy and public diplomacy. But the attraction can not be confused with political impact. The visibility and potential attractiveness of a popular cultural product is evidence of its existence, whereas diplomatic influence is seen as evidence of changes in perceptions, relationships, behaviour, or policy outcomes as a result of subsequent engagement. Cultural diplomacy is not a governmental affair. Not only are civil society, cultural organizations, media, private creative practitioners, diasporas, and digital spaces included in today's public diplomacy, but they are often key players in diplomatic engagement (Cull, 2019; Pamment, 2013; Manor, 2019). This is especially true for Nigeria, where the transnationalisation of Nollywood and Afrobeats has been at the forefront before Nigeria has adopted them as formal diplomatic tools. Digitalisation has also brought about a reduction of the traditional gatekeeping function of the state: cultural producers can now reach foreign audiences directly. This has created an amalgamation of cultural influence, not necessarily based on the state. Nigeria is therefore used as a case study for an examination of the connections between cultural production and foreign policy. The country's traditional foreign policy principles since their formulation have been to promote African solidarity, regional leadership and peacebuilding, while the creative industries are now avenues through which Nigeria is internationally represented as a country (Tella, 2021; Abowei, 2024). But Nigeria's image in the international community is perpetually shaped by various narratives about governance, insecurity, corruption, and political instability.

Due to this, soft power is viewed in the overall picture of the state's reputation and should be interpreted in the context of the legitimacy of the state. This paper explores the role Nollywood and Nigerian music in Nigeria's cultural diplomacy and looks at how far their international reach can help in the soft power strategy. It also explores the issue of digital platforms, state and non state actors, and institutional coordination. It finishes with an analysis of Nigeria's current cultural

resources and says that a crucial policy issue is to find some ways of making the market and popular culture more closely related to the enduring diplomatic relationships without having government-produced culture become government propaganda. From the resources reviewed in this paper, it is found that Nollywood, music, and other cultural resources are part of Nigeria's overall soft power strategy (Ogunnubi & Isike, 2018; Tella, 2021; Abowei, 2024).

Little knowledge exists in the existing literature on the issue of cultural resources as diplomatic influence. The literature does not discuss the institutional move from evidence of cultural reach to claims about soft power. In this paper, I would thus like to venture into the space between the international circulation of a cultural product and the state converting the circulation into foreign-policy value. The current study aims at answering the question of how and the extent to which Nigeria's international cultural visibility via Nollywood and Afrobeats is contributing to diplomatic influence and foreign-policy outcomes in Nigeria.

The research problem of this study is as follows: Nigeria is rich in cultural resources like Nollywood and Afrobeats, but the recognition of such resources and their contribution to Nigeria's foreign policy position have not been systematically determined. The goal of this research is to accomplish the following objectives:

1. To investigate the contribution of Nollywood and Nigerian music in making Nigeria visible in the world.

2. To evaluate how much of that cultural visibility becomes diplomatic influence.

3. To discuss the role of digital platforms, state and non-state actors, and institutional coordination in Nigeria's cultural diplomacy.

4. To bring out the factors limiting the effectiveness of cultural attraction in foreign policy.

5. To suggest policies to enhance cultural diplomacy in Nigeria.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Conceptual Framework

#### Culture

Culture is a complex phenomenon; it is the sum of the values, beliefs, practices, languages, art, traditions, and social norms that express the collective identity of a society, both tangible and intangible (Williams, 1983). This study examines the cultural expression that moves across national borders; in this case, Nigerian films, popularly known as Nollywood, and Nigerian music not just as enjoyable, but as having the potential to create familiarity with Nigeria and Nigeria's people, among those with little direct interaction with the country.

#### Cultural Diplomacy

Cultural diplomacy, which involves the use of cultural resources and interaction to further national interests and involve foreign publics, has been defined by Ang et al. (2015) and Cull (2008). It is a diplomacy that is different from the traditional one insofar as it is possible for cultural interaction to happen with actors outside government. A Nigerian filmmaker or musician doesn't have to work for the state for their work to influence the perception of Nigeria by the outside world. Digital platforms have also extended these opportunities by enabling the circulation of cultural products with relatively little state intervention (Cull, 2019).

#### Soft Power

Soft power is defined as the power to attract others through attraction and not

coercion or material inducement (Nye, 2004). According to Nye, its main sources originate in culture, political values and foreign policies that are seen as legitimate. The impact of these effects is gradual, and culture can impact perceptions without any direct request for audiences to take a political stance, while current research and discussion on social media demonstrate the increased role of digital media in disseminating that influence (Pamment, 2013).

### Foreign Policy

Foreign policy is the process and policies that States use to achieve their interests and interact with the international environment (Hill, 2016). It is influenced by the institutions, leadership priorities, and structures at home. This general awareness is what makes foreign policy applicable to cultural diplomacy: States can achieve international goals by "communication diplomacy" and "relationship building diplomacy," not just by military and economic power.

### Diplomacy

Diplomacy is a means of conducting relations without violence, through negotiation, representation, and discussion (Berridge, 2015). Though in the past, public diplomacy was a domain of foreign ministries and accredited officials, current public diplomacy has far more actors and audiences (Cull, 2019; Pamment, 2013), and cultural activities can complement formal public diplomacy by creating channels of engagement that do not pass through government officials.

## 2.2 Theoretical Framework

The main analytical framework that is used for this study is soft power theory. The idea was pioneered by Joseph S. Nye in Bound to Lead (1990); he expanded it in Soft Power (2004). He names culture, political values, and foreign policies that are seen as valid as important sources of soft power. This theory is applicable because Nollywood and Nigerian music are cultural resources through which foreign audiences understand Nigeria. Nigeria as a case study also enables an exploration of a traditional state-based notion of soft power concerning the private, commercial, and transnational routes through which important sources of cultural attraction have been created. The theory is applied in this context with four main assumptions: First, international power is not solely material, meaning that ideas, culture, values and legitimacy can influence relations (Nye, 2004); second, attraction can influence preferences without necessarily ensuring political agreement (Bjola & Holmes, 2015); third, legitimacy and credibility are conditions that shape the relationship between cultural attraction and influence (Manor, 2019); and fourth, contemporary communication spreads through a web of actors, media, civil society, individuals and digital platforms, beyond the government solely (Pamment, 2013). Indeed, the Nigerian case explains this last: content created by Nollywood movie makers and Nigerian musicians is made not only for creative and commercial purposes but also circulates internationally and influences the perception of foreign audiences of Nigerian society. This generates a tension between the use of cultural resources and formal foreign policy, as the influence of culture has been built up mainly through market force and not a coherent state policy. Attraction doesn't create influence, and cultural popularity should be seen as a tool, not necessarily an end, in foreign policies. Nye's framework helps to explain why attraction alone does not constitute influence and why cultural popularity is a tool, and not necessarily an outcome, of foreign policies looking for soft power.

It is used in Nigeria, but there are some requirements to qualify for using it. Cultural attraction is hard to measure because it builds up over time and is influenced by various

factors. Second, there is a conflict in the Nigerian case between the account of power based on the state and the account of the production of cultural attraction from below. Third, there is unequal access to production infrastructure and international digital markets, giving Nigerian creators an opportunity to be visible to the world without relying on foreign-owned platforms. Such circumstances would foster a more conservative separation between cultural resources, attraction, possible effects, and actual foreign-policy results. This paper is not a mechanical application of Nye's framework. Rather, it qualifies the framework in areas where the Nigerian case does not comfortably fit. While Nye emphasizes the role of government as an instrument of soft power projection, the cultural pull studied in this research has been generated mostly through private agents, musicians, and digital platforms, and not through a government strategy. The analysis of Nye with public diplomacy scholarship thus introduces networked and non-state actors into the analysis (Pamment, 2013; Manor, 2019). Another qualification is about the connection between attraction and influence. This relationship is mediated by institutional capacity, institutional coordination and reputation, as is illustrated in the Nigerian case. In this research, cultural resources, attraction, potential soft power and demonstrated foreign-policy impact are analysed separately in the sense that they are not perceived as a continuum. In general, the paper makes the argument that popularity does not automatically happen. As the cultural attractiveness of Nigeria has developed largely outside of ministries, visibility can lie dormant until institutions develop avenues by which such attractiveness can be used to sustain Nigeria's diplomatic relationship and foreign policy goals.

### 2.3 Empirical Review

The literature has noted the importance of culture as a source of soft power, but cautioned about the use of cultural resources as evidence of soft power. Nye (2004) proposes that culture, political values, and legitimate foreign policy should all be taken into account to get a full picture of soft power. Nollywood, music, food, language, sport, religion, fashion and diaspora networks have been identified as components of Nigeria's soft power by Nigerian scholarship (Ogunnubi & Isike, 2018; Tella, 2021, 2023; Abowei, 2024). In the realm of cultural diplomacy, interaction has been considered more important than promotion (Ang et al., 2015; Cull, 2008), and, in recent public diplomacy research, digitalisation and the role of non-state actors are gaining in significance (Pamment, 2013; Bjola & Holmes, 2015; Manor, 2019).

### Critical Synthesis

While this study highlights the sources of Nigeria's soft power, the literature provides much less information on how the resources can be converted to diplomacy. Tella (2021) and Ogunnubi and Isike (2018) list various aspects of Nigeria's cultural heritage, but there is a lack of systematic study of the institutionalization of the linkages between attraction and influence. Abowei's (2024) empirical study is more relevant, yet more directly on the regional influence of the country, rather than its diplomatic position in the world.

Literature about Nollywood (Fafiolu, 2013; Afolabi et al., 2022) also Favors speaking of the dissemination of film material as diplomacy, so that an important distinction is made between a “relational” of a film product and a “diplomatic” one. It is this distinction that is the focus of analysis in this research. The paper fills this void by offering a unified framework to segment policies of cultural circulation, attraction, potential soft power,

and proven diplomacy. The Foreign Policy orientation of Nigeria and its relationship with soft power. Soft power, as shown by Nye in his concept, which may really lead to the influence of other countries without the superiority of military and economic power. Examples of intangible resources that can bring such attraction to Nigeria include its culture and cultural exports (Ogunnubi & Isike, 2018; Tella, 2021; Abowei, 2024). In Nigeria, culture is not just about attracting foreign audiences, but about how foreign-policy objectives can be related to the presence of non-state actors, including private corporations, diaspora communities and digital platforms, who often enable such attraction (Pamment, 2013; Manor, 2019).

## Soft Power and Nigeria's Foreign Policy Orientation

Nye's concept of soft power demonstrates that the ability to attract and influence other countries culturally can matter even without overwhelming military or economic capacity. Nigeria's cultural exports provide examples of intangible resources that can generate such attraction (Ogunnubi & Isike, 2018; Tella, 2021; Abowei, 2024). Because communication and attraction are often facilitated by non-state actors such as private corporations, diaspora communities, and digital platforms (Pamment, 2013; Manor, 2019), the relevant question for Nigeria is not simply whether culture attracts foreign audiences, but whether the state can build relationships that allow this attraction to contribute to foreign-policy objectives.

Nollywood as Cultural Diplomacy

As a result of its visibility to the world and its potential in public and cultural diplomacy (Fafiolu, 2013; Afolabi et al., 2022; Asani, 2026), Nollywood has become one of the most researched aspects of the Nigerian Creative Economy. Its films focus on issues in Nigeria's social contexts, family relations, religion, and social change. This movement in the African markets and even the international arena provides opportunities to foreign audiences to come into contact with Nigerian society outside of political contexts (Tella, 2021; Abowei, 2024). This reach has since been increased by digital distribution. In a soft power context, Nollywood's significance is that it can help to introduce Nigerian people, experience and social environment to the foreign audience. The popularity of Nollywood movies overseas does not necessarily equal diplomatic clout. The movie can draw in a big audience, but leave people with a negative perception of Nigeria's Government and foreign policy. Nollywood undoubtedly brings Nigerian culture to the world and its impact on diplomatic influence can only be assessed upon its interaction (Nye, 2004; Abowei, 2024). For this reason, the predominantly private and commercial nature of Nollywood is well suited to examining the distinction between cultural influence from the bottom up and cultural diplomacy from the top down.

## Nigerian Music and Soft Power

However, with streaming, collaborations with artists from abroad and social media, Nigerian music, especially Afrobeats, has grown significantly on a global scale with artists like Burna Boy, Wizkid, Davido, Rema and Tems. It has been done at two levels: symbolically, where it conveys a message of contemporary Nigerian creativity and confidence; and relatively, where it opens spaces for listeners and diaspora audiences to explore more of the Nigerian culture (Ogunnubi & Isike, 2018; Tella, 2021; Abowei, 2024). Afrobeats is not as popular as it has become; it is about opportunities for the development of culture and the building of relationships. Nigerian musicians can be termed informal cultural ambassadors, but not formal ambassadors. Their activity is mostly creative and commercial and the foreign policy good they bring is incidental. These can

come from opportunities for tourism, diaspora connections, and institutional ties when visibility is not about the music itself, but about what it can bring to them. There is little justification to take the popularity of any outcome as a measure of foreign policy achievements.

### Digital Platforms and the Transformation of Cultural Diplomacy

Nigeria's cultural products have been revolutionised by digital platforms in their reach to international audiences. Films and music, with growing importance, have begun to circulate without relying heavily on the state's intermediary role, which has been weakened by platforms like Netflix, YouTube, Spotify, and TikTok (Bjola & Holmes, 2015; Manor, 2019). Meanwhile, algorithms, commercial platforms, audience behaviour condition the visibility of a cultural product, sometimes against producers and the state (Manor, 2019). This means that cultural circulation through such channels should be considered separate from formal digital diplomacy, even as the two intermingle. Streaming and social media can provide Nigerian cultural products with opportunities to access audiences that might not have been reached otherwise. The policy task has less to do with making things more visible online, and more to do with creating an environment that enables Nigerian creators to gain from their visibility online through IP protection, infrastructure and the development of domestic capacity.

### The Nigerian State and Non-State Actors

Over the years, the government has begun to view culture as an element of national development and image; however, Nigeria's cultural influence is largely through private actors and diaspora networks. The National Cultural Policy of 1988 was not prepared for the later rise of Nollywood to the proportions that it would reach (Afolabi et al., 2022). The Federal Government's launch of Destination 2030: Nigeria Everywhere as the brand of Nigeria's soft-power and tourism brand more recently in February 2025 is a more conscious step toward institutional projection (FMINO, 2025). This is an effort to institutionalise the attraction already being achieved by non-state actors.

## 3. Materials and Methods

This study is a qualitative approach using the method of thematic research of secondary sources. Such a method is suitable, since it is trying to understand the correlation between cultural production, attraction and foreign policy, not to calculate numbers. The body of evidence is made up of peer-reviewed journal articles, academic book chapters, policy documents and industry reports on soft power, cultural diplomacy, Nollywood, Nigerian music, Digitalisation and the Creative Economy, with a focus on soft power about Nigeria and recent initiatives like Destination 2030: Nigeria Everywhere. The evidence was themed, using six themes: cultural visibility and attraction; Nollywood circulation; Afrobeats circulation; digital platforms and non-state actors; state coordination and cultural policy; and cultural attraction to foreign policy opportunities. The analysis was carried out in a structured manner. Common arguments and concepts were identified through the reading of sources. These ideas were then organized into initial themes and then compared to the five research objectives. Final themes were reviewed to assure adequate supporting material for each objective and to assure analytically distinct themes. Relevance to the areas of Nigeria's soft power, cultural diplomacy, Nollywood or Nigerian music is a key criterion for inclusion of a source and the evidence base reflects the digital and Afrobeats era of the sector, not an earlier period. It was geographically focussed primarily on Nigeria or Sub-Saharan Africa as

appropriate for comparison or context. Theoretical and conceptual works were preserved if these were present even though not published in chronological order. Academic search engines and institutional library databases were used as sources of information, with search terms being developed around the core concepts of the study: Nigeria, soft power, cultural diplomacy, Nollywood and Afrobeats, with direct searching of relevant government websites for policy documents like Destination 2030: Nigeria Everywhere. These results were filtered by the four criteria listed above, and the results that met all four were read in their entirety and included in the thematic synthesis.

Data Sources

| Source Type | Examples | Purpose |
|---|---|---|
| Peer-reviewed Journal Articles | Ogunnubi & Isike (2018), Tella (2021), Abowei (2024) | Theoretical and empirical grounding |
| Policy Documents | Destination 2030: Nigeria Everywhere (FMINO, 2025) | Analysis of state cultural policy |
| Industry Reports | Nollywood studies, music industry publications | Evidence of cultural reach |
| Academic Books | Nye (2004), Cull (2019), Manor (2019) | Theoretical framework |

## 4. Discussion of Findings

This indicates that, despite the high degree of cultural visibility, this does not correspond to high levels of diplomatic influence, qualifying Nye's soft-power approach. Whether attraction translates into influence is a question Nye (2004) raises, but when attraction is done by non-state actors and markets, not by deliberate state efforts, the gap between attraction and influence can be quite large as the Nigerian case shows. Based on these findings, it is recommended that soft-power theory needs to better consider institutional and relational processes to turn cultural resources into foreign-policy results.

### Nigeria's Cultural Resources and Their International Reach

The conclusion of this study shows that Nollywood and the music industry are opportunities that have great cultural potential for Nigeria. These industries have emerged as channels through which Nigerian stories, social experiences, language, performance, fashion, and contemporary identity are witnessed by foreign audiences (Fafiolu, 2013; Tella, 2021; Abowei, 2024). Their international circulation is important for soft power as it allows for repeated familiarization, which can lead to attraction. This is in the analytical framework of the present work, a shift from cultural resources and attraction to potential soft power, but not a proof of successful diplomatic results. The evidence indicates that Nigeria has considerable cultural resources and international cultural visibility, but does not indicate that such resources have been put to use in order to achieve enduring influence in foreign policy. The institutional and relational dimensions are necessary for building a bridge between Nollywood/Afrobeats and diplomatic influence in Nigeria.

## Domestic Governance and Image Challenges

Challenging domestic governance and image. Nigeria's culture has an encompassing national image. Some of the previous research on Nigeria's soft power has revealed that security, governance challenges, and other internal paradoxes in Nigeria can undermine the trustworthiness of cultural attraction (Ogunnubi and Isike, 2018; Tella, 2021; Abowei, 2024). This conforms with the theoretical expectation that the extent to which attraction turns into influence can be influenced by the legitimacy and credibility of the attraction. Cultural products can also provide other images of Nigerian society, but they are not an alternative to political/economic information received by other means. This is an imbalance of confidence and diversity in the creative industries and competing narratives in the political/ security sphere. While cultural diplomacy can support other areas of foreign policy, it can't fix a reputation issue alone.

## Piracy and Intellectual Property

Piracy and poor IP protection has always been a problem in the creative industries. These issues can reduce the profits of producers from their creative labour. This is important for cultural diplomacy because there is a need for a healthy and viable home creative system, or else there is no influence. Protection of intellectual property should thus be considered not only as an economic problem, but as a part of the institutional framework that underlies competitive cultural production.

## Infrastructure and Funding Constraints

The resource element of infrastructure and funding constraints may also be a factor. The international engagement of Nigeria's creative industries is stunted by lack of infrastructure and limited institutional capacities. Production and distribution systems have to be in place in order to sustain attraction. Nigeria must create an environment where production, IP protection, digital infrastructure and diplomatic effort mutually reinforce each other.

## Implications for Nigeria's Foreign Policy

The international growth and reach of Nollywood and Afrobeats could serve as another dimension in the conduct of foreign policy other than the traditional diplomatic route in Nigeria. Nigeria's cultural products regionally and internationally, play a role in shared cultural experiences and provide further points of contact between Nigeria and foreign publics (Tella 2021; Abowei 2024). The benefits of any cultural visibility are not in cultural products but in cultural relationships. This shows and confirms the tension between state-centredness and bottom-up as noted in the theoretical framework which serves as the basis for the qualification of Nye's model in the Nigerian context. The economic dimension reinforces the above argument, namely that a developing creative industry can make a contribution to trade, tourism and international relations (not diplomatic leverage). The state's emerging trajectory towards branding creative production, cultural projection, and market access all under one umbrella is captured in Destination 2030: Nigeria everywhere (FMINO, 2025). The policy question is how to link up that influence to actual foreign policy without making creative work the subject of state propaganda.

## Cultural Authenticity, Relationship Building, and Institutional Coordination

Another one to consider is authenticity. Davis et al. (2015) and Cull (2008) have suggested that cultural diplomacy can build lasting relationships, as long as audiences feel a sense of credibility from the expression and social authenticity rather than being purely manufactured for promotion. Nigeria's creative

industries have an advantage here because much of their success overseas has been a result of private initiative, market demand and audience choices, in a natural way that formal campaigns sponsored by the government may not be able to copy. That strength may be diminished by too much or direct government involvement. The correct role of the State is thus to facilitate and not to replace. If someone is captivated by Nigerian films, they can also delve into Nigerian literature, food, or travel, or follow Nigerian musicians to find festivals or Nigerian communities abroad. The examples show that cultural diplomacy is not about promoting images, but about establishing relationships (Cull, 2008; Pamment, 2013). This pipeline can be exacerbated by digital platforms, and remains influenced by platform algorithms and business models (Manor, 2019). But this relational potential is yet to be realised unless there is effective coordination. There are several institutions with responsibility for culture, tourism, foreign affairs, trade and the creative economy, and without a common approach, projects could duplicate and vie for resources, or fail to connect to the long-term foreign policy goals. The 1988 Cultural Policy did not foresee the subsequent evolution of Nollywood and the creative economy (Afolabi et al., 2022), nor was Destination 2030 a very old attempt at coordinated international cultural projection (FMINO, 2025). These developments collectively suggest a vision of soft power in which the state is neither the only force of attraction, but also a facilitator, regulator, connector and protector.

### Final Synthesis

The evidence from across the study confirms the main thesis that Nollywood and Nigerian music are available resources that can be tapped into for soft power, but with no conclusive evidence that this is the case and that Nollywood and Nigerian music has been used to achieve diplomatic goals in any sustained way. Their importance is in the linkages where Nigeria is experienced other than in the usual political stories. Instead, Nigeria does not have to create a cultural identity for its diplomacy; it is only necessary that there is a coherent mechanism that links the various cultural resources to the available diplomatic opportunities, which does not, however, undermine the independence that makes them credible. This institutional process has started, as recommended by Destination 2030, but it is important to convert the creation of a brand into a secure, grounded relationship and into policy-relevant engagement (FMINO, 2025).

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusion

The findings of this study show that Nollywood and Nigerian music are important avenues through which Nigeria is visible to the international community, as they bring not just commercial projects into the world, but Nigerian stories, sounds, language, lifestyles and cultural practices. The results are in line with the cultural aspect of soft power theory by Nye, but they do not suggest that cultural visibility guarantees diplomatic power. The key analytical insight of this paper is the differentiation between cultural circulation, cultural attraction, potential soft power and actual foreign policy results. Despite the emergence of institutional structures for international cultural projection under Nigeria's global soft power and tourism brand, Destination 2030: Nigeria Everywhere, which was officially launched in 2025, Nigeria's cultural influence continues to be largely the work of private individuals, markets and networks, with the most recent example being the state's official branding (FMINO, 2025). The linkage between the creative industry and foreign policy institutions is however incomplete, and Nigeria's challenge is to develop institutions that link available cultural

resources with foreign policy goals without compromising their independence which makes them attractive.

### 5.2 Limitations

There were some limitations to this study. First, because it is based on secondary sources, it does not feature interviews with officials, producers, and diplomats concerned with converting attraction into leverage. Thus, the institutional gap described here is not actually observed, but rather argued. Second, the qualitative design enables the paper to illustrate the nature of the problem without offering any indication of its intensity in terms of cultural attraction or of the possible success of cultural translation in terms of diplomatic success. Thirdly, the analysis is based exclusively on Nigeria, and the conclusions about the facilitative role of the state are hence presented as an interpretation of the situation for Nigeria rather than as a more generalised statement on African cultural diplomacy. The restrictions outlined above set the framework for future research.

### 5.3 Future Research

Qualitative research in Nigeria should involve interviews with Nigerian diplomats, creative producers, and policymakers to gain insights into the problems that exist in the promotion of Nigeria's culture and foreign policy. A second useful way of pursuing the discussion would be comparative analysis of Nigeria's cultural diplomacy with that of other African nations, like the South African and Ghanaian cases, for instance, to illuminate the special features of the Nigerian case and the common regional challenges. Lastly, the qualitative treatment of issues in this paper, including audience familiarity and subsequent changes in perception after cultural exposure, could be treated more directly with survey or sentiment data, to provide quantitative evidence of the relationship between cultural attraction and influence.

### 5.4 Recommendations

Develop a national cultural diplomacy policy: Nigeria needs a clear framework for the objectives, responsible institutions, co-ordination and evaluation criteria of foreign policy through culture that does not over-centralise creative production, but still links the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with institutions responsible for arts, culture, and the creative economy. Enhance cultural diplomacy in the Nigerian missions overseas. Selected embassies should build on this cultural interest by hosting relationship-oriented film screenings, music events, exhibitions, and culinary programmes with local cultural groups, universities, diaspora groups and Nigerian creative professionals, rather than attempting to create cultural attraction from the top down.

Strengthen public–private partnerships: Government needs to support creative actors and not control and regulate them by establishing structured partnerships with filmmakers, musicians, streaming platforms, and diaspora organisations with an interest in international festivals, cultural exchange, market access, intellectual property protection and diaspora engagement.

Strengthen creative infrastructure and the protection of intellectual property. In addition to more effective IP protection to ensure the production's income and investment, investment in production facilities, training, digital infrastructure, and international market access is needed to support the international growth of the creative industries.

Respect and safeguard the autonomy of the creative industry: Cultural diplomacy should not make filmmakers and musicians into the mouthpieces of the government. The government can best serve by offering support, platforms and diplomatic networks and by providing independence for creative actors so

their work is credible with international audiences.

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