

INTERNATIONAL CASE STUDY
Music Spaces in West Africa

Indiana University Sponsoring Center: African Studies Program

Developed by:

Ibrahim Odugbemi, Graduate Student

Learning Outcomes:

- A. To expand teachers' and students' knowledge about music spaces in West Africa.
- B. To identify multiple perspectives on the disputed issue.

What is the disputed issue?

Control of music spaces

In what world region and/or country is the disputed issue located?

Ghana and Nigeria, West Africa

What is the essential question that frames the disputed issue?

Should music spaces be regulated or unregulated?

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A. What visual resource might ignite the conversation and/or frame the disputed issue?

Figure 1. *Music: A Universal Language*



Source: Tandjigora, O. (2022), *Music culture and socio-political influence*. idrakpost.
<https://www.idrakpost.com/en/d/150/music-culture-and-socio-political-influence>

Note: Image from an article about music's ability to not only give emotional satisfaction but also provoke thought and bring about cultural and socio-political transformations.

B. What are the key vocabulary terms that students must know in order to understand the disputed issue?

Afrobeats: Currently the most popular musical genre from Africa. It is a combination of various musical forms from different parts of West Africa.

Dominance: Power and influence over others.

Highlife: A music genre which originated in the coastal cities of Ghana in the late nineteenth century and which had become popular in Nigeria by the 1950s.

Laissez-Faire: A French phrase which literally means “allow to do,” which expresses the idea “let people do as they choose.” The phrase is also used to refer to an economic policy whereby the government does not interfere with businesses, allowing them to operate freely based on supply and demand.

Liberal: A person who believes in accepting and respecting the interests, behaviors, and opinions of others.

Music space: The places, venues, and platforms where music is played or performed.

Nationalist: A person who strongly identifies with their nation and supports its interests, particularly against the interests of other nations.

Pan-African: To be Pan-African is to believe in the unity, togetherness, and cooperation of Africans. A person who is Pan-African or who follows the philosophy of Pan-Africanism is called a Pan-Africanist.

Streaming platform: A technology (or the company providing said technology) that allows users to watch or listen to content like music or movies over the internet, without having to download that content.

Transcontinental: Extending or going across a continent; involving several countries in a continent.

C. What are the general descriptions and context of the disputed issue?

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, Nigerian music, particularly as it is represented by the **Afrobeats** genre, has experienced an increasing recognition in and beyond Africa. More than other African musicians, Nigerian Afrobeats artists have had huge success through the purchase and **streaming** of their songs by listeners and fans in other African countries and by those based outside Africa. Similarly, while local radio and TV stations regularly air their songs, Nigerian Afrobeats artists have also been favorite choices for live performances within and outside the continent. For instance, TurnTable Charts notes that, in 2023, Nigerian artists, Rema and Asake, “cemented their positions as Afrobeats’ global ambassadors, with Rema holding the

title of the most globally exported artist and Asake captivating audiences across Nigeria, Ghana, and Togo, earning him the coveted title of most streamed artist in each country.” According to Statista, Nigeria’s digital music market is expected to generate a revenue of USD 122.1 million in 2024, while Ghana’s is expected to generate USD 5.1 million in the same period.

It is this situation that has led to the Nigerian music industry being accused of dominating the **music spaces** of other African countries. One such country is Ghana, where artists and other stakeholders in the music industry have been addressing this issue of **dominance** in various ways, largely in an effort to curb it. Similarly, opinion writers, commentators, columnists, and televisual content creators, both in Nigeria and Ghana, have also shared their thoughts about the issue.

A similar situation exists between Nigeria, on the one hand, and Cameroon, Kenya, and South Africa on the other. In all these cases, as in Ghana’s, the accusation about Nigeria’s domination of music spaces is fueled by competition for recognition, resources, and market dominance. Ghana and other African countries boast talented artists who are eager to showcase their skills on the global stage. However, Nigerian artists appear to dominate the international Afrobeats scene. Nigerian musicians have achieved unprecedented global success, collaborating with international artists, winning awards, and topping charts worldwide. This has led to some Ghanaian artists feeling overshadowed and marginalized, sparking tensions between the two camps.

D. What are the names of the unique multiple perspectives involved in the disputed issue?

Perspective One:	Those Supporting a Regulated Music Industry in Ghana
Perspective Two:	Those Supporting an Unregulated Music Industry in Ghana
Perspective Three:	Nigerian Artists

E. Why does the disputed issue matter?

Historical Background

The music spaces of Nigeria and Ghana have always interacted with each other, as is evident in the fact that the primary West African sites of Afrobeats production are Lagos, Nigeria and Accra, Ghana. Afrobeats is a fusion of British house music, hiplife, hip hop (particularly its Nigerian and Ghanaian derivatives), dancehall, soca, Jùjú music, Fújì music, **highlife** (including its Yoruba and Igbo derivatives), R&B, house, ndombolo, Naija beats, Azonto, palm-wine music, and kpanlogo. The genre describes all popular music forms from West Africa and the diaspora, and the coinage of the word is credited to DJ Abrantee (Abrantee Boateng), a Ghanaian British DJ, promoter, and radio and TV presenter. Nevertheless, as a word and a genre, the connection between Afrobeats and “Afrobeat” is obvious. The latter was started in the 1960s and 70s with the Nigerian Fela Anikulapo Kuti as its pioneer. A major precursor of this genre itself is highlife, which originated in Ghana in the last decade of the nineteenth century. By the 1950s, it was a flourishing genre in Nigeria too. From the second half of the 1960s, however, the prominence of highlife was dwindling and was being overshadowed by other Nigerian genres, like Afrobeat and the Yoruba-language-based Jùjú music, which received significant attention across Africa and internationally.

Cultural Background

Both Nigeria and Ghana have strong cultural influences on Afrobeats through musical genres that are particular to each country. Genres like hiplife, highlife, kpanlogo are of Ghanaian origin, while Fela’s Afrobeat, Igbo highlife, Yoruba highlife, Jùjú, Fújì, and Naija beats are Nigerian. Nigeria’s cultural influence over Afrobeats is also evident in the languages use, including Nigerian Pidgin and local languages like Yoruba and Igbo. Although this is also true of Ghanaian languages, these Nigerian examples appear more prominently, perhaps because they are also used in Nigerian films—which were already widespread across the sub-Saharan region and beyond Africa by the end of the twentieth century. Suffice to say, Nigeria’s mediascape is bigger than Ghana’s and this gives Nigerian artists more cultural influence and control over Afrobeats.

Social and Economic Background

The Afrobeats genre has become commercially successful, with a revenue of USD 2 billion per year and over 30 million listeners worldwide every month. However, Nigeria is at the center of this success. This is arguably made possible by Nigeria having both the highest population and the biggest economy in Africa. Compared to other African countries, Nigeria also has large

diasporic communities in Western countries and even other African countries, which are avid consumers and promoters of Nigerian cultural and entertainment products, including Afrobeats music.

F. What is the timeline of significant events that are related to the disputed issue or that describe its stages?

Figure 2. Timeline of Relevant Musical Trends in West Africa and Beyond

Late 19 th Century	
1890s	The highlife genre begins in Ghana.
Mid-20 th Century	
1950s-1960s	The highlife genre flourishes in Ghana and Nigeria, with the latter country being a major market for Ghanaian highlife artists. During this period, Nigerians also begin developing their own varieties of the genre, including Igbo highlife and Yoruba highlife.
1960s-1970s	Nigerian musician Fela Kuti pioneers Afrobeat, a genre that blends traditional African rhythms with jazz, funk, and highlife music.
Late 20 th Century	
1970s-1980s	Afrobeat gains popularity across and beyond Africa, both as a genre and because of the political activism and Pan-Africanism of Fela Kuti.
1980s-1990s	Various African musicians experiment with blending traditional rhythms with Western influences, laying the groundwork for what would later become known as Afrobeats.



Early 21st Century

2000s

Nigerian musicians such as D'banj and P-Square gain international recognition for their fusion of African rhythms, hip-hop, and R&B, contributing to the early development of Afrobeats. Ghanaian rapper Reggie Rockstone, who pioneered the hiplife movement in 1994, was also actively involved in laying the groundwork for the genre's rise.

Late 2000s

The term "Afrobeats" (note the "s") emerges, describing the contemporary fusion of African rhythms with influences from hip-hop, R&B, and dancehall.

2008

Nigerian artist Wizkid releases his debut album "Superstar," which helps propel Afrobeats onto the global stage.

2010s

2010s

Afrobeats experiences exponential growth in popularity, with Nigerian artists such as Davido, Burna Boy, and Tiwa Savage leading the way. Similarly, Ghanaian artists such as Sarkodie, Stonebwoy, and Shatta Wale rise to prominence, contributing their unique style and sound to the Afrobeats genre.

2011

On April 11, the British Ghanaian DJ Abrantee (Abrantee Boateng) launches the world's first ever "Afrobeats" show on Capital XTRA, a prominent London radio station.

2016

Drake collaborates with Wizkid on the hit single "One Dance," which becomes a global sensation and introduces many listeners to Afrobeats.

2018

Beyoncé's album "The Lion King: The Gift" features numerous Afrobeats artists, further solidifying the genre's international appeal.

2019

Burna Boy's album "African Giant" receives critical acclaim and Grammy nominations, garnering even more attention for Afrobeats globally.

Present (2020s)

2020s

Afrobeats continues to evolve and influence global music trends, with artists from across the African continent and diaspora contributing to its growth and popularity. Afrobeats artists collaborate on numerous projects, but there's also competition for awards, recognition, and market share between Nigerian artists and artists from other African countries, particularly Ghana and, to a significant extent, South Africa and Cameroon. Friendly and often bitter rivalries emerge, with fans and artists engaging in debates about which country produces the best music.

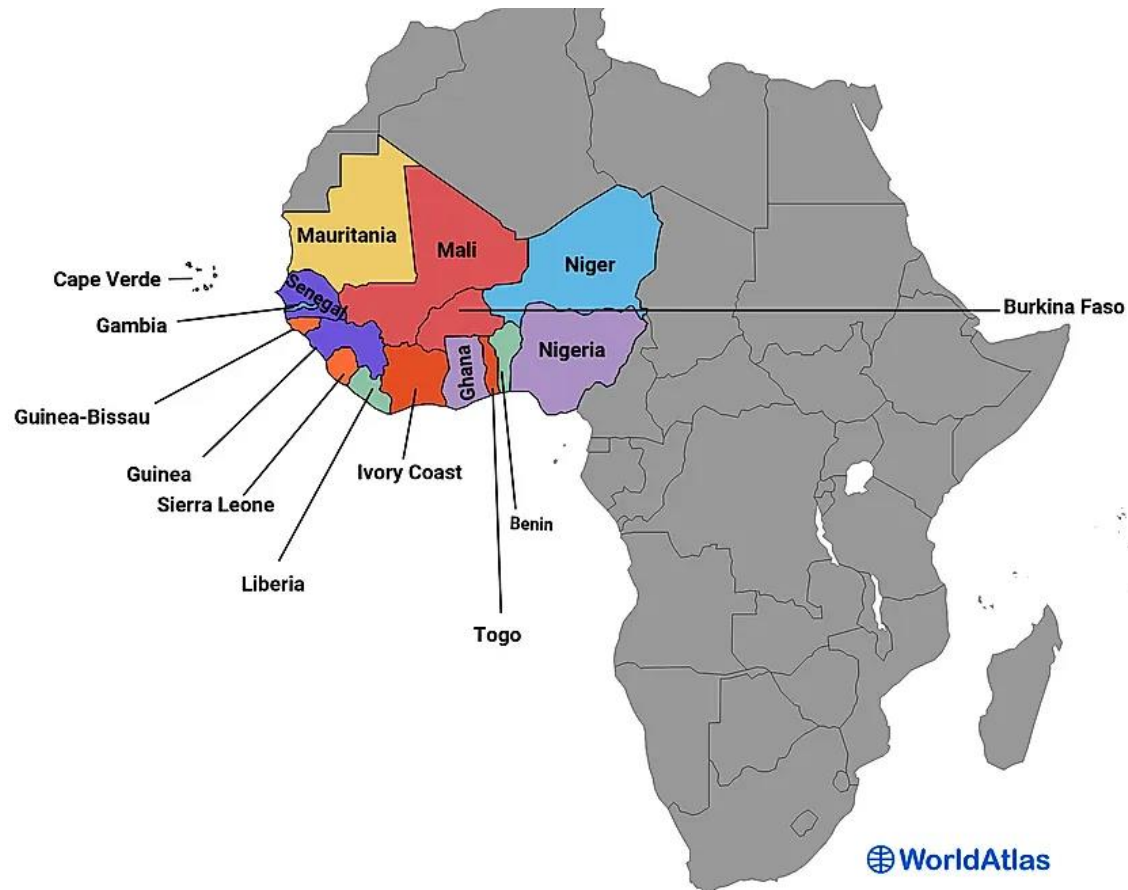
2024

Universal Music Group purchases a majority stake in Mavin Global, a leading Afrobeats label based in Lagos, Nigeria.

Odugbemi, I., (2024).

G. What map(s) can help students understand the disputed issue better?

Figure 3. West African countries including Ghana and Nigeria



Map Source: *West African Countries*. World Atlas. (2021).

<https://www.worldatlas.com/geography/west-african-countries.html>

Note: This map shows the geographical location of West African countries within the continent.

H. What short (6-to-10-minute) video can provide an overall understanding of the disputed issue?



Video Title: [Ghana vs Nigeria Music Beef: How One Tweet Started Everything](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kEIDGZjOLPQ)
URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kEIDGZjOLPQ>
Alternative Search: On YouTube, type “Ghana vs Nigeria music beef”
Author(s): emotionkontrolla
Year: 2023
Length: 12:05 minutes

Note: This video provides a detailed explanation of how the disputed issue began on Twitter (now X). It features tweets from both Nigerians and Ghanaians, which are easy to follow alongside the presenter’s explanations, offering a clear understanding of the dispute. While the video may seem to lean in favor of Ghana, the inclusion of Twitter posts helps provide valuable insights into how the conflict started and has developed over time.

I. What additional deliberations questions complement the essential question?

1. Should countries be allowed to limit foreign music on media platforms?
2. In what ways can rivalry among artists from different African regions be transformed into cooperation and collaboration?
3. Would African artists benefit more from national, regional (West African), or continental (African)?
4. How can international music platforms be encouraged to provide fair coverage of artists from different countries and regions in Africa?

J. What optional and supplementary resources might shape an understanding of the disputed issue?

Parallel examples of the disputed issue:

- Nigerian music in other African countries: Nigerian music as well as culture is being accused of dominance in other African countries, including Cameroon, Kenya, and South Africa.

Resources:

- *Angry Cameroonian artistes allegedly use army to abort Naira Marley's Valentine Day concert.* ATQ News. (2021). <https://atqnews.com/africa-angry-cameroonian-artistes-allegedly-use-army-to-abort-naira-marleys-valentines-day-concert/>
- *How authorities cancelled Naira Marley's Val's Day concert in Cameroon—* Journalist. Punch. (2021). <https://punchng.com/how-authorities-cancelled-naira-marleys-vals-day-concert-in-cameroon-journalist/>
- *Cameroon actor says Nigerian artistes should be banned from performing in the country (video).* Africa Global Village. (2020). <https://www.africaglobalvillage.com/cameroon-actor-says-nigerian-artistes-should-be-banned-from-performing-in-the-country-video/>
- *Living in the shadow of a giant: The origins of Cameroon's problem with Nigerian music.* Medium. (2021). <https://danielngongang.medium.com/living-in-the-shadow-of-a-giant-the-origins-of-camerouns-problems-with-nigerian-music-e3c1b2ef4dcb>



- *Naira Marley breaks silence on his botched concert in Cameroon.* Mp3bullet. (2021). <https://mp3bullet.ng/naira-marley-breaks-silence-on-his-botched-concert-in-cameroon/>
- *Cameroonian actor/comedian Pancho Cy International incites xenophobic attacks against Nigerian artistes, alleges that Nigerians are greedy (video).* Linda Ikeji's Blog. (2021). <https://www.lindaikojisblog.com/2020/12/cameroonian-actorcomedian-pancho-cy-international-incites-xenophobic-attacks-against-nigerian-artistes-alleges-that-nigerians-are-greedy-video-2.html>
- *Cameroon music makers edged aside by Nigerians.* VOA. (2019). https://www.voanews.com/a/africa_cameroon-music-makers-edged-aside-nigerians/6178780.html
- *Should Cameroonian artists call for a ban on Nigerian music in their country? [Pulse editor's opinion].* Pulse. (2021). <https://www.pulse.ng/entertainment/music/should-cameroonians-be-calling-for-a-ban-on-nigerian-music-in-their-country/vh1n21t>
- *"Who is Naira Marley that he cannot be banned?" Cameroonian comedian, Pancho C.Y International rants.* Pulse. (2021). <https://www.pulse.ng/entertainment/music/cameroonian-comedian-pancho-cy-international-rants-about-naira-marleys-ban-from/e5bep8x>
- *Nigerian artistes, Afrobeats now a threat to other African genres—Cameroonian musicians, others cry out.* Nigerian Tribune. (2023). <https://tribuneonlineng.com/nigerian-artistes-afrobeats-now-a-threat-to-other-african-genres-cameroonian-musicians-others-cry-out/>
- *South Africans are trying to figure out why Nigerian musicians prosper more globally compared to their SA counterparts.* OkayAfrica. (2019). <https://www.okayafrica.com/south-africans-trying-to-figure-out-why-nigerian-artists-prosper-globally/>
- *The African firestorm against Nigerian music continues as Kenyans react to Naomi Campbell's use of Nigerian music to promote Kenya.* ATQ News. (2021). <https://atqnews.com/the-african-firestorm-against-nigerian-musicians-continues-as-kenyans-react-to-naomi-campbells-use-of-nigerian-music-to-promote-kenya/>

Videos:

- *Why Ghanaians actually FIGHT Nigerians over Afrobeats.* emotionkontrolla. (2023). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=LL67zca5RyY>



- *How Shatta Wale SAVED Burna Boy at the Afrochella.* emotionkontrolla. (2023). YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=c1rz7drmSFo>
- *Are Nigerians taking over Ghana? Afrobeat takes spotlight in December in GH.* Starleo TV. (2023). YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-onmCPUK97Q>
- *"I hate it when Ghanaians say we play more Nigeria music than our own" Hitz FM's Dj Bridash.* Edward Blagoege (Blagoegegh.com). (2022). YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nMsu3JFsevo>

Websites that cover the disputed issue, as a whole, with good reliability and validity:

- *The battle of creative dominance and so-called Naija infiltration of Ghana's music.* Ghana Weekend. (2022). <https://ghanaweekend.com/2022/02/21/the-battle-of-creative-dominance-and-so-called-naija-infiltration-of-ghanas-music/>
- *The dominance of Nigerian music in the Ghanaian music space.* Lagos Local News. (2023). <https://www.lagoslocalnews.com/entertainment/the-dominance-of-nigerian-music-in-the-ghanaian-media-space>
- *Nigeria's dominance of African music...A case of history repeating itself?* Naija Times. (2023). <https://ntm.ng/2023/07/29/nigerias-dominance-of-african-music-a-case-of-history-repeating-itself/>
- *BC: Everything you need to know about Afrobeats–Northxclusive.* Punch. (2022). <https://punchng.com/bc-everything-you-need-to-know-about-afrobeats-northxclusive/>
- *Opinion: Why Nigerian musicians prosper more globally than other African artists.* OkayAfrica. (2022). <https://www.okayafrica.com/nigerian-music-performance-global-african/>
- *From Afrobeats to Nollywood: West African cultural exports could be the next big global content trend.* The Current. (2023). <https://www.thecurrent.com/afrobeats-nollywood-west-african-culture-global-content-streaming-media-marketing>
- *Spotify Wrapped: Nigeria's diverse music scene in 2023.* TurnTable Charts. (2023). <https://www.turntablecharts.com/news/1169>
- *Digital Music–Nigeria.* Statista. (2024). <https://www.statista.com/outlook/dmo/digital-media/digital-music/nigeria>
- *Digital Music–Ghana.* Staista. (2024). <https://www.statista.com/outlook/dmo/digital-media/digital-music/ghana>

K. What are some ways in which students might safely civically engage in response to this case study?

Find suggestions at:

- **Better World Info**—many different topics and ways to take action:
<https://www.betterworld.info>
- **DoSomething**—has campaigns to join and challenges to take action:
<https://www.dosomething.org/us>
- **Global Citizen**—offers petitions to sign on various global issues:
<https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/take-action/>
- **The Global Goals**—suggests ways to take action on the 17 UN Sustainability Goals:
<https://www.globalgoals.org/take-action/>
- **United Nations: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**—"The Lazy Person's Guide to Saving the World": <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/takeaction/>



MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES HANDOUTS FOLLOW ON NEXT PAGES*

HANDOUTS ARE ONLY FOR STUDENT SMALL GROUP PRESENTATIONS

***NOTE: These are not to be handed out to the whole class, but to small groups after the class has learned about the case content.**

INTERNATIONAL CASE STUDY

Music Spaces in West Africa

PERSPECTIVE ONE*:

Those Supporting a Regulated Music Industry in Ghana

***This perspective description is being handed out to your team only.**

NOTE: This description is written from the perspective of Ghanaian artists and commentators who support complete domination of the Ghanaian music space by Ghanaian songs.

General Description: Ghanaian airwaves and public spaces are overwhelmingly dominated by Nigerian music. This situation has arisen because the African music scene is manipulated to favor Nigerian artists. Key positions within African offices of major streaming platforms, such as Apple Music, Spotify, Audiomack, Boomplay, and YouTube, are held by Nigerians. These individuals leverage their positions to prioritize Nigerian music, leaving Ghanaian artists underrepresented. This manipulation extends to radio and television stations, DJs, and club owners in Ghana who are inclined to play more Nigerian songs than those by Ghanaian artists. To address this imbalance, it is crucial for us as Ghanaians to unite and advocate for our music. We must strive for the prominence of Ghanaian songs within our own music space. It is our music space; therefore, we must have complete control and dominance within it. The Play Ghana initiative has been launched to achieve this goal for the Ghanaian music industry. By supporting this initiative, we can ensure that Ghanaian music receives the recognition and airplay it deserves. Let us come together to promote the Play Ghana initiative, fostering a music environment where Ghanaian artists can thrive and be celebrated in their homeland. Through collective effort, we can reclaim our airwaves and public spaces from Nigerian music, ensuring they reflect our rich musical heritage.

Values: Equality, Competition, Self-Reliance

Comments and Resources Supporting this Perspective:

- The system is rigged against other African countries by Nigerians.

Resource: *The system is rigged against other African countries by Nigeria.* Culture Stage.

(2022). YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rraEY7N6910>

- Nigerian music is dominant in Ghana not because it is of better quality than Ghanaian music but because Nigeria's music industry puts measures in place to consciously and strategically promote Nigerian music and prevent foreign domination. The music industry of Ghana must also put these measures in place.

Resource: *The dominance of Nigerian music in the Ghanaian media space.* Lagos Local News. (2023). <https://www.lagoslocalnews.com/entertainment/the-dominance-of-nigerian-music-in-the-ghanaian-media-space>

- The Play Ghana initiative is meant to promote Ghanaian music.

Resource: *The "Play Ghana" initiative to support indigenous music takes off.* Kente TV. (n.d.). <https://kentetv.com/the-play-ghana-initiative-to-support-indigenous-music-takes-off/>

- Ghana has good quality music that can be used to strengthen the GDP of the country.

Resource: *"Play Ghana" initiative: Information Ministry supports campaign to play 80% GH music "forever".* Class FM Online. (2023). https://www.classfmonline.com/entertainment/Play-Ghana-Initiative-Information-Ministry-supports-campaign-to-play-80-GH-music-forever-48122#google_vignette

- Ghana's music space is a major market for Nigerian artists.

Resource: *Shatta Wale blasts Nigerian artistes: "Ghana is your gateway".* Nairaland Forum. (2021). <https://www.nairaland.com/6912451/shatta-wale-blasts-nigerian-artistes/3>

Comments and Resources Opposing this Perspective:

- Ghanaian should be free to enjoy the music of their choice.

Resource: *Ghanaian singer Shatta Wale taunts colleagues, calling to reduce Nigerian music on Ghana's airwaves.* Legit. (2023). https://www.legit.ng/entertainment/celebrities/1569953-ghanaian-singer-shatta-wale-taunts-colleagues-calling-reduce-nigerian-music-ghanas-airwaves/#google_vignette

- Ghanaian artists should not see Nigerian artists and music as a problem. Rather, they should learn how to make music that can attract the **transcontinental** audiences of their Nigerian counterparts.



Resource: *The battle of creative dominance and so-called Naija infiltration of Ghana's music.* Ghana Weekend. (2022). <https://ghanaweekend.com/2022/02/21/the-battle-of-creative-dominance-and-so-called-naija-infiltration-of-ghanas-music/>

- Nigerian artists have worked hard for the mainstream success and attention they are now enjoying. Ghanaian artists are also trying their best, but they should keep working and wait for their time to be the center of attention.

Resource: *Sista Africa diagnoses reason for Nigerian music dominance, hints at redemptive hope for Ghana.* Class FM Online. (2023). <https://www.classfmonline.com/entertainment/Sista-Afia-diagnoses-reason-for-Nigerian-music-dominance-hints-at-redemptive-hope-for-Ghana-40038>

Primary Outcomes of Perspective: The Play Ghana initiative was launched by the Creative Arts Agency (CAA) of Ghana, the Ministry of Information, and the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture. The goal of this campaign is to promote the visibility of Ghanaian music by increasing the percentage of the music's airing on radio and television stations and in social gatherings by 70 to 80%. The director of the agency, Ms. Gyankroma Akufo-Addo, called for the amendments of the cultural policy and the broadcasting bills of Ghana to increase the airing of local content to 70%, just as it is in countries like Nigeria.

Secondary Consequences: There have been reports and speculations that the Play Ghana initiative is specifically meant to bring about the banning of Nigeria music in Ghana. The Ghanaian artists at the launching of the initiative, particularly Black Sherif, have been accused of being anti-Nigerian and threatened with cancellation in Nigeria.

INTERNATIONAL CASE STUDY

Music Spaces in West Africa

PERSPECTIVE TWO*:

Those Supporting an Unregulated Music Industry in Ghana

***This perspective description is being handed out to your team only.**

NOTE: This description is written from the perspective of Ghanaian artists and commentators who support a **laissez-faire** approach to regulation.

General Description: It is true that we, as Ghanaian musicians, are facing significant challenges keeping pace with our Nigerian counterparts. There is a noticeable dominance of Nigerian music within the Ghanaian music scene. However, this dominance is not due to any manipulation or unfair advantage; it reflects the disparity in the scale of our respective music industries. The Nigerian music industry is considerably larger and more influential than ours. We cannot address this imbalance by lobbying the government to regulate the currently dominant Nigerian music in our country. Rather, we need to focus on rebuilding and strengthening our music industry from within, bringing about healthy competition and co-existence between Nigerian music and our own. Collaboration among Ghanaian artists and other key stakeholders is crucial. By working together, we can create a more robust and competitive music industry. It is also essential for Ghanaian artists to recognize that talent alone is not enough to succeed. Understanding and catering to the tastes and preferences of our Ghanaian audience is vital. Incorporating indigenous languages and styles into our music can add a unique and original flavor that resonates deeply with local audiences and attracts international listeners. Authenticity in music can be a powerful tool in distinguishing Ghanaian music on the global stage. Furthermore, Ghanaian artists can also learn from Nigerian artists by paying close attention to the business aspects of music-making. A professional approach to marketing, distribution, and overall brand management is essential for achieving long-term success. By focusing on these areas, we can create a vibrant and sustainable music industry that not only competes with, but also complements, the Nigerian music scene.

Values: Community, Cooperation, Diversity

Comments and Resources Supporting this Perspective:



- Ghana needs a reinvigorated approach from within to reclaim its competitive edge.
Resource: *Shatta Wale voices concern over Ghana music decline amidst rising Nigerian dominance.* Notjustok. (2023). <https://notjustok.com/news/shatta-wale-voices-concerns-over-ghana-music-decline-amidst-rising-nigerian-dominance/>

- The popularity of Nigerian music is not surprising because Nigeria has some inherent cultural, social, and economic advantages over other African countries. For Ghanaian artists to level up with Nigerian artists, they need to produce songs that appeal to the taste of Ghanaians, songs that are rich with elements of local languages and styles.

Resources:

- *Ghanaians will consume songs that suit their taste—Yvonne Nelson on why Nigerian music is dominant in Ghana.* Pulse. (2023). <https://www.pulse.com.gh/entertainment/celebrities/ghanaians-will-consume-songs-that-suit-their-taste-yvonne-nelson-on-why-nigerian/nrdv2jd>
- *The battle of creative dominance and so-called Naija infiltration of Ghana’s music.* Ghana Weekend. (2022). <https://ghanaweekend.com/2022/02/21/the-battle-of-creative-dominance-and-so-called-naija-infiltration-of-ghanas-music/>
- *Comparing Ghanaian artists to Nigerian artists is insignificant at the moment—Shatta Wale.* Anamonpa Media. (2024). <https://anamonpamedia.com/stop-comparing-ghanaian-artists-to-nigerian-artists/>
- *Ghanaian musicians are more talented than Nigerian musicians but ...—Joseph Matthew.* Modern Ghana. (2022). <https://www.modernghana.com/entertainment/71563/ghanaian-musicians-are-more-talented-than-nigerian.html>

- Ghanaian artists should learn from their Nigerian counterparts to be enthusiastic and determined about music-making.

Resources:

- *Ghanaian musicians are not as exploitative as Nigerians.* Pulse. (2024). <https://www.pulse.com.gh/entertainment/celebrities/ghanaian-musicians-are-not-as-exploitative-as-nigerians-camidoh/3rfryf6>
- *One major difference between Ghanaian and Nigerian artistes revealed.* Ghana Web. (2021). <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/entertainment/One-major-difference-between-Ghanaian-and-Nigerian-artistes-revealed-1252972>



- Ghanaian promoters should stop disparaging Ghanaian music.

Resource: *Say good things about our music if you want us to go global—Bisa Kdei.* Pulse. (2024). <https://www.pulse.com.gh/entertainment/celebrities/say-good-things-about-our-music-if-you-want-us-to-go-global-bisa-kdei/np79jjn>

Comments and Resources Opposing this Perspective:

- Nigerian artists do not support Ghanaian artists and music.

Resource: *Nigerian artistes not supporting Ghana valid, deserves critical attention—Stonebwoy.* Daily Post. (2021). <https://dailypost.ng/2021/12/31/nigerian-artistes-not-supporting-ghana-valid-deserves-critical-attention-stonebwoy/>

- Nigerians do not respect Ghanaian artists.

Resource: *Nigerians do not respect Ghanaian artists, they treat us like trash when we visit—Yaw Tog reveals.* Ghan Celebrities.com. (2022). <https://www.ghanacelebrities.com/2022/03/22/nigerians-do-not-respect-ghanaian-artists-they-treat-us-like-trash-when-we-visit-yaw-tog-reveals/>

Primary Outcomes of Perspectives: This perspective confirms that there is a dominance of Nigerian music in Ghana's music space. However, the dominance is less a case of Nigerian music being a problem for the Ghanaian music industry than a reflection of how the industry is organized and run.

Secondary Consequences: Ghanaian artists are now being advised to look at ways of developing their music, including by working and partnering with their Nigerian counterparts and by learning the business of music from them, not just in terms of production and production values but also in terms of distribution.

INTERNATIONAL CASE STUDY

Music Spaces in West Africa

PERSPECTIVE THREE*:

Nigerian Artists

***This perspective description is being handed out to your team only.**

NOTE: This description is written from the perspective of Nigerian artists.

General Description: As Nigerian artists, we see the dominance of our own music in Ghana, in West Africa, and across other African countries, as a testament to the power of hard work and perseverance. We have worked relentlessly to reach the heights we enjoy today, and our journey is far from over. When Ghanaian highlife music was at its peak, we were some of its most passionate supporters, playing an integral role in its spread and growth across the continent. The recent criticisms of our music for dominating the scene can be interpreted as a reflection of entitlement from some Ghanaian artists, which unfortunately risks creating unnecessary divisions among Africans. This kind of divisiveness is harmful not only to the unity of African nations, but also to the core principles of Pan-Africanism, which stress solidarity, cooperation, and shared progress. It is vital for Ghanaians, and all Africans, to realize that the cultural success of one country (e.g., Nigeria) is a victory for the whole continent. Fostering unity and mutual support benefits current generations, but also paves the way for a more interconnected and harmonious Africa for future generations. Our (Nigerian) musical achievements should not be seen as a threat; instead, they should serve as inspiration for all African artists to aim for excellence and innovation in their craft. Together, we can ensure that African music continues to grow and make an impact on the global stage.

Values: Community, Cooperation, Stability

Comments and Resources Supporting this Perspective:

- Nigeria's dominance of African music is a case of hard work paying off over time.

Resources:

- *Nigeria's dominance of African music... A case of history repeating itself?* Naija Times. (2023). <https://ntm.ng/2023/07/29/nigerias-dominance-of-african-music-a-case-of-history-repeating-itself/>



- *Opinion: Why Nigerian musicians prosper more globally than other African artists.* OkayAfrica. (2022). <https://www.okayafrica.com/nigerian-music-performance-global-african/>
- Nigeria, Ghana, and other African countries need to stay united.

Resources:

- *Shatta Wale: Ghana, Nigeria are the same—Wizkid.* Daily Post. (2021). <https://dailypost.ng/2021/12/29/shatta-wale-ghana-nigeria-are-the-same-wizkid/>
- *Timeline of Burna Boy, Shatta Wale’s four-day feud.* Premium Times. (2022). (<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/entertainment/music/503852-timeline-of-burna-boy-shatta-wales-four-day-feud.html?tztc=1>)

Comments and Resources Opposing this Perspective:

- Ghana is the gateway for Nigerian artists.

Resources:

- *Shatta Wale blasts Nigerian artistes: “Ghana is your gateway.”* Nairaland Forum. (2021). <https://www.nairaland.com/6912451/shatta-wale-blasts-nigerian-artistes/3#108854545>
- *Nigerian artistes have to pass through Ghana to blow—Stonebwoy.* The Guardian: Life. (2020). <https://guardian.ng/life/nigerian-artistes-have-to-pass-through-ghana-to-blow-stonebwoy/>
- *Shatta Wale continues rant against Nigerian artistes.* News Central TV. (2021). YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ukJEzT-IRVk>

Primary Outcomes of Perspectives: The reactions from Nigerian artists and commentators led to counterreactions from **nationalist** Ghanaian artists and commentators, who argue that Nigerian music has relied on Ghana to be successful. However, Ghanaian artists like Shatta Wale, who was initially anti-Nigeria, now supports the presence of Nigerian music in Ghana’s music spaces. He urges fellow Ghanaians to learn from Nigerian music industry (particularly regarding its approach to business) and is quick to call out Ghanaian artists who speak against Nigerian music and artists.

Primary Outcomes of Perspectives: The call out, reactions, and counterreactions involved in the dispute have now become a major issue on social and digital media platforms among Nigerian artists and their supporters. The artists had even gone as far as exposing one another’s private lives.