

“I Am Not a Church Person!” Gendered Cultural Politics in the Portrayal of Fungisai Zvakavapano-Mashavave on Social Media in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

Women musicians in Zimbabwe continue to be subjugated because there are residual patriarchal attitudes driven by religion and cultural norms and values. This article discusses the nexus between culture, religion, and patriarchy as gauged by the portrayal of women musicians. The study looks at how Fungisai Zvakavapano-Mashavave was bullied on social media after collaborating with a Zimdancehall artist in the song “Vanondibatirana.” The study aims to ensure gender parity in a context where women are still being objectified despite Zimbabwe being a signatory to United Nations gender equity statutes. The African feminist concept of equality between females and males provides the theoretical framework for this qualitative study. The song’s message is explored using textual analysis. The findings show that traditional views on women’s roles continue to hinder women artists’ identity and self-esteem. Objectification of women is noted as a result of the way colonialism, religion, and culture influence some members of society to judge women musicians. The findings also show that women are denigrated and relegated to the subaltern, and recommendations advocate that women musicians reclaim equality alongside men in the musical performing arts.

Keywords: cultural politics; gender; patriarchy; social media; women musicians