
Gender Wealth Gap in the USA's Afrobeats Scene

The Case of Tiwa Savage and Burna Boy

ABSTRACT The United States has been a space for global musical transnational encounters among African-descended peoples, with various artists collaborating. These collaborations have blossomed with the advent of Afrobeats—a loose term describing the contemporary transatlantic sound of popular African music. Although there are male and female Afrobeats performers on the African continent, this cultural exchange occurs more often between male artists and U.S. musicians. Because male artists are mostly invited for live performances, their visibility puts them in a position to perform with and collaborate with U.S. artists. As a result, male artists get nominations for global awards such as the Grammys and accumulate more wealth. For female artists, the result is less visibility and wealth. Using Tiwa Savage and Burna Boy—two Afrobeats giants—as case studies, this essay examines the factors that limit Tiwa, a female performer, from achieving the same wealth as her male counterpart, Burna Boy. Specifically, this study analyzes the sonic and semiotic representations in their popular music videos, Tiwa's "Koroba" and Burna Boy's "On the Low," to understand why Burna Boy might have the edge over Tiwa. Their music and career trajectories shed light on how capitalism and sociopolitical issues, including colorism, might contribute to the gender wealth disparities between male and female Afrobeats performers.

KEYWORDS Afrobeats, Tiwa Savage, Burna Boy, Gender Wealth Gap, Women in Music, African Music, African Women, African Diaspora Music, Music and Gender, Women in Popular Music, Black Women in Music, Hip-Hop Feminism, Afrobeat, Popular Music in Africa, Hip-Hop.

The United States has long served as a pivotal arena in global musical transnational encounters. African musicians hold a distinctive position within this dynamic because of their shared identity and historical struggles with African Americans, who have played a central role in shaping global popular music. For instance, the renowned Nigerian musician Fela Kuti, often credited with pioneering Afrobeat—a genre characterized by its fusion of Nigerian highlife and African American influences—joined forces with pan-African leaders. Through his music, he vehemently criticized what he perceived as agents of cultural imperialism, social degradation, political oppression, and economic domination.¹ Similarly, Miriam Makeba of South Africa used her music to respond to the profound impact of apartheid on Black South Africans. Her extensive repertoire drew from a rich tapestry of African cultures and the Black diaspora, incorporating a hybrid of languages and styles that represented “a polyvocal, non-white world,” resonating with

1. Michael Veal, *Fela: Life and Times of an African* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2002), 11–15.

people of all races and cultures.² Both these iconic figures achieved recognition and success in the United States.

In recent years, the international spotlight has increasingly turned towards Afrobeats—a term loosely used to describe the contemporary transatlantic sound of popular African music. The United States is a central hub for the expression and dissemination of Afrobeats. This phenomenon can be attributed to the ongoing migration of Africans to the Western world and the vibrant musical exchanges between African-descended communities in the diaspora, which have facilitated the popularization and evolution of Afrobeats. Like hip hop, Afrobeats provides a platform for Africans and African Americans to convey powerful, didactic messages through music.³ It is worth noting, however, that this cultural exchange predominantly occurs between male artists from Africa and their counterparts in the United States, particularly within popular music and hip hop. Furthermore, the visibility of male artists, often invited for live performances and collaborations with American artists, places them in a favorable position to garner nominations for prestigious global awards, such as the Grammys, and accumulate more wealth. Conversely, female Afrobeats artists face a more challenging landscape, experiencing reduced visibility and, consequently, fewer opportunities for wealth accumulation.

This article delves into an in-depth analysis of gender wealth disparities within the Afrobeats genre, with a focus on the trajectories of two prominent artists, Tiwa Savage and Burna Boy. I explore the factors that hinder Tiwa Savage, a female performer, from achieving a level of wealth similar to that of her male counterpart, Burna Boy. Specifically, I analyze their music videos to scrutinize the sonic and semiotic representations reflected in their respective works, Tiwa's "Koroba" and Burna Boy's "On the Low," in order to discern the potential reasons behind Burna Boy's apparent advantage. Furthermore, this article places these artistic journeys within the broader context of sociopolitical issues, including colonization, global racism, and colorism. By analyzing the career trajectories of these two artists, this study sheds light on how these systemic factors might contribute to the gender wealth gap among Afrobeats performers in the United States. Methodologically, I adopt a multifaceted approach that relies on primary sources in the form of music videos, interviews, and audience reactions to dissect the visual and auditory elements present in the works of Tiwa Savage and Burna Boy. In addition, archival materials related to music festivals and venues are consulted to gain historical context and industry insights. Moreover, existing scholarship that addresses the devaluation of women in the music industry, particularly within the hip hop genre, plays a crucial role in informing and supporting my analysis. By combining these methodological approaches, this article provides a comprehensive examination of the factors contributing to the differential wealth accumulation between male and female Afrobeats performers, as exemplified by the experiences of Tiwa Savage and Burna Boy.

2. April Sizemore-Barber, "The Voice of (Which?) Africa: Miriam Makeba in America," *Safundi* 13/3-4 (July-October 2012): 251-76.

3. Stephanie Shonekan, "Sharing Hip hop Cultures: The Case of Nigerians and African Americans," *American Behavioral Scientist* 55/1 (2011): 9-23.

CAUSATIVE FACTORS: AFROBEATS SCENES AND THE DILEMMA OF CHOICE

The devaluation of African-descended women, especially in popular music spaces, has been the subject of discussion among Black feminist scholars who have written about music for decades. While women practitioners have continued to create meaningful change through their music, men have taken the limelight, leaving women sidelined. Hence, Black women are constantly navigating to fit in a male-dominated popular music space.⁴ Within the African continent, the participation of women in popular music is met with social, cultural, and political issues that exist in their spaces. Female musicians who challenge social norms or present non-conforming narratives through their music are often sidelined.⁵ In the United States, the problem is rooted in the combination of racism and patriarchy as some Black men who are degraded in the broader society may exert their authority within Black communities, where they believe they would earn respect.⁶ As a result, there has been a constant decrease in the number of female practitioners in the popular music sphere,⁷ especially on the continent. Nevertheless, popular music scenes provide a space for women to tackle the issues mentioned above⁸ that result in the gender wealth gap.

Some scholars have delved into the causes of the gender wealth gap across various disciplines and occupations. Still, little attention has been devoted to its exploration in popular music scenes, particularly within transatlantic musical encounters among people of African descent. Extant research reveals that men tend to amass more wealth worldwide than women, with the underlying reasons varying across countries and cultures. In the United States, scholars have theorized unequivocally that this gender wealth gap is a consequence of men owning more wealth than women. This gap is attributed to several factors, including disparities in wages due to gender differences, variations in higher education that leave women burdened with more loans than men, challenges faced by single mothers in providing for their children, gender-based disparities in attributes related to marriage, such as women marrying at a younger age and spending more time being married than men. Additionally, men may exhibit greater financial acumen, and there may be differing spending needs between men and women.⁹ On the African continent, the gender wealth gap is influenced by obvious factors such as family inheritances, which often favor men and consist of assets such as agricultural lands, real estate, and monetary resources. This gap is further shaped by gender disparities in education and employment, as well as the availability of high-paying jobs for women. But there are nuanced gender dynamics intertwined with the wealth gap that existing analyses may

4. Gwendolyn D. Pough, *Check It While I Wreck It: Black Womanhood, Hip-Hop Culture, and the Public Sphere* (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 2015), 75–76.

5. Msia Kibona Clark, “Feminisms in African Hip hop,” *Meridians*, 17/2 (2018): 383–400.

6. Mikki Kendall, *Hood Feminism: Notes from the Women That a Movement Forgot* (New York, NY: Viking, 2020), 73.

7. Brittney Cooper, “Maybe I’ll Be a Poet, Rapper”: Hip-Hop Feminism and Literary Aesthetics in “Push,” *African American Review* 46/1 (2013): 55.

8. Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma, Bilge. *Intersectionality* (Cambridge and Oxford, UK: Polity Press, 2020), 174.

9. Angela Wang Lee, “The gender wealth gap in the United States: Trends and explanations,” *Social Science Research* 107 (September 2022): 102745.

not fully elucidate.¹⁰ This article examines the Afrobeats musical scene in the United States to understand the gender dynamics that come into play when African musical culture meets the United States, resulting in a wealth pay gap.

In this article, I adopt a framework that allows the consumption of Afrobeats to be examined from both direct and indirect perspectives encompassing psychological, sociological, and consumer behavior dimensions. By applying this framework, I write a comprehensive analysis of Afrobeats, shedding light on the intricate interplay of identity, perception, and social constructs and norms within this musical genre. From a psychological standpoint, this analysis delves into the personalities and perceptions of Afrobeats performers Tiwa Savage, Burna Boy, and their audiences, elucidating how their persona and identities are constructed and perceived within the Afrobeats sphere. This exploration uncovers the underlying psychological dynamics shaping the Afrobeats experience for creators and consumers. Sociologically, the analysis considers the patriarchal aspects prevalent in the Afrobeats scene, which often emphasize male dominance. This patriarchal lens extends to the artists themselves, their performative acts, and male-dominated audiences. It also sheds light on how hypermasculinity, misogyny, and violence play a role in shaping social norms and dynamics within the Afrobeats community. The consumer behavior perspective of this framework delves into the public engagement with Afrobeats, audience preferences, and its commodification. This article scrutinizes these aspects and explores how Afrobeats is consumed, valued, and commodified within the broader cultural landscape.¹¹ Applying this multifaceted framework enables a nuanced and intersectional analysis, crucial for unraveling the complexities that characterize gendered African transatlantic musical encounters. Furthermore, it offers valuable insights into how Afrobeats can be regarded as a “new music” that strengthens and illuminates the relationships between Africans on the continent and the Black diaspora. Through this lens, Afrobeats emerges as a powerful cultural force that transcends borders and fosters connections among diverse communities.

Afrobeats, as a musical genre, represents an evolution from the male-dominated African popular music landscape. It stands out for its contemporary transatlantic sound, which resonates not only within African communities on the continent but also among Africans residing in the United States. This musical genre, often referred to as Afrobeats, although the terminology remains a point of contention among practitioners, has gained prominence both locally in Africa, particularly in urban areas among youth culture, and on the global stage through mass media and social commentary. Consumption of Afrobeats in the United States takes various forms, encompassing both individual experiences and communal settings. African diaspora communities primarily engage with Afrobeats through popular music streaming services, such as Pandora, Spotify, YouTube

10. Marya Hillesland, “Investigating the Gender Wealth Gap in Ghana,” *Oxford Development Studies* 47/1 (2019): 63–78.

11. María Luisa Palma-Martos, Manuel Cuadrado-García, and Juan D. Montoro-Pons, “Breaking the gender gap in rap/hip-hop consumption,” in *Music as Intangible Cultural Heritage: Economic, Cultural and Social Identity*, ed. Blanca de-Miguel-Molina, Virginia, Santamarina-Campos, María de-Miguel-Molina, and Rafael Boix-Doménech (New York, NY: Springer International Publishing, 2021), 53–56.

Music, Apple Music, Amazon Music, and social media. Additionally, Afrobeats finds its way into the vibrant Black and Afro dance halls, clubs, and bars of major American cities, where DJs curate playlists featuring recorded Afrobeats tracks for enthusiastic audiences. Furthermore, Afrobeats has become the sonic backdrop for African conventions and annual gatherings held in major U.S. cities, where first-generation Nigerian Americans and other African diaspora communities come together to celebrate their cultural heritage. In addition to these organic settings where Afrobeats naturally thrives, Africans intentionally create communities to celebrate and promote the genre in the United States. These include concert venues and Afrobeats music festivals, which provide platforms for artists to showcase their beats, sounds, and languages. These spaces serve as musical arenas and sites for asserting and challenging notions of belonging. They facilitate the musical fusion of sounds and transatlantic connections that bridge postcolonial African urbanity with the inner cities of the United States.¹² Moreover, these spaces become venues for converging intersectional identities and ideologies from both worlds, resulting in unique experiences for practitioners and audiences alike. Afrobeats, in this context, acts as a cultural bridge, facilitating the exchange of ideas and values between African and American communities while reaffirming the transatlantic connectivity that characterizes this musical genre. Ultimately, Afrobeats serves as a powerful medium through which cultural expressions and identities intersect and flourish within the United States, fostering a sense of unity and belonging among those who partake in its vibrant soundscape.

Historically, many African women have actively contributed to and participated in popular music, much like their male counterparts on the continent. It is worth noting, however, the existence of a conspicuous gender disparity within the music industry, particularly regarding the representation of successful artists at concerts and music festivals.¹³ This gender imbalance persists within the Afrobeats music scene in the United States. An example is the Afro Nation festival, which claims to be the world's largest Afrobeats festival. On May 27 and 28, 2023, at LoanDepot Park in Miami, Florida, a diverse gathering of individuals of African descent and Afrobeats enthusiasts congregated for this festival. The festival boasted an impressive lineup of Afrobeats performers, prominently featuring male artists, including renowned figures such as Burna Boy from Nigeria, who is discussed in this paper, Wizkid, Rema, Asake, Fireboy DML, CKay, Bnxn, and Black Sheriff, among others. Additionally, the festival featured international artists, including male Jamaican dancehall DJ Beenie Man, male Jamaican singer Mavado, male Panamanian singer Sech, and male French singer Dadju. Notably, the gender disparity extended to the festival hosts and DJs, all of whom were male. Within this predominantly male lineup, however, two notable female artists stood out: Gyakie, a female Ghanaian singer, and Nissi, a female Nigerian singer. These two women represented a minority among the fourteen male performers, and their inclusion in the lineup underscored the

12. Catherine M. Appert, *In Hip Hop Time: Music, Memory, and Social Change in Urban Senegal* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2018), 161–62.

13. Linda Cimardi, "Between Home and International Scenes. Sarah Ndagire's Way to World Music," *Music and Sound Culture* 63 (2023): 35–54.

importance of addressing gender diversity and equity within the Afrobeats music scene, not only in the USA but also on a global scale.

Although the Afro Nation music festival in Detroit, Michigan, held August 19-20, 2023, had more female performers, it continued the trend observed at similar events, with a limited presence of female Afrobeats performers from the continent. Once again, Nissi was the sole female Afrobeats artist from Africa included in the lineup. The remaining female artists featured at the festival were African-descended women from the USA, including Ari Lenox, Latto, Coi Leray, Libianca Fonji, and Ebony Riley, who represented a minority among the performers. In contrast, the lineup consisted of male artists representing various nationalities and musical styles. These included Kizz Daniel, a Nigerian singer and songwriter; Diamond Platnumz, a Tanzanian musician; Vivtony, a Nigerian singer and rapper; Davido, an American Nigerian singer and songwriter; Psquare, a Nigerian musical duo comprising twin brothers Peter and Paul Okoye; Naira Marley, a Nigerian singer; Masego, an American musician and singer; Tayc, a French singer-songwriter, and Stonebwoy, a Ghanaian musician. The gender imbalance extended beyond the performers to include the DJs and backstage artists, who were all men.

This recurring pattern at Afrobeats concerts in the United States, characterized by a predominantly male lineup, underscores a historical trend in music collaborations. Historically, music collaborations have primarily involved American artists and male artists from the African continent, with notable exceptions such as Beyoncé, who, in 2019, included both male and female African artists, including Tiwa Savage, in her major project, “The Lion King: The Gift.” These collaborative opportunities have often placed male Afrobeats artists in positions that allow them to accumulate wealth and global recognition. The question arises: why do event organizers and artists predominantly favor male performers? The career trajectories and sonic representations of artists such as Tiwa Savage and Burna Boy provide valuable insights into addressing this question.



FIGURE 1. Afro Nation performer line-up in Miami flyer.



FIGURE 2. Afro Nation performer line-up in Detroit flyer.

TIWA SAVAGE VS BURNA BOY: HISTORY AND PERSPECTIVES

Historically, African musicians have made significant contributions to global popular music. Icons such as Manu Dibango from Cameroon, Fela Kuti from Nigeria, and Miriam Makeba from South Africa, among others, were particularly influential in the 1980s. During this period, they creatively integrated and blended African music with that of the West and the Caribbean, infusing their own culture to craft unique genres that reflected their personas, experiences, and creativity. The 1980s marked a pivotal time when African music started being recognized in world music categories in the West. While the categorization was problematic—grouping music from diverse cultures—it provided African musicians a platform to compete on the global stage. They became part of the global pop chart and were eligible for recognition in the Grammys world category.¹⁴ Shortly after, hip hop emerged as a powerful movement propelling globalization forward. Nigerian musicians took center stage in the evolution and globalization of hip hop in Africa. Talented youth emerged, collaborating, contributing, and drawing inspiration from hip hop across various cultures.¹⁵ As hip hop morphed into Afrobeats in contemporary times, artists such as Tiwa Savage and Burna Boy have become prominent figures, contributing to its global spread. They stand at the forefront of this musical evolution, shaping and influencing the trajectory of Afrobeats globally. In 2024, the Grammys created a new category, “Best African Music Performance,” dedicated to music produced in Africa. Five Afrobeats songs were nominated, including Burna Boy’s “City Boys.” Tyla Laura Seethal won the category against “Amapiano,” Asake & Olamide, “City Boys,” Burna Boy, “Unavailable,” Davido Featuring Musa Keys, and “Rush,” Ayra Starr. Four of these five singers, excluding Tyla, are Nigerians. It is important to emphasize that despite the patriarchy in the music industry being highlighted in this paper, a woman made history by winning this category for the first time.

Tiwa Savage, born Tiwatope Savage in 1980 in Lagos, Nigeria, is a prominent female Afrobeats artist with an illustrious career that spans both the African continent and the international music scene. Her journey in the music industry began when she relocated to London at the age of eleven to pursue her high school education. Early in her career, Tiwa worked as a backup singer for various artists and even participated in the UK edition of the X Factor, showcasing her vocal talent. Her dedication to music led her to study at the prestigious Berklee College of Music in Boston, Massachusetts. In 2012, she made a significant decision to return to Nigeria, marking her entry into the Nigerian music industry. Since then, Tiwa Savage has achieved remarkable success, evolving from a budding artist to becoming one of the most influential women in Africa. Tiwa’s impact extends beyond music: she has been recognized by the British Broadcasting Corporation, BBC, as one of the hundred inspirational and innovative women in 2017 and was included in the

14. Eric Charry, *Hip Hop Africa: New African Music in a Globalizing World* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012) 284; Timothy D. Taylor, *Global Pop: World music, World Markets* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014), 8.

15. Ndukaeze Nwabueze, “Hip-hop Culture and Youth in Lagos: The Interface of Globalisation and Identity Crisis,” *Youth, Space and Time* 3 (2016), 186.

Women4Africa Goldlist for 2022. Her diverse experiences and exposure have enabled her to write songs and produce music videos that resonate with a broad audience, transcending linguistic and cultural barriers. One of Tiwa's distinctive features is her multilingual approach to music. She incorporates various languages into her songs, including indigenous Nigerian languages, West African pidgin English, and English. This linguistic diversity makes her music accessible to numerous ethnic groups across the African continent and people of African descent in the diaspora. While Tiwa's music often addresses critical issues concerning African women and women's empowerment, she also delves into themes of love and hope, showcasing the versatility of her artistic expression. Despite openly embracing her Christian identity and spirituality, Tiwa Savage effectively expresses herself despite facing criticism for performing music that challenges conventional beliefs within her faith. Her global appeal has led her to sign recording deals with major music producers worldwide, earning numerous awards, collaborate with iconic musicians like Beyoncé, and grace prestigious stages such as Jay-Z's Made in America Festival in Philadelphia, the Global Citizen Festival: Mandela 100 in Johannesburg, South Africa, and the Coronation of Charles III and Camilla in 2023. Tiwa Savage's extensive touring has seen her perform on stages across Africa and the Western world, solidifying her status as a global music sensation. Notably, her success in the music industry has also translated into substantial wealth, making her one of Nigeria's wealthiest female musicians. Tiwa's remarkable journey affirms her talent, spirituality, dedication, and contribution to the vibrant landscape of Afrobeats music in Africa and beyond. Her debut movie, "Water and Garri," in which she will make her acting debut and serve as executive producer, was released on May 10, 2024.

Burna Boy, renowned as the "African Giant," is a Nigerian singer born in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, in 1991. His educational background, much like Tiwa Savage's, includes time spent studying in the United Kingdom. But Burna Boy pursued degrees in media technology and communications at the University of Sussex and Oxford Brookes University rather than in music. Burna Boy's music career also took off in 2012 when he returned to Nigeria after gaining recognition for his single "Like to Party," which became a resounding hit. Like Tiwa Savage, Burna Boy's exposure and experiences have shaped his ability to create music that transcends linguistic and cultural boundaries, appealing to diverse ethnic groups, nation-states, and global audiences. Many of Burna Boy's songs, including the track "On the Low," analyzed in this article, have garnered millions of views worldwide. A distinctive aspect of his music is its ability to resonate with listeners who may not necessarily understand the language in which the songs are sung. This universal appeal speaks to the power of Burna Boy's music to connect with people on a profound level. One noteworthy aspect that sets Burna Boy apart is his sampling and incorporation of elements from the music of the legendary Afrobeat pioneer Fela Kuti. Fela's influence looms large in the world of African music, and his music holds a special place in the hearts of Africans and people of African descent. By drawing inspiration from Fela's music and infusing it into his creations, Burna Boy has captured the attention and admiration of a broad and diverse audience. Burna Boy has amassed a substantial and dedicated fan base through extensive collaborations, international tours, and numerous awards. He is widely recognized as one of the wealthiest musicians in Africa because of his successful music career and business ventures. Both Tiwa

Savage and Burna Boy gained exposure and popularity in similar spaces. Still, Burna Boy's larger fan base and considerable wealth indicate that specific elements within their music and career trajectories account for this disparity. In the context of their music, analyzing the sonic representations and themes within the works of both artists may shed light on why Burna Boy has achieved more financial success than Tiwa Savage despite their similar trajectories and backgrounds.

SONIC AND SEMIOTICS REPRESENTATION OF TIWA'S "KOROBA" AND BURNA BOY'S "ON THE LOW"

Drawing on the Afro Nation festival, widely regarded as the largest Afrobeats event globally, as an illustrative case, it becomes evident that male artists consistently hold a prominent and preferred position in the selection of performers for Afrobeats concerts in the USA. This trend persists even in contemporary times. This observation prompts a compelling inquiry: is there a prevailing preference among Afrobeats enthusiasts for Burna Boy's music over Tiwa Savage's? Both artists have cultivated extensive repertoires featuring songs widely recognized and cherished within the global community of people of African descent. To unravel the potential factors contributing to the variance in their fan bases, it is imperative to delve deeply into a comprehensive music analysis.

African women in popular music address various issues that engage with dominant discourses in feminism and womanist studies through their music. Themes addressing patriarchy, women empowerment, identity, violence against women, relationships, emotional struggles, and other sociopolitical issues are present in their lyrics.¹⁶ Tiwa's song "Koroba" vividly represents her artistic identity, spanning various dimensions, including visual aesthetics, lyrical content, and its intended audience. Notably, the song delves into thematic elements that consistently resonate throughout her musical repertoire. Despite her occasional presence in news headlines because of supposed controversies in her personal life, Tiwa Savage adeptly embraces and projects the persona of a rebellious figure, what hip hop feminist scholar Gwendolyn Pough describes as bringing wreck to popular music scenes. In other words, Tiwa utilizes her lyrical narratives to disrupt prevailing masculine discourses, penetrate the public domain, and somehow affect and shape the collective imagination of her listeners. The impact could be temporary. Although causing disruption may not result in significant or enduring changes to the world, the release of this song represents a pivotal moment in Afrobeats where her narrative has disrupted social norms for a meaningful purpose.¹⁷ Starting the song with an incisive commentary, she boldly proclaims, "And now, for entertainment news, the African bad girl Tiwa Savage once again graces the front pages." Black women in music have utilized the adaptation of contested identities as a means of reclaiming power.¹⁸ Moreover, she masterfully weaves her lyrics in pidgin English, as translated below.

16. Msia Kibona Clark, "Feminisms in African Hip Hop," *Meridians*, 17/2 (2018): 384.

17. Gwendolyn D. Pough, *Check It While I Wreck It: Black Womanhood, Hip-Hop Culture, and the Public Sphere* (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 2015), 76.

18. Imani Perry, *Prophets in the Hood: Politics and Poetics in Hip Hop* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 156.

PIDGIN ENGLISH/ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I no come this life to suffer/I did not come into this world to suffer.
If I follow politician/if I follow a politician,
You go hear am for paper/you will hear about it on the news.
Them go call am prostitution/ they will call it prostitution.
Who no like enjoyment?/who does not like enjoyment?
If money dey for pocket/if you have money in your pocket,
Shebi na national budget o?/isn't it part of the national budget?
We go blow am like trumpet e (okay)/we will blow the money away like a trumpet.

Refrain: Koroba . . . /bucket.

Koro, oya carry your, am/ bucket, come and carry it.

Oya, everybody carry something/come on everybody, carry something.

He say, "Darling, I'm watching you"/he says, "Darling, I am watching you."
Small thing you turn mugu/ You become a fool at the slightest provocation.
You come dey shout ole/You shout thief.
The money you no work for/ the money you did not work for.
Bad commando (hey), You carry overload/bad commando, you are carrying too much.
Yawa dey, igboro/there is a big problem in the neighborhood.
Sho wole, ko wole/did it enter? It did not enter.

I no mean to bother you at all/I do not mean to bother you at all.

Monkey dey work bamboo dey chop/citizens work hard, but politicians embezzle the money.

Kilamity you say you be talk and do oga/calamity, you say you keep your promises, Sir.
Tell me wetin you fi do/tell me what you can do.

In the preceding analysis of the commentary and lyrics, Tiwa expresses her deep contemplation regarding how she can gain the approval of society, given that every facet of her life is relentlessly scrutinized by the media, often resulting in unfavorable portrayals of herself and her family. She astutely highlights the pervasive hypocrisy prevalent in the lives of certain men, particularly those in politics, who tend to pass severe judgments on women. Within the context of her narrative, Tiwa delves into the story of a woman who is romantically involved with a politician. This choice of partner is seen as a means to escape poverty, as politicians are frequently associated with wealth despite their reputation for corruption. Her poignant lyrics vividly capture this sentiment: "I did not come to this world to suffer." Tiwa proceeds to narrate the experiences of a woman who has an intimate encounter with a politician. After their night together, the politician insinuates distrust by claiming that the woman might pilfer from him and reinforces his surveillance of her actions. Tiwa does not mince her words when criticizing the politician, accusing him of embezzling funds from the hardworking masses. In summary, Tiwa unequivocally places the blame on the politician as the root cause of the problems she has elucidated throughout her commentary and lyrics.

The visuals in the video effectively reinforce the lyrics. At the outset of the video, Tiwa Savage takes on the role of a news anchor, making the statement, "And now for entertainment news, the African bad girl Tiwa Savage is on the front news again." This introduction

sets the stage as Tiwa is depicted on a television screen impeccably dressed as a newscaster, delivering the news. Subsequently, the scene transitions to Tiwa and a group of women gathered in a salon, engrossed in reading newspapers, checking their phones for updates, and engaging in lively conversations about current events. Concurrently, Tiwa's singing narrative delves into the idea of her becoming newsworthy should she align herself with politicians. As she croons these verses, the women in the salon begin to gesture towards her, implying that the news revolves around her. Tiwa then shares some of the money she received from the politician with these women. This act prompts a lively response as the women enthusiastically join her in dancing, adorned in vibrant costumes and brandishing buckets. In this music video, Tiwa systematically challenges gender stereotypes, embodying an empowered persona through her elegant costumes, assertive dance moves, and notable actions. The video showcases scenes in which a woman triumphs over men in a soccer contest and another woman assertively slaps a man. Moreover, it portrays women as the ones in control of the news narrative, while men serve as backup dancers. Tiwa further amplifies her message by taking pointed jabs at politicians, transforming herself into various characters to underscore her critique. The overarching themes of women's empowerment and gender equality are central to Tiwa's message, and she daringly confronts traditional Nigerian cultural norms that often silence women. Tiwa successfully resonates with her global fan base through the rhythm and visuals, notwithstanding the criticisms she may receive.

Compared to Tiwa's "Koroba," Burna Boy's song "On the Low" arguably represents his persona as a "bad boy." Furthering the problematic tradition of objectifying women's bodies in popular music videos, Burna Boy sings about his lover, Angelina, who satisfies him sexually. Angelina is depicted responding by gyrating her waist and dancing around Burna Boy in moves that seem designed to indulge his gaze. The lyrics, originally in pidgin English, are literally translated below to highlight Angelina's overt sexualization.

PIDGIN ENGLISH/ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Kpokpotikpo kpo kpo/(onomatopoeic sound)

Baby, your love dey high me like choko/Baby, your love makes me high like I am on drugs.

Refrain: Angeli, Angelina, you dey cool my temperature/Angelina, you cool my temperature.

If you call, I go come deliver/ when you call me, I will come and deliver.

I no go fall e your hand, never/ I will never disappoint you.

Say na me you go love forever/ I hope you will love me forever.

I'm a khaki, no fit be leather/I am the real one.

Oh my Angeli, Angelina

Anytime wey I see you for the club, I dey television your body/whenever I see you at the club, I visualize your body.

Shey, you no know say the thing wey you carry fit kill somebody/I hope you know that your body features can kill someone.

You know I feel a vibe, you feel a vibe, so baby whine it pon me/You know I feel the vibe, and you feel the vibe too, so baby whine your waist for me.

Yeah, and I know you shy, but it's cool when we're making love/I know you are shy,
but it is okay when we are having sex.

On the low

Shey when I wan dey comot, make I signal you/I hope it okay to signal you when I want
to leave.

Why you want to dey question me like an interview? / Why do you question me like
you are interviewing me?

I'm tryna put the ring on your finger too/I am also trying to propose to you,

And be a better guy, guy/ and be a better man.

The lyrics start with the onomatopoeic sound, “Kpokpotikpo kpo,” which repeats after each line in the first verse with speech adlibs. In this verse, Burna Boy describes how Angelina’s love makes him feel like he is on drugs. Specifically, he states that her love makes him feel good and promises never to disappoint her. He also emphasizes his honesty, hoping that Angelina will love him forever. In the second verse, Burna Boy sexualizes his girlfriend, Angelina. He tells her that each time he sees her, he visualizes her body and asks if she knows that her body features seduce men. Burna Boy then requests that she shake her waist, affirming that her mood during sex is desirable. Shifting to the last verse, he promises to be a better man by agreeing to communicate more with his girlfriend so that she would not have to question him like she is interviewing him. To conclude, he states his intentions of being a better man and proposing to her for marriage.

Unlike Tiwa, Burna Boy’s songs encompass themes of drugs, sex, and the female body. These themes are visually portrayed in the music video, where Angelina is depicted dancing while Burna Boy watches her attentively and gives her instructions. For instance, when he croons the line, “So baby whine your waist for me,” Angelina gracefully moves her waist in response. Throughout the video, it is just the two of them signaling and responding to each other’s rhythms. Both the Tiwa and Burna Boys’ songs share a common groove and maintain a moderate tempo. Despite their sounds being digitally crafted in studios, they exude the unmistakable essence of African rhythm and sounds combined with a Western pop sensibility. This fusion contributes to Afrobeats’ global acclaim and cultural resonance among people of African descent worldwide. Although both artists rose to fame concurrently, several studies have attempted to compare their popularity. OlaOluwa Yaya, Toyin Ajose, and Ahamuefua Ogbonna conducted extensive searches using the web, news, images, and YouTube Google trends to assess the popularity of Tiwa and Burna Boy. Their comprehensive findings from 2016 to 2020 indicate that Burna Boy received more searches on YouTube, while Tiwa garnered more attention on the web, in the news, and in image searches.¹⁹ These statistics validate that Tiwa was

19. OlaOluwa S. Yaya, Toyin S. Ajose, and Ahamuefua E. Ogbonna, “Long-range dependence and Trends in Nigerian Popular Music Artists’ Famosity-“Davido,” “Burna Boy,” “Tiwa Savage,” and “Wizkid”: Evidence from Google Trends,” *Munich Personal RePEc Archive (MPRA)* (November 2020):1–13.

frequently in the news because of her wedding, childbirth, tumultuous divorce, and leaked sex tape, while fans were predominantly engaged with Burna Boy's music. Consequently, streaming Burna Boy's music has significantly contributed to his wealth.

GENDERED EXPECTATIONS: A CRITICAL LOOK AT THE BIASES SURROUNDING CHOICES

The three primary audiences that engage mainly with African female musicians who have achieved international renown serve as a valuable starting point for this discussion. Afrobeats performers cater to three primary audiences: first, the non-expert listeners from the Global North who are genuinely interested in music emerging from the African continent. Second, the audiences within Africa who deeply appreciate contemporary interpretations of revitalized traditional African music. Finally, the international public eagerly tracking the latest releases within the Afrobeats genre.²⁰ Beyond these primary audiences, it is important to acknowledge the presence of two additional categories: peer listeners and music analyzers. The first three categories of listeners are generally forthright in their assessments of Afrobeats artists, expressing their views on various aspects of the music, including lyrics, rhythms, and visual elements found in music videos. They frequently voice their judgments online, using various social media platforms and seizing opportunities to engage in discussions about the music. In contrast, the peer listeners, who belong to the same fraternity of Afrobeats performers, approach the music with a different intent. They primarily listen for inspiration, aiming to sample elements and write their own music. In many cases, they remain reserved in sharing their opinions on their peers' music to avoid potential backlash or professional friction. Lastly, the analyzer category comprises music scholars and enthusiasts like me. While we have our biases, we primarily aim to conduct constructive critical analyses of Afrobeats performances. Within these groups, vibrant discussions, particularly in the context of artists such as Tiwa and Burna Boy, yield judgments about what constitutes exceptional music. These judgments are often based on social, religious, and political beliefs, reflecting broader societal norms and expectations.

Judging by the audience reception, the two artists' history and music analysis indicate that they are contemporaries who create good music. What sets them apart, however, are the themes addressed in their music. There has been an ongoing debate surrounding African popular music and Afrobeats and their alleged influence on challenging social norms. Audiences tend to hold artists accountable on the basis of their personal lives, the music they produce in connection with their indigenous cultural affinity, and their physical appearance. Being a celebrity comes with various "privileges," one of which is that society expects them to be role models for listeners. These norms are rooted in African indigenous societal gender ideologies, which are deeply intertwined with patriarchy and gender expectations. Tiwa's music is known for its daring nature. In a society where some expect women to be subservient, humble, and conform to a set of rules and societal standards, Tiwa has consistently taken an assertive stance through her music. She

20. Linda Cimardi, "Between Home and International Scenes," 42.

creates songs and music videos with intriguing themes that challenge prevailing gender norms. This can be observed in the analysis of her music video for “Koroba,” where themes such as taking control of the narrative of the “bad girl” and exposing what I refer to as the “hypocrisy of the African-gendered life” have attracted criticism. These criticisms raise questions about Tiwa’s stardom and the legitimacy of her music within the broader context of societal expectations and values.

Tiwa and Burna have both been in the news for scandals, with Tiwa facing more scrutiny than Burna, who appears to receive a softer response. In addition to Tiwa’s messy divorce case, the most scandalous incident involved the release of a sex video featuring Tiwa and her former boyfriend. In 2021, Tiwa granted an interview in which she revealed that someone had attempted to blackmail her with a sex tape. She explained that her boyfriend at the time had accidentally posted the tape on Snapchat and deleted it within minutes. Unfortunately, someone had already obtained it and demanded money. Even before the tape’s release, Tiwa faced criticism for being careless, not serving as a positive role model for younger women, and openly discussing the sex tape situation. The situation escalated when the blackmailer released the tape. Tiwa took control of the narrative and refused to pay the ransom. This led to a significant backlash, resulting in the loss of many followers on social media and reduced streaming of her music videos, both domestically and in the diaspora. It is crucial to note that Tiwa was involved in a consensual relationship, engaging in activities that are common in any relationship, such as having sex with her boyfriend. Nevertheless, many people concluded that she was a prostitute, a stigmatizing label in many African societies. This misunderstanding and the anger surrounding her involvement in a sex tape that she neither recorded nor posted added to the controversy.

In addition to the sexualization of women, as I analyzed in the music video “On the Low” earlier, Burna Boy also prominently features themes of drugs and alcohol in his work. This is particularly evident in one of Burna Boy’s most viewed music videos, “Last Last,” on YouTube, in which Burna Boy is portrayed surrounded by an all-male group celebrating drugs and alcohol. Through their costumes and dramatizations, one could argue that this portrayal exhibits traits of toxic masculinity. Furthermore, Burna Boy has garnered media attention for his alleged struggles with anger management. There have been documented instances of his engaging in public arguments with fans and even his own workers, raising concerns about his behavior. Additionally, several reports from media outlets in Nigeria have accused him of attempting to harm young men physically, sending thugs to attack fellow artists, and his escort allegedly firing shots at fans over minor provocations in a Lagos club. Many Nigerians view Burna Boy as embodying a “bad boy” image because of these actions, which are widely deemed unacceptable. It is intriguing that despite these controversies, Burna Boy does not face the same level of scrutiny as his female counterpart, Tiwa Savage. This raises questions about the double standards that persist within African society regarding gender expectations and the consequences faced by artists who push the boundaries of these expectations through their music. Specifically, why does a woman receive backlash for challenging gender norms in her music, while a man is often praised for glorifying the use of alcohol and drugs?

The diaspora introduces an additional layer of scrutiny on women Afrobeats musicians. To comprehensively analyze this phenomenon, Black feminist theories provide a valuable framework for intersectionality. This framework allows for an in-depth examination that addresses the specific needs of Black women and sheds light on how various aspects of their identities, including colorism, significantly impact their lives.²¹ When we turn our attention to Burna Boy, we observe recurring themes in his music, such as misogyny, drug and alcohol references, violence, and the sexualization of women. These themes have been subject to critical analysis by numerous scholars.²² They represent aspects of Black manhood and hypermasculinity that are already prevalent in the hip hop scene in the United States.²³ Moreover, these themes are expected in the United States and the global popular music landscape. Consequently, Burna Boy tends to find acceptance within the diaspora, as audiences often do not prioritize or pass judgment on these recurring themes. In contrast, Tiwa faces a different set of challenges within the diaspora, primarily centered on colorism—a concept that is often taken for granted²⁴ yet remains pervasive, playing a central role in issues that Black women and other women of color in the music industry encounter in the United States.²⁵ Alice Walker coined the term “colorism” in 1983, defining it as the “prejudicial or preferential treatment of same-raced people based solely on the color of their skin.”²⁶ Nicole Fleetwood argues that color gradations have historically been a measure of value among performers and a social practice in the United States. Recent studies confirm that complexion continues to matter for immigrants, not just for attaining status²⁷ but sustaining it. Although Tiwa does not reside in the United States, colorism affects her activities and career, as color hierarchies rather than ethnicity play a role in the United States. This pervasive issue, visible in popular culture, especially in music, impacts women musicians from other cultures who participate in the United States’ music scenes as performance intersects with skin color and visibility.²⁸

Scholars have theorized how proximity to whiteness affords Black women privilege in the music industry. Among women in the popular music industry, appearances hold just as much significance as talent. Men who are music artists frequently exhibit colorist behaviors in real life and music videos. Three prominent female artists who have arguably

21. Cienna Davis, “From Colorism to Conjurers: Tracing the Dust in Beyoncé’s *Lemonade*,” in *Beyoncé In The World: Making Meaning With Queen Bey In Troubled Times*, ed. Christina Baade and Kristin A. McGee (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2021): 66.

22. Guillermo Rebollo-Gil and Amanda Moras, “Black Women and Black Men in Hip Hop Music: Misogyny, Violence and the Negotiation of (White-Owned) Space,” *The Journal of Popular Culture* 45/1 (2012): 118–32.

23. Adeerya Johnson, “Dirty South Feminism: The Girlies Got Somethin’ to Say Too! Southern Hip Hop Women, Fighting Respectability, Talking Mess, and Twerking Up the Dirty South,” *Religions* 12/11 (2021): 10–30.

24. Sarah L Webb, “Everyday Colorism,” *The English Journal* 108/4 (2019): 21.

25. Evelyn Nakano Glenn, ed., *Shades of Difference: Why Skin Color Matters* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 5.

26. Alice Walker, *In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens: Womanist Prose* (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983), 290.

27. Verna M Keith, “A Colorstruck World: Skin Tone, Achievement, and Self-Esteem among African American Women,” in *Shades of Difference: Why Skin Color Matters*, ed. Evelyn Nakano Glenn (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009): 28.

28. Nicole R. Fleetwood, *Troubling Vision: Performance, Visuality, and Blackness* (University of Chicago Press, 2019), 72–73.

benefited from colorism are Beyoncé, Rihanna, and Nicki Minaj. While they have faced devaluation at various points in their careers,²⁹ Witt highlights that Beyoncé's success can be attributed, at least in part, to her fair skin. During her early career with the group "Destiny's Child," she was often strategically placed between her two darker-skinned counterparts—Kelly Rowland and Michelle Williams—as a marketing tactic. This decision was made due to the preference of male artists, who had a history of selecting light-skinned women for their music videos. In the case of Rihanna, her physical appearance was a pivotal factor in her career trajectory, as industry executives emphasized her physical beauty when introducing her to the music scene. As for Nicki Minaj, beyond her skin color, her campy aesthetic, ever-changing hair colors, and clothing choices have played a significant role in shaping her career. This is due to the media's tendency to racialize her based on these elements. These three women represent some of America's most visible, successful, and recognizable contemporary Black female artists.³⁰ Questions about the challenges faced by African American women artists who are as talented as their fair-skinned counterparts but struggle to gain access and recognition in the industry become paramount. These issues emerge as particularly pertinent when comparing Tiwa Savage's experiences with those of Burna Boy, who is amassing collaborations, whereas Tiwa faces difficulties in securing similar opportunities. In a related context, Maeve Eberhardt and Kara Freeman argue that Iggy Azalea's success in the hip hop world can be attributed to her whiteness and the privilege it affords her. They highlight that many record sales are made to white audiences, and white record executives hold influential positions in the billion-dollar music industry. This phenomenon underscores the concept of white privilege, where whiteness operates as an invisible racial category that sets societal norms, granting advantages to whites in various aspects of life.³¹ Considering these insights, it becomes crucial to contemplate how artists like Tiwa Savage can compete and gain recognition in an industry where African American women artists with darker skin tones face difficulties securing opportunities. Whereas Burna Boy thrives in collaborations, Tiwa's struggle for recognition remains a poignant reflection of the disparities present within the music industry.

On the global front, other issues pertinent to specific female musicians intersect with colorism. For African women, as in Tiwa's case, who are subjected to colonialism, patriarchy, and class issues on the continent, as well as race issues in the United States, colorism plays a role in forging her identity in the USA Afrobeats scene.³² For Africans, forging identities to sustain their arts has resulted in skin lightening, an effect of colonization. Skin bleaching emerged as a cosmetic practice after a series of advertisements set light-skinned individuals as standards of beauty on the continent. Shortly after, it became

29. Robin James, *Resilience & Melancholy: Pop Music, Feminism, Neoliberalism* (Winchester, Hampshire, UK: John Hunt Publishing, 2015), 168.

30. Aja Witt, "Colorism in the music industry and the women it privileges," (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 2018), 9–31.

31. Maeve Eberhardt and Kara Freeman, "'First Things First, I'm the Realist': Linguistic Appropriation, White Privilege, and The Hip-Hop Persona of Iggy Azalea," *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 19/3 (2015): 303–27.

32. Glenn, "Shades of Difference," 61.

“a way of life,” with an increasing percentage of women bleaching their skin to attain beauty standards.³³ Tiwa is one artist who has not bleached her skin, resisting societal pressure to “look flashy”; however, she pays the price by not being selected despite her talent. These challenges have left many female Afrobeats performers in dire situations, forcing them to resort to unconventional means to sustain their music careers. In addition to clandestinely dating wealthy men and producers, who sometimes subject them to sexual abuse, they are compelled to accept any invitation, regardless of the potential repercussions, to maintain visibility, relevance, and financial stability.

One noteworthy incident that sheds light on the consequences of such decisions occurred in May 2023 when Tiwa Savage accepted an invitation from King Charles to perform at the Coronation of Charles III and Camilla in the United Kingdom. Before this event, the news surrounding the marriage of Meghan Markle, Duchess of Sussex, to Prince Harry, the Duke of Sussex, had been particularly sensitive for Black communities worldwide. Despite the wedding being hailed as a “rousing celebration of blackness”³⁴ due to its historical significance as the first royal wedding involving a Black individual, Meghan Markle’s tumultuous experience within the royal family resulted in a media frenzy. It ultimately led to the coining of the derogatory term “Megxit” by the British media to encapsulate the circumstances surrounding the couple’s departure from royal duties.³⁵ Amid these ongoing crises, Black performers from around the globe rallied in support of Meghan Markle, and consequently, many allegedly rejected King Charles’s invitation. This significant turn of events reignited global discussions regarding the role of the royal family in colonialism and racism. It was in the middle of this backdrop of intense scrutiny and debate that the coronation took place, causing every Black music performer, including Tiwa, who had accepted the invitation to perform, to face severe backlash from Black communities worldwide. Why did Tiwa Savage experience the harshest backlash of other black artists who participated in the event?

The answer to the above question lies in the choice of the song Tiwa performed for King Charles, “Keys to the Kingdom: from Beyoncé’s *Black is King* album, which raises intriguing considerations. Specifically, one may wonder what Tiwa was thinking when selecting such an anti-colonial song to celebrate the British monarch who historically championed colonization, especially during this sensitive period in world history. To shed light on this decision, it is valuable to turn to the insights of scholars who have delved into the significance of the *Black is King* album in the context of the global Black community. Notably, some scholars have provided valuable perspectives on the importance of the *Black is King* album. Jordan Ealey, for instance, characterizes the album as a grand Afro-diasporic celebration that places Black performers and various genres of Black popular

33. Blay, Yaba Amgborale. “Skin Bleaching and Global White Supremacy: By Way of Introduction,” *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 4/4 (2011): 6.

34. Afua Hirsch, “Meghan Markle’s wedding was a rousing celebration of blackness,” <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/may/19/meghan-markles-wedding-was-a-celebration-of-blackness>.

35. Noreen Khan-Qamar, “An Intersectional Feminist Reading of Social Media Conversations about the Duke and Duchess of Sussex,” in *The Journal of Multimodal Rhetorics* 65 (2022): 64–74.

music from around the world at its core.³⁶ Similarly, Christin Smith and Loren Saxton Coleman argue that *Black is King* serves as a guide for individuals on their journey to self-discovery, emphasizing the necessity of understanding the Black ancestral past to comprehend the present.³⁷ Additionally, Muzayyanah Awaliyah and her colleagues posit that Beyoncé employs the album to critique the discrimination and inequality Black people face in America.³⁸ Despite these diverse interpretations, a common thread emerges: *Black is King* is a creation by and for Black people. Given this backdrop, exploring the possible reasons for Tiwa's choice of Beyoncé's song for her performance becomes pertinent. First, "Keys to the Kingdom" by Beyoncé is a globally recognized and appreciated track, making it a suitable choice for such a prestigious event. Second, Tiwa's inclusion as one of the artists featured in the album allows her to claim a personal connection to the song and its message. Third, Tiwa hails from a culture where music is often shared among community members, and copyright laws may not be as rigorously enforced, allowing for a more flexible approach to performing another artist's work. In this context, her admiration for Beyoncé, whom she regards as a "big sister," further legitimizes her choice to perform Beyoncé's music. A fourth and central reason for Tiwa's selection can be found in the argument put forth in this paper, which emphasizes the need to maintain relevance and accumulate wealth in the competitive world of the music industry. My analysis and accompanying posters clearly indicate that Tiwa had experienced marginalization in popular performances globally, primarily due to ongoing gender bias. While some artists may have declined the invitation to perform for King Charles, Tiwa accepted it, driven by the belief that "any news is news." Although her coronation performance generated mixed reactions, it undeniably increased her visibility, with more people discovering Tiwa through this exposure.

CONCLUSION

My analysis underscores a glaring disparity between male and female musicians in Afrobeats. In recent times, Afrobeats listeners can amplify their voices within seconds and minutes via social media. Women artists appear to face heightened scrutiny, resulting in unequal wealth distribution. These disparities become evident when examining the lived experiences and historical precedents of Tiwa Savage and Burna Boy. Consumers of Afrobeats hold distinct expectations for each artist based on gender, ultimately contributing to the economic disparities between male and female performers. The prevalence of gender bias and stereotypes is particularly evident when considering Tiwa Savage's limited freedom to express herself through music or control the narrative surrounding incidents

36. Jordan Ealey, "Black Is King," Beyoncé Knowles-Carter, Kwasi Fordjour, Emmanuel Adjei, Blitz Bazawule, Ibra Ake, Jenn Nkiru, Jake Nava, Pierre Debusschere, and Dkayl Rimmash, dirs. (2020)," in *Studies in Musical Theatre* 15 no. 1 (2021): 65–67.

37. Christin Smith and Loren Saxton Coleman, "Ancestor is King: The Role of Afrofuturism in Beyoncé's *Black is King*," in *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 39 no. 4 (2022): 247–59.

38. Muzayyanah Awaliyah, Mustofa Mutmainnah, and Iklila Ummu Sam'ah, "Black Parade" Song: How Beyoncé Criticized Racism," *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa* 8, no. 1 (2021): 103–11.

such as the sex tape leak. Moreover, a glance at the Afro Nation Afrobeats festival's website in Miami reveals a striking absence of women in the festival's organizing committee. This lack of representation of women within the music industry is a significant factor contributing to the exclusion of women from Afrobeats performance spaces. The historical precedents in which women in the industry have consistently been marginalized and underpaid for their performances perpetuate a norm that discourages female participation. This lack of representation effectively disempowers women in the Afrobeats musical scene, limiting their ability to negotiate fair compensation. The resultant lack of transparency in pay between genders leads to a pronounced gender pay gap.

This analysis underscores the notion that Afrobeats audiences tend to favor music that aligns with their personalities and societal norms. The prevalence of male domination in Afrobeats, especially in the United States, is a result of African patriarchal values that align with the colorism prevalent in the United States. African audiences, accustomed to male-dominated concert lineups, have carried this preference to the United States. Male artists are often rewarded for freely expressing themselves, even when their songs challenge societal norms. These expressions foster a stronger fan base, translating into increased income through higher views on streaming platforms. Consequently, Afrobeats concerts and festival organizers seeking to sell event tickets often prioritize male artists because they draw larger audiences. In addition to monetary compensation, these invitations enhance the visibility of male artists and lead to nominations for global awards. Hence, artists like Burna Boy garner Grammy nominations, whereas their female counterparts, such as Tiwa Savage, do not. This analysis highlights how these experiences and performances are directly tied to wealth disparities in the Afrobeats music industry. Women Afrobeats artists receive fewer opportunities than their male counterparts, ultimately resulting in a significant wealth gap. ■

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