

## AFRICAN NATIONAL ANTHEMS: THEIR VALUE SYSTEM AND NORMATIVE ‘POTENTIAL’

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**ABSTRACT** Arguably, a national anthem defines a country’s identity. Globally, it is regarded as a symbol of national unity. In Africa, they assert a country’s independence from colonial imperialism. Despite their strong symbolism and nationalistic ingenuity, national anthems have remained latent in both academic and policy discourses. Moreover, they not only exhibit nationalistic elements, but also propagandistic, aggressive or even chauvinistic constructs. In view of this dichotomy, the debate continues to deepen as the dilemma unveils, how to reconcile the positive elements of the national anthems with the antagonistic lyrics they produce in order to promote values and norms for full realization of ‘African potentials?’ Drawing upon Ian Manners’s concept of ‘normative power,’ this article employs thematic network analysis tools to examine the pattern of lyrics within the African national anthems as potential sources of ‘norms’ for framing the philosophy of ‘African potentials.’ This article goes beyond the common argument that national anthems are historical effigies to discover the ‘potentials’ within the diversity of constructs emerging from their lyrics and thematic network analytics.

**Key Words:** Africa; African potentials; National anthem.

### INTRODUCTION

In one of the African languages, Kiswahili, it is translated as ‘*Wimbo wa Taifa*,’ the national anthem is considered as a sacred and liberation song. Most of them were composed by African fighters against colonial domination during the independence struggle, 1950–1960s (Blake, 2006). Yet some historians argue that revolutionary propaganda started as early as 1922, when an article in the *Communist Review* demanded that ‘no opportunity for Africans should be lost for propagandizing the native soldiers in the colonial armies’ (Geiss, 1967; Tageldin, 2014). Ali Mazrui agrees with this historical account and relates the ‘secret Pan-African army’ to the Sinn Féin that was built up by the Irish Army under the very nose of England (Mazrui, 2003). In essence, liberation songs that later on coined into national anthems were part and parcel of this Pan-African struggle against external domination, development contradiction, ignorance, and possibly ‘intellectual poverty’ (Meli, 1988; Cusack, 2005; Allen, 2013).

Caught between an insolvent development contradiction and intellectual predicament, the African continent requires deep reflections. My interest to conduct research and reflect on the richness and memories of African ‘national anthems’ elated my mind in December 2015 while having a vigil during the 23rd anniversary of my late father, Nicodemus Onditi Obimbo. During this

occasion, I had an opportunity to gather our extended family members in our rural home, in western Kenya. Whenever I create such an opportunity to bond with family and nature, I always listen more than I talk. In this occasion, our fourth-born brother, Mr. Samuel Amkono narrated to us how our late father in the 1970s and 80s regularly prayed for the family. Interestingly, his prayers were not the usual supplications. Every time he (the late) made a prayer, he would conclude by reciting both the Kenyan and Tanzanian national anthems. With nostalgia, Mr. Amkono noted that *baba* (our father), would particularly emphasize the first ‘God bless Africa’ and the last line ‘Bless children of Africa’ of the first stanza of the Tanzanian national anthem. Reference to ‘God’ was perhaps used as a call to God to extricate his family from the yoke of *abject poverty* that his family was enduring at the time. The reference to ‘children’ symbolized his sentimental belief in his seven sons and a daughter as the only ‘hope’ for the future. Unfortunately, he never lived longer to see the fruits of his labour. He died on October 12, 1992 of what doctors at the *old Russia* hospital in Kisumu described as a ‘cardiac arrest.’ May God rest his soul in eternal peace.

In my view, the memories of spiritualizing the national anthem by the Onditi senior, is a sign of institutionalized forms of memories for avoiding forgetting those histories that bring hope, even to the most under-privileged in the society. There is also the thread of cultural nationalism, i.e., building an aura of nationalism ‘from below,’ starting from the nucleus of the society-family. For example, the link with the ancestors, as in the Lesotho and Zimbabwe ‘Land of our Fathers,’ as well as the references to ‘Lord,’ ‘Holy Spirit,’ ‘Bless Us’ symbolizes their role in history and religion. These are forms of ‘social control’ regulating the society against excesses. Secondly, in the African cosmogony people don’t die; they are referred to as the ‘departed’ who can always be invoked to come and help their descendants during historical moments of family or national crises, whether these are induced by external or internal forces. References to the war that wrought independence and to the blood shed during war touch on the sentiments and emotions of those affected. It is a strategy to constantly remind the nation of these important events as key unifying epochs.

However, fifty years after the Independence of most African states, African people still grapple with chronic poverty, underdevelopment, protracted conflicts, ignorance, and the politics of ethnicity (Oyugi, 1997: 47; Noyoo, 2000: 58; Saha, 2010: 81). Arguably, they provide a symbolic sense of national unity and a sense of identity (Guibernau, 2004; Kyridis et al., 2009), as such, creating an environment for the realization of ‘African Potentials.’ The idea of ‘African Potentials’ was first coined by the Centre for African Area Studies (CAAS) of Kyoto University in efforts to create functional academic linkages between African and Japanese scholars in addressing African development challenges in the 21st century.<sup>(1)</sup> In this article, the concept of ‘African Potentials’ implies both material and non-material aspects of development. For instance, land, frequently mentioned in most African anthems, is not only a basis for production, but it is also a symbolic form of empowerment. During the colonial period, land was a source of tensions and conflicts, leading to the loss of life and dignity

for Africans. Therefore, the discourse around 'African Potentials' aims at evaluating the wisdom and systems to deal with global and regional issues, which the African society has given birth to and have been neglected by such powerful forces throughout history of African people, without romanticizing them. This process of decolonization takes various forms: the promotion of citizenship, as well as addressing issues such as social inequality, gender-sexuality, and land injustices.

The question of gender remains unaddressed in most African societies, particularly in connection to land ownership. The chauvinistic nature of national anthems, is real. As revealed by this article, the normative power of national anthems has been majorly felt in regard to land ownership between men and women. For example, in most countries in Africa, women farmers typically achieve lower productivity in agriculture than men due to their limited access to-and returns from productive resources, such as land. This results in an untapped productivity and potential for consolidating peace and stability on the continent. Recent studies have shown that the lack of a gender perspective in agricultural policies may undermine efforts to support local resource management and climate adaptation (Su et al., 2017). At the same time, agriculture continues to be a main contributor to pro-poor growth and poverty reduction in African economies, because it focuses on the parts of the economy in which the poor are active (Diao et al., 2010). The majority of low-income developing countries are agrarian economies, defined as countries in which at least 60% of the population lives in rural areas (The World Bank, 2011). Thus, addressing gendered power relations in socio-economic activities is a prerequisite to challenge the stereotypical view against women, but it could also be a strategy for attaining the 'African Potential' in all aspects, addressing root causes of conflict, including a lack of food, hence preventing women-men tensions at the household level (Reda, 2016).

Besides the social implications of the philosophical nature of national anthems, their contextual inclination is key to their interpretation. Regardless of the country or region in question, their lyrics may symbolize power and sometimes victory. In the Western world, they are played to pay homage to a reigning monarch or head of state. From a socio-political point of view, they depict people's social, cultural, and political history (Vambe & Khan, 2009: 30; Liao et al., 2012: 115). Contrary to the socio-political point of view, other scholars elucidate that anthems, particularly those drawn from Africa, were circumstantial and that they are artistic productions, poetry or prose written during the colonial period (Ngara, 1988). Moreover, they have also become part of celebrations during the quadrennial Olympic Games (Bornman, 2005: 385). In the post-1994 South Africa, the opening ceremony of the 1995 Rugby World Cup continued to shape the politics of the Southern African nation (Muller, 2001: 25). In what seems to be the renewal of the Pan-African movement, there is a growing attention on the need to revitalize the notion of 'African ownership' (Franke & Esmenjaud, 2008: 140). This has become more visible in the advent of the Agenda 2063 (African Union, 2014). As such, African leaders and ordinary citizens alike are learning to unite and speak with one voice on regional and global issues (African Union,

2014).

In line with the notion of ‘African Potentials,’ both African and Western scholars have espoused the need to reflect on some of the indicators of past struggles (West, 2006: 59; Jaravani, 2013: 275). To this end, there is a growing need for scholars and policymakers to revisit African identities partly because they present symbols of a common public culture (Smith, 2002: 15). It can be argued that common public cultures are recipes for peace, harmony, and unity. Based on these qualities of the African *Nyimbo za Taifa*, it is clear that their lyrics have the potential to provide a rich source of knowledge, skills, tools and values that prevent conflicts and promote a culture of peace. Their normative richness could immensely contribute to social and political transformation, national cohesion and unity (McWhorter, 2001; Mazrui, 2003: 135; Borman, 2005: 385; Breed, 2009: 145; Emeh, 2013: 116). However, whereas most African countries regard national anthems as a statue for national unity (Guibernau, 2004: 127; Lenz, 2013: 213), they remain latent without an adequate conceptual framework on how they could be utilized for responding to aforementioned challenges. An analysis of the lyrics produced by national anthems is important for understanding not only the pattern of harmony and dichotomy, but also the implications of these lyrics on African development processes—nation building and peacebuilding.

This article proceeds in two sections. The next section describes the methodological as well as conceptual tools utilized when analyzing the patterns of lyrics and themes from the national anthems’ texts of 55 African countries. The second details the patterns of lyrics and their implications on pillars identified by the African Union as key to Africa’s developmental trajectory in 2063: inclusive development, nation-building, Pan-Africanism, governance and cultural identity, and values and ethics (African Union, 2015). The conclusion considers the potential analytical and normative utilization of national anthem’s constructs as an alternative model for informing policy formulation as well as framing development narratives towards the realization of ‘African potentials.’

## IAN MANNERS’ CONCEPT OF ‘NORMATIVE POWER’

This article was born from a study on African ‘national anthems’ and peacebuilding within the context of the African renaissance in the five African sub-regions: Eastern Africa, Southern Africa, Western Africa, Central Africa, and the Maghreb sub-region.<sup>(2)</sup> National anthems of selected countries were dissected using a thematic network analysis (TNA) approach to identify trending themes before interpreting their possible linkages to the elements identified as drivers of Pan African potentials: inclusive development, nation-building, Pan-Africanism, governance and cultural identity, values and ethics.

This article employed a thematic network analysis as it related to the grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1990: 6; Silverman, 2006) to examine the lyrics produced by African national anthems on the following basis: i) basic themes; ii) organizational themes; and iii) global themes (Attide-Stirling, 2001: 390).

This approach enabled us to break up the text systematically into clearly defined clusters of themes, hence unraveling and making sense of the mass of textual data rather than relying on intuition. All of the 55 African countries' national anthems were examined against the set criteria of basic, organizational, and global themes. Thus, themes were not necessarily classified as per the regional economic community (REC) geopolitical infrastructural arrangements, instead, patterns of similarities and discontinuities in concepts engrained in the anthems were identified and sequentially coded as basic, organizational and global.

This approach recognized the fact that there is overlapping membership into the RECs. For example, Tanzania draws membership in both the East African Community (EAC) and the South African Development Community (SADC). However, this article focuses on analyses of common terms, words and concepts among national anthems, at the same time assessing how these terms, words and concepts speak to the Pan-African philosophy of inclusive development, nation-building, Pan-Africanism, governance and identities, values and ethics. Reference to natural ecology and conscious avocation of the cultural and physical geography (flora and fauna, land and spiritual resources), as well as the memory of political history of African people forms an important component of this article. Symbolism (flag, colours of the flag, blood of the heroes) is a critical aspect of African emancipation; thus, this article makes attempt to interpret, not only their lyrics, but also their lived values, as relates to African norms, liberation struggles, peace and unity.

Thus, this approach allowed for sensitive, insightful and rich exploration of the text's overt structures and underlying patterns. In this case, the step-by-step process involved analyzing the themes of the national anthem that were specific to its national context and how they in turn linked or resonated with key concepts linked to the Pan-African renaissance (inclusive development; nation-building; Pan-Africanism; governance and cultural identity, values and ethics).

In regard to the conceptual framework, both historians and cultural study scholars have attempted to link national symbols to nationalism and ethnic identity (Smith, 1991; Manners, 2002). In this article, we employed the concept of 'normative power' to understand how lyrics were produced in national anthems in various African contexts. The concept of 'normative power' has roots both in the works of Anthony Smith and Ian Manners (Smith, 1991; Manners, 2002). It relates to the concept of 'ethno-symbolism' developed by Smith, which espouses nation-building as a form of collective cultural identity (Smith, 2002: 10). The development of this theory was largely influenced by Smith's notion that *ethnie*'s is a status precursor of nations, grounded on myths, memories, values, traditions and symbols (Smith, 1991; Adams, 1995: 460). However, critiques of Smith have faulted his emphasis on the 'legal rights and duties' of citizens as a sign of nationalism as being minimalistic (Guibernau, 2004: 130). For instance, Smith fails to acknowledge that 'common legal rights and duties' do not necessarily define the common 'social values' that define a nation. It is possible to offer an account of a nation and nationalism without considering the legal or dutiful obligations of citizens, hence, the use of the concept 'normative power.'

In this article, it is believed that norms conveyed by national anthems transcend material culture and legal obligations to develop a set of values that may influence citizens' behavior towards a particular cause in life, such as nation-building and peacebuilding. Furthermore, such behavior is largely influenced by the power of values and norms generated by national anthems. Hence, this article employs Manners's concept of 'normative power' to frame discussions on the influence of lyrics produced by national anthems to develop processes such as nation-building and peacebuilding in the African context. Manners applies the concept of 'normative power' to examine the various types of diffusion material or ideation (Manners, 2002: 238). Given the immaterial nature of national anthems, this article focuses on normative power from an ideational lens. In this perspective, therefore, it is noted that norms are transmitted through ideas and institutions, as well as policies (Lenz, 2013: 213).

To this end, the institutional orientation of African anthems is a reflection of the social values embedded within the cultural confines of people. Thus, national anthems are regarded as sacred, ritualistic and godly (Liao et al., 2012). The linkages between norms and the human ecosystem can also be considered from a cognitive point of view. When people think in dissimilar ways and are not willing to compromise at all, conflicts arise (Odunuga, 2013: 704). This means that differences in individuals' opinions, values, understanding, expressions and thought processes lead to conflict. As alluded to by Plato, conflict begins in the human mind; thus, rhythm and harmony that come with art-based peacebuilding strategies have the capacity to transform the soul. In other words, the common ground is nationalism's connection to both peacebuilding and already existent ethnic identities and communities' desire to achieve religious harmony, liberty, cultural cohesion, political unity and regional integration (Merdjanova, 2000: 234; Bajaj, 2015: 155; Mishra, 2015: 27).

Some scholars have argued that national anthems, similar to any other national symbol, galvanizes citizens' nationalism (Bozos, 2004: 30). They also strengthen a country's identity and people's allegiances and feelings of belonging to a nation and state (Brunn & Cottle, 1997: 250). Many of these same symbols and images provide the basis for nationalism, regionalism, irredentism, and potentially even later for separatism, devolution, and conflict (Jones & Fowler, 2007). National identity is not an innate quality in human beings; neither is it acquired naturally as one grows up. It is however, considered, a powerful instrument in state building. Thus, it forms a key pillar of nation building and, in some circumstances, peacebuilding (Eriksen, 1993: 9). This article examines how the normative power of national anthems influences national culture and policies based on cognition and identity. The creators of national anthems expected that the lyrics they produced would exert influence on what they considered to be appropriate behavior by citizens. Two mechanisms are particularly important in the construction of norms (Manners, 2002: 238).

The first is socialization (Manners, 2002). In this article, it refers to the various forms of influence-'harmonious' narratives of 'human dignity' and 'peacebuilding' as well as 'negative' ones of 'bloodshed' and 'war.' The means by which the

lyrics of national anthems exert influence through normative power are similar to those by which it exerts influence through state functions. For example, the solemn recitation of a national anthem by citizens in remembrance of a previous civil war or genocide serves to remind the nation of the importance of maintaining cohesion and peaceful coexistence. Socialization efforts occur through the institutional channels provided by the state or the country's history. The subtle differences lie in the fact that these paths merely serve as *channels of* diffusion by providing settings for socialization to occur; they do not guarantee peace or stability in themselves.

The second form of normative diffusion is emulation (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Checkel, 2001: 550). Learning the deeper meaning of a national anthem's lyrics can be a source of ideation for peacebuilding. In this case, national anthems ultimately exert cross-cultural influence by virtue of their historical record and attractiveness. As a result, the self-construction of national anthems as a successful public culture in nation-building takes pride in the place. Advocates of this course of normative diffusion observe that narratives are key sources of soft power (Nicolaïdis & Howse, 2002). The functional orientation of national anthems is intertwined with their national identities. Often, nations with similar geopolitical orientations have similar lyrics. For example, the national anthems of Bulgaria (55.56% of the statements), Austria (41.94%), Canada (38.46%), Australia (39.47%), Russia (33.3%) and Belgium (31.25%) substantially describe their "homeland" as a notion, even as a geographical area. The social functions of national anthem have been considered key to uniting individuals under the same flag, oath, and anthem, among others, inducing a general feeling of belonging to a specific community and using preexisting forms in the nation (Smith, 1998). Among African national anthems, the use of the phrase, '*God Bless Africa*' across most of the countries in Southern Africa, including Zimbabwe, Zambia and the Republic of South Africa, attest to this understanding.

In sum, Ian Manners explains that the normative power of national symbols such as national anthems can be interpreted as ideational diffusion, which operates through socialization or emulation. However, why would policy makers in Africa be persuaded to adopt norms presented by various national anthems to develop an alternative peacebuilding model? To address this question, a closer examination of the lyrics and themes produced by national anthems is necessary.

## THE DYCHOTOMY OF NATIONAL ANTHEMS

A thematic network analysis of lyrics produced by African *national anthems* highlighted both the harmony and tension in their potential application to nation-building and peacebuilding processes. The literature on nationalism indicates that most national anthems are interwoven across sub-regions, with countries with shared historical and political backgrounds depicting similarities (Smith, 2009: 5). However, the results in this study revealed that the meanings and frequency of occurrence among constructs varied across and within sub-regions. In order

to have a sense of this differentiation article, this examines patterns in the African national anthems as linked to the concept of ‘African potentials,’ inclusive development, nation-building, Pan-Africanism, governance and identities, values and ethics.

### I. Inclusive Development

In this study, African sustainable development and inclusion were perceived as a response to the need to preserve nature and the land, a phenomenon essential to African people and ingrained in their culture and traditions (Smith, 2009: 7). Among the top fifty most frequently occurring concepts in African national anthems, the outcomes of the thematic network analysis revealed that concepts denoting economic engagement ranked relatively high across the five sub-regions. They included the following: people 19 (34.5%), land 29 (52.7%), labor 10 (18.2%), sun 9 (16.4%), and homeland 8 (14.5%). According to this *organizational theme*, the role of land as a factor of production was vividly reflected in African national anthems. This implied that anthems set the pace for African economic order. Similar trends were observed across African sub-regions; in aggregate, the Southern African sub-region had the highest (71.4%) frequency of the concept of land, followed by Eastern African (63.9%) and West African (47.1%). In Central Africa sub-region, the concept of land appeared in two (28.6%) of the seven countries, and similarly in the Maghreb sub-region, the concept appeared in two (33.3%) countries of the total six in the sub-region. The concept of ‘land’ as not only a means of economic production but also a source of cultural prestige among African people was prevalent. For instance, the Sudanese national anthem begins by pointing to the ownership of land by the people, *we are the army of God and of our land*.

The African economic order, as conceived by national anthems, portrays Africa as largely dependent on the forces of nature and fortunes of ‘god.’ The concept of ‘god’ appeared in 25 (45.5%) of the total of 55 countries studied. The need to defend the land was considered to be born from the liberation struggle that led Africans to sacrifice their lives for independence. Other concepts related to the phenomenon of defending African land, featured in national anthems include the following: struggle 8 (14.5%), death 11 (20%), and bloodshed 12 (21%). Although these concepts also appeared among other African countries, they were mainly featured in countries such as South Sudan, Djibouti, Benin, Niger, Burkina Faso and Cape Verde. This association reiterated the finding that national anthems were not only sources of values for peacebuilding but also sources of tension, particularly when viewed from the African emancipation perspective. The first stanza of Benin’s national anthem, for example, obliges citizens to maintain their land, as it was obtained through bloodshed in vivid battles, it says, to *deliver at the price of the blood of vivid battles*.

It was also established that some global norms such as gender equality and inclusivity that remained silent in policy spaces were engrained in national anthems. However, it is mixed; some of the worst forms of exclusion against



women, as articulated by Connell & Messerschmidt's (2005) conception of hegemonic masculinity (social hierarchy), find their way into some national symbols. Accordingly, this study found similar trends among African national anthems. In fact, words such as sons 7 (12.7%), fatherland 9 (16.4%), and brothers 5 (9%) were featured more among several countries, compared to feminine concepts such as motherland 6 (10.9%) and women 4 (7.3%). Interestingly, among the African countries, Tanzania highlighted both men and women in the second stanza of its national anthem: *Wake kwa Waume na Watoto*, (Women, Men and Children).

## II. Nation-building

The basal and crude necessity for continued liberation, with all of its erosive characteristics, reduced the trajectory of national anthems as sources of norms for peacebuilding and nation-building. However, the uniting function of national anthems was not, by any means, relegated exclusively to its emancipation functions. Overall, unity as a concept occurred in 32 (58.2%) of the 55 African countries. Similar trends were observed among the national anthems across sub-regions: Eastern Africa 7 (63.3%); Southern Africa 7 (50%); Central African sub-region 6 (85.7%); West African 12 (70.6%). None of the national anthems among countries in the Maghreb sub-region contained the concept of unity. Nation-building was found to be included considerably more, as defined by other associated concepts such as peace 25 (45.5%), nation 21 (38.3%) and nation-building (21.8%). Even among national anthems where liberation 17 (30.9%) and struggle 8 (14.5%) were considered cornerstones of nationalism, concepts such as love 15 (27.3%) and happiness 10 (18.2%) as well as symbolic words such as flag 13 (23.6%) reflected the peacebuilding tone of national anthems.

The sanctity of African national anthems is reflected in several symbolic forms. For example, the first stanza of Zimbabwe's national anthem echoes the main theme of 'God Bless Africa' for Zimbabwe to be blessed and protected by the creator from all foes. Although this is a sign that the country is concerned with national security, it could also symbolize the absence of peace clouded by 'fear' and apathy among citizens. In Zimbabwe, the colors of the flag and references to fallen heroes relate more to the ideology of the ruling party, ZANU PF (Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front), which has at some level become coterminous with the government of Zimbabwe and the state. The same lyric is observed in the Mozambique's national anthem, *heroic people who, gun in hand, toppled colonialism*.

The theme of celebrating independence and African history's triumph over colonialism is rife in Mozambique's national anthem. Similar to the Zimbabwean anthem, references to the flag as a symbol of statehood and references to fighters who toppled colonialism are made. These verses celebrate the new socialist party and the triumph of Mozambique over colonialism, while exalting the ideology of the ruling party at the same time. This is the same as the verse in the Zambian anthem that also celebrates independence, while upholding the centrality of

freedom of the people of Zambia, *free men we stand, under the flag of our land*.

The current South African (SA) national anthem is a combination of 'God Bless Africa,' *Morena Boloka*, which is the Sesotho version of 'God Bless Africa,' *Die Stem Vie Suid Africa*, which was the national anthem from 1957–1994 and *The Call of South Africa*, the English version of *Die Stem Vie Suid Africa* (God Bless Africa was composed by Enoch Sontonga, a Methodist Mission school teacher in 1897). Before the SA elections in 1994, 'The Call of South Africa' was the official anthem of SA apartheid, while 'God Bless Africa' was sung by the majority of the population at all anti-apartheid rallies and similar political gatherings. The two were merged into one official SA national anthem after independence was gained in October 1997. The national anthem employs 5 of the 11 officially spoken languages in SA, presenting SA as a multicultural society. On similar note, Mozambique's talks about unity and freedom, referring to the country as 'our land' and the issue of land as national identity. The same is also true of Lesotho's national anthem, which speaks of peace and ancestors' land as a uniting force, *oh, land of mine, land of our fathers*.

Additionally, the use of symbolic terms such as children 10 (18.2%) and homeland 8 (14.5%) were found to be essential characteristics of a conceptual framework ideal for the African peacebuilding architecture. In this sense, the functional aspects of emancipation discourse were abandoned in favor of less hostile but equally universal claims about African national anthems. As such, the following themes were conceptually constructed: 1) National anthems are key symbols of national identity; 2) Nationalistic behavior among leaders drives patriotism; 3) Effective regional integration reflects national policies on issues such as language and style of governance; 4) The type of education system in a country drives both collective and class conscience towards using national anthems; 5) Citizens have an intrinsic urge to be loyal to a state; 6) Consciousness about national anthems enables resistance to foreign domination and other nationalities; and 7) People of a country have value systems that promote cohesion.

Concepts such as 'negritude' and 'African Personality' were theoretical and philosophical expressions of the general mood of African nationalism. As part of this new social consciousness, some scholars believed that with independence a new ethos would be created, a new kingdom where Africans were free, proud of themselves and their culture, and respected by other nations (Curtis, 2010). Similarly, patterns emerging from the thematic network reveal that concepts are selected and ordered in a manner effective enough to bring the people of a nation together, and these 'sacred' historic moments are highlighted and emphasized. For example, the first stanza of the Zimbabwean national anthem emphasizes lifting up the flag of the country against all foes as a symbol of proclaiming victory from colonialism. References to heroes of the liberation struggle also reinforce the same point that the formation of national anthems was indeed influenced by political issues and the need to celebrate the overthrow

of colonial conquest in the continent.

Although the above statements largely denote the positive function of national symbols, the impulses of national anthems, as reflected in tone and rhythm, were seen to be controversial and therefore an immutable part of the human political struggle: a) Ethnic relations in Africa are complex and reflect community cohesion, and b) Fragile multicultural states have a tendency to relapse into conflict. The ethnic factor was clearly demonstrated in some of the national anthems. For example, Rwanda's national anthem recognizes the three main ethnic groups, although not necessarily in the order of superiority, but the tone seem to esteem the *Tutsi*, the others include, *Twa and Hutu*.

### III. Pan-Africanism

This study established Pan-Africanism as a concept in national anthems and form of intellectual resistance to neocolonialism, characterized by terminologies such as 'Africa,' 'neighbors' and 'patriotism.' However, this was not strongly reflected in the manner in which terms that defined Pan-Africa such as 'Africa' were featured in the national anthems. For example, in Eastern Africa, the term 'Africa' only appeared in two (18.2%) countries, in Southern Africa, 3 (21.4%) countries, and in West African, 4 (23.5%) countries. In the same vein, none of the countries in the Central African and Maghreb sub-region contained the term 'Africa.' Collectively, the term appeared in 9 (16.6%) of the 55 African states under study. Pan-Africanism was believed to represent positivism as well as cynicism. For example, the first stanza of the Tanzanian national anthem states, 'God Bless Africa,' and the last line of the last stanza of the Ugandan anthem states, 'The Pearl of Africa's Crown.' These two represent a hopeful Africa. On the other hand, the Central Africa Republic's (CAR) first stanza crowns African people in solidarity as having the same origin. However, it obliges people to remain vigilant to resist any form of tyranny, *from both within and outside, long subjugated, long scorned by all, but, from today, breaking tyranny's hold.*

In this sense, therefore, African national anthems were conceptualized less as norms to serve a developmental function and more as a liberation phenomenon. In Southern African countries, the use of terms such as 'strive for freedom,' 'liberation' and 'struggle' are shared among countries such as Angola, South Africa, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In particular, the Angolan national anthem highlights the importance of liberation voices as demonstrated in line one of the first stanza.

### IV. Governance

African national anthems' conceptual foundation in governance and democracy was certainly found to be elementary. However, moving away from its conceptualization as a tool for liberation and intellectual resistance against external domination, the thematic alignment also revealed that anthems were conceptualized to advance a universal culture of good governance, democratic values, gender

equality, respect for human dignity, justice and the rule of law.

Freedom was perceived to have been achieved through liberation struggle, bloodshed and death, but what pushed liberation over the threshold of a mere platonic relationship was the ability of incoming African rulers to embrace values of good governance and respect for human dignity. Amartya Sen's argument that development as 'freedom' should reflect human progress is primarily and ultimately an enhancement of opportunities such as human entitlement (Sen, 1999). The conceptualization of African national anthems seems to elucidate that freedom is an end to the struggle from external domination and not necessarily the promotion of human agency as central to human wellbeing, as espoused by Sen. This implies that the notion that African national anthems are embedded in values and ethics is questionable, particularly in respect to flawed democratic and authoritarian regimes on the continent (Stewart, 2015; Isma'ila & Othman, 2016; Walker, 2016). Thus, democracy did not necessarily imply good governance; even in circumstances where democracy was conceptualized to mean participation, the country's history differentiated the type of democracy a country portrayed as an agitation against the West and the type of democracy a country fronted for domestic consumption. Rwanda typifies this contradictory phenomenology in the first stanza of its national anthem.

This notion of democracy as a conceptual framework of national anthems was not necessarily a central theme. Concepts that would ordinarily define democracy and rule of law (such as respect for human dignity and participation) did not rank highly across sub-regions; rights were represented in 5 (9.1%) countries, humanity in 4 (7.3%) countries, protection in 4 (7.3%) countries and democracy in 3 (5.5%) countries. Moreover, democracy alone was not believed to guarantee good governance or rule of law; something else was required to leverage the conceptual relevance of national anthems beyond mere participation and transform it into something grander such as systems of values, national cohesion, loyalty, citizenship, identity and ethnic relations. Ethnic relations and African geopolitics of boundaries seem to play a major role in the conceptualization of some African national anthems. When similar concepts were examined across borders, it was established that some national anthems were explicit about their foreign relations and regional politics. For instance, the Ugandan national anthem recognizes the importance of neighbors in the second stanza. The country's defense strategy seems to emphasize a diplomatic approach to regional issues, *and with neighbours all, at our country's call, in peace and friendship we'll live*.

Despite the notion of *diplomatic neighborliness* among African anthems, latent tensions between countries, particularly those with fractured borders, were featured in some national anthems. For example, the conceptualization of Somalia's national anthem rages with grudges of war and protestations. Several lines of every stanza warn of the return of a perceived seized land. Moreover, the symbolic '*white star*' in line 4 denotes the ambiguity of the borders with countries such as Kenya, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Djibouti, implying that future cartographic realignment of the regional borders may be a necessary measure in regional integration and promoting comprehensive peacebuilding in the region.

## V. Cultural Identity, Values and Ethics

By analyzing the coded words from the 55 African countries' national anthems, it is observed that statements were made in reference to both material (flag, sons, daughters, mothers, fatherland, sun, and children) and immaterial (love, ancestors, singing, happiness, heart, and god) culture. The organizational themes revealed the following: 1) national anthems project a world that is beyond human control (oath, religion, conversation, socio-cultural identity and the arts); 2) national anthems are inherently masculine; 3) an Africa controlled by invisible forces—ancestors (totems, traditions and rituals); 4) African cultural identity informs the national development agenda; 5) African national anthems are anchored on the universal values-love, respect, and happiness; and 6) national anthems rekindle national sentiments.

Land as the main source of African heritage is featured prominently among anthems. As such, the concept of land appeared in 29 (52.7%) of the total 55 African countries. Other symbolic forms of culture characterizing national anthems included the following: singing in 11 (20%) countries, flag in 13 (23.6%) countries, love in 15 (27.3%) countries, and sun in 9 (16.4%) countries. The word 'happiness' appeared in 10 (18.2%) countries. This reflects the hospitality of African people and the traits required to create the necessary conditions for resolving relational conflicts as well as peacebuilding. The occurrence of terms such as love, happiness, life, prosperity, righteousness, humanity, holiness, friendship, spirit and brotherly indicate the mental and emotional euphoria that enlivens Africans enormously. Thus, delight in African national anthems can be central to the conceptualization of African peacebuilding infrastructure and development modelling. However, there seem to be emotional ties that are limited to the psychology of national anthems, particularly in their musical lyrics. Nevertheless, even when the euphoria was psychological and immaterial to provide strategies for nation-building and peacebuilding, it remained firmly rooted in the aspirations of African people to unite and build the continent based on its natural heritage.

While there exist several aspects of harmony and calls for peaceful coexistence, such as the case of Congo, Brazzaville and Gabon, other countries in the same geographical area maintain a liberation mood. For example, the second to last line of the last stanza in the Chadian anthem warns the populace of the need to remain vigilant in preserving their freedom, "Your freedom will be born of your courage." Inter-regional similarities in the conceptualization of anthems are evident across the continent. For instance, the same themes of peace and protecting the nation from enemies also exist in anthems from Malawi, Kenya, Tanzania, Gambia and Nigeria. For Nigeria, the emphasis on the three pillars (freedom, peace and unity) of nationalism appears prominently in the first stanza, "One nation bound in freedom, peace and unity."

A similar motif also exists in the Angolan national anthem with references to the heroes who died for independence and the need to honor the people's history. The second line of the first stanza says, "*The heroes of the fourth of February.*"

It goes on to recognize the brevity and sacrifice of the freedom fighters for the attainment of the country's independence. As such, the fourth line of the first stanza says, "...*Who died for our independence.*" Likewise, Swaziland's national anthem implores the creator to establish and fortify them, 'Establish and fortify us, Lord Eternal.' On the other hand, Niger's 5th line of the 3rd stanza radicalizes the populace to rise against any intruder by symbolically referring to such enemies as 'animals.' The Maghreb sub-region seems to project more dichotomy than harmony in the conceptualization of its national anthems. The Algerian anthem is more treacherous with the first stanza that asserts, '*we swear by the lightning that destroys.*'

Although the results showed that the lyrics produced by African national anthems point to the detachment of African countries from any form of external domination (intellectual or material), in the end, the discourse invariably returned to the oppression of citizens of such countries. Dichotomies among national anthems make the simple isolation of their concepts even more complex to do for building a peacebuilding framework or a development model. Instead, it is imperative that coded concepts are conceptually linked to long-term development goals of which nation-building and peacebuilding strategies become a part. This is especially because change management scholars have reiterated that the theory of change can be a helpful tool for developing solutions to complex social problems facing development (Carr, 2000: 210). This means that if the theory of change is well articulated, policymakers and development strategists should be able to comfortably predict development results across the spectrum (Walinga, 2008).

## CONCLUSIONS

This study revealed that lyrics emerging from national anthems present both harmony and tension in the evolution of 'African Potentials.' In this diverse conceptualization, on one hand, nation-building and peacebuilding models were represented as a harmonious process depicted by the need to maintain unity and peace in the African land, with a recognition of the significant role played by natural forces—god and ancestors. On the other hand, tension was reflected as a disjunction to the African potentials—both materially and non-material symbols: i) African emancipation on the basis of freedom, liberation, bloodshed, death and continued struggle and ii) an economic order that is controlled by superstition and nature. Thus, the central tension is that while the African emancipation destines Africa to the enslavement of the past and fierce resistance against any form of western domination, the elements of nation-building such as unity, peace, god/divine, human dignity and land as a source of food and prosperity present prospects for positive peace. Any attempt to conduct a social construction (developing theory of change) for peacebuilding based on the philosophies of national anthems will require a dichotomous approach.

Furthermore, this study established that the popular notion that African national

anthems are similar was not true; instead, they bear a special relationship with the nation they represent. This relationship did not necessarily follow the African regional political infrastructure (Regional Economic Community classification), but rather, the abundance of natural resources (forests, oceans, sun and seas), spirituality of super natural forces, and the rich history of each respective country greatly influenced the lyrics of national anthems. This implied that African national anthems were largely heterogeneous in both conceptualization and aspiration. Thus, their application to nation-building and peacebuilding modelling can be effective if applied case-by-case considering contextual differences. Clearly, on the mere basis of this thematic network analysis of national anthems, it is difficult to elaborate on how the proposed alternative nation-building and peacebuilding model should be framed. Thus, further research is required to discover the intrinsic value of national anthems as; 1) lived social objects; 2) their potential contribution towards rethinking a rapidly technologically transforming Africa in the 21st century; and 3) from the African emancipation point of view, what is the relevance of national anthems in the face of covert (use of virtual technologies and mind set) forms of colonization?

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## NOTES

- (1) Centre for African Area Studies, Kyoto University, 6th African Forum between Japanese scholars and African scholars, on 'African Potentials to develop alternative methods of addressing global issues: Presented paper on, "*African National Anthems: Their Conceptual potential in modelling Afrocentric Peacebuilding and Development Architecture*" in Makerere University, Kampala, December 9–11, 2016.'
- (2) The Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) was established in February 1989 in Marrakech, Morocco, with the treaty agreeing to coordinate, harmonize and rationalize their policies and strategies to achieve sustainable development among the five states; Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. With readmission of Western Sahara

into the African Union, its membership into AMU becomes inevitable. For the purpose of this article, themes and lyrics in the Egypt's national anthem are analyzed from a North African perspective. Given that the focus of this article is not necessarily on the structure of sub-regional bodies, evidence of harmony or discontinuities in themes and concepts forming the body of national anthem can transcend such geopolitical infrastructural arrangements. Hence, case examples from the Arab Maghreb Union and Egypt are identified as North African states, thus classified as 'Maghreb plus.'

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