The African Concept of *Personhood* and its Relevance in the Global Context

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We all struggle to find the meaning of being human. In this struggle, there are different attempts that aim at defining *personhood*: biological, anthropological, religious, psychological, and others. From the African perspective, there are culturally centred definitions that define the attributes of the human person (being) in clear terms. These terms have inherent values in them that if applied, would interrogate and inform current local and global ethics, especially the value we attach to life, beyond existence.

While it is clear that there is no homogeneity in as far as African culture is concerned, and language being part of culture, the different terms that define personhood have an inherent value in them that defy common parlance and straddle community limits. The concept of the human person is therefore encapsulated in the thoughts and actions of the African peoples, thereby giving credence to human relationships, shaping and determining these relationships in ways that cherish and value life-supporting and positive transformative efforts in building human societies, irrespective of gender, race and religion. It is therefore our contention that critical to African review of her present and future engagement in the global affairs is this age-long concept that she would need to reflect upon and propose to her present state and to the world at large. This is because of the peace and human security concerns on the continent arising out of the governance and democratic principles deficits experienced, together with the onslaught of the international community especially in the areas of trade and commerce which relegate Africa to the so-called 'Developing Economies' which are characterised by endemic poverty, political instability, corruption, together with the sickness and disease burdens.

It is the right understanding and appreciation of *personhood,* it is argued in the presentation, which will restore human dignity and value for life and all that pertains to it. We shall apply the concept to question both the physical and mental barriers that limit cooperation and working for the common good among modern communities. We shall build on the philosophy of '*I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am'* to strengthen the argument for a communal perspective that works for the establishment of the community of persons without borders; a community that works for and seeks the wellbeing of others. We shall further interrogate some of the cultural values related to gender segregation and roles; together with the kinship ties from the family to the ethnic or national identities. In this, we shall seek to inquire whether what essentially defines personhood is related to these 'convenient identities' that divide rather than unite humanity.

In the conclusion, se shall seek to establish interventions where modern day social, economic and political constructs (paradigms) contradict and are not supportive of personhood. Our proposals will be

based on the essential relationships between national, regional and international regimes and the local/indigenous values that assert human values of dignified living as members of the world, not bound by nationality, race or creed. With emphasis on raising both individual and community perspectives of personhood and its attendant values, we shall seek a re-assertion of the universality of our humanness, thereby advocating for humane relationships that enhance potential for human growth and development that seeks the good of others above limited interests.

African National Anthems: Their Theoretical Potential in Modelling Afrocentric Peacebuilding and Development Architecture

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Arguably, national anthems provide philosophical foundations for both nationalism and people's identity. World over, national anthems signifies a people's willingness to work for the benefit of the nation against foreign domination, be it political, economic, cultural or intellectual. In Africa, they signify a country's independent status and unity of the people. Despite this rich African heritage, national anthems have remained latent in both academic and policy discourses. Their functions have been limited to public holidays, yet their conceptualization presents potential framework for informing evolution of processes such as peacebuilding. Drawing upon peacebuilding conceptual frameworks-as well as thematic network analysis of the national anthems of the 55 African countries-this article explores how the conceptualization of national anthems could inform development of alternative framework for peacebuilding. It was established that these anthems present both resonances and dichotomy of concepts. It concludes by proposing ways in which these diversity of concepts could inform an African peacebuilding architecture.

Key words: African; national anthems; peacebuilding; nation building; African emancipation

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African Potential beyond Dichotomy: Local Quest for National Integration?

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Among major challenges to thinkers on African potential is how local people's views, choices and actions could be effective in the context of solution of difficulties and contradictions caused by political and economic macro-frameworks imposed or introduced to the continent by exogenous and/or global forces. We have known a number of remarkable local initiatives to get over problems in the micro-dimension. Nevertheless, we have to discuss how people could achieve peaceful and prosperous coexistence with macro-frameworks such as the nation state and market economy, while thorough replacement of them by any other frameworks seems to be unrealistic or even unproductive. Exploration on how African people's potential could be demonstrated or envisaged vis-à-vis their changing relations with the state system and market economy should be advanced.

It has been said that in a number of African countries, typical serious problems caused by the state poor governance and greedy aspect of 'market transaction' are elites' capture and control of resources, patrimonial rule, and ethnically divisive politics linked with the former two. Needless to say, these macro problems have been often negatively affecting ordinary people's livelihoods in ways such as: instigation of mass participation in ethnic clashes related to electoral struggles; land grabs by elites and corporations connected with them; uneven distribution of public and private resources; senses of marginalization and fear of 'others' in a nation which could be cause for minor and major violence.

Is African ordinary people's potential able to cope with these problems, in the process of which factors in macro- and micro-dimensions are intertwined with each other? This author are now attempting to look into this seemingly most difficult question in our study on African potential in two ways: one is to explore people's perception on national politics focusing on their views on political leaders' responsibility, corruption, ethnically-biased distribution of public resources, and desirable actions towards other ethnic groups' adverse circumstances; the other is to survey whether and how people are constructing collaborative and self-reliant groups and enterprises engaged in socio-economic activities, free from ethnic clustering. The main research field is a once-conflict-ridden area in Kenya which is an African country, apparently most clearly characterized by the macro-problems mentioned above. These problems came to surface when the country underwent a nation-wide conflict called Post-Election Violence (PEV) from 2007 to 2008.

Results of the author's first research has suggested that a majority of residents living in an area having suffered ethnic conflicts perceive that: leaders should conduct resource distribution in an ethnically non-biased manner; they should stop any corruption and respect for the state integrity; and people themselves should support other ethnic groups in the same country if the latter are in social or

economic difficulties. Such perceptions, if not false, seem to be conducive to overcoming divisive politics.

The second research is still very incomplete but has been revealing that there were initiatives to form self-help groups on the basis of non-ethnic selection after PEV, aiming at socio-economic recovery of neighborhoods. There are quite a few cases where these new self-help groups have developed into formally-registered corporations, utilizing assistance by the government and aid organizations. In the process of successful formalization and business expansion, emerging formal companies have been maintaining their multi-ethnic composition and ethnicity does not seem to be crucial for successes. The most successful corporation, however, has turned into an entity consisting of members from a single ethnic sub-group though having started as a multi-ethnic one.

Overall, we may tentatively claim that people not only understand importance of a non-corrupt and ethnically equitable macro-political framework but also collaborate beyond ethnic differences in daily businesses. Yet, ethnic identity may effectively strengthen internal cohesion of a corporation in the reality. African potential should be forged to bridge discrepancy so that ethnicity-based cohesion and multi-ethnic collaboration could complement each other.