

## (Mis)representation of Gender (In)equality in the National Anthems of Selected African States

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**Abstract.** Extant studies have examined national anthems from stylistic, historical, philosophical, pragmatic, discourse, sociological, and sociolinguistic perspectives with insufficient scholarly attention paid to the representation of gender issues inherent in the national anthems of African states. This study, therefore, examines how gender inequalities are lexically represented in the national anthems of selected African states with a view to unmasking implicitly gender-related issues and ideological inclinations inherent in the anthems. Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics and Lazarian Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis are adopted as framework. Ten (10) national anthems, which are gender inequality-laden, were purposively selected and served as data for this study. They are Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Libya, Malawi, Niger, Sudan, and Tunisia. Data were subjected to content and critical discourse analyses. Four gender-related issues were identified in the anthems namely: exclusion of women roles in the struggles for independence, glorification of men's roles before, during, and after independence, and backgrounding female gender versus foregrounding of male gender and gender equality. Gendered ideological inclinations in the anthems are male-chauvinistic, masculinity, patriarchal and nationalism. The study concludes that national anthems of selected African states are lopsided and tilted towards male gender at the detriment of the roles of women thereby perpetuating African patriarchal ideology.

**Keywords:** Lexical Choices, Representation, Gender Inequality, National Anthems, Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis

**Languages:** English, English (in Translation)

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## **1.0 Introduction**

A national anthem is a sacred compositionary song of an independent nation that reveals the socio-political, economic, and religious experiences and realities. It creates bonds and embodies collective national memory of a nation state. It is basically constructed to passionately project collective identity of a country expressing national identity, national history, bloody memory of war, heroism, and victory of a nation. According to Cerulo 1993, national anthem provides the strongest and clearest statements of national identity by distinguishing one nation from another, reaffirming their identity boundaries and projecting a collective message.

National anthem is a form of social practice and place for demystification of gender, power and ideology. As a form of discourse, national anthem is a reflection of how gender, ideology, and power are produced, reproduced, resisted, negotiated, constructed, contested, and perpetuated. It is a representation of gender inequality, subordination, domination, ideology, and power relation. This means that gender discourse as a form of social practice is socially constituted and constitutive. It is a discourse of domination, resistance, hegemony, power relation, gender inequality, subjugation and others. It is expedient to say that Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth, FCDA) is an approach that examines mainly the domination of women and the resistance put on by women. This resonates the tenets of Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis. According to Lazar 2005, among the basic tenets of FCDA are resistance, reflexivity, deconstruction of gender, power relation, and gender structure. Resistance, a major FCDA tenet, is an emancipatory involvement that is committed towards achieving and maintaining social gender order in text and talks.

FCDA is concerned with gender ideology, gender discourse and structure, resistance, unequal power relations, gender ideological inclinations, and gender deconstruction in texts and talks. FCDA is a theoretical anchorage that examines how hegemonic relations are enacted and perpetuated but also challenged in text and talk (Lazar, 2005, 1-2). Among the texts and talks is national anthem, which is a representation of the complexities, intricacies, and interrelatedness of power and gender. The investigation of power relation and gender structure, features and strategies may help in the understanding of implicit and explicit resistance, misrepresentation of gender inequality, gender-related issues as well as gender ideological inclinations in selected national anthems of African states. This study, therefore, examines the (mis)representation of gender (in)equality in national anthems of selected African states with a view to unmasking implicitly gender-related thematic issues as well as ideological inclinations inherent in the anthems.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

A number of studies have been carried out on the discourse of national anthems such as Ricento 2003, Souza (2006 and 2008), Dze-Ngwa 2014, Olasunkanmi et al. 2015, Alo and Ayinuola 2017, Ayinuola (2020a, 2020b and 2024), Ndendze's 2022, and Nwinlaaru and Nartey's 2022. Ricento 2003 examined how Americanisation, the ideal of all nations, is legitimised as values in the present world. The paper focused on the construction of American national identity between 1914 and 1924, which was during the First World War. During this period, American nation justified her participation in the war. Her inclusion and participation were to legitimise her national culture and identity including right to life, freedom, religion, sovereignty, association and so on. While the paper used American national topoi including coat of arm, national motto, national anthem and so on, the current study only focusses on national anthem with special attention on the representation of gender ideology.

Similarly, Souza 2006 focused on the twenty-four national anthems that were originally written in English in the world. While Souza 2006 explored discourse functions and lexico-grammatical properties and production processes of twenty-four national, Souza 2008 investigated eighteen national anthems originally written in English of countries of the world using evaluative semantic analysis. These papers differ from the current study because it examines gender issues and ideology which were inherent in national anthems of selected African states.

Olasunkanmi et al. (2015) investigated the paradox of the quest for global, peace and the linguistic violence of some countries' national anthems and opined that national anthems that preach violence and encourage anti-social behaviours should be prohibited. Though Olasunkanmi et al. and the current study use some national anthems of African states as subject of investigation, the current study is different in that it focusses on the construction of gender ideology in selected national anthems of African states.

In addition, Ayinuola (2020a) researched on the discursive construction of national identities and ideologies in national anthems of selected African states. The study discovered that African national identities are characterised with egalitarianist, territorialist, communitarianist, historicist and theist identities. The paper concluded that national identities and ideologies are a reflection of socio-cultural, political and religious happenings in the African context. While the current study examines how gender ideologies are constructed in selected national anthems of African states, Ayinuola (2020a) focusses on the construction of African identities and ideologies that are general to African nation states.

In furtherance, Ayinuola (2020b) examined how national ideologies are lexicalized in the national anthems of African states. Situated within Hallidayan's Systemic Functional Grammar and Fairclough's socio-semiotic

model of Critical Discourse Analysis as theoretical framework, the paper discovered that territorialist, historicist, egalitarianist, and pan-Africanist are explicated in names and naming, collocation, and relexicalisation. The paper concludes that lexical choices are conveyor of national identities and ideologies. While Ayinuola (2020b) examined national ideologies in selected national anthems of African states, the current study focuses on the construction of gender ideologies inherent in the national anthems of African states.

Additionally, the focus of Ndendze's 2022 work examines how the interstate war is represented in selected anthems of African states. The paper discovered that some states did not mention war in their anthems while some did. It further discovered that there is a symbiotic relationship between war and national psyche. This is because of the 54 states in Africa, 17 never mentioned war in their anthems, while 19 mentioned interstate wars in their anthems. The paper categorized nations that mentioned interstate wars into proactive, defensive and pacific. The current study is similar to Ndendze 2022 because they both focus on the discourse of national anthems. However, while the current study focuses on the gender ideological inclinations in national anthems, Ndandze 2022 is on the presence or absence of interstate war in an anthem of African nation.

Resistance ideology in national anthems is the focus of Nwinlaaru and Nartey's 2022 paper. Situated within Hallidayan Systemic Functional Grammar of transitivity choices, the paper discovers that national anthems are markers of traumatic national colonial experience of African states. The two main ideologies inherent in the text are anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist. While Nwinlaaru and Nartey 2022 focus on the discourse of resistance in selected national anthems of African states, the current study is on how gender related issues are misrepresented in national anthems of African states.

Ayinuola 2024 examined how discourse strategies are lexicalized in the national anthems of selected African states. The paper, specifically, situated within Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistic and Wodakian model of Critical Discourse Analysis, asserts that strategies are a set of plans deployed to achieve specific objectives of provoking and invoking nationals to defend their countries against intruders and invaders. While both papers focus on the discourse of national anthems, the orientation is different in the sense that Ayinuola 2024 examined discourse strategies' forms and functions, the current research work focuses on the representation of gender inequality in the national anthems of selected African states. Also, while both have Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistic as theoretical anchorage, the difference is that the current work is situated within Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis and Ayinuola 2024 is on Critical discourse Analysis.

It can be surmised from the foregoing that previous studies have examined national anthems from (critical) discourse analysis, pragmatic, stylistic viewpoints with insufficient scholarly attention paid to the (mis)representation of gender in national anthems of selected African states. This study, therefore, examines how gender inequalities are lexically represented in the national anthems of selected African states with a view to unmasking implicitly gender-related issues and ideological inclinations inherent in the anthems.

### **3.0 Aim and Objectives**

The aim of this study is to investigate how gender inequalities are lexically and grammatically (mis)represented in the national anthems of selected African states. The specific objectives of this study include the following: (a) to identify gender related issues in the national anthems of African states; (b) to lexicalise and grammaticalise gender inequalities inherent in the national anthems; (c) to identify and discuss gender related ideological inclinations inherent in the national anthems of African states.

#### ***3.1 Theoretical Orientation***

The theoretical framework for this study is anchored on Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) and Lazarian Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Systemic Functional Grammar is a linguistic model of meaningful choices rather than formal rules in communicative events and explains the principles of natural language as a system of systems. It is a theory that was popularised by Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday. However, the theory started with a Polish anthropologist called Bronislaw Malinowski whose professional career started in Britain. Malinowski coined the term "context of situation" which is not only the literal meaning of the words but also the way social occurrences construe meanings. According to Halliday 1999, context of situation is defined as the immediate context where language is given paramount attention.

SFL is concerned with the way people use language in life-situations and how social lives condition language use vice versa. This means that SFL is concerned with meaning. According to Bloor and Bloor (1995:1),

Language is a system of meaning. That is to say that, when people use language, their language acts are the expression of meaning. From the point of view, grammar becomes a study of how meanings are built up through the use of words and their linguistic forms such as tone and emphasis. This may seem fairly obvious to most people since it accords with a common sense view of language; but not all linguists have been concerned with meaning in such a direct way [...]

The theory was further popularised in Britain by J.R. Firth, the first professor of linguistics in London. Firthian approach coined the term “context of culture” in his London School of Linguistics. According to Halliday 1999, context of culture is defined “as the ideas and customs and values inherited from the past” which affects meaning. The context of culture determines general culture, value and customs of a particular speech community. The context of situation is the place where language is given prominence. Here language performs three major functions called metafunctions.

Metafunctions, according to Alo and Ogungbe 2012, is deployed in the analysis of language function as well as how linguistic choices intermingle or coalesce with discourses in a particular social context to achieve specific objectives. These functions include ideational (experiential), interpersonal and textual. While ideational metafunction is concerned with inner and utter consciousness, interpersonal function focusses on the relation among interlocutors and is deployed to negotiate roles and attitudes of a speaker to a proposition in communicative events.

Furthermore, Hallidayan Systemic Functional Grammar bifurcates into functional and systemic dimensions. The functional dimension is basically concerned with dialectical relationship between language and social context, while systemic dimension believes that language is “a structured of network of sign system” used by speakers for meaning construction in such a case that the selection of one choice deselects others.

Critical Discourse Analysis, on the other hand, sees language as a form of social practice (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). The aim of CDA is to demystify discourse by deciphering ideologies and enhance the understanding of language functions (Fairclough, 2014). Furthermore, CDA aims to contribute to general consciousness of exploitative social relations through focusing on language (Fairclough, 1989:9). The tenets of CDA, according to Fairclough and Wodak (1997:271-280), include the following: CDA addresses social problems; power relations are discursive; discourse constitutes society and culture; discourse does ideological work; discourse is historical; the link between text and society is mediated; discourse analysis is interpretive and explanatory; and discourse is a form of social action.

Additionally, the purpose of CDA is to unmask not only the opaque issues but also transparent ones such as hegemony, inequality, dominance, power and ideology in text and talk. Wodak (1995:209) opines that the aim of CDA is “to integrate systemically all available background information in the analysis and interpretation of many layers of a written or spoken text. It can be surmised that CDA is concerned with social injustice and inequality.

Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth, FCDA) is a branch of CDA. The aim of FCDA is to examine how power, gender, and dominance are discursively produced and/or resisted in a variety of ways

through textual representations of gendered social practices, and through interactional strategies of talk. According to Lazar (2005:5), FCDA “as a political perspective on gender concerned with demystified the interrelation of gender, power and ideology in discourse is equally applicable to the study of text as well as talk which offer a corrective approach that primarily favour one linguistic mode over another”. Lazar further asserts that the aim of FCDA is to challenged social order and critiques gendered social practices and relations with the ultimate goal of contesting the status quo in order to realize equal gender and power relations (Lazar, 2005:6). Furthermore, FCDA focuses on how gender ideology and gendered relations of power are (re)produced, negotiated, perpetuated, sustained, maintained, contested, mitigated, intensified and represented in social practices. It focuses on demystifying the interrelationships of gender, power ideology and dominance in talks and texts. It is apposite to say that FCDA is a discourse of resistance and praxis. This simply means that FCDA is concerned with how men are socially privilege and empowered; women are disempowered thereby making gender discourse is socially constitutive and constituted.

In essence, FCDA is concerned with the (mis)representation of women in social practices and discourse structures in African dominated society. The tenets of FCDA include feminist analytical resistance, gender as ideological structure, complexity of gender and power relation, discourse in the (de)construction of gender and critical reflexivity of praxis (Lazar, 2005:5-20). In this paper, Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics and Lazarian Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis are adopted as theoretical framework because of their form-function interface. While SFL accounts for linguistic forms and choices, FCDA caters for gender inequality, (misrepresentation and ideology in the text.

#### **4.0 Methodology**

Out of fifty-four (54) nations representing distinct national anthems in African states, eleven (11) national anthems were purposively selected because they are gender-ideology laden and have gender orientations. These anthems, which are in English versions, served as data for this study. These eleven anthems foreground gender issues and they are Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Libya, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria, Sudan, and Tunisia. Interpretative research design is used. This paper only considered the English versions of these national anthems of African states. Information about national anthem is presented in the table below:

**Table 1:** *Selected Information from National Anthems Examined*

Country	Independence	Adoption	Title	Sample Text
Botswana	1966	1966	Our Country	Awake, awake, O men, awake
D.R. Congo	1960	1960	“La Congolais”	Stand up Congolese
Equatorial Guinea	1960	1960	Hinno Nacional (Hymn of the Nation)	In brotherhood, undivided...
Gabon	1968	1968	The Concord	United in concord and brotherhood
Ghana	1957	1957	Hail the Name of Ghana	God bless our homeland, Ghana
Libya	1951	1969	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	O son of Libya, oh son of wild lions
Malawi	1964	1964	O God Bless Our Land of Malawi	Men and women serving selflessly
Niger	1960	1961	La Nigerianne	All the virtues of our ancestors
Nigeria	1960	1978	Arise, O Compatriots	The labour of our heroes past
Sudan	1956	1956	We are God’s aAmy	...sons of the Sudan, summoned to serve...
Tunisia	1956	1987--	O Defenders of the Homeland	Men and youth of Tunisia

Note that, where a national anthem has no title, the first line of the anthem serves as the title for easy identification. Data were subjected to content and feminist critical discourse analyses.

## 5.0 Data Presentation and Discussion

It is important to focus first on gender related issues in the discourse of national anthems in selected African states and followed by gender related ideological inclinations with lexical and grammatical choices explicating them.

African national anthems are markers of historical-political upheavals, socio-cultural national values, and African ideologies and worldviews. These national anthems are composed and adopted at different epochal periods-before, during, and after independence by individuals, groups or association. National anthems that are composed before independence are mostly revolutionaries. Such anthems are Cape Verde 1974, Cameroon 1957, Ghana 1957, and Madagascar 1958. Some were adopted in the year of their independence-Angola 1975, Benin 1960, Burundi 1962, Central African Republic 1960, Chad 1960, Congo D.R 1960, Cote d’Ivoire 1960, Djibouti 1977, Equatorial Guinea 1968, Eritrea



1993, Gabon 1960, Gambia 1965, Guinea Bissau 1974, Kenya 1963, Malawi 1964, Mauritania 1960, Mozambique 1975, Senegal 1960, Sierra Leone 1961, Somalia 1960, Swaziland 1968, Sudan 1956, South Sudan 2011, Tanzania 1961, Uganda 1962, and Zambia 1964. Some anthems were revised and re-adopted after independence. The anthems that were adopted after independence are these: Algeria 1963, Burkina Faso 1984, Cameroon 1978, Comoros 1978, Congo 1991, Democratic Republic of Congo 1972, Egypt 1979, Lesotho 1967, Namibia 1991, Niger 1961, Nigeria 1978, Rwanda 2001, Seychelles 1996, South Africa 1995, Togo 1979, Tunisia 1987, and Zimbabwe 1994. African national anthems are sacred songs that evoke patriotism and provoke nationalism and patriotism among citizens of a nation. These anthems preach national cohesion and nation building, revolution and praise monarchical kings.

Four gender-related issues were identified in the anthems namely: exclusion of women roles in the struggles for independence, glorification of men's roles before, during, and after independence, backgrounding female gender versus foregrounding of male gender, and gender equality. These issues are exemplified below.

### ***5.1 Exclusion of Women in the Struggle for Independence***

The exclusion of women in the struggle for independence is the predominant gendered issue in the discourse of national anthem. This suggests that there is the total exclusion of the role of women in the struggles for independence. The pre-independence period is a period meant for clamour for independence where political parties, pressure group, mass media and nationalist played a significant role. In the nationalist struggle, only men were recorded as the only participants. The struggle is projected as men's affair where women are misrepresented as being non-existent. This suggests that the role of women is inconsequential to the success of independence attainment. It is pertinent to exemplify the exclusion of women in the struggles for independence as issue in excerpt 1 below:

**Excerpt 1 (Nigeria):**  
To serve our **fatherland**  
The labour of our **heroes** past  
Shall never be in vain

In excerpt 1 above, the heroes are the three nationalists namely Ahmadu Bello, Nnamdi Azikwe and Obafemi Awolowo. The three nationalists fought for independence of Nigeria with other nationalists such as Anthony Enahoro, Chief Akintola, Chief Fani Kayode, and others. It is disheartening that women nationalists were excluded in the anthem. Women such as Ransom Kuti who led Aba Women against in 1922 against colonialists and the first female to drive a car were obviously excluded. The

omission was deliberate and intended to glorify the role of men as being indispensable to the attainment of independence. The struggle for Nigeria's independence attainment was carried out by both men and women. Before independence, tribal affiliation and ethnic and political subscription were nothing and it was after the independence that the composers and writers of these anthems exclude women and foreground the role of men at the detriment of the law of natural justice. The women's roles are backgrounded while the men are foregrounded.

The heroes are the founding fathers of Nigeria. They are Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, and Sir Ahmadu Bello. These three men set the agenda for the national politics, moulded the constitution, formed the political parties, established the values, set up constitutions institutions for sharing the values or power and the wealth of the nation and dispensed both the rewards for conformity to the norms and the punishments for breaching the shared values and customs. The founding fathers created the political and national culture not for the prime of the colonial rule, but for all of the succeeding times of the Nigerian post-independence geopolitics

In another instance, the propagation of the spread of religion, peace, progress and prosperity was associated with the grandfathers. This is explicated in excerpt 2 below:

**Excerpt 2a (Libya):**

Our **grandfathers** carried their swords when **struggle** called on them..  
They fought till they spread religion, peace and prosperity all over the world

**Excerpt 2b (Gabon):**

Yes, may the happy days of which **our ancestors** dreamed  
Let us salute the **Fatherland** and ever sing

Excerpt 3 above showed that can be observed that it is only the grandfathers and ancestors that fought against the colonial masters. It can be observed that "swords" is metaphorised as fate, ideology, world-view, and mores. Similarly, the sword is metonymised as gun, pistol, firearm, and other dangerous weapons of mass destruction used to defend one's territory against intruders. The grandfathers were never found wanting when the need arise to defend their homeland. The grandmothers were not even mentioned in the struggles for independence because the society regarded them as property of men and were disregarded. This is mostly explicated in classic work of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* where women were not given prominent roles but were mentioned when issues relating to matrimony were mentioned. The exclusion and backgrounding of women's roles perpetuate patriarchal ideology. Patriarchal ideology is practise to reveal male dominance, control, supremacy, preference as well as women subjugation, oppression, marginalisation, and victimisation in a male-dominated African society.

In Gabonese national anthem, the nation is perceived as a father. Thus, a nation is a place of security. A nation provides adequate security to her sons and daughters. The semantic features of father are: +animate, +human, + protection and + security while national has semantic features +inanimate and +abstract. Nation as a father shows a place of protection and acceptability. Fatherland equally refers to somebody's ancestral nation and a native land. A nation is a place of protection and security. This implies that there cannot be any internal or external invasion and if there is, the nation stands and defends its territory and citizens. The safeguarding of lives of citizens is mostly evident when other nations are in a war situation. Expatriates from different home nations are redeployed to their home country for safety.

It can be observed from the above that nation is perceived as a father. In Libya, *the grandfathers carried their sword when struggles called on them* to fight against colonial masters; while, in Nigeria, *the labours of heroes past* was mentioned signifying Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, and Sir Ahmadu Bello, where the roles of prominent nationalist, Funmilayo Ransom-Kuti, was not mentioned and the effects of Aba Women Riot; in Gabon, "ancestors" and "fatherland" are deployed to show that the land belongs to the ancestors who fought for independence, while ancestress was not mentioned in the struggles for independence. For instance, Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti is a woman that participated in the Nigerians quest for independence. She was a member of the committee that drafted Nigerian constitutions. She attended conferences and spearheaded the creation of Nigerian Women Union, a group that advocated women rights to vote and be voted for.

## *5.2 Glorification of Men's Roles Before/After Independence*

Glorification of men's roles after independence as a thematic issue shows that the roles of men are foregrounded. Men are projected as the superhero, crusaders and champions of new African nations. It is expedient to say that men are regarded as the brain behind the struggles and attainment of African independence. This simply means that, after independence, men's roles are glorified thereby making the women inexistent in the discourse of national anthems in African states. Examples are displayed below:

### **Excerpt 3 (Niger):**

We find again in our **children**  
All the virtues of our **ancestors**.  
Such virtues are our inspiration  
For **fighting at every moment**

Nigerian national anthem was adopted in 1961 after her independence in 1960. Prior before independence, there were referendum

and the quest for independence. It can be observed in excerpt 1 that two kinship terms are mentioned—children and ancestors. It is evident that though the word “children” is neuter, “ancestors” is gendered. The semantic features of “ancestors” has + forefathers, +, blood relation, +, family members, + blood, + parentage, descent, +familial, +relation, +blood line, - . It is regarded that the ancestors have masculine semantic colouration because female old parents are not regarded as an important personality. This is due to the fact that, in the traditional African setting, women are regarded as the property of men and instruments of producing babies. This is the reason in many instances, the roles of women are not even mentioned in the struggle for independence and even after independence. This is exemplified in excerpts 4, 5, and 6 below:

**Excerpt 4 (Tunisia):**  
Men and youth of Tunisia,  
Rise up for her **might** and **glory** (Tunisia)

**Excerpt 5 (Sudan):**  
Sons of the Sudan, summoned now to serve,  
Shoulder the task of preserving our country.

**Excerpt 6 (Libya):**  
O son of Libya, oh sons of wild lions  
We are for **glory**

It can be seen in Excerpt 4 that men and youths are identified as the brain behind the glorification of African nation. They are the panacea behind the attainment of African independence. It is noteworthy that and sons are masculine terms. These people are being called to carry out the tasks of building their countries after independence. Mentioning men and youths automatically backgrounds the role of women and foreground men’s role. It is expedient to say that men and youth are commandeered to rise up and defend their countries against intruders and colonial masters.

The collocative ingenuity of excerpt 4 reveals that men and youths should rise up for the glory of Tunisia. The glory simply symbolizes nationalistic attainment. Nationalism, according to Falola and Dauda 2017, is a largely dynamic principle capable of engendering hope, emotions, actions, which help to activate human beings and create political solidarity amongst them for the purpose of achieving a common goal. This suggests that only men and youths rose up against cultural domination and intrusion during colonial rule.

Additionally, in Excerpt 5, a masculine kinship is mentioned as the preserver of nation and nationhood. Sons of Sudan are summoned to serve and shoulder the task of preserving their nation against intruders and invaders. The semantic features of sons include +lad, +schoolboys, +teens, - girls. The implication of the above is that the struggle for independence

involves men, youths and sons while women and girls are excluded and foregrounded. The glorification of the roles of men, youth, and even sons shows that they are the brain behind independence which is the new glory of African nations. These people (men, youths, and sons) preserved their nations against internal and external intruders.

Similarly, in Excerpt 6, sons of Libya who are wild lions are ready to fight for the glory. The sons are the nation-builders, who toil day and night for the preservation of the independence of their nation. Glory symbolises freedom, liberty, independence from the shackles of colonial masters.

It can be observed that glorification of men's role after independence is a major thematic feminist issue prominent in national anthems of African states.

### **5.3 *Backgrounding Female Gender and Roles***

In this issue, the role of women is backgrounded, while men's roles are foregrounded thereby revealing that men are the panacea of African independence. This is exemplified in Excerpts 7, 8, and 9 as thus:

**Excerpt 7 (The Gambia):**

And join our diverse peoples  
To prove **man's** brotherhood.

**Excerpt 8 (Ghana):**

Arise, arise, O **sons** of Ghanaland,  
And under God march on forevermore

**Excerpt 9 (Congo):**

Arise, **Congolese**, proud every **man**,  
Proclaim the unity of our nation.

In Excerpt 7, for instance, it can be observed that diverse people are regarded as man brotherhood. Words signify the above thematic issue are man and brotherhood. These words are masculine kinship terms. If brotherhood means oneness, unanimity, and togetherness, sisterhood therefore means what. It is expedient to say that man's brotherhood symbolises togetherness and oneness. In addition, the sons of Ghana are admonished to arise under the march of God, while every man is a Congolese in Congo in Excerpt 8 and 9 respectively.

### **5.4 *Gender Equality***

Despite the apparent gender inequality that characterized national anthems of selected Africa states, it is noticeable some national anthems of African states emphasise the representation of gender equality. This occurs in five African nations namely: Botswana's *awake **men**, awake **women***; Malawi's

*Men and women serving selflessly/In building Malawi; Mali's stand up men stand up women; Senegal's young and old, men and women; Tanzania's God bless Tanzanian...its sons and daughters.* As against the backdrop of gender inequality and imbalance, some national anthems of Africa states preach equality in the representation and projection of both sexes and gender. Though sex is biologically constructed, gender is socially. It is expedient to say that men and women are given equal roles in these anthems.

The antithetical juxtaposition of lexical items of “men and women” reveals gender balance and equality among the supposed nations of African states. Men and women do serve selflessly, stand up to defend their countries against internal and external secessions. These are the major roles of men and women in the aforementioned nations of African states.

It can be observed that national anthems of African states are characterised with exclusion of women in the struggle for independence, glorification of men's roles after independence, backgrounding and gender equality. While women's roles are backgrounded and excluded in the struggles and attainment of independence, men were glorified and foregrounded. Except in few cases where juxtaposition is made between men and women, national anthems of African states are lopsided and tilted towards male gender which is a reflection of patriarchal tendencies of African continent. Similarly, the four gender related issues, which were identified in the anthems show that selected anthems are lopsided and tilted towards male gender at the detriment of the roles of women thereby perpetuating African patriarchal ideology.

### **5.6 Gendered Ideologies in Selected National Anthems**

Gender related ideologies in the national anthems of African states include male-chauvinistic, anti-masculinity, patriarchy and nationalism. Male chauvinistic ideology is the belief that men are superior to women mentally, professionally, materially, intellectually, and physically. While men are superior, women are inferior. The term “male chauvinistic” came as a result of feminist movement who believes that they should be equal right for men and women. From the anthems, it can be observed that men are believed to be superior than women. This is explicated in **Men and youth** of Tunisia, the labour of our heroes past (Nigeria) and Arise, arise, O **sons** of Ghanaland (Ghana). It can be observed that attention is focused on the male gender as the preserver of nation and nationhood.

Another gendered ideology is masculinity, which focuses on the representation of men's positivity. It is concerned with the differentiation, naturalization, projection and perpetuation of men's power. Exemplifications from the anthems show that men, sons are youths are commandeered to arise and defend their countries. It is the men that has the power to fight, preserve and defend their nations against intruders. For

instance, it can be observed that clarion call is made to the men to arise. This is explicated in Arise, arise, O **sons** of Ghanaland (Ghana) and Arise, **Congolese**, proud every man.

Another gendered ideology are patriarchy and nationalism. Patriarchy is domineering, nationalism is a movement for the emancipation of nation. Nationalism is used to solicit national solidarity, support in the creation of national identity and ideology. While patriarchal ideology reveals male dominance, nationalism calls for support from both men and women.

### **5.7 Discussion of Findings**

It can be observed that clarion call for building a nation is directed to the men, youths and sons. “Arise and march under God” is centered on the sons, men and youths. In Congolese anthem, the men who are proud citizens are directed to arise and developed their nation. It can be noted that national anthem is gendered towards masculinities. This paper corroborates the work of Cusack 2005 that African national anthems are not neutral in the representation of gender ideology. Though masculinities have been the major concerns of African national anthems, there are instances where gender equality is placed on men and women. This occurs in five African nations namely: Botswana (awake men, awake women); Malawi (Men and women serving selflessly/In building Malawi); Mali (stand up men stand up women); Senegal (young and old, men and women); Tanzania (God bless Tanzanian...its sons and daughters). Unlike European nations where women are mentioned, African national anthems tilt towards male dominance thereby perpetuating patriarchy.

### **6.0 Conclusion**

This study has examined the representation of gender inequality in selected national anthems of African states. The prominent issues identified in the selected national anthems include exclusion of women of the struggles for independence, glorification of women’s roles, backgrounding of women roles and gender equality. Exclusion of women from the struggles for independence shows that women are insignificant, glorification of men role is a tactical over representation of the roles of men, backgrounding of women role is a tactical under-representation of women and gender equality clamours for fairness, justice, and equity. Gendered ideological inclinations in the anthems include male-chauvinistic, patriarchal, masculinity, nationalistic. Male-chauvinistic attributes superiority to men, masculinity believes in the representation, legitimisation and perpetuation of positive sides of men. While patriarchal is concerned with male dominance and female subjugation, nationalism calls for solidarity and supports in the attainment and perpetuation of nation and nationhood. The study concludes

that African nations' anthems are lopsided and tilted towards male gender at the detriment of the roles of women thereby perpetuating African patriarchal ideology. Lexical representation of gender related issues showed the prevalent of patriarchal ideological system. Hence, national anthems are annex of hegemonic and unequal power relations in the African context. Against this backdrop, the study, having been aware of the indispensability of the roles of women to the developments of an independent nation, advocates for women inclusion in government policies and programmes so as to witness unprecedented developments in the twenty-first century within the African context.

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