

Pan Africanism Ideological Model and its Viability for African Renaissance

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Abstract

The quest for African renaissance in the twenty-first century remains one of the most urgent intellectual and political concerns confronting the African continent. Despite achieving political independence between the late 1950s and early 1960s, many African nations continue to grapple with underdevelopment, neo-colonial dependency, corruption, political instability, identity crisis, economic fragility, and technological backwardness. These persistent challenges suggest not merely structural weaknesses but a deeper ideological vacuum within post-colonial African governance. Historically, Pan-Africanism emerged as a response to the trans-Atlantic slave trade, colonial exploitation, racial oppression, and global marginalisation of African peoples. While Pan-Africanism played a decisive role in the struggle for independence, its broader philosophical and developmental potential has not been fully institutionalised in post-independence Africa. This raises the critical problem of whether Pan-Africanism can be re-articulated and operationalised as a coherent and viable ideological model for achieving sustainable African renaissance in the twenty-first century. This paper argued that Pan-Africanism must be reinterpreted not merely as a liberation movement but as a comprehensive African ideological model capable of guiding governance, economic reform, cultural revival, and diaspora reintegration. This study sought to demonstrate that Pan-Africanism remains a viable philosophical template for African unity, identity reconstruction, value reorientation, and diaspora reintegration. Methodologically, the study adopted expository, critical and comparative analysis methods. Findings revealed that Pan-Africanism embodies a comprehensive ideological framework grounded in shared history and collective self-determination. Although instrumental in achieving political emancipation, its ideological momentum has not been adequately institutionalised to foster technological innovation, economic diversification, and sustainable development. The study concluded that revitalised Pan-Africanism can serve as the philosophical backbone for African renaissance in the contemporary global order. It recommends the harmonisation of diverse Pan-Africanist perspectives into a unified framework as necessary steps toward sustainable continental transformation.

Keywords: *African Renaissance, Decolonisation, Ideology, Pan-Africanism, Sustainable Development.*

Introduction

The quest for African renaissance in the twenty-first century has become one of the most pressing intellectual, political and philosophical concerns within contemporary African discourse. Despite the attainment of political independence by many African states between the late 1950s and early 1960s, the continent continues to grapple with persistent challenges such as underdevelopment, economic dependency, neo-colonial domination, corruption, political instability, identity crisis, and the widening gap between the rich and the poor. These realities raise fundamental questions about the ideological foundation of post-colonial African states and the direction of Africa's developmental trajectory in a globalised world.

Historically, Pan-Africanism emerged as both a response to the trans-Atlantic slave trade and European colonial domination, and as a unifying intellectual movement aimed at fostering solidarity among Africans on the continent and in the diaspora. It developed into a powerful ideological force championed by leading political thinkers and activists such as Marcus Garvey, W. E. B. Du Bois, Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Leopold Sédar Senghor, Amílcar Cabral, Obafemi Awolowo, Nnamdi Azikiwe, and Nelson Mandela whose collective efforts contributed significantly to the liberation struggles that culminated in political independence across much of Africa.

However, while Pan-Africanism succeeded as a liberation ideology, its broader philosophical and developmental potentials remain insufficiently explored and institutionalised. The absence of a coherent and harmonised ideological framework has led to what may be described as a “farce of ideology” in many African states—where political independence has not translated into economic self-reliance, technological advancement, or cultural renaissance. In this context, the need to re-examine Pan-Africanism not merely as a historical movement but as a contemporary ideological model becomes imperative.

This paper therefore interrogates Pan-Africanism as both a concept and an ideology, arguing that it remains a viable philosophical template for African unity, identity reconstruction, value reorientation, diaspora reintegration, and sustainable development. It contends that a revitalised and harmonised Pan-Africanist ideology can serve as a pragmatic panacea for African renaissance in the twenty-first century.

Conceptual Clarification of Pan Africanism

Pan-Africanism has evolved over more than a century as a complex ideological current, political project, cultural philosophy, and moral vision. Its conceptual foundations lie in the shared historical experiences of the African continent and the global African diaspora, including the trans-Atlantic slave trade, colonial conquest, racial discrimination, economic exploitation, and subsequent struggles for self-determination. At its core, "Pan-Africanism asserts that Africans and people of African descent share a common destiny that must be guided by collective solidarity, autonomous development, and a reaffirmation of indigenous cultural identity" (Adi & Sherwood, 2003 p.8). The term “Pan-Africanism” merges the prefix pan (meaning “all”) with “Africanism,” suggesting unity in diversity across geographic, linguistic, and cultural divides. It is therefore inherently transnational, crossing boundaries imposed by European colonialism. However, Pan-Africanism is not merely a slogan for unity; it is a multidimensional ideological framework that encompasses political integration, economic cooperation, cultural revival, and psychological emancipation. According to Campbell (2015 p.35), "Pan Africanism is not only a model but also an organized ideology for the act of governance of socio-political institutions in the continent of

Africa. Also, it is the principle of advocacy of the political union of the indigenous inhabitants of Africa." According to *Wikipedia*, 'Pan Africanism is a worldwide intellectual movement that aims to encourage and strengthen bonds of solidarity between all people of African descent'.

The early articulation of Pan-Africanism took place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries through the efforts of diaspora intellectuals and activists. Henry Sylvester Williams convened the first Pan-African Conference in London in 1900, bringing together Black intellectuals to challenge racial oppression and advocate for the rights of Africans and their descendants (Sherwood, 2014 p.23). Around the same period, scholars like Edward Wilmot Blyden developed the idea of African personality, emphasizing cultural pride and resistance to assimilation into Western norms (Mazama, 2001 p.391). In the early twentieth century, W. E. B. Du Bois emerged as perhaps the most influential theorist of Pan-Africanism, arguing that the liberation of African peoples was integral to global justice and human dignity (Mazama, 2001 p. 391). Du Bois's work highlighted the interconnectedness of struggles against racism in the United States, colonialism in Africa, and racial oppression around the world. Subsequent Pan-African conferences especially those organised in the 1910s and 1920s cemented the movement's international character, linking leaders and intellectuals across continents.

Without doubt, Pan-Africanism has a chequered history. The strong advocates of this ideological school of Pan Africanism movement, among others, include such political icons like Marcus Garvey, Kwame Nkrumah, Haile Selassie, Julius Nyerere, Jomo Kenyatta, John Henrik Clarke, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Sekou Toure, Hackney Black, Thomas Sankara, Malcolm X, W. E. B. Du Bois, Leopold Sedar Senghor, Leon Damas, Mkwugo Okoye, Chinua Achebe, Aime Cesaire, Muamman Gaddafi, Amilca Cabral, Nnamdi Azikwe, Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, *et.al*. All these Pan Africanists have fought tooth and nail in one form or the other to secure the independence of Africa from the racist regimes of the colonialists. They have equally shown vehemently and politically the sense of humanity and African development than man's inhumanity to man's domination, polemical enslavement and grandiose celebrity of Africans in diaspora in the contemporary twenty-first Africa (Makalami, 2015 p. 42). According to Campbell (2015 p.40), the Pan Africanists Parliament of 2014 revealed the mission of Pan Africanists as follows;

- to raise the political consciousness and solidarity of the Africans both at home and in diaspora.
- to attain collective self-reliance.
- to globally and independently empower African people, ensure power consolidation in Africa possibly 'United African Nations' that would bring to realization the economic, social and political clout that will enable Africa as a league of nations to compete globally and competitively at the world stage with the European Union and the United States of America.

In lucid terms, Pan Africanism according to Makalami (2015 p. 49) can be formulated as a movement to champion the belief that African peoples, both on the continent and in the diaspora, share not merely a common history, but a common destiny. By and large, the fact is that Pan Africanism denotes globally, the unity of continental Africa.

Pan Africanism as a Political Ideology

According to Honderic (1995, p. 54), an ideology is a collection of normative beliefs, doctrine, dogma, theory, creed and values that an individual, social group or an institution holds for other

than purely epistemic reasons. Historically, the term ideology was first conceived by a French philosopher and enlightenment aristocrat, Antoine Destutt de Tracy (Hatch, 1961 p.38). In contemporary philosophy, the term *ideology* refers to such related terms in one way or the other like a general view, a philosophy, ideas, concept, a world view, anthology, belief, system, style of thought politically, epistemologically, culturally and/or by an individual thinker or a group. It is within this context, that such ideologies like communalism, feudalism, capitalism, socialism, communism, Marxism, welfarism, arch-capitalism, anti-communism, democratic socialism, libertarianism, fascism, Negritude, nationalism *et. al* are meaningfully used and significant.

Apparently, a distinction is often made between an ideology and a theory. There is a sense in which an ideology is perceived as normative in nature, while theory on the other hand and by approach is said to be explanatory through creating explanatory models. Be that as it may, it is apt to see a political thinker and/or a theorist advocating or identifying himself with one political ideology or the other. It is in view of this that Pan Africanism, is an ideology of class or social group of the same political thought with the same ideological focus and cultural orientation aiming at resurgence of African civilization and reclaiming of African pride and Self esteem. It is in the realization of this focus that each of the protagonists of Pan Africanism is committed to one ideological focus on the other hand.

As an ideology, Pan Africanism is a philosophical school of thought for the sharpening, strengthening and unification of African identity and cultural identification on the one hand and for the realization of African renaissance in the twenty-first century. Pan Africanism can also be viewed as a model and a philosophical template for the impression of the unity of Africans wherever they may be in the international globe. As a model, Pan Africanism is a template for the revival and re-positioning of the value system in Africa and in the global world. It is seen and conceived as an ideology that promotes Pan Africanism in terms of the realization of the potency and underlying principles and the common destiny of Africans globally.

According to Falola and Essien (2013, p.71-72), "Pan Africanism as a philosophy, represents the aggregation of the historical, cultural, spiritual, artistic, scientific and philosophical legacies of Africans from the past to the present." Indeed, Pan Africanism as a philosophical ideology represents the ethical system upon which African norms, values and ethical principles are built. Fundamentally, these ethical and aesthetic values which African ethical system emphasizes include honesty and loyalty, patience and humility, respect for elders and social norms, hospitality and kindness, obedience and gentleness, truthfulness and attitude, hard work and goodwill, responsiveness and usefulness as well as chastity and charity.

Besides the values of African culture that Pan Africanism traces its indigenous and cultural origin to, as the product of African civilization, there are also negative values which formed the basis and culminated rise of Pan Africanism as a form of struggle. (Alade, 1998 p.321). These are negative values of oppression that European penetration into Africa brought upon Africans in their scheme of governance. These among others include racism, slavery, colonialism, imperialism, neo-colonialism and xenophobia culture. It was those negative values inculcated to African continent that brought about Pan Africanism as a regressive and liberative measure sparking some other Pan African religio-political movements across the global stage.

The fact is that "Pan Africanism as an ideology attained its golden age from the twentieth century Africa with the independence of Ghana in 1957 and the independence of many other African countries in the twentieth century" (Aime, 1998 p.31). This has led to the formulation of various

Pan African measures by Pan Africans leaders aimed at revolutionizing and decolonization of African from imperialism. For instance, Kwame Nkrumah on assumption of office as the President of Ghana in 1957 backed by the Socialist ideology he called *consciencism* summoned the first ever All-African Peoples Conference (AAPC) in April 1958 with delegates of political movements and major political leaders and advocates of Pan Africanism all over Africa Invited (Alade, 1998 p.321). While the conference with the exception of South Africa had all the independent States of Africa: Ghana, Liberia, Libya, Tunisia Sudan, Egypt and Ethiopia all in attendance, the imperativeness of pushing ideological focus of the Nationalist Pan African conference remained a priority. For instance, it marked the first time that the black African region would come together politically to exercise its political unity and common identity at a National conference level and spoke with equanimity against imperialism, colonization, slavery, exploitation and injustice of the West against the African continent. It was at this conference that the promulgation of the Emancipation of the African Continent from the colonial rule was established and also a fierce battle against colonial and apartheid rule in South Africa and other un-independent States of Africa was declared (Aime, 1998 p.33).

Besides, the Accra National Conference of 1958 also marked the establishment of a new political beginning and emancipation of Africa from imperialism as well as the establishment of a new policy of non-alignment between the US and the United States of Soviet Republic (Adi & Sherwood, 2003 p.8). The political consensus at this conference was followed by the signing of *Sanniquellie declaration* in Liberia at Sanniquellie in 1959. This was jointly done by Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, President Sekou Toure of Guinea, President William Tubman of Liberia, thus outlining the principles for the achievement of the unity of independent African States with emphasis on a national identity and autonomous constitutional structure (Adi & Sherwood, 2003 p.12). Even though there were ideological differences among the independent African members States prior to the 1960 African National Conference, such that the 1960 conference gave rise to two rival functions within Pan-African Bloc: The Casablanca Bloc and the Brazzaville Bloc; the fact still remains that Pan Africanism as an ideology was still able to maintain its ideological balance and political agitation for the emancipation of African States (Aime, 1998 p.37). Today in Africa, there is no country that is still groaning under the theores of colonization.

The Need for an African Ideology

For Africa to attain genuine renaissance in the twenty-first century, there is an urgent need for a clearly articulated, coherent, and transformative African ideology. Oyebola (1987, p.17) expressed this submission thus: "any nation which wants spectacular transformation from abject poverty and confusion into great wealth and world recognition must have a coherent, deep-rooted and forward-looking national philosophy". Thence, it can be argued that no nation rises to sustainable greatness without a guiding philosophical framework that shapes its political institutions, economic direction, cultural consciousness, and social values. Development is never accidental; it is ideologically driven. Nations that have achieved remarkable industrial, technological, and economic breakthroughs have done so on the foundation of clearly defined ideological commitments.

It is on this framework that every nation of the world is known for one fundamental ideological breakthrough or the other. For instance, while China is known for technology, India for pharmacy, Israel for military might and Ghana for gold, Britain is on the other hand, known for education. Also, while South Africa is known for diamond, Lebanon for cedar, Malaysia for palm oil, Saudi

Arabia for trade and tourism, Kuwait for crude oil; on the other hand, United States is known for authority, Japan for automobile, Italy for textile and Czechoslovakia for steel. At the same time, Germany is known for machinery, and Indonesia for wears. All this is premised on ideology as a template. My argument therefore is that for African renaissance in the contemporary twenty-first century, there is an urgent need for a fundamental ideology for sustainable growth; an ideological strategy for the emancipation of the Black Americans and Diaspora Africans in the global world and ideological framework against African alienation in today's world. An African ideology, therefore, must go beyond borrowed political systems and externally imposed developmental templates. The persistent challenges of neo-colonial dependency, tribal nationalism, corruption, leadership failure, economic overreliance on primary commodities, identity distortion, and socio-political instability reveal not merely administrative weaknesses but a deeper ideological vacuum. In many African states, governance operates without a coherent philosophical orientation capable of integrating culture, politics, economy, and identity into a unified developmental vision.

The historical experiences of nations such as China and Japan demonstrate that ideological clarity is central to national transformation. The resurgence of these countries after periods of war, humiliation, and economic devastation was made possible through deliberate ideological reorientation, disciplined leadership, technological innovation, and strong national consciousness. Africa, though burdened by the legacies of slavery and colonialism, has not experienced devastation comparable to some of these nations; yet the continent continues to struggle. The difference lies not in history alone, but in the absence of a consolidated ideological framework capable of mobilising collective will and national purpose. Apparently, the tribal nationalism, neo-colonialism, xenophobic attacks, militarism, dictatorship, identity distortion, civil wars, political instability, problem of endemic diseases, economic domination by imperialists, rebellions and internal revolts, deep-rooted corruption unemployment and planlessness, high mortality rate and poor health facilities, illiteracy, crudeness and backwardness and over dependency on the imperialist leaders, neo-colonialism, religious intolerance, tribal jingoism and ethnicity problem, *selfishism* and ineffective leadership in different parts of African nations constitute a major hindrance to the rapid scientific, industrial and technological transformation of African nations and the re-integration of the Diaspora Africans.

Furthermore, the reintegration of the African diaspora requires a unifying ideological foundation that affirms shared history, common destiny, and collective self-determination. Without a consciously articulated African ideology, the continent risks continued fragmentation, economic marginalisation, and cultural erosion in the global order. It is within this context that Pan-Africanism emerges not merely as a historical liberation movement but as a viable candidate for a comprehensive African ideology—capable of repositioning Africa for sustainable development, continental solidarity, and global relevance in the contemporary age.

An African ideology must be rooted in indigenous values, historical consciousness, communal ethics, and cultural identity while remaining open to scientific advancement, technological innovation, and global engagement. It must confront and reject the structures of neo-colonial economic domination and psychological dependency that perpetuate underdevelopment. Such an ideology should emphasise moral regeneration, public accountability, social harmony, productive enterprise, technological advancement, and continental unity.

Pan Africanism as a Panacea for African Renaissance

The global target of Pan Africanism is to serve as at development strategy and template for the

development and revival of renaissance of Africa in the twenty-first century. This is orchestrated in the various ideological acumen of the front liners and political icons of Pan Africanism. To this effect, the Leopold Sedar Senghor's *Negritude movement*, Mobutu Sesse Sekoure's view of *authenticite*, Julius Nyerere ideology of *uhuru jumaa*, Obafemi Awolowo's ideology of democratic socialism, Nnamdi Azikiwe's principle of *zikizim* and Amilca Cabral's quest for the unification of the whole of African continent point to this fact.

Besides, Pan Africanism is required as a template for the consciousness to over-rule the mindset Europeans and other foreign oppressive gladiators have carved in Africans. Be that as it may, Pan Africanism is a justified strategy for the transformation of the twenty-first century Africa on the ground that it is regarded as a principle for the liberation of Africa and the realization of a reformed political and social African consciousness for a united global African family.

Indeed, Pan Africanism as template for the emancipation of the 21st century Africa can serve as a collective weapon of decolonization based on the philosophy that only the African people have the independent, inalienable right to decide what happens to them and to their continent Africa. This implies that Africans are the rightful guardians of the continent of Africa as their homeland and the defenders of Africa irrespective of where they are currently domiciled. Pan Africanism can rightly be an organ for the welfare of African people irrespective of where they may be and shall always be placed above any personal or individual interest. Pan Africanism is a panacea for reparations in favour of the Africans such that no thought be given to the idea of debt repayment to global European interests.

More so, Pan Africanism, on the other hand, is a snoop of African awareness committed to reclaiming African pride and self-esteem and on the other hand, a global African family committed to preparing for the challenges of the twenty-first century Africa. Pan Africanism can indeed a tool for self-determination of Africans in that it aims at establishing that only Africans have the absolute irrevocable and unconditional right to pursue and collectively decide their own destiny, self-determination, self-fulfillment and self-defense as well as their own future particularly on their own African soil without any compromise. Pan Africanism can also be a global vehicle for African self-protection such that it ensures the rightness of necessary steps without any hindrance to secure and protect the rights and entitlements within the context of the twenty-first century global freedom of activation.

Pan Africanism is a global ideological conception that also seeks the equal participation of the Africans in the United Nations and in other international fora on the basis of non-compromisation of equal rights and opportunities accruable to them. While Pan Africanism serves as modulator for resurgence of African civilization and the dignity of Africa and Africans in the twenty-first century, it equally seeks the pursuit of reclaiming Africa pride, self-esteem and African identity through a typical indigenous knowledge of the continental Africa.

Indeed, Pan Africanism is a spirited machinery for the reclaiming of the artifacts taken owners on the continent of Africa and that the remaining resources of the continent and around the sea areas be converted for the benefits of the living Africans on the continent and those in the global Diaspora.

Furthermore, the work argues that the harmonisation of diverse Pan-Africanist perspectives into a unified and pragmatic ideological framework establishes an ideological framework to achieve the aims of African renaissance. By integrating political, cultural, ethical, and economic dimensions of Pan-Africanism, a holistic model for repositioning Africa within the contemporary global order

becomes born. The claim is based on the premise that the tyranny of underdevelopment orchestrated by 'unfulfilled expectations as well as the 'farce of ideology' in Africa constitute a major hindrance for the development of Africa in the face of European imperialism. Thus, the need for a 'revitalized' Pan Africanism, as an ideological parameter to the rescue.

Apparently, while Pan Africanism as an instrument of ideology fulfilled led many African nations to the attainment of independence between late 1950s and early 1960s, the hope to guide the dividends of Pan Africanism in the area of modernity and spectacular, technological and ideological break through needs to be exploited such that the unfulfilled expectations to join the comity of developed nations and experience Japan's post-1945 miracle of unprecedented development, China's technological breakthrough and the astonishing breakthroughs in Europe and America will not be a matter of mere conjectures in the twenty-first century African world.

Given the above conjecture, there is need for African nations, using Pan Africanism as a model to adopt a colossal re-orientation in social attitudes, socio-cultural reforms, leadership reformative strategy. It is on this basis that I submit that Pan-Africanism is an instrument and a model that should be adopted as an ideology by the African nations for the unification of Africans home and abroad. As a philosophical template that seeks the revival and repositioning of the value system in Africa and in the global given the principles underlying the ideology, it engenders the expression of African identity and cultural identification. A revitalised Pan-Africanism would foster leadership reorientation and moral regeneration, encourage technological innovation and manufacturing development, strengthen continental institutions, promote diaspora reintegration and enhance Africa's bargaining power in global politics.

Conclusion

This study has argued that although Pan-Africanism successfully inspired anti-colonial liberation movements and facilitated political independence across Africa, its transformative ideological potential remains largely under-utilised in the post-independence era. The continent continues to face grinding poverty, corruption, political instability, tribal nationalism, economic dependency, and technological backwardness — conditions that reveal the absence of a coherent and operational ideological foundation.

Contrary to the assumption that Africa's present challenges are solely the inevitable consequences of slavery and colonialism, this work maintains that the major obstacle lies in the failure to institutionalise a clear, forward-looking African ideology. Other nations that endured devastating wars and external domination have risen to global prominence through deliberate ideological reorientation and disciplined national commitment. Africa must likewise undertake a radical ideological renewal.

Pan-Africanism, properly revitalised and harmonised, provides a viable philosophical and political template for this renewal. It offers a framework for reclaiming African identity, strengthening continental solidarity, promoting economic independence, advancing technological development, and reintegrating the African diaspora. Ultimately, African renaissance in the twenty-first century depends on adopting and operationalising Pan-Africanism as a coherent ideology capable of transforming aspiration into concrete socio-political and economic realities.

Recommendations

In view of the foregoing analysis, this study advances the following recommendations for repositioning Pan-Africanism as a practical ideological framework for African renaissance in the

twenty-first century:

1. Harmonisation of Pan-Africanist Thought

The philosophical, political, and cultural contributions of Pan Africanists figures such as Marcus Garvey, Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Obafemi Awolowo etc should be critically synthesised into a coherent and unified ideological framework to forge a comprehensive continental ideology suitable for contemporary realities through the establishment of Pan-Africanist intellectual centres and integration of the works of these Pan Africanists into the educational curricular at secondary level via subjects such as Civic Education, History, Government etc. and also at the tertiary level.

2. Cultural and Identity Reawakening

There must be deliberate efforts to revive indigenous knowledge systems, African languages, cultural heritage, and value systems as foundations for identity reconstruction and continental solidarity. This can be achieved through the adoption of African languages as official or co-official languages in administration, use of mother-tongue as language of instruction in schools, integration of indigenous knowledge systems into formal education etc.

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