



The African Union hosted Barack Obama in July 2015. (Credit: derejeb/Bigstockphoto.com)

## Expert Comment

# Towards a new pan-Africanism? A brief introduction

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# Towards a new pan-Africanism? A brief introduction

**Roland Benedikter and William Mensa Tsedze**

Africa's situation remains unsatisfactory due to a complex combination of problems and factors at the interplay of the six core fields of economics, politics, culture, religion, demography, and technology. Yet the continent's overall historical passage is in the process of opening up. In the present transition phase, a new perspective is required. The area does not need to build things from scratch but can instead rely on well-developed ideas that can be adapted to current circumstances.

The 18th and 19th centuries birthed a vision of a politically unified, transnationally interdependent, socially democratic, ethnically peaceful, and economically prosperous Africa as a self-sufficient, innovative, and emancipated member of the modern global community. This vision has been branded 'Pan-Africanism', a term often misused yet difficult to replace in its essence. Indeed, the notion of 'Pan-Africanism' has shifted over time, occasionally falling into the trap of nationalism and exclusiveness, sometimes clinging to isolationist and confrontational patterns that backfired, and other times serving as a substitute for party ideology. Yet the term has largely retained its positive and constructive core, at least in its intentions.

Although large parts of this vision have yet to be achieved in practice, progress has been made in the 20th and 21st centuries—albeit insufficient for many and marred by inequality and poor governance. The primary consequence of shortfalls in substantial sectors such as civil rights; the rule of law; participation; and local, national, and transnational solidarity is the mass emigration of youth. Large swathes of Africa's young have relinquished their dreams of having equal chances independent of place and race and their belief in a better future without emigration. Education, embedded and fair local and regional economic networks, and circular multi-level governance are fields in which much work remains to be done even after decades of independence. Clues include stable implementation of the rule of law, the furthering of a self-governed civil society, expanding investment in schools and universities, broader democratisation, and internationalisation of the African question. Existing 'Pan-African' organisations such as the African Union (AU), the growing African diaspora, the international alliance of democracies, and the global

community must work together to improve the continent's condition by empowering younger generations to 'do it their way'.

### **Policy recommendations**

- Africa's transnational cooperation organisations (e.g., the AU) must envision a new Pan-Africanism specific to today's age, namely one that eschews outdated ideology, clichés, and slogans and is not leveraged for partisan or other special interests. A Pan-Africanism for today must employ a less confrontational, nationalist, and militant language and turn instead to more cooperative, interlinked, embedded, cosmopolitan, and global rhetoric. The continent must orient itself in its global standing towards the U.N. Millennium Development Goals (United Nations, n.d.-a), the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, n.d.-b), the Paris Climate Agreement (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2019), and other joint programmes and values established by the United Nations and other bodies dedicated to dialogue between civilisations. Only with a big-picture perspective is sustainable, 'deep' transformation (Club of Rome, 2019) feasible, particularly for Africa.
- To activate its resources to participate in this bigger picture, the new Pan-Africanism must include several internal aspects: decisive intensification of cooperation and solidarity between states, governments, and civil societies; the development of a joint cultural consciousness and socio-economic strategy; and consideration of the entire continent when making political decisions. Externally, the continent requires improvements to standing agreements by adapting to changing circumstances, full application of international economic and political standards, and an internationalisation of education.
- A new Pan-Africanism also means taking more responsibility for the region's independence, autonomy, and self-governance through domestic solidarity, innovation-mindedness, and inclusion. While clinging to original ideals, Africans must repaint Pan-Africanism with a fresh appearance, given that many citizens of African countries are disillusioned about its reality. Most Africans do not believe that current African institutions are appropriate representatives of a contemporary Pan-Africanism; rather, they believe governments have pocketed the idea for their own interests.
- A new Pan-Africanism needs to be less nationalist and seclusive and more cosmopolitan and open to interchange. It must overcome special interests and instil

good governance on all levels as its *conditio sine qua non*. That includes better use of technology for global access and comparison and a new cooperative focus on know-how development.

- African governments should stop simplifying things by relying on the growing African diaspora. Africans abroad throughout recent years, particularly under the framework of the African-European refugee and migration crisis since 2014, have become a valuable external resource for many African countries; however, the continent should not substitute economic, social, and political development at home by pushing for more young Africans to emigrate and send money back. African governments should also refrain from getting rid of their youth to collect outside resources and silence internal critics.
- African and European institutions and governments must do more to stop the refugee and migration crises in the Mediterranean; the continuation of the crisis will only serve to intensify anti-migration sentiments in Europe, erect new borders, and limit options rather than broadening them in the medium and long term.

### **Modern Africa: A continued vision of justice, integration, and progress combined with ongoing precariousness**

Africa's present situation is rooted in – and must be understood in the context of – its modern history of precariousness. Slavery and colonisation represent two major historical constants that have presented Africans for centuries with servitude, humiliation, and forced expatriation. Ethnic rivalries, nepotism, and paternalism are more home-made factors. Such factors were fed by – and inspired – traditional family thinking, authoritarianism, lack of solidarity, ethnic rivalries, inequality, and a trend towards competing micro-politics without much recognition of greater unity or common interests.

As a result of external and internal factors, the idea and practice of nation-building have long been under-developed throughout Black Africa. This problem has been perpetuated by the lasting influence of local and regional religions, beliefs, and value systems. The idea of a 'nation' in the modern sense – as a community of solidarity where

nobody is left behind because everybody helps everybody through the overall social arrangement – is difficult to implement, never mind transnational integrations towards an African Union (AU) in an applied and practical sense.

As early as the end of the 18th century, a movement sprung up to bring Africans together for unity, peaceful participation, and new prosperity; it was based on resistance to domestic and external exploitation. This movement was called Pan-Africanism. It had moments of glamour during the emancipative struggles of the 19th and 20th centuries for the independence of Black African countries and for overcoming racism outside Africa, such as in the post-World War Two United States. For more than two centuries, the (quite different) founding fathers of the movement in Africa and mainly in the West held the same dream: that of a democratic Africa rid of its evils – united, developed, progressive, and in constant, open-minded exchange with the world.

At one of the founding conferences of Pan-Africanism in 1945 in the United Kingdom, Marcus Grant, a Sierra Leonean member of the West African Youth League, spoke of the movement's basic thoughts and aspirations, capturing the spirit of African emancipation up to the present day:

*“We do not want to die of hunger anymore. We no longer want to work that hard just to support, through our poverty and ignorance, a discredited aristocracy and imperialism. We condemn the monopoly of capital and the rule of enrichment of private industry for private profits alone. ... We will file a complaint, make appeals and sue. We will make the world listen to the realities of our condition. We will fight in every way possible for freedom, democracy and the improvement of our social condition.”*  
(Ouedraogo, 2009)

Yet more than 50 years after national independence, socioeconomic and political progress and social balance remain a shambles in most Black African countries even if some countries have found a path to development.

### **Economic progress remains relative and unequal**

From an economic standpoint, the allegedly impressive growth of African countries has garnered enthusiastic headlines from newspapers across the globe in recent years. But such growth, if any, is not based on innovation or know-how but mainly on mineral resources, export-oriented agricultural products, and, of course, development aid. Nevertheless, the combined GDP of all 55 countries on the African continent (with 1.3 billion people) reached US\$ 3.3 trillion in 2017, lower than Germany's US\$ 3.65 trillion with 82 million people. According to former US president Barack Obama, Africa's total GDP in 2016 equalled that of France (Withnall, 2016). Yet even these numbers have been contested, as only seven of the continent's countries reported performance statistics in accordance with international standards.

Industrialisation remains precarious in African countries, let alone post-industrialisation. Africa has essentially remained a raw-material supplier, just as in the colonial era. The informal sector (i.e., the grey and shadow economy consisting of non-registered and criminal segments, respectively), which is neither taxed nor statistically assessed or formally governed, occupies more than 80% of the labour force (Niane and Brou, 2016), and its importance has increased recently. The agricultural sector remains rudimentary. Although 65% of Africans claim to be farmers, the continent lives in permanent food insecurity; its food imports are nearly US\$ 36 billion annually and may reach US\$ 110 billion by 2025, as per U.N. and OECD estimates (OECD/FAO, 2016).

The reality behind these facts is that since independence, African economies have not fundamentally changed their underlying structure. From the colonial economy of the

past, many African countries beyond the international community's radar have entered economic *gangsterism* or unregulated liberalism of the strong versus the weak, based on tribal, nepotistic, or partisan divisions. As in other mostly illiberal geopolitical areas around the world, a small bourgeoisie constituted by the ruling classes is rising on the shoulders of the poorer strata of the population, deepening inequality and a sense of injustice – especially amongst the younger generation – whilst national economies continue to grow.

As a consequence, many of the young are turning to Marx or Mohammad and ultimately placing their hopes on human traffickers to smuggle them to Europe, in what has in the meantime become a professional criminal business of illegal migration – “the world's biggest criminal travel agency”, according to Trento University expert Andrea di Nicola (Culbertson, 2015). This ‘industry’ is worth at least US\$ 20 billion per year, with US\$ 6 billion earned by individual traffickers alone and the rest by the criminal networks in control (Ibid); these amounts comprised the lion's share of illegal migration's global industry of US\$ 35 billion in 2017 (Reuters, 2017). These figures are projected to grow over the coming years without massive intervention from governments and global bodies such as the International Organisation for Migration and the United Nations. Essentially, the international criminal migration industry is transporting the best and brightest out of Africa.

### **Structural and systemic social evolution has been achieved only partially**

Why this industry is doing so represents a deeper issue. The social evolution of African youth is the true barometer of the quality of governance on the continent, including distribution of wealth, access to education and technology, and participation in progress. With high demographic growth, today's Black African population is close to 1.3 billion and may reach 2 billion in 2050 (UNDESA, 2017). Such strong population growth requires states to constantly expand and improve access to healthcare, education, and housing – but in most cases nullifies qualitative improvements by the greater numbers to be taken care of.

At least 554 million Black Africans are considered poor, a condition exemplified by a particularly high birth rate in this segment and inherited by children. Social security coverage remains nonexistent in most countries. Every night more than 240 million working adults go to sleep hungry. Black Africa remains the continent where per capita income is the lowest in the world. According to a report by the African Development Bank published on 22 May 2017, the populations of at least 18 African countries have a medium or high standard of living (Jeune Afrique with AFP, 2017). According to the same report, however, 645 million Africans do not have access to electricity, and more than 300 million have no access to drinking water. Healthcare in Africa remains the poorest on the planet. Average African hospitals are still lacking in basically everything – at a time when luxury planes are available 24/7 to evacuate members of the ruling classes to Western (mostly American, French, British, and German) hospitals in case of illness.

### **Governance remains below self-set standards**

Good political governance has been the bedrock of the Pan-Africanist founding fathers' and mothers' beliefs in a thriving continent. Stricken by inequalities at home and the dishonourable treatment to which they were sometimes subjected in parts of the Western, Arab, and Asian world, early pan-Africanists dreamt of a better condition for black people in their own countries so citizens could develop and emancipate by promoting their culture without falling prey to domination or exploitation from within or without.

The inhumanity of colonisation triggered the rise of African nationalism after World War Two, which came so quickly that it led to competition amongst ethnic groups and influential tribes and families – and triggered innumerable, lasting internal divisions affecting reality on the ground until the present day. Notions of 'enemy' and 'traitor' surfaced all too easily between Black Africans on all sides when it came to reordering their countries after independence. All who were not part of the 'single thought' about what would be best for the

new 'nations' in accordance with given leaders were swiftly accused of 'collaborating with the imperialists' and branded 'foes' of the rising new establishments.

This was an unfortunate mechanism from the start. If, from the 1950s through the 1970s, independence was the prerequisite to achieving emancipation for the people, it had to appear as the ultimate goal for the new African ruling classes – and it had to be realised, as they believed, at any cost. Many of the new African leaders concentrated so exclusively on this goal that they came to power without real development programmes and without a long-term vision for their countries. Consequently, many African regimes unconsciously locked themselves into structures left by the colonisers without being able to establish new structures; to revive the economy, agriculture, and education systems; and to introduce broader health and social protections. Their hesitation in making decisions around structural and systemic innovation quickly became apparent to the general public.

After the end of colonialism and the start of extended development aid, this mental situation changed only negligibly (Nugent, 2012). On the contrary, substantial help (e.g., debt cancellation by Europe and the West, which was intended to exact historical justice and end exploitation) exacerbated the situation for most people. Governments of some of the poorest countries, who were relieved of a good part of their public debt towards European countries by the 1990s, used the situation to amass even more debt primarily in favour of the rulers and their clientele (Ndulu et al., 2008) – with many of these new, self-made debts tied to personal bank accounts in Switzerland.

As one result of the failed introduction of a serious political economy, most French-speaking countries of West and Central Africa – rather than taking control of their economies – have not managed to establish an economic structure for sustainable development. Even in 2017, these countries had to continue to wait for reports from the Bank of France to learn how their own economies were performing. The mass of Black African populations quickly understood that their political leaders and intellectuals were not great change-makers as

they had announced but, in too many cases, were profiteers who returned to their countries after acquiring outside education and skills to occupy vacancies left by the imperialists' departure; and that what they primarily did was participate in sharing the now independent – and poorly internationally observed – national 'cake'. When people discovered this deception, some so-called 'new African regimes' rallied to the army and police in order to retain power. The results were bloody, manifesting as deadly repressions in the streets of most African capitals since independence until the present day. The other consequence was that Africa's part of the 'bottom billion' was not granted a fair chance to escape poverty, misery, and oblivion (Collier, 2009).

### **Pan-African organisations of the past and the present**

And today? After decades of attempts towards national and transnational alliance-building, many Africans realise that much remains to be done – and that some of the most essential tasks after independence have not been achieved. To create a united Africa, with integrated peoples domestically and geopolitically, far-from-exploitation, tolerant, wealthy, and dedicated to development and emancipation not only for themselves but for humanity – these were the dreams stubbornly nourished by the founders of Pan-Africanism. They eventually gave birth to the AU on 26 May 2001, which was conceived to be the organ of true Pan-African integration based on gradually improving cooperation between African countries.

The AU replaced the former Organisation for African Unity (1963–2002), which quickly revealed its limits when it came to real integration of peoples. If this federation of states was a failure, we must also understand that several African countries are demanding visas for citizens of neighbouring countries to access their territory even today. In 1991, the Treaty of Abuja (Nigeria) provided for the establishment of a common continental market by 2025 (African Economic Community, n.d.). Yet all facts indicate that this project, as of 2018,

is far from complete. Today, intra-African trade does not exceed 13% of the continent's total trade. African economies are for the most part extractive and centralist (i.e., concentrated on their capital) and disproportionately connected to their former colonial powers. In 2017, the AU opted for a budget of \$782 million, 73.79% of which came from international aid with only 26.21% from contributions by African states themselves (Rodier, 2017).

Although the formally supranational organisation, the African Union (AU), often gathers the heads of state of the continent for symbolic celebrations, many Africans remain sceptical of the AU's political and emancipatory role. Perceived more as a club of heads of state than as an international union, the AU is routinely criticised for its inability to maintain human rights and the rule of law in its member countries, to protect individual citizens, to establish the rule of law, and to guarantee primordial individual and collective rights. It is also often accused of failing to protect the people of its member states from misuse of power by heads of state who express themselves through repression, veiled or open dictatorship, muzzling of the press, imprisonment, and torture of political opponents.

As a result of the AU's financial and political weaknesses, it remains difficult, if not impossible, for the organisation to properly address – let alone solve – the continent's problems, such as terrorism and new fundamentalism, ethnic conflicts and wars, famine, disease, brain drain, and migration. These are amongst many problems around which the present AU displays its limits.

### **A glimpse of hope? Africa's rapidly growing diaspora**

In such circumstances, intensifying relations between Africa and its diaspora appear to many as a ray of hope. According to the African Development Bank, as of 2017 the continent's diaspora (i.e., the total number of African citizens living in foreign countries) was sending more than US\$ 65 billion into Africa every year from outside areas (Diallo, 2018). Most came from European expatriates, with a fair portion from illegal migrants living temporarily (two

years on average until a decision, including appeal) as asylum seekers through European welfare. Several countries have embarked on initiatives to get closer to their diaspora, now seen as a financial windfall for the economic growth of their populations.

Togolese authorities, who govern one of the poorest countries on the continent (Benedikter and Tsedze, 2017), have embarked on international tours to meet the diaspora. Distinction Award Ceremonies to 'emerging Togolese of the diaspora' (Admin TogoPortail, 2016) – who are in many cases external money senders – have been held amidst great public pathos. A series of peaceful demonstrations organised by a political party to demand the right to vote and other constitutional rights for Togo's diaspora claimed at least 16 lives across the country between August and October 2017 (RFI, 2017). Indeed, the diaspora is still considered by some governments as a kind of political opposition because a sizeable number of its members are political refugees.

The downside of this trend is that money sent back by Africans abroad, often stemming from generous European and Western social welfare funds not destined for foreign aid, has partly replaced efforts towards domestic African development. The effect is an unaltered and unilateral dependency of African countries on the outside and on increasing mass emigration, which aggravates the African-European migration crisis. Europe will be unable to treat illegal migrants equal to its own citizens for much longer in light of growing anti-migration feelings in most European and Western countries due to the number and method of arrivals (Benedikter and Karolewski, 2017). African governments' passivity in indirectly accepting mass migration as a 'fact' to financially rely on its rapidly growing diaspora could alter the developed world's willingness to assist African countries in their policies. Thus, over-reliance on the diaspora's help could be the next great historical error of Africa's leaders.

### **Africa's cultural differences and diversity: Chance and challenge**

The erosion of the authority of traditional sultans, kings, and sheikhs in the colonial conquest of the African continent profoundly changed cultures and pre-colonial social organisation. Bitter resistance followed, and many chiefs, kings, or priests were deported from their lands and their beliefs exiled with them. In addition, the systematic plundering of hundreds of thousands of artefacts that previously held specific roles in the cultural and spiritual social organisation of African peoples and that are today the pride of Western museums led to a loss of cultural continuity and a reduction in cultural resilience. Although many people and cultures never accepted colonisation, many also did not find a place in Africa's postcolonial independent states, which were often drafted rather artificially as 'nations' without much respect for cultural delineations (e.g., as in the case of the Tuareg). Others regained at least some pride by trying to place cultural traditions systematically at the service of the development of their young nations (see the Ashanti of Ghana). The marginalisation and nationalisation of culture for the sake of politics represents a double-edged sword and remains an open problem in Africa's development. Overall, social organisation imposed on Africa by both colonial and postcolonial powers and interest groups did not allow all peoples throughout the continent to demonstrate their individual multifaceted and differentiated genius creators.

Perhaps the best example of the contextual political dimension inherent in Africa's culture vis-à-vis historical social evolution are the Tuareg (Goodin, Goodin, and Tilly, 2006). The name 'Tuareg' evokes resistance and insubordination as well as 'natural' Pan-African aspirations – starting with the basics of their culture, which is diametrically different from traditionally patriarchal Western civilisations. The Tuareg consider themselves a matriarchal society, where the child belongs to the mother's tribe irrespective of the quality of the father. Similarly, political power is transmitted mainly amongst women. In general, Tuareg women have high social status; the Tuareg regard this as the main trait of their cultural distinction,

which has afforded them rich reservoirs of resilience and resistance. Amongst the last peoples to be subjected to French colonisers in West Africa, the Tuareg stubbornly protested against colonisation and won several battles against the French army – including that of Takoubaou, Mali, where the commander of the French forces, Lieutenant Colonel Eugene Bonnier, was killed on 15 January 1894. Present in all countries of the Sahel (i.e., Algeria, Burkina Faso, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Chad), the Tuareg have never stopped protesting against any central administration since the rebellion of 1916–17 (the so-called ‘Kaocen revolt’ in Niger). In recent years, the Tuareg of Niger and Mali have rebelled continuously against their national governments, claiming that these governments were abandoning their regions and that foreign powers were looting their soil. The Tuareg who reside in the most arid and least populated part of Mali revolt frequently to protest being forgotten and overlooked by the central power. These revolts often cause a slowdown in development. The first post-independence Tuareg revolts were severely repressed, and military administrators were imposed on their areas in northern Mali in 1964. This contributed to radicalisation of some groups in the area. Today, several Tuareg clans are at the head of radical and terrorist movements such as the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad, Ansar Dine, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa, The Signatories in Blood, and Al-Mourabitoun.

One main reason for these ongoing conflicts is cultural; if foreign governments – especially the French government, which negotiated the release of their hostages for several million euros that went to Tuareg captors organised in various small separatist groups – had opted for a peace negotiation in the region that included traditional culture and support of central governments in these areas, several wars may have been avoided (e.g., the carnage of AQIM and others). Unfortunately, domestic and foreign governments are both struggling to recognise the influence and real power of Tuareg women or even tribal leaders in these societies, which remains a *conditio sine qua non* for creating a sincere political dialogue

and achieving lasting peace at an affordable cost. The ransoms received by kidnapers probably refinance the conflict, and a solution through military intervention of the G5 Sahel carries an uncertain outcome given the unresolved cultural dimension that reaches beyond military, political, or economic power (RFI, 2018).

### **The role of religion**

After disruption of the traditional social order of African peoples, many men and women found an alternative bulwark of cultural organisation in religion. This trend sparked the development of several Afro-Muslim brotherhoods in Africa. One of the most famous and perhaps most active is Mouridism. Mouridism was founded by Sheikh Amadou Bamba (1853–1927), a self-declared cultural renovator in Senegal, at a time when colonisation had greatly disrupted the social balance. Mouridism is, in essence, a combination of *Wolof* and Islamic African values, hence its success in Senegal. Mouridism carries strong economic and political importance in the nation. With over 4 million faithful, the Mourides have their spiritual capital in the city of Touba, the second largest city in Senegal. Mourides' festivals are exceptional occasions that offer business opportunities, the most important of which is the Magal (a public holiday in Senegal), which marks the anniversary of the founder's departure in exile under pressure from the French colonial administration. Similar to other religious groups and sects in nearby areas, the Mourides play an important role in the country's stability. The spiritual leaders, or caliphs, are regularly consulted by all political parties. They manage conflicts between politicians, which confers political stability on the country and favours peaceful political transitions. The 'brotherhood' has also played a crucial role in reconciliation attempts between Senegal and neighbouring Gambia (Senghor, 2017). The role of the Mourides in the fight against radical Islam and terrorism is a well-established factor 'from below' – and not least because of this deeply rooted influence, Senegal has come to enjoy stable peace and increasing economic wellbeing.

## **Culture and politics intertwined**

In Ghana, African culture regained its nobility after independence. Traditional cultural leaders contributed enormously to processes of decentralisation, development, and stability. Also because of their contribution, Ghana is one of the most dynamic economies in Africa and to a certain extent a model of 'homemade' democracy. The King of the Ashanti, the majority ethnic group, remains rather impartial in the political game of his country, which affords him a status beyond daily politics that does not suffer from decisional ambiguity. He is in great demand by other West African heads of state, kings and princes from Africa, and even foreign countries whose representatives flock in to respond to the rigorous protocol of the Manhyia Palace in Kumasi.

Embedded in African culture is a capacity for negotiation, the search for understanding, and a peaceful norm. Traditional courts based on seeking reconciliation and peaceful settlement of conflicts base their rulings on the fear of the gods whose myths and legends have inspired laws and social practices to resolve differences. All African peaceful societies were basically governed by moral and religious orders understood as socially and politically rule-giving. Yet modern postcolonial African heads of state have never been able to fully use these historical values of the African peoples to achieve cohesion and transmit Pan-African views to the people. In learning from past mistakes, in addition to councils of the Heads of State, the AU should install a council of the kings, sultans, sheikhs, princes, traditional chiefs, and culturally recognised 'wise people' in a 'Pan-African Wisdom Council' or similar, which should sit regularly and be associated with conflict resolution on the continent. Such a Pan-African Wisdom Council should not have a direct political influence but should assume the role of an advisory board of 'para-political' dimensions. It could build on previous attempts; whilst a state organisation inspired by African cultures was impossible after independence, there were attempts in that direction during the Cold War, all of which

failed because of an exaggerated politicisation of culture. Take, for example, the case of Patrice Lumumba (1925–1961) and his interpretation of the search for an ‘African way’.

Nevertheless, culture and politics remain inherently intertwined. Considering two quotes from the same historical speech of 4 October 1984 at the United Nations (Sankara, 2016), Sankara’s stance on the interface between politics and culture was expressed as follows (Nzwamba, 2014):

*“We must proclaim that there can be no salvation for our peoples unless we radically turn their backs on all the models that all charlatans of the same kind have tried to sell us for twenty years. There can be no salvation for us except this refusal. No development outside this rupture.” ... ‘I want to stand with the people of Afghanistan and the Irish, alongside the people of Grenada and East Timor, each in search of happiness dictated by the dignity and the laws of its culture.’”*

Thus, does the ‘salvation’ of African peoples *also* lie, at least partially, in a moderate return to their cultural roots? What about the ancient values for the younger generation, who have never known them in real life? How can exaggerated politicisation be avoided?

One example of how to restore cultural aspects of the past whilst modernising its forms and contents is Africa’s largest film festival, Fespaco, held in one of its poorest countries, Burkina Faso (BBC, 2019). The festival is an embodiment of Africa’s rich cultural diversity and its shortfalls, such as in providing women equal access and rights. As the BBC reported on that occasion,

*“Fespaco: Africa's largest film festival turns 50. ... Since Fespaco began 50 years ago, no woman has ever won the top prize, the Golden Stallion of Yennenga.”*

Can such a film festival, which is changing Africa’s remembrance and imaginary of itself – and thus serves to some extent as a catalyst and driver of the ‘imaginal politics’ (Bottici,

2014) of empowerment – be one way to follow in reconciling past and present cultures with social and political progress? Can it mark one contribution on the path towards more ‘Pan-African’ shared views and value system, built on improved awareness and self-consciousness of Africa’s own traditions and roots whilst remaining decisively transnational, continental, and socially progressive?

**The only viable perspective: Towards a *new* Pan-Africanism that deserves the name**

For more than half a century, African peoples have waited largely in vain for the Pan-African dream to materialise. Many citizens have become chronic chanters against exploitation, with slogans often derailed by their rulers’ opposition to ‘outside forces’, whilst the true exploiters in all too many cases sit on the seats of power in Africa’s capitals. Yet their rhetoric has not sapped the desires for accountability amongst youth. Therefore, many African regimes are happy to see their youth emigrate and never return. For these rulers, mass emigration of the youth is the best way to get rid of unwanted critics and potential innovators.

In the meantime, colonialism has returned to Africa but wears the clothes of illiberal and authoritarian regimes like China. While the West is pumping billions of dollars of development aid into corrupt regimes, China is behaving like a new imperialist economic and trade regime in many parts of Africa, buying whole areas, mountains, and resorts; constructing its own infrastructure with its own workers; and taking away raw materials and profits in great quantity and quality in return. Not by chance, the main seat of the AU in Addis Abbeba is a gift from China – yet a Trojan horse in the eyes of many younger African citizens.

Indeed, in the eyes of a growing number of its educated, Africa should remember the old Latin saying “*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*” (“I fear the Danaans, although they bring gifts”). In other words, reliance upon illiberal, non-democratic governments and regimes to develop a more productive, cooperative, and democratic Africa – such as the envisaged Pan-African dream – is an illusion that the AU should critically accompany and recognise as

necessary if it does not want to lose even more credibility amongst young African citizens who gather information through the internet and have developed, against all odds, a much broader vision than many regimes still imagine.

### **So what might the future hold?**

Whatever the term ‘Pan-Africanism’ can inspire, and wherever it may lead in the coming years, the best system to meet Africa’s needs is one inspired by democracy, a critical and independent media sphere, and good governance grounded in transnational cooperation and integration amongst peer countries and citizens. Respect for and protection of human rights, implementation of the rule of law, and the creation of economic opportunities for youth are essential.

A new Pan-Africanism must help to better integrate African economies amongst themselves and the African economy into the world market. Africa must move forward from raw-material supply to a real processing industry to create jobs and re-evaluate raw materials on its own to begin to sell products instead of resources.

Europe, the West, and the world have to take responsibility for such progress in their own interests. As the great-nephew of the last Emperor of Ethiopia Haile Selassie I and political analyst Asfa-Wossen Asserate said in his warnings of a new ‘mass exodus’ of Africans to Europe,

*“The current refugee crisis is mainly due to the events in the Middle East. In the process, one development is still undervalued which is much more threatening in the long term: the migration of tens of thousands of Africans to Europe. Europe and [the world have to] fundamentally change their Africa politics. Otherwise, soon it will not any longer be thousands, but millions of refugees, and Europe’s biggest challenge in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the migration challenge, will end in disaster – both for Africa and Europe. Especially those who the African continent desperately needs for its*

*development are turning their backs on their homelands, worsening the situation on the ground. Europe must specifically support those states which are building democratic structures and investing in their youth. This is the only way to make it possible for young Africans ready to flee to have a dignified future on their continent, and to stay.”* (Asserate, 2016)

On the other hand, a new Pan-Africanism means that Africa itself must take more responsibility for its development in the face of globalisation. Africans must get rid of the many confusing ideas about globalisation, including the misconception that leaving the continent means finding a better life. Instead, citizens should make appropriate arrangements to create better ways of living at home and to open a new space for Africa on the world stage. The restoration of a productive business climate will play a pivotal role in attracting foreign investors, but this relies decisively upon how generational and social questions are faced.

The overall outlook must include greater investment in domestic security through ‘deep’ development, particularly in education, labour opportunities, and infrastructure. In Africa’s poorest and most desperate areas, cooperation is needed beyond borders – something most African countries are still not accustomed to because of enduring rivalries and historical mistrust. For instance, growing Islamic fundamentalism and religious extremism in the Sahel Zone – including repeated attacks on Burkina Faso (Benedikter & Ouedraogo, 2017) – has emerged over recent years with increasing intensity and has led, for example, to dozens being killed in March 2018 in the third large attack on the capital Ouagadougou within just two years (2016 to 2018). Thus, a stronger securisation policy must include a much more multidimensional strategy than military initiatives alone (Benedikter and Ouedraogo, 2018), including local developmental initiatives, better ‘capillary’ education, and community- and culture-building assets.

Eventually, leaders of the continent should understand the unprecedented desire of its youth to participate in managing their countries. Democracy and tolerance will encourage the return of portions of the African diaspora, to their countries' benefit. Africa will not be able to develop in autarky but must engage resolutely towards win-win partnerships between its countries and the globe to raise self-confidence, teaming up with current partners and with new actors for a joint economic take-off that, given demographic development, is not an option but a necessity – not only for Africa, but for Europe and the world.

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