

Ubuntu Philosophy and The Dialogue of Pan-Africanism

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Abstract

This paper explores the intersection of Ubuntu philosophy and the evolving dialogue of Pan-Africanism, highlighting how Ubuntu's humanistic principles can revitalize and deepen Pan-African unity in the 21st century. Ubuntu emphasizes communal identity, mutual care and interdependence. These emphases by Ubuntu go beyond common ancestry, history and race to accommodate the utilization of the diversities and uniqueness that are identifiable within the countries of the continents and diaspora. While Pan-Africanism has historically focused on political liberation, economic cooperation, cultural pride and ideological. The pattern of relating Ubuntu Philosophy to Pan-Africanism has gained little or no attention. This paper is qualitative research. The methods used for this research are textual exposition, philosophical analysis and synthesis. This work, therefore, seeks to investigate how Ubuntu philosophy can contribute in the dialogue of Pan Africanism. The significance of this research is to show how Ubuntu encourages inclusive dialogue, reconciliatory leadership and shared vision of African future irrespective of the diversities and uniqueness that are identifiable in our experiences as countries within the continent. This paper argues that for the dialogue of Pan Africanism to be fruitful and sustainable, Ubuntu Philosophy provides a viable platform for its success. This is because as long as Ubuntu upholds mutual care and interdependence, it will always be compatible with the diversities and uniqueness that are embedded within the experiences of various countries of the continent.

Keywords: *Colonialism, Neo-colonialism, Pan-Africanism, Slave Trade, Ubuntu Philosophy.*

INTRODUCTION

The Ubuntu philosophy and Pan-Africanism though rooted in different historical experience, converge on the powerful idea: the value of human interconnectedness. Ubuntu, an African ethical philosophy is best captured by the phrase “I am because we are”. It emphasizes community, empathy and mutual care. It is a social philosophy that is based on the principles of care and community, harmony, respect and responsiveness which expresses the fundamental interconnectedness of human existence (Bolden, 2014). Pan-Africanism on the other hand is a political and cultural movement that seeks unity and solidarity among African people and African diaspora. When brought into dialogue, Ubuntu and Pan-Africanism offer a socially transformative vision that speaks to the healing of historical wounds and the building of a more just and united future. Ubuntu Philosophy and Pan-Africanism when brought together have the power to reimagine Africa and diaspora societies because of shared values, mutual recognition and restorative justice. It encourages dialogue that transcends national and ethical boundaries, nurturing a sense of belonging that is both local and global. In a world that is marked by

fragmentation and alienation, Ubuntu and Pan-Africanism offer a model for inclusive, relational and hopeful community building that is anchored on the African spirit of togetherness and resilience.

The aim of this study is to assess how Ubuntu Philosophy and Pan-Africanism can work together to inspire unity, healing and social transformation across the African continent and its diaspora. The topic seeks to highlight how Ubuntu, with its emphasis on human dignity, communal responsibility and interconnectedness can provide a moral foundation for the Pan-African vision for solidarity and liberation. The paper also aims to bridge the historical and cultural divides that have separated African nations and communities. The trans-Atlantic slave trade and colonialism fractured the continent through artificial borders and erasure of indigenous knowledge systems. Revisiting Ubuntu within the context of Pan-African dialogue allows for a discovery of shared values that pre-date colonization and speak to a common African worldview.

Ubuntu philosophy presents a radical different way of seeing the world, one that prioritizes community over competition, interdependence over individualism and empathy over exploitation. When Ubuntu is placed in dialogue with Pan-Africanism, it becomes not only a call for African solidarity but a global moral and political framework. Globally, there is a growing dissatisfaction with the system that prioritizes profit over people and nationalism over shared humanity. In this context, Ubuntu emphasizes on human dignity, compassion and relational identity in order to enhance inclusive and sustainable ways of living. When linked with Pan-Africanism which confronts the legacies of colonialism, slavery and racism, Ubuntu deepens the call for justice by adding an ethical dimension grounded in African thought. Ubuntu philosophy and Pan-Africanism contribute to the ongoing discussion on decolonization, by emphasizing indigenous knowledge system that brings about collective wellbeing and cultural renewal.

This study is qualitative research. The research designs that were adopted are historical and ethnography. The study adopts the methods of textual exposition, philosophical analysis and synthesis. The method of textual exposition was used to expose the thoughts of scholars who have written on Ubuntu Philosophy and Pan-Africanism. The method of philosophical analysis was used to breakdown issues that were significant to our study. The method of synthesis was used to generate new knowledge that arises from the dialogue of Ubuntu and Pan-Africanism, in order to offer a better understanding of the subject matter. The findings of this research show that Ubuntu philosophy and Pan-Africanism are geared toward enhancing unity and solidarity among people of African descent. Ubuntu also provides the principles of resolving contemporary Pan-Africanism challenges. This paper argues that for the dialogue of Pan Africanism to be fruitful and sustainable, Ubuntu Philosophy provides a viable platform for its success. This is because as long as Ubuntu upholds mutual care and interdependence, it will always be compatible with the diversities and uniqueness that are embedded within the experiences of various countries of the continent.

Critical issues in African History

The horrible effect of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the imposition of colonialism and the current neo-colonial movement in Africa has been considered as the tripartite crime against Africa. These crimes left a lasting effect on the African continent. It changed the course of African history. Thus, most discussion about Africa revolves around these three critical issues.

We are going to examine these critical issues and to see how they have impacted on unity and solidarity among Africans.

Slave Trade

The trans-Atlantic slave trade in Africa lasted for almost three hundred years. The Portuguese and the Spanish were the people who laid the foundation for slave trade in Africa. Slave trade in Africa started around 1445 when Dinis Dias and Lanzarote de Fretias anchored their fleets at the mouth of the Senegal River and reconnected some of the Cape Verde Islands (Orijinta, 2011). After Dias and Fretias, came Venetia Alvise de Cadamosto, Pedro de Cintas (who discovered the Gulf of Guinea), Fernando Po, Lopez Gonzales, Vasco da Gama and so on. The slave masters introduced to the African continent, system of credit and exchange. African slaves were transported and sold to European countries to work in their plantations thereby improving the European economy. Under an inhumane condition, these slaves were packed like sardines and it is said that the mortality rate was around 17% on the average (Orijinta, 2011). The slaves were also meant to perform some menial jobs like taking care of the household of some wealthy people, service in commerce and administration, service in the military, worked as labourers in the mines and their highly profitable sugar plantations. By doing these jobs, African slaves became a solution for European and American job needs. This is because they were three times cheaper than European labour.

It is good to mention that the slave masters were exchanging some items for slaves. Some of the items they exchanged were mirror, sugar, gunpowder, some decorated bottles and some Indian textiles (Inikori, 1992). They used these items to lure some African chiefs and some other people to exchange or turn in their subjects or brothers as slaves. This is why it is often said that the slave trade in Africa would not have succeeded if there were not any cooperation from some local people. In Nigeria, these local cooperators were called the middle men and most of them were from the Ijaws, the Urhobo, the Calabar, the Itsekiris and Ijebus (Orijinta, 2011). Initially those who were given out as slaves were domestic slaves, criminals, prisoners of war and other undesirable people in the community. However, since the demands of the Europeans started being overstretched, the need to fulfill their demands made the middle men to bring anyone their hands could reach.

Slave trade in Africa contribute to the disunity and lack of solidarity among Africans both home and abroad. This is why it is said that slavery in Africa altered the course of history. It is regarded as one of the most atrocious and inhumane activity that has ever being carried out in human history.

Colonialism

Colonialism started in Africa as an aftermath of the Berlin conference (1885), which saw to the portioning of Africa by the Europeans. It was necessitated as a result of the industrial revolution that ushered in a new process of production which aim to counter the slave-based economy.

The industrial revolution brought about increase in production and to ensure increase in production, raw materials are needed. Also, there were decrease in agricultural production such that European countries like Britain were no longer able to feed their increasing population. Consequently, there were need for market not just for sourcing raw materials but also for food, hence, the need for some European countries to source for these outside their continent.

Chinweizu while discussing the European conquest in Africa said that “when Europeans pioneered industrial capitalism, her demands upon the resources of the world increased tremendously” (Chinweizu, 1978: 35). In the quest to get all these resources and since to take African power to their country has declined, the Europeans decided to put African labour to work in Africa; digging up for her the riches of African mines (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012).

In a bid to exploit Africa and take up everything they want, notwithstanding the resistance they encountered, the colonialist had to take direct control of the African Economy and Political Administration for the following reasons: it helped them to produce the type of food required for their industrial workers back home. Secondly, to reorganize the economy and market to facilitate its integration into the world market and international economy (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012).

Thirdly, to ensure that Africa was made a consumer nation for European goods. This is because, if the situation is not guaranteed, it will affect the development and progress of the industrialization going on in Europe. Fourthly, is the enthronement of eurocentrism, that is, the recognition that everything European is superior and that whatever that is not European is inferior. Hence this had a great influence on language, cloth, lifestyle, ideology and so on of the continent.

It is important to mention that colonialism destabilized traditional, political and social institutions in Africa. By creating empires, they destroyed, divided and combined existing kingdoms, empires and ethnic groups. Hence the recent misunderstanding and struggles among different ethnic groups leading to disunity in Africa.

Neo-colonialism

After the Second World War, the colonial and imperialism trend started fading off. Most African countries started fighting for independence. When most African countries started gaining their freedom, little did they know that it was just a political exchange of baton between the colonial masters and the new African leaders. Little did Africans know that those leaders were loyal to the colonial masters. Kwame Nkrumah describing how neocolonialism has affected Africa said that “Neocolonialism of today represents imperialism in its final and perhaps its most dangerous stage” (Nkrumah, 1970). Neo-colonialism is aimed at preventing the financial power of the developed countries being used in such a way as to impoverish the less developed. The essence of neo-colonialism is that “the state which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty, but in reality, its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside” (Nkrumah, 1970: ix). From this, we see that neocolonialism was invented as a tool to maintain control of Africa, to checkmate and order the way she uses her economic and political power. The point about neo-colonialism is that when the economic and political power of a country or continent is being controlled, it thwarts the seed of growth in the country or continent. Neo-colonialism can manifest in various forms such as influencing government policy decisions, providing funding for state, placing individuals in positions of power, exacting control over foreign exchange and imposing a banking system controlled by the imperial power (Northrop, 2012). This neo-colonialism in Africa has brought about many effects such as corruption, overdependence and debt accumulation, environmental degradation, collapse of indigenous industries and investment, cultural homogenization and forced assimilation and so on. The point is that neocolonialism perpetuated by more technologically advanced countries, ensures that low income countries cannot develop or grow (Obikwelu, Messina & Andy, 2023).

❖ Ubuntu Philosophy

Ubuntu as a philosophy originated from the Bantu people of southern Africa, even though it is now shared across most African countries. Ubuntu is a Philosophy that encompasses the interdependence of humans on one another and the acknowledgement of one's responsibility to their fellow humans. It is a philosophy that encourages collectivism over and above individualism. The Ubuntu philosophy recognizes our interconnectedness within our community. Through this interconnectedness, you can obtain a sense of belonging to the world (Van de Kerhof, 2024). Ubuntu Philosophy embodies a communal ethos that emphasizes shared responsibility, trust in each other and interconnectedness among communities. Ubuntu counters the Cartesian "*ego cogito*" which argues that the individual is the source of knowledge. Ubuntu rests on the proverb "*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*" which translates as a person is a person through other persons. The implication of this is that the source knowledge is the community not the individual (Van de Kerhof, 2024). Therefore, Ubuntu philosophy can be summarized as 'I am because we are'.

Etymologically, the word Ubuntu can be drawn from two syllabi 'Ubu' and 'ntu' in Nguni Bantu Language. 'Ubu' refers to the social nature of human beings, in other words, it underscores the idea that individuals are interconnected, they share common humanity. 'Ntu' refers to the uniqueness of every human being. From this, we see that Ubuntu acknowledges the inherent worth of every individual and that each person has something to offer (Van de Kerhof, 2024). From this we see that Ubuntu is a philosophy based on the knowledge that individuals express compassion, reciprocity, dignity and mutuality in the interest of building and maintaining common collectives (Mbigi, 1995). Generally speaking, Ubuntu is oriented towards communal and relational principles which Lutz (2009), maintains is the stronghold of African thought and life.

Ubuntu Philosophy emphasizes that peoples' identity is continuously developing within the context of their reciprocal relationship with people. This implies that by supporting and nurturing others, one's own identity and quality of life is enhanced (Mayaka & Truell, 2021). Ubuntu aims at inclusiveness of everyone in the community, their responsibility to others and to the overall wellbeing of the environment. It indicates the role of community in generating a sense of self and a sense of belonging. Ubuntu philosophy tells us that we draw our identity from the community. Ubuntu Philosophy is both descriptive and normative. From the descriptive point of view, it gives account of a value system and from the normative point of view, it shows how people relate with one another. Having examine the concept of Ubuntu philosophy, there are some assumptions we can draw from the concept according to Bolden.

- 1) Interdependence: Ubuntu Philosophy is essentially a relational philosophy, hence the statement 'I am because we are'. This points to a strong constructivist ontology in which a person draws his sense of being within the social context in which one finds oneself. It highlights the importance of a subjective and emotional appreciation of human experience rather than objectivity and rationality (Bolden, 2014). Ubuntu philosophy acknowledges the importance of interdependence among members of community and valuing one's identity through our relationship with the other. It is important for us to note that by highlighting the assumption of interdependence does not mean that an individual sacrifices one's good for the community rather it helps us to understand that, "the individual does not pursue this common good instead of his or her good, but rather pursues his or her good through pursuing the common good" (Lutz, 2009: 314).

- 2) **Inclusiveness:** One thing about Ubuntu philosophy is that it is collective in orientation that as it expresses the value of collaboration, cooperation and community. It encourages care and respect for others and solidarity in difficult times. These values are believed to be rooted and anchored in peoples' life and communities (Poovan, du Toot & Engelbrecht, 2006). While some collective philosophies have been criticized as oppressive and totalitarian, Ubuntu is described as an inclusive approach which calls for solidarity, dignity and respect in our relationship with others (Bolden, 2014). To illustrate the beauty of this Ubuntu philosophy as inclusive, Mbigi (1995), proposes the theory of collective finger. According to him, the finger can be seen as individual persons who act together to achieve a common goal, and at the same time each finger stands for a value which is required and vital for collective action. It implies that this theory shows that Ubuntu is a principle of inclusivity and togetherness which highlights the fact that we need cooperation to function.
- 3) **Intersubjectivity:** Ubuntu philosophy is intersubjective because it focuses on the relationship between the individual and the collective. Ubuntu is a relational philosophy revolving around the idea that a person becomes a person through his or her relationship with and recognition by others (Mangaliso & Mangaliso, 2017). The point about the intersubjectivity of Ubuntu Philosophy is the significant relationship between the I and the We. This relationship is vital because the individual cannot function effectively without the community.

Ubuntu Philosophy simply portrays and embodies an understanding of what it is to be human and what is needed for human beings to grow and find fulfillment. It is also an instrument to maintaining social cohesion and solidarity among people of the same descent. For Africa to unite, create that sense of brotherhood and make a better home for all, Ubuntu philosophy must be preached and put into practice.

Pan-Africanism: Meaning, History and Achievement

In this section, we are going to examine the meaning of Pan-Africanism, its origin and its nature. The reason for this is for us to have a firm grasp of what Pan-Africanism is all about. Pan-Africanism as a concept has often been used by some political activist, leaders and nationalists to portray condemnation against slavery, racism and colonialism. However, there is no single definition of Pan-Africanism, this is because when we read various literatures, we will find many interpretations and meaning of Pan-Africanism which are imposed by various researchers. However, we are going to examine various definitions of Pan-Africanism to see different authors' point of view.

The African Union (AU) defines Pan-Africanism as "an ideology and movement that encourages the solidarity of Africans worldwide". Oyewole and Joash (2006), understand Pan-Africanism from two perspectives. First, they understand it as an ideology that recognizes the African and Afro-American intellectuals and Political Activists as identical. It strengthens racial solidarity based on new self-consciousness. Secondly, they saw it as a movement that promotes political independence, racial equality and continental unity. From this definition, we see that the success of African state depends on the unity of African nations and the recognition of African shared value, culture and belief. Kodjoe (1986), defines Pan-Africanism as the acceptance of oneness of all the people of African descent and commitment to the betterment of all the people of African descent. So apart from the political and cultural perspective earlier seen, Kodjoe brings in the idea of oneness which I believe is an important factor in the progress of the African continent. Thompson (1969), understands Pan-Africanism as something that is

antithetical or a challenge to the activities of European imperialism that is summarized in the activities of slave trade, colonialism and racism. Tondi (2005), argues that there are four themes that are discernible through the evolution of Pan-Africanism in thought and in practice in the 20th century namely: (a) Pan-Africanism: a universal expression of black prides and achievement; (b) Pan-Africanism: a return to Africa by the people of African descent living in the diaspora; (c) Pan-Africanism: a harbinger of liberation and (d) Pan-Africanism: a political unification of the continent. When you look at these four themes you see that Tondi wants to capture in a simple presentation the meaning of Pan-Africanism through the evolution of ideas and understanding of the term. To capture this understanding, Maimela (2013: 34), summarizes Tondi's four themes by saying that "for 20th century African struggle, Pan-Africanism means a vehicle that was meant to reclaim African history and rediscover the African personality that had been subjugated under European cultural domination".

Robert (1973), defines Pan-Africanism as the instrument that mobilizes the people of African heritage all over the world in order to build a common cultural, political and economic community by capitalizing on the issues of racial discrimination, social segregation, economic exploitation and denigration of self-rule. He also pointed out that the unity of the African and the diaspora in all areas is an important step in working for the dignity, liberation, equality and development of the African nation and people. Looking at all these definitions, one would say that Pan-Africanism aims at the restoration, unity, solidarity, liberation and development of the African people of African descent (home and abroad) with the view of building a better continent. Having looked at these definitions let us examine the history of Pan-Africanism.

The term Pan-Africanism was first coined by Henry Sylvester Williams in 1900. However, Immanuel Gesis (1969), suggest that the idea dates back to 1787 events such as the agitations of the Abolitionist movement and freed slaves in Americas, Britian, Sierra Leone, Libreville, and other West African colonies. Some other scholars argue that Pan-Africanism goes back to 1783AD to include all social-historical struggles that have occurred with African Geographical world. Eze (2013), believes that the idea of Pan-Africanism emerged around 15th century owing to the struggles that were localized within the historical era. John Clarke (1990: 663), supported this view by arguing that "the main root of Pan-Africanism, is both in action and social thought ... nourished by the events of the 15th century – the second rise of Europe, the beginning of the transatlantic slave trade and Western colonization". This idea was further supported by Rodney (1981), when he said that Pan-Africanism is something we must define in struggle. "One of the essentials to the African slave struggle is the common experience of exploitation and oppression and the unity which the slaves forged, a commonality which could only be operative when they moved against European exploitation and oppression...that...is the essence of Pan-Africanism in the period when it was born (in the fifteenth century) and it had to be born in a context where a large number of Africans from different social background were thrown into a context in which this necessity could arise".

From this there is no doubt that the 15th century was a significant period for the emergence of Pan-Africanism. It is important to note that prior to this period, race was not an issue. Nobody was judged based on being black or white. Being black or white was not an institutionalized form of human classification since blackness possesses neither juridical nor substantive intentionality (Eze, 2013).

Pan-Africanism as an intellectual movement is a product of modernism. It serves as an ideology that is geared towards restoration of African subjectivity as well as challenging the intellectual root of colonial historicity. The intellectual formation of Pan-Africanism was

formed in the works of slaves like Olaudah Equiano, Ottobah Cugoano, John Russwurm, Samuel Cornish, Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. DuBois and others. It was later developed in West Indies and Africa under the influence of Marcus Garvey, Sylvester Williams, Nnamdi Azikwe, Kwame Nkrumah, Leopold Senghor, Aimé Césaire and so on.

From this brief history of Pan-Africanism, one could deduce that Pan-Africanism has a twin task in relation to correcting the historical injustice of slavery, colonialism and racism. The tasks are to free Africa and unite Africa and her people. To achieve this requires the restoration of African humanity in all facets of life and the elevation of Africa back onto the global stage as equal people, culture and geographical space (Maimela, 2013). We can say that with regards to this task, Pan-Africanism is making a serious effort to achieving its set goals. For instance, Pan-Africanism succeeded in the abolition of slave trade in the Caribbeans, USA and Europe. By doing this, it contributed to the emancipation of slaves all over the world. Pan-Africanism contributed to the creation of oneness and brotherhood among African descent both within and outside the continent. Uniting people is always a difficult task but Pan-Africanism movement made strong effort in the formation of sense of solidarity and shared identity among black African communities. Another great achievement of Pan-Africanism is the digging out of our precolonial shared values by our Pro-African Intellectuals and to produce an African political and economic ideology (Taye, 2019). Furthermore, Pan-Africanism movement ensured the freedom of African nations from colonial rule, such that from 1960s, except for few countries, most African nations started gaining their independence. One task that seem not to be complete is the complete liberation of the African continent. Africa is not yet completely free, it still depends on the West and other wealthy countries such as France, the United Kingdom, the United States, Japan, China, International monetary fund, World bank and so on, for economic reasons. This has led to the continuous exploitation of the continent by the West leading to heterogeneity in Africa which is a fundamental challenge confronting the reason behind Pan-Africanism. This challenge can be confronted by understanding the kind of homogeneity that we need in Africa as people with various kinds of external and internal influences.

Interrogating Homogeneity in Pan-Africanism

This section will be introduced with the words of Kumssa that “although one of the main objectives of Pan-Africanism which is decolonization has been achieved, the need for African unity remains elusive” (Kumssa, 2022). This section will attempt to demonstrate convincingly the reason for this elusivity. When we talk about homogeneity, what do we mean? It simply means the state of two or more things having qualities that make them look the same or seem of the same kind. By implication, each time, ‘homo’ is brought up, it is about sameness. When we say that one of the fundamentals of Pan-Africanism is common ancestry, common history, common destiny and so the need for unity and solidarity, it simply means that Pan-Africanism with its attributes sees Africa made up of fifty-four (54) countries as one. When the claim of common ancestry is projected, it means that Africa is of the same origin. But do we mean this origin in terms of the same forefathers or demography or by colour? If we go by the same forefathers, it might be difficult to demonstrate that because there are also migrants who have nationalized. If we go by demography, we can envisage the idea of having the same location. If we go by colour, we might also face the challenge of demonstrating the commonness in terms of colour with the north Africans. The most proximate and more appropriate should be common demography and not common ancestry.

Furthermore, this same challenge applies to the understanding of common history. Not every African country experienced trans-Atlantic slave trade. Most modern North-African countries never got involved. Ethiopia was not colonized and the kind of colonial experience and mentality developed by African francophones are not the same with the African Anglophones, same also applies to both neo-colonialism and imperialism. Also, colour is out of the question. The argument of this paper is that the commonness attached to the attribute of Pan-Africanism is erosive and obscure. It is erosive and obscure because, a continent of 54 countries or several empires, kingdoms and the sort cannot have such commonness as portrayed by Pan-Africanism. All the above arguments support the claim of Kumssa (2022: 9) that

“Personal ambition and a lack of understanding and co-operation among African leaders are among the major causes of the failure of Pan-Africanism for the past two decades. The dogmatic struggle between radicals, moderates and conservatives continues to be the greatest obstacle to unification. Other obstacles are the rate of illiteracy in Africa, the military threat, the geography and economy of the continent, the hegemony of the South Africans in the southern Africa subcontinent and the links of North Africa with the Middle East. Other factors influencing the prospects for African Unity are language, religion, and the conflict between the traditional and the modern elites.

The point is that recognizing the diversity of cultures and experiences in Africa will go a long way to rechanneling the focus of Pan-Africanism and foster a rapid, possible as well as sustainable kind of development for Africa. Pan-Africanism can unite Africans in diversity and still achieve solidarity. One may ask how? There are several countries in Africa as there are several worldviews by these countries. So, Pan-Africanism should utilize the diversity in cultures to achieve its goal.

From the foregoing, we are suggesting that we must not exaggerate our commonness to appeal to concerns about development. We can always promote or strategize ways of achieving development in Africa even in diversity. All must not be one or common, it can also accommodate several entities.

Ubuntu as a Guide for Pan-African Praxis

If Pan-Africanism is the political and economic blueprint for African unity, Ubuntu can be its ethical heart and several practical implications arise from this synergy. They include:

- 1) **Reframing Leadership:** Ubuntu encourages leadership that is participatory, accountable and compassionate. This is because Ubuntu promotes people centered leadership which has its core tents as respect and dignity, solidarity and compassion (Ekong, 2024). In contrast to authoritarian or patronage-based system, Ubuntu-informed leadership prioritizes consensus, dialogue and service. Pan-African institution, often criticized for bureaucracy and elitism, could benefit from this model of inclusive governance rooted in care and shared responsibility.
- 2) **Restorative justice and healing:** Across the continent, historical injustice – such as slavery, colonialism, apartheid and civil wars – have left deep wounds. The African Union (2025) points out that these ugly events in Africa have left socio-economic, cultural and psychological scars across the African continent and the African diaspora. These injustices have perpetuated global inequalities and hinder African development. Reparations therefore, are not merely about addressing historical wrongs but about building a just and equitable societies. Ubuntu’s principles of forgiveness, truth-telling, and restorative justice offer valuable tools for reconciliation. Truth and reconciliation commissions, inspired by

- Ubuntu, could be adopted for broader Pan-African healing process to address cross-border grievances and historical traumas.
- 3) **Economic Solidarity:** Ubuntu implies an economy of sharing, not accumulation. While Pan-Africanism seeks economic integration through trade and infrastructure, Ubuntu calls for equitable distribution and mutual support. This could inspire models of development based on cooperative ownership, ecological balance and human well-being rather than profit and exploitation.
 - 4) **Diasporic Inclusion:** Ubuntu inclusive ethos can also bridge the often-tenuous relationship between continental Africans and the diaspora. Pan-Africanism historically arose from the diaspora, yet institutional Pan-Africanism has sometimes sidelined diasporic voices. Nagar and Nganje (2025) during their annual report to the African Union, lament that the African Diaspora are often excluded in African discourse. They suggest that the diaspora should be mobilized to champion the continents abroad. Stating that Africa Diaspora contributed in the fight against apartheid and they have also contributed to cultural revival in music and film. Ubuntu's stress on belonging and mutual recognition can help create deeper and more respectful partnerships across the global African family.
 - 5) **Education and cultural revival:** Ubuntu encourages learning that is communal, oral, and rooted in lived experience. Pan-African educational reform can draw from Ubuntu to build curricula that centers on African knowledge systems, languages, and values. This would resist epistemic colonization and foster pride in African Heritage.

Ubuntu Philosophy as a Solution to contemporary Pan-Africanism challenges

Ubuntu Philosophy is the center of African outlook and being. Ubuntu as a social accord is linked to equality, respect, care, ethics, moral, political, social and spiritual dimension of the African people. It highlights the relationship between the individual and the community. Pan-Africanism on the other hand is about promoting African interest. It is geared towards restoring and promoting unity and sense of brotherhood. We know that following contemporary African experience, Pan-Africanism movement seems to be encountering challenges. These challenges tend to hinder the objectives of the movement of Pan-Africanism. In this section, therefore, this study will demonstrate that Ubuntu philosophy can be a solution to these challenges.

The traditional African societies lived relatively in peace until the events of slave trade and colonialism. With the advent of the colonial masters, most African that used to live together were separated by boundaries of what we now call country. These demarcations were made for the interest of the colonial masters, because of the large deposit of minerals that were found in African soil. However, with most countries gaining independence, it was not much time before wars and misunderstanding started coming up between ethnic groups and between countries. For instance, the Nigerian/Biafra war, the Rwandan war (the Hutu and Tutu), and the recent war in Democratic Republic of Congo were few examples. Also, we think about the xenophobic attack on non-south African as another typical example.

The cause of conflict, violence and war in Africa has been linked to ethno-religious rivalries, bad politics, injustice, corruption, marginalization, among others (Smith, 2015). Ubuntu philosophy promotes an idea of togetherness and a sense that we are all one. Hence the statement 'I am because we are'. Pan Africanists should work towards connecting and uniting the people of Africa irrespective of their ethnic origin, religion, language, color, economy, area size and so on.

Another challenge that Pan-Africanism faces in Africa is security. Some African countries especially West Africa is being confronted by terrorists. In Nigeria for example we have Boko-Haram, Al Qaeda, bandits, unknown gunmen, Kidnappers and so on. These conflicts or insecurities pose a big threat to the development and growth of Africa. Musa Abutudu (2003) argues that Africa majorly suffers from human security. This human security assumes that, if life is threatened or there is a detract from lives being lived in a fulfilling manner, then there is a security concern. Africa is being bedeviled by human security because every day, either life is being lost or people sustain significant injury. Africa has the largest number of internally displaced people in the world. This is not good for Africa. Ubuntu Philosophy teaches us that we should work for the collective interest of all since it is the task of everyone to work for the betterment of all. It is the task of all to fight against security challenges. Ubuntu encourages community strength since we draw our strength from community support. So, everyone should work for the success and happiness of all. It is expected that the new wave of Pan-Africanism is to eradicate the security challenges to better realize the agenda of political and economic integration among members of African union.

In Africa, Politics is a do or die affair. The post-independence political history of Africa has shown that one cannot gain office without armed struggle, rigging, fraud, post-election violence and conflict. In some countries, military force or coup d'état has become the order of the day. Most of the time, transition to power is marked by violence. Some leaders tend to perpetuate themselves in power. This kind of character and attitude does not show the Ubuntu philosophy. Ubuntu philosophy portrays humanity, humanness, goodness of nature, good moral disposition, virtue, sense of common humanity and true humanity (Gade, 2011). African political leaders should realize that we all share in the common humanity and that politics and ethics should not be divorced. Pan-African movement should strive on the building of democratic values and principles that will guide African leaders.

Economic underdevelopment is one of the major challenges many African countries face. While some African countries have experienced significant growth, many others remain trapped in poverty, plagued by corruption, unequal distribution of resources, and dependency on foreign aid and loans, wars, embezzlement. Nwaoba (2017) supports this view by arguing that what causes economic underdevelopment in Africa is politicization of economic interest, cronyism and nepotism, economic sabotage, poor economic investment culture, foreign goods consumption orientation, idiosyncratic pursuit of African leaders, sit-tight syndrome in governance, Armed struggle and guerrilla warfare and son on. Ubuntu offers a framework for reshaping and redirecting African economic landscape by fostering a spirit of shared prosperity. Ubuntu philosophy encourages a communal responsibility which could help create more inclusive economic system. This approach contrasts with the individualist and profit-driven approach that have resulted in milking and exploiting African's natural resources and labor. Ubuntu could inspire policies that focus on sustainable development, entrepreneurship and local empowerment

CONCLUSION

The African continent today because of slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism, has experienced and inherited a complexity of problem. The good news is that Ubuntu philosophy can provide a guide to solving these problems. Pan-Africanism as both a movement and an ideology that is geared towards promoting solidarity and oneness can help Africa to face its struggles if it looks towards adopting Ubuntu philosophy. Ubuntu is a philosophy that portrays

the common brotherhood of the African people. To unite and liberate, we must work together. This is because the struggle to unite and liberate Africa cannot be pursued in isolation. Pan-Africanism movement should strive to further revolution in Africa and to create a sense of brotherhood among people of African descent. By embracing Ubuntu's principle of unity, solidarity, shared prosperity and peacebuilding. African nations can overcome the fragmentation, economic inequality and social division that hinder progress.

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