

Fractured Patriotism, Stalled Pan-Africanism: Rebuilding African Unity Amidst National Crises

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Abstract:

The ideal of Pan-Africanism envisions a united Africa overcoming colonial legacies and fostering continental solidarity. However, this vision faces a critical obstacle: fractured patriotism within many African nations. Ethnic divisions, political corruption, economic disparities, and institutional weaknesses have eroded national cohesion, undermining the foundation upon which Pan-African unity must be built. This paper argues that a durable Pan-Africanism cannot be imposed top-down or emerge solely from institutional frameworks. Instead, it requires rebuilding inclusive and ethical patriotism that transcends internal divisions and creates a shared sense of belonging within nations. Where such patriotism is absent or fragile, transnational solidarities (through economic cooperation, cultural exchange, and activist networks) play a vital preparatory role, gradually fostering a broader African consciousness. This dialectical relationship between national cohesion and continental solidarity challenges dominant assumptions that African unity can be achieved solely through formal political integration or economic agreements. By critically analyzing the interplay between fractured patriotism and the stalled progress of Pan-Africanism, this study proposes a pathway that centers ethical nationalism as a prerequisite and springboard for genuine Pan-African solidarity. The paper contributes to ongoing debates on the compatibility of nationalism and Pan-Africanism and offers strategic insights relevant for activists, policymakers, and scholars engaged in Africa's political future.

Keywords : Fractured Patriotism, Crises, national cohesion, ethical patriotism, Pan-African solidarity.

Introduction

Since independence, Pan-Africanism has established itself as one of the major political and moral horizons of the African continent. Inheriting the struggles against colonialism and the quest for collective emancipation, it was championed by figures such as Kwame Nkrumah (1963), Cheikh Anta Diop (1954), and Julius Nyerere (1966). Alongside these activists for African political unity, other thinkers like Léopold Sédar Senghor (1964) contributed, from a more cultural perspective, to nurturing the ideal of a united, supportive, and sovereign Africa.

But before being a political agenda, Pan-Africanism was first an idea, born out of the pain of slavery, the rejection of racism, and a deep desire to restore Black people to their human and historical dignity. Kodjo and Chanaiwa (1998, p. 779-780) briefly recount its history:

Le panafricanisme est né au Nouveau Monde, aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles, à la faveur de la lutte de libération des Noirs contre la domination et l'exploitation des Blancs, et ces mouvements se sont d'abord traduits par le séparatisme religieux afro-américain (qui s'étendra plus tard à l'Afrique). En Afrique même, le panafricanisme en tant que mouvement de libération remonte, comme nous l'avons vu au chapitre 23, à l'invasion de l'Éthiopie par les fascistes italiens en 1935 et surtout au cinquième Congrès panafricain réuni à Manchester en octobre 1945. À ce congrès, pour la première fois dans l'histoire du mouvement panafricain, les délégués africains étaient les plus nombreux et les débats ont essentiellement porté sur la libération de l'Afrique colonisée. Le congrès de Manchester fut organisé par un Secrétariat spécial présidé par Peter Milliard de la Guyane britannique (l'actuel Guyana), et comprenant R. T. Makonnen des Antilles (trésorier), Kwame Nkrumah de la Côte-de-l'Or (l'actuel Ghana), George Padmore de la Trinité (cosecrétaires), Peter Abrahams de l'Afrique du Sud (secrétaire chargé des relations publiques) et Jomo Kenyatta du Kenya (secrétaire adjoint). Le congrès rassembla

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*plus de deux cents délégués venus pour la plupart des colonies britanniques d'Afrique, parmi lesquels figuraient de futurs chefs d'États indépendants. Un vétéran du panafricanisme, W. E. B. Du Bois, présida toutes les séances du congrès.*²

The Pan-Africanism roots therefore lies in the intellectual and spiritual struggles of the 19th-century African diaspora, before flourishing in the 20th century in movements for national emancipation and continental unity. Three generations of actors mark this development: the intellectual precursors (Edward Wilmot Blyden, Alexander Crummell, Martin Delany, W. E. B. Du Bois), the political pioneers (Kwame Nkrumah, George Padmore, Jomo Kenyatta, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Sékou Touré, Léopold Sédar Senghor, Patrice Lumumba), and the institutional successors (Haile Selassie I, Julius Nyerere, Muammar Gaddafi).

From Blyden's words to Nkrumah's actions, from Du Bois's activism to Haile Selassie's diplomacy, Pan-Africanism established itself as an ethic of Black solidarity and a humanism of liberation. It aimed to restore to Africa its dignity, its capacity for self-determination, and its moral unity. However, more than sixty years after independence, this dream of continental unity appears to be stalled. *"Porté aujourd'hui par l'institution continentale, à savoir l'Union africaine (UA), l'unité n'est toujours pas une réalité,"*³ notes Dramane (2024, p. 221). Ethnic tensions, political corruption, social divides, economic inequalities, and distrust of public institutions weaken the internal cohesion of African states. Yet, this cohesion constitutes the foundation on which any authentic Pan-African construction must be built.

Thus, the current political and moral context reveals a profound contradiction: while African unity is proclaimed as a common goal, African nations themselves are disintegrating from within. This situation highlights what we will call a fractured patriotism, a form of national attachment torn between particular interests, community loyalties, and crises of political legitimacy. Pan-Africanism, in such a context, can only advance with difficulty, due to the lack of an ethical and symbolic bond linking citizens to one another and to the collective values they claim to uphold.

The problem is that African unity no longer has a solid base. We talk about solidarity between African countries, but in many states, the sense of national belonging itself is weakening. Under these conditions, Pan-Africanism cannot work: it first requires a strong and healthy patriotism, yet this is often weakened, diverted, or reduced to political games. The deadlock comes from this: we want unity at the continental level, but the foundations on which it should remain fragile.

It is from this problem that arises the main question of this article: how can a sustainable African unity be rebuilt in a context of fractured patriotism and persistent national crises? This main question breaks down into three specific questions, each of which will guide a part of our reflection: what are the historical, political, and moral causes of the stagnation of contemporary Pan-Africanism? In what way does the crisis of national patriotism constitute a major obstacle to the realization of African unity? How

² In english : Pan-Africanism was born in the New World, in the 18th and 19th centuries, fostered by the struggle of Black people for liberation against the domination and exploitation by Whites, and these movements initially manifested as Afro-American religious separatism (which later extended to Africa). In Africa itself, Pan-Africanism as a liberation movement dates back, as we saw in Chapter 23, to the invasion of Ethiopia by Italian fascists in 1935 and especially to the fifth Pan-African Congress held in Manchester in October 1945. At this congress, for the first time in the history of the Pan-African movement, African delegates were the most numerous, and the discussions focused primarily on the liberation of colonized Africa. The Manchester congress was organized by a special Secretariat chaired by Peter Milliard from British Guiana (now Guyana), and including R. T. Makonnen from the Caribbean (treasurer), Kwame Nkrumah from the Gold Coast (now Ghana), George Padmore from Trinidad (co-secretaries), Peter Abrahams from South Africa (secretary in charge of public relations), and Jomo Kenyatta from Kenya (assistant secretary). The congress brought together over two hundred delegates, most of whom came from British colonies in Africa, including future heads of independent states. A veteran of Pan-Africanism, W. E. B. Du Bois, presided over all the sessions of the congress.

³ In english : Carried today by the continental institution, namely the African Union (AU), unity is still not a reality

can the link between ethical nationalism and Pan-African solidarity be rethought to rebuild a viable and inclusive unity agenda?

These questions correspond to three specific objectives, linked to a main goal. The main goal is to propose an ethical and political path to rebuild African unity based on the re-foundation of patriotism, with a view to a moral and political renewal of the Pan-Africanist project. To achieve this end, the specific objectives are organized in a complementary manner. The first aims to analyze the structural and axiological causes of the stagnation of the Pan-Africanist project, in order to identify its theoretical and practical deadlocks. The second involves examining the nature and manifestations of fractured patriotism in contemporary African states, highlighting the dynamics of civic disintegration and legitimacy crises that undermine national cohesion. Finally, the third aims to develop a conceptual framework for an ethical nationalism, considered as the foundation of a renewed Pan-African solidarity, capable of reconciling national attachment with continental awareness.

Our analyses are based on the main hypothesis that African unity cannot be sustainably achieved without a moral and civic reinvention of national patriotism. Logically, three specific hypotheses are added to the main hypothesis. The first is that the failure of contemporary Pan-Africanism stems less from institutional factors than from a crisis of shared political and ethical values. The second specific hypothesis is that African patriotism has been distorted into community-based and clientelist loyalties, undermining national cohesion. The third specific hypothesis is that only an ethical nationalism, based on justice, responsibility, and solidarity, can serve as a springboard for a truly inclusive Pan-Africanism.

This study adopts a qualitative and philosophical approach structured around three complementary methods. First, a conceptual analysis is employed to clarify the central notions (Pan-Africanism, patriotism, ethical nationalism) and to examine their internal ambiguities as well as the theoretical limits revealed by the political evolution of the continent. Next, a critical analysis of African political speeches and texts (foundational writings of Pan-Africanism, OAU/AU declarations, constitutional provisions concerning citizenship and national unity) highlights the contradictions between the stated principles and state practices, particularly regarding governance, public ethics, and the building of civic bonds. Finally, a normative approach is deployed to formulate the axiological conditions required for a redefinition of the patriotic bond and a strengthening of the Pan-African project. This approach builds on a reflexion already initiated on the ethics of the patriot and intergenerational responsibility, with the aim of proposing a conceptual framework capable of sustainably guiding political action in Africa. This methodological choice is justified by the fundamentally moral and political nature of the problem under study, which calls for an interpretative and prescriptive analysis rather than an empirical or statistical investigation.

Finally, the article is structured around three main axes corresponding to the three specific questions and hypotheses:

- The first part examines the current impasses of the Pan-Africanist project in the face of the continent's transformations.
- The second part analyzes the crisis of national patriotism as a symptom of moral and political disarticulation.
- The third part proposes a re-foundation of Pan-Africanism from ethical nationalism, offering a new horizon of African solidarity.

1. The Current Deadlocks of the Pan-Africanist Project in the Face of the Continent's Changes

In its simplest form, Pan-Africanism is, according to Kounou (1905, p. 17), "*une idée, une idéologie politique de solidarité et d'unité des Africains, pour un projet de développement économique et social visant une reconquête systématique des ressources et capacités africaines, pour le bien-être des*

*Africains.*⁴ Ngaha (2023, p. 465) defines it as "*un mouvement fondé sur l'unité politique et économique des peuples africains. C'est un antidote contre l'idéologie impérialiste et ses ramifications en Afrique.*"⁵ This movement has had a significant impact in several areas. Indeed, Pan-Africanism contributed to the independence of many African countries starting in the 1950s. Pan-Africanist leaders advocated for the emancipation and sovereignty of African states, which led to the end of European colonial domination on the continent. Additionally, the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963, now the African Union (AU), aimed to promote political and economic integration of Africa (Ngaha, 2023), although its results have been mixed. This creation is one of the main achievements of Pan-Africanism. Pan-Africanism has also promoted the rehabilitation of African cultures and the valorization of African identities, in opposition to colonial ideologies that sought to eradicate or diminish them (Jelpi, 2024).

However, this Pan-Africanist agenda today appears as a prestigious theoretical legacy, but politically fragmented. Its founding discourse, forged in the struggle against slavery, racism, and colonial domination (Jelpi, 2024), has become fixed in a memorial vision that can no longer respond to the profound transformations of the continent. Africa today is characterized marked by rapid urbanization, an increasing individualization of social trajectories, expansive demographics, greater dependence on external markets, renewed geopolitical competition, widespread insecurity, and persistent political fragmentation. Pan-Africanism has not been able to produce a political imagination capable of integrating these changes. It has failed to create unified and effective political structures at the continental level. The OAU, despite its ambitious goals, has often been ineffective due to the lack of consensus among member states. After the first generations of Pan-Africanist leaders, the movement lacked charismatic figures capable of bringing African nations together around a common project. This absence of leadership has led to a weakening of the Pan-Africanist ideal. Pan-Africanism has not succeeded in creating true African economic integration (N. B. Anglarrill, 1989). Efforts to establish common markets, monetary unions, and continental infrastructure have often failed, leaving African economies fragmented and vulnerable (Jelpi, 2024).

Three major impasses therefore appear: an ideological impasse, an institutional impasse, and a moral impasse. First of all, Pan-Africanism still revolves too much around old narratives of resistance and liberation. These ideas are important, but they no longer really resonate with young people who are mainly looking for work, mobility, justice, and a stable life. The discourse remains trapped in a rational identity-based that mainly serves to heal a historical wound, instead of proposing a real political agenda for today. Furthermore, African integration relies on intergovernmental structures that lack binding enforcement mechanisms. States, attached to their respective sovereignties, sabotage any deepening of continental unity. Regional organizations suffer from a chronic effectiveness deficit, while coups d'état (Sorsy, 2023), constitutional manipulations, and national rivalries undermine any prospect of political construction. Finally, a moral deadlock runs through the entire project. Pan-Africanism has prioritized collective mobilization at the expense of developing a moral subject. It has not taken into account the ethical dimension of the individual as a citizen (Sorsy, 2023), a key element for any sustainable political construction. Without a transformation of moral dispositions, real solidarity will be not possible. The weakness of civic ties, the vulnerability of institutions, and the crisis of responsibility observed in many African countries have ultimately emptied Pan-African discourse of its normative substance.

Pan-Africanism has stalled because its political imagination has not kept pace with the speed at which Africa is changing. It remains stuck while the continent moves. And since it lacks a solid ethical foundation, it fails to create true solidarity among the peoples.

⁴ In english : an idea, a political ideology of solidarity and unity among Africans, for an economic and social development project aimed at the systematic reclamation of African resources and capacities, for the well-being of Africans

⁵ In english : a movement based on the political and economic unity of African peoples. It is an antidote to imperialist ideology and its ramifications in Africa

This inability to establish effective continental solidarity is echoed on a national level. The weakness of the pan-Africanist agenda is not only doctrinal or institutional; it also reflects deep fragilities in the relationship of citizens to their own state, which can be seen in national patriotism crisis.

2. The crisis of national patriotism: a symptom of moral and political disintegration

In *Patriotisme et multicrises: Quelle Afrique pour la postérité ?*⁶ Sorsy (2023, p. 121) reminds us that patriotism can only be understood through the notion of the homeland, derived from the Latin pater. The homeland is the place of emotional and civic belonging, and patriotism is the shared feeling of attachment to this political community:

*Nous comprenons mieux le concept de patriotisme à partir de celui de la patrie qui, en latin, renvoie à pater, c'est-à-dire père. La patrie est le pays où l'on est né ou auquel on appartient comme citoyen, et pour lequel on a un attachement affectif. Le patriotisme est donc un sentiment partagé d'appartenance à un même pays, la patrie.*⁷

This concept aligns with Daucé, Le Huérou, and Rousselet 's conception (2013, p. 10): "Le patriotisme s'entend comme un sentiment d'appartenance, d'attachement à son pays,"⁸ whose main function is to maintain national cohesion and support civic duties. Fossum (2007) expands on this idea by defining patriotism as a form of attachment based on democratic values and human rights, rather than on the traditional pre-political ties of nation-states.

From these definitions, Sorsy (2023, p. 124) deduces that "celui qui est prêt à se dévouer ou à se battre pour sa cité afin d'en défendre les intérêts est appelé patriote. Il incarne plusieurs valeurs éthiques dont les plus importantes sont l'amour et le service."⁹ If we consider all the values that a patriot embodies, we can, according to him, arrive at the formulation of the following obligations that pertain to them:

- a. Un patriote ne renie pas la terre de ses aïeux et ne la montre pas de la main gauche.
- b. Un patriote aime sa patrie plus que toute autre.
- c. Un patriote aime ses compatriotes et ne privilégie pas l'étranger à leur détriment ; il n'est cependant ni raciste, ni xénophobe, ni ethnocentriste.
- d. Un patriote fait passer les intérêts de sa patrie avant ceux des autres.
- e. Un patriote sert sa patrie dans l'intégrité et le dévouement.
- f. Un patriote est prêt à se sacrifier pour sa patrie.
- g. Un patriote œuvre avec abnégation pour construire sa patrie.
- h. Un patriote ne détourne pas les deniers publics ; il proscrit la corruption et les infractions assimilées.
- i. Un patriote n'est pas auteur des injustices sociales ; il combat le népotisme puisque la patrie surpassé l'ethnie, le parti politique, la famille. (Sorsy, 2023, p. 124)¹⁰

⁶ In english : *Patriotism and Multicrises: Which Africa for Posterity?*

⁷ In english : We better understand the concept of patriotism from that of the homeland, which in Latin refers to pater, it means father. The homeland is the country where one is born or to which one belongs as a citizen, and for which one has an emotional attachment. Patriotism is therefore a shared feeling of belonging to the same country, the homeland.

⁸ In english : Patriotism is understood as a feeling of belonging, of attachment to one's country

⁹ In english : one who is ready to devote oneself or to fight for their city in order to defend its interests is called a patriot. They embody several ethical values, the most important of which are love and service

¹⁰ In english : a. A patriot does not renounce the land of his ancestors and does not show it disrespectfully. b. A patriot loves his homeland more than any other. c. A patriot loves his fellow citizens and does not favor foreigners to their detriment; however, he is neither racist, xenophobic, nor ethnocentric. d. A patriot places the interests of his homeland above those of others. e. A patriot serves his homeland with integrity and dedication. f. A patriot is willing to sacrifice himself for his homeland. g. A patriot works selflessly to build his homeland. h. A patriot does not embezzle public funds; he rejects corruption and similar offenses. i. A patriot does not commit

Other authors have emphasized the ambiguities of patriotism in contemporary African contexts. Kouassi (2007) shows that patriotism is often mobilized opportunistically during times of crisis. To avoid these abuses, he calls for a patriotism based on active citizenship and universal values, in line with Habermas's concept of constitutional patriotism. For his part, Sorsy (2023) proposes an ethical re-foundation centered on the 'individual-citizen,' carrying a triple responsibility: to ancestors, to contemporaries, and to future generations. Two structuring principles stem from this responsibility: love of the homeland directed towards the common good, and service rendered with dedication and integrity. This ethic aims to form citizens capable of supporting just institutions, with the joint support of educators, families, religious leaders, and rulers. Diop (2024), for his part, underlines the need for an active, critical, and supportive patriotism, open to the demands of universal justice. Mbendje (2025) reminds us that the absence of genuine patriotism paves the way for institutional predation and corruption.

The current crisis of patriotism in African states is not merely a matter of a lack of love for the country. It is primarily the result of a profound rift between the individual, the citizen, and the state. As I have shown elsewhere, individuals today fluctuate between their personal aspirations, their community loyalties, and a state often perceived as arbitrary or predatory. In this fragmented space, the figure of the citizen struggles to emerge: they are little recognized, little empowered, and little protected.

This fragility enhanced the instrumentalisation of patriotism. In many countries, it is reduced to a rhetoric of loyalty designed to serve those in power. Civic patriotism, the kind based on service, integrity, justice, and the common good, is marginalized in favor of ceremonial patriotism, lacking moral depth. At the same time, the erosion of public integrity (corruption, impunity, clientelism, nepotism, manipulation of the law) weakens the sense of individual and collective responsibility. No authentic patriotism can develop in institutions that reward predation.

The multiple economic, security, environmental, educational, and political crises reveal a deficit in moral foundation. Public action remains inefficient due to the lack of a shared ethical base. This confirms a simple idea: no political transformation can be sustainable without the prior mobilization of consciences. The weakness of African institutions is not only material; it stems from the insufficient training of upright citizens who support the public.

The patriotism crisis is therefore an indicator: it reveals the deep disconnection between individual, citizen, and State. It is precisely this disconnection that explains the paralysis of the contemporary Pan-Africanist agenda. Before being institutional or geopolitical, the crisis is moral. Consequently, any credible revival of Pan-Africanism requires first rebuilding this moral foundation at the national level: in this regard that the need for a renewed normative framework arises, capable of linking ethical requirements of citizen with the continent political determination.

3. Move toward the Pan-Africanism refoundation: An Ethical Nationalism as a Horizon for African Solidarity

Facing the stagnation of Pan-Africanism and the loss of meaning in patriotism within African states, it becomes obvious that the continent has to think the way of thinking and acting. Old ideological considerations, identity withdrawals, or technocratic plans¹¹ are no longer sufficient: they neither

social injustices; he fights nepotism because the homeland takes precedence over ethnicity, political party, and family.

¹¹ Technocratic plans' refers to development or integration strategies designed primarily by experts, international institutions, or administrative technicians, based on economic models, technical indicators, or bureaucratic procedures. These plans privilege managerial rationality (figures, standards, protocols, institutional frameworks) but often neglect the social, cultural, political, and moral realities of African societies. Their limitation lies in the

address the population daily realities nor the current political requirements. What truly lacking is a solid framework that links the personal morality of citizens (responsibility, integrity, sense of the common good) to a broader political vision for Africa. It is the direction that new path can open: an ethical nationalism that seeks to first rebuild the moral quality of nations to make genuine continental solidarity possible. Ethical nationalism is neither an identity retreats nor a chauvinistic glorification of the nation. It is a normative patriotism oriented towards the common good, based on the values of responsibility, justice, service, and integrity.

Rethinking Pan-Africanism based on ethical nationalism, civic responsibility constitutes an essential pillar. It refers to moral, legal, and political obligations incumbent upon each member of a political community, and it unfolds in several inseparable dimensions. Personal responsibility (Aristotle, 1990; Kant, 1993; Sorsy, 2023) is based on virtue and self-mastery, action guided by duty and universalizable principles, as well as integrity oriented toward serving the common good. Civic responsibility (Habermas, 1997; Pettit, 2004) involves active participation in collective livelihood, whether through voting, staying informed, monitoring leaders, or defending public goods, with the aim of maintaining a non-dominated government and strengthening democratic cohesion. Finally, political responsibility in the broad sense (Jonas, 1990; Sen, 2010) consists of recognizing that one's individual choices have repercussions on the community, the state, and future generations, and acting to concretely reduce real injustices rather than merely adhering to abstract ideals.

In its legal sense, liability is, according to Guillien and Vincent (2009, p. 508-509), the

obligation de réparer le préjudice résultant soit de l'inexécution d'un contrat (responsabilité contractuelle) soit de la violation du devoir général de ne causer aucun dommage à autrui par son fait personnel, ou du fait des choses dont on a la garde ou du fait des personnes dont on répond (responsabilité du fait d'autrui) ; lorsque la responsabilité n'est pas contractuelle, elle est dite délictuelle ou quasi délictuelle.¹²

The combination of these responsibilities establishes a solid ethical framework, an essential condition for transforming patriotism into active and enlightened engagement, capable of supporting authentic and lasting African solidarity, and of forming the moral foundation for a renewed Pan-Africanism.

In ethical nationalism perspective, justice for a fair rebuilding of the Pan-Africanism must be understood as substantive, distributive, and participatory justice, capable both of correcting structural inequalities inherited from history and of establishing political relationships based on non-domination. First and foremost, distributive justice, as formulated by Rawls (1997), remains essential: it requires institutions to ensure fair equality of opportunity and a distribution of resources that primarily benefits the least advantaged, a minimal condition for restoring civic trust in fractured societies. Rawlsian justice is based on two principles:

Le premier exige l'égalité dans l'attribution des droits et des devoirs de base. Le second, lui pose que des inégalités socio-économiques, prenons par l'exemple des inégalités de richesse et d'autorité, sont justes si et seulement si elles produisent, en compensation, des avantages pour chacun et, en particulier, pour les membres les plus désavantagés de la société. (Rawls, 1997, p. 41)¹³

fact that they offer top-down solutions, without transforming civic behaviour, without citizen approval, and without taking into account local dynamics that nonetheless determine the success of any reform.

¹² In english : obligation to redress the prejudice resulting either from the non-performance of a contract (contractual liability) or from the breach of the general duty not to cause harm to others through one's own actions, or through things one has custody of, or through persons for whom one is responsible (liability for the acts of others); when the liability is not contractual, it is referred to as tortious or quasi-tortious.

¹³ In english : The first one requires equality in the allocation of basic rights and duties. The second one emphasizes that socio-economic inequalities, take for example inequalities of wealth and authority, are just if and only if they produce, as compensation, benefits for everyone and, in particular, for the most disadvantaged members of society.

Yet, this justice cannot be purely institutional: it must be enriched by the capability approach advocated by Amartya Sen (2010), for whom authentic justice is based on the effective ability of individuals to act, choose, and contribute to the common good. In other words, a renewed Pan-Africanism cannot ignore the need to enhance the civic, economic, and political capabilities of African citizens. To these two dimensions is added the republican requirement of non-domination formulated by Philip Pettit (2004), according to which a just community is one that protects everyone against forms of arbitrariness, whether they are state, economic, or communal. Finally, the intergenerational justice advocated by Hans Jonas (1990) reminds us that the Pan-African refoundation must include responsibility toward future generations, by preserving the material, political, and symbolic conditions for a sustainably united Africa. Understood in this way, justice is not a mere abstract principle: it becomes the essential normative framework for grounding an ethical nationalism capable of combining internal solidarity, civic cohesion, and a Pan-African vision.

As integrity concern, it is a great magnitude and deep complexity because it concerns honesty, absolute probity, impartiality, incorruptibility, justice, responsibility, respect, trust, sincerity, and loyalty: "*elle concerne aussi bien l'honnêteté, la probité absolue, l'impartialité, l'incorruptibilité, la justice, la responsabilité, le respect, la confiance, la sincérité, la loyauté.*"¹⁴ (Sorsy, 2022, p. 30). Aline Giroux presents integrity as a contemporary version of what Aristotle (1997) called Kalokagathia. By addressing each of the particular virtues, he highlights the one that results from all the others. Particular virtues are to character what parts of the body are to a healthy person. Thus, Aristotle writes (1997, 1248 b15),

*Il est évidemment nécessaire que celui qui mériterait vraiment cette appellation [de beau (kalos) et bon (kagathos)] ait les vertus particulières car dans aucun cas il ne pourrait en être autrement [...], il est nécessaire que toutes les parties ou la plupart ou les plus importantes d'entre elles soient dans le même état que le tout.*¹⁵

Kalokagathia is, in relation to particular virtues, the complete virtue. Similarly, the virtue of integrity is a complete virtue in relation to the particular virtues of respecting the truth, sincerity, lucidity, commitment, or honesty, fidelity to one's word, and impartiality. Indeed, the idea of integrity refers to that of wholeness or purity (integer). Within the framework of the virtue of integrity, most virtues, or the most important among them, are free and pure from vices, those contaminating excesses or deficiencies to which any virtue is susceptible. Thus, an integrous person knows how to recognize the truth that should be kept silent, the naive and successive sincerities, the commitments that have become confinements; brutality disguised as honesty, rigidity presented as faithfulness, iniquity masquerading as justice or impartiality. In short, moral integrity is the opposite of corruption: the corruption of virtue turning into vice.

In practice way, explains Sorsy (2022, p. 31)

*Celui qui est intègre sait dire non ; le bénoui-oui, cette personne qui s'empresse toujours à approuver les initiatives d'une autorité établie, ne construit rien sur la durée. C'est important de se positionner et de dire quand on ne veut pas quelque chose. Et il est important d'exprimer ce non. Être intègre, c'est être incorruptible et sans faille. Je dirai même que l'intégrité est à l'antipode de la corruption. Les personnes intègres tiennent parole. Elles sont fidèles et tiennent leurs promesses. Elles sont dignes de confiance et honnêtes ; elles ne déçoivent pas. La cohérence est une de leur grande valeur. Elles agissent, en effet, conformément à ce qu'elles disent et pensent.*¹⁶

¹⁴ In english : it concerns honesty, absolute probity, impartiality, incorruptibility, justice, responsibility, respect, trust, sincerity, and loyalty

¹⁵ In english : It is obviously necessary that one who truly deserves this appellation [of beautiful (kalos) and good (kagathos)] possesses the particular virtues, for in no case could it be otherwise [...], it is necessary that all the parts, or most of them, or the most important ones, be in the same state as the whole.

¹⁶ In english : Someone who is honest knows how to say no; the yes-man, the person who is always quick to approve the initiatives of established authority, does not build anything long-lasting. It is important to take a stand and say when you don't want something. And it is important to express this no. Being honest means being

The patriot, as defined in my previous works, is not a blind activist: he is a clear-sighted citizen, driven by a responsible love for his political community and committed to the moral and institutional transformation of his country.

This theoretical framework allows us to move beyond the artificial opposition between nationalism and Pan-Africanism. African unity can only be built on morally consolidated nations. A country that develops upright citizens inherently contributes to continental stability. Pan-African solidarity is only credible if it is based on exemplary states and active citizenship.

Ethical nationalism also provides a common language capable of harmonizing governance efforts across the continent: fighting corruption, respecting the rule of law, protecting public assets, civic education, social justice, intergenerational responsibility. It allows for the articulation of love for one's country and the opening of the continent, making each citizen not an isolated actor, but a vector of extended solidarity.

From this perspective, the refounding of Pan-Africanism does not require an immediate federation, but a moral site: the gradual alignment of civic values, institutional norms, and political practices across the continent. Ethical nationalism provides the conditions for such convergence, by creating coherence between the ethical demands of the citizen and the political ambition of the continent.

Conclusion

The analysis conducted shows that the deadlock of contemporary Pan-Africanism is due neither to a simple institutional deficit nor to a lack of political will: it has its roots in a deeper moral fracture, one that today affects the connection between the individual, the citizen, and the State. As long as African nations fail to restore a patriotism based on justice, responsibility, and civic integrity, no continental unity can last sustainably. A strong Pan-Africanism cannot emerge from fragmented states, divided by competing loyalties, undermined by distrust, and lacking a common ethical foundation.

In this respect, the rebuilding of the Pan-African project requires a prior transformation of the national framework itself: to rethink patriotism not as a tribal sentiment or a tool for political mobilization, but as a moral commitment aimed at the common good. This is what the notion of ethical nationalism allows, by linking the demand for distributive justice, civic responsibility, and intergenerational solidarity within a broader African horizon.

Such a project does not merely seek to revive the pan-Africanist ideal: it redeploys its significance by making public morality, rather than unifying rhetoric, the true driver of continental integration. The challenge is huge, but it remains unavoidable if Africa wants to overcome the deadlocks that have paralyzed its unity for decades. The real question to ask is : can Africa rebuild a credible political unity without first producing the institutions, virtues, and practices that truly compel states to be just toward their own citizens?

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in incorruptible and flawless. I would even say that integrity is the opposite of corruption. Honest people keep their word. They are loyal and keep their promises. They are trustworthy and honest; they do not disappoint. Consistency is one of their great values. They act, indeed, in accordance with what they say and think.

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