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Political Leadership and the Quest for Unity and Development in Africa

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Political Leadership and the Quest for Unity
and Development in Africa
(TITLE)

BY

Thierno Thiam

THESIS
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

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In Memory of
Papa Bocar Mbow

To my dad, Papa Magaye Thiam and my two moms, Ourma and Sira

To the People of Africa
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Introduction

The African continent today is characterized by two major attributes: one is fragmentation, and the other one is economic destitution. The concept of fragmentation in Africa denotes a physical as well as an essential reality. Africa is not only the land of a multitude of microstates, it is also a land where these geographical divisions have rifted apart the hearts and minds of a people. Countries like Rwanda, Burundi, Lesotho, Swaziland, Eritrea, Djibouti, and even Senegal, the Gambia etc. epitomize the sadness of the African condition in their depiction of a land that seems incapable of uniting and bring a solution its common problems. As for the concept of economic destitution, it refers to millions of African living on less than a dollar a day. Most meaningfully it refers to the millions of Africans who suffer from chronic malnutrition diseases. For these reasons, the history of the young nations of Africa has always been pervaded by two concepts: one is unity and the other one is development. The attainment of these two objectives has become an African obsession. Yet, despite the different roads and a myriad of plans, Africa seems to be going the other way. The artificial geopolitical decoupage of Africa is coupled by a perverse internal fragmentation along linguistic, cultural, ethnic, and historical lines. The cause being the consequence, poverty’s favorite home in the world has become Africa. One basic question that experts and non experts alike have asked for a long time and are still asking rings like this: is Africa doomed? While the majority seems to believe that there is a solution to Africa’s problems, other questions loom ahead and constitute a bumping block on Africa’s way to a better future. One such question is related to the appropriate approach to be adopted. There seems to be no disagreement in principle among Africa’s leadership on the need for a united Africa
as the only way to development. Yet, to this day, Africa has not known any significant form of union let alone development. What is the missing piece? What is Africa’s leadership doing, separate from public declarations, to set Africa on the salutary path of unity and development?

**Research Question**

In this thesis, I intend to examine the role of African political leadership in the quest for unity and development in Africa. Broadly speaking, leadership is often defined as the position or office of a leader or the capacity to lead. Within the limits of this study, leadership is evoked with the idea of individual leaders across the African continent. In this respect, this study intends to submit to critical scrutiny a wide range of leaders going from the period of the birth of most African nations in the 1960s to the latest attempt at unity and development with the recent birth of the African Union. As for the concept of unity, it refers to the need felt both by the elite and the masses for a united front in Africa. This concept is expressed sometimes radically as in the case of the Casablanca group, during the Addis Ababa conference, who advocated a union in the form of a federation of all African states. At the head of this group was one man called Kwame Nkrumah. It is also used to express the need for some degree of cooperation as exemplified by the “moderates” of the Monrovia group who were anxious to protect their newly gained sovereignty. As for the concept of development, it is a normative notion and obeys no rule of universal definition. However, within the context of this thesis, it refers to the idea of getting Africa out of poverty through increased economic efficiency and a sustained level of integration.
Justification

I chose the subject “Political Leadership and the Quest for Unity and Development in Africa” for a variety of reasons. First of all, for Africa these two concepts constitute overriding priorities. They do not constitute a luxury in themselves. Rather they are sine qua non conditions that Africa is condemned to achieve if it wants to remain a viable human entity. Second, if Africa is in the situation in which it is today, it is to a large extent due to poor leadership. Third, I contend that the question of unity is inseparable from the concept of development in the specific case of Africa. The thinness of the markets of separate African countries, the political and social stability that individual African countries seem incapable to guarantee are all ingredients that conspire to send Africa into the back ladder of sustainable development. For this reason, a certain type of African leadership has sought to establish some type of union within the continent. These attempts go from the Organization of African Unity to the African Union and a multitude of regional groupings, federations and confederations en passant. That all these tentative efforts resulted in failure is a historical fact. African elites have suffered an almost universal condemnation for the calamitous conditions of the continent. Most of the previous literature on African Unity have argued that there is the potential for an economic takeover if unity is achieved. The missing link, however, they argue is Africa’s leadership which is not up to the task (Diop 1987, Adewoye 2000). In this thesis I focus on a closer assessment of the role of African leadership in the creation and destruction of integration mechanisms in Africa. In other words, I intend to assess the role of Africa’s leadership in the building or weakening of African unity and development.
Certainly, if Africa looks like a “concentration camp” today, it is undoubtedly because some historical forces conspired to tear Africa apart. The Berlin Conference (1884-1885) which consecrated the balkanization of Africa with no respect to historical, cultural, ethnic and linguistic realities, in this respect constitutes a founding event. Four centuries of Atlantic slave trade, colonialism, and neocolonialism also took their inexorable toll on Africa. But, it is also a sad truth that African elites failed the masses in their initial promises during the first days of independence and are still failing them on to this day. The “exogenous” factors to Africa’s demise have been dealt with extensively. Although these “exogenous” or historical factors are determinant in understanding the present, new focus should be directed to endogenous factors in the sense that they will determine what Africa is going to be. For all these fundamental reasons I intend to focus on an assessment of the role of Africa’s political leadership in the quest for unity and development in Africa.

**Research Method**

This study intends to draw from previous research in the field of African politics especially in its treatment of the related questions of leadership, unity and development. This overall research has painted a grim picture of Africa’s leadership as the primary responsible for Africa’s disunity and underdevelopment. Because of the new developments that this study seeks to comprehend, data will also be collected from newspaper articles, official, government statements, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. I also intend to focus on a study of individual leaders and individual regimes through the complexities of their interactions.
In the first chapter I propose to review the conventional literature about African political leadership and the literature about unity and development as well as the related literature on regional organizations. In the second chapter I examine regional organizations in Africa and their role in promoting Unity and economic integration in Africa. At this level, I intend to focus on the case of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The third chapter will discuss the creation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). In the fourth chapter, I develop an assessment of how the African Union (AU) was created to replace an ineffective and moribund OAU. The fifth and final chapter will present the conclusion and findings of this study.
Chapter One

Literature Review

I. Leadership and the African Reality

a. Defining the concept of Leadership

Broadly, the concept of leadership refers to a reality as old as human and animal organization (Rousseau 1762, Gordon 2002). It is generally defined as a process. In this process, the individual (or leadership team) induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader and his or her followers (Gardner 1990). This definition of leadership encompasses the idea and the concept of a necessity to perform basic tasks essential to the survival of a group.

In the specific domain of politics, however, some classic references are testimony to the fact that political leadership has been an important concern to political philosophers for centuries. Plato, Niccolo Machiavelli, Max Weber, for instance, have all examined the concept from different angles. Their conclusions, centuries ago, are still relevant and illuminates the debate on political leadership. Plato’s *The Republic* constitutes an attempt to sketch the ideal state. In his ideal state, political leadership is vested in the philosopher-king who leads with vision, and reason. He insists on an absolute rigor in the process of selecting leaders. Intelligence and wisdom form one single entity and are central to the Plato’s view of leadership (Plato 360 BC). This normative approach to leadership is contrasted by Machiavelli’s prescriptive approach. Machiavelli’s *The Prince* is a how-to-rule manual. Most significantly, it is a cold set of prescriptions that
the "prince" must follow if he wants to maintain power regardless of moral considerations (Machiavelli 1513). These different approaches, although formulated from a distant past, do indeed shed a light of understanding on contemporary African politics where the quest for and preservation of power take an overriding priority over all other agendas. As for Max Weber, his main argument on leadership is that great leaders emerge in times of great distress. Africa is, without a doubt, at such a crossroad in her history. He distinguishes three forms of leadership: charismatic leadership, traditional leadership and administrative or bureaucratic leadership. Charisma is the gift from above where a leader knows from inside himself what to do. This type of leadership contrasts with the traditional leadership of a king or modern rational leadership of an administrative or elected leader (Dronberger 1971). In the case of Africa in quest of an elusive unity, Weber charismatic leader is most definitely needed.

Elcock’s (2001) study of leadership constitutes a very interesting aspect of the historical definition of the concept. He stresses the elusive nature of the definition of leadership. His contribution to the literature is interesting in many ways. First, he revisits the theories of Hegel (1822) and Thomas Carlyle (1841) who have argued that the Great leaders emerge to change the course of history when they are needed. Second, he brings out the literature that has attempted to draw a parallel between business and political leadership. He argues that in business, or in the military, identifying potential leaders is not impossible since the training in these domains is by and large uniform. In politics, however, he argues that leaders are *sui generis* in the sense that they rise to office through a myriad of accidents, which do not necessarily reflect their ability to lead. He cites Adolph Hitler and Joseph Stalin as prime examples of leaders who came to
power because of mere historical contingencies. Elcock goes from this historical perspective to highlight the vitality of leadership in today in the context of fast paced changes at all levels of society.

b. The African Perspective

In the African context, the concept of leadership does not differ fundamentally from the previous classical approaches. However, the unique circumstances in Africa do indeed call for an examination of the concepts through “new lenses”. Defining the concept of leadership, the Nigerian senator Okadigbo wrote: “I use the word leadership to mean those who are in charge of government, those who have the power to allocate resources authoritatively according to certain conditions (Okadigbo 1995). Iosokun (1998), on the hand, runs counter to Okadigbo in his argument that leadership is not necessarily a question of position or authority in the sense that a man without charisma (Weber) and even without competence may find himself in a position of leadership. Under the light of the peculiar circumstances of Africa made of disintegration and destitution, one could legitimately ask the question whether it is all about the African condition, one of doom; or is it about the leadership? In other words, do leaders matter? Samuels (2003), in his analysis of leadership, argues that leadership is the determining factor in shaping history and that historical forces are only secondary to their talents and will. “In short”, says Samuels, “constraints may be greater in the historian’s narrative than they are in the real world, where social, political, and economic forces can be tipped into the balance to abet the leader’s scheme. (Samuels 2003, 2) This view is shared by analysts and political leaders alike on the African continent. Wade (1989) argues that in
the case of Africa, it is true that natural calamities and historical injustices bear their share of responsibilities in the demise of Africa. But he recognizes also is it also true that Africa’s leadership, through it absence of concerted and united programs, is a major source of disillusionment for the African people. Obasango (1990), in his preface to Challenges of Leadership in African Development stresses the paramount importance of the role that African leaders must play within the framework of a genuine cooperation mechanism. He presses for the need for African leaders to become the architects of Africa’s own fortune since so far Africa’s leadership has for the most part only brought disaster to millions of Africans. For him, Africa’s salvation lies within the own hands of Africans via their leadership. For this reason and because of the centrality of informed leadership in the process of political and economic integration, in his eyes, he established the African Leadership Forum with the mission of fostering genuine leadership in Africa. Most importantly, he stresses one of the major objectives of the forum:

“To generate greater understanding and to enhance the knowledge and awareness of development and social problems within a global context among young, potential leaders from all sectors of society, cutting across national, regional, continental, professional, and institutional borders and with a view to fostering close and enduring relationships and promoting life-long association and cooperation among such potential leaders”. (Obasango, 1990, 6-7)

Gordon (2002) provides additional support for this view. In his review of the African condition through some basic indicators such as health, education, food, housing, road conditions, corruption, etc., he arrives at the conclusion that the determining factor in Africa’s problems is a failing leadership. “If all the money in the world is given to Africa today,” he argues, “it will be worthless in the long-run without effective and creative leadership.” (Gordon 2002, 174). In the eyes of most of analysts, Africa’s
leadership is clearly not just a leadership that failed in its attempts to promote political, economic, and social development, but a leadership which failed to set up the basic infrastructures for a genuine united Africa. Gordon notes that the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), for instance, culminated a long battle among African leaders on the idea of African unity, Pan-Africanism, and regionalism. In this respect, the "death" of the OAU in July 2002 constitutes a cruel testimony to the sterility of a preposterous leadership battle that has characterized Africa in various forms and fashions from the 1960s to this day. This type of leadership characterized by sectarianism, ethnocentrism and their corollaries has caused a permanent state of conflict (active or latent) throughout the African continent. The politics of ethnocentrism and division by Africa's leadership has also been examined by Ayittey (1998). The author condemns Africa's leadership for this blatant failure. However, he makes a clear differentiation between the leadership in Africa and the people. Africa's disintegration and demise, for him, is the direct result of poor leadership. The second distinction and the most important one in his eyes, concerns what he calls the 'two Africas': the traditional Africa and the modern one. He contends that the traditional face of Africa is the one that works with efficiency, the one that produces to sustain its people. In contrast, the "modern Africa", the lost one, is the Africa of political greed which causes disruptions and dislocations. It is the Africa that claims countless innocent victims as illustrated by the Rwandan genocide and the senseless human carnage in other areas of Africa. He argues that "Most African leaders are despots and failures" and are true representations of modern Africa (Ayittey 1998, 13). Similar views are expressed by Konneh (2002) who contrasts pre-colonial African political leadership to post-colonial
African leadership. He argues that, prior to the advent the colonial system, the style of leadership in Africa was one of "communalism", a system in which the individual was nothing apart from the group. In neo-colonial Africa, however, African leaders became wealthy through the use of the inherited colonial strategies and tactics of duplicity and extortion to enrich themselves at the expense of the masses. These views have been supported by the latest literature on African leadership. Mpangala (2000, 117) argues that recent "studies on ethnic conflicts in Africa have revealed that most African politicians have been at the center of conflicts due to the fact that political competition and competition for economic privileges have often been based on ethnic relations, thus exacerbating ethnic conflicts."

If one thing is clear at the light of these analyses, it is the fact that the real trouble with Africa is its leadership. Such seems to be the conclusions of Adewoye. "Africa's crisis" he lashes out, "lies mainly in the political domain, in the 'structural' sector from where poor or bad leadership often reflects adversely in all other sectors and facets of the political system and society." (Adewoye 2000, 39) For this reason, he sides with Ben Turok (1991) who had previously argued that the solution to Africa's crisis lies not so much in the economic as in the political domain.

If the authors above examined the situation on the continental scale, others started with the smaller unit by analyzing the state of the African nation-state. Cervenka in 1977 had this remark: "So far the priority of national interest over those of Africa as a whole has been the main African weakness both in the relations between independent African States and in their relations with the industrialized countries." (Cervenka 1977) The author argues the real problem with Africa is the problem of a leadership that clings in a
morbid fashion to the concept of national sovereignty to the detriment of unity on a continental scale. This view is echoed by Bakut (2000). He is primarily interested in examining the question under the angle of the tiny unit of the state, which in his view has become somewhat out of phase as a political unit. He argues that while the New World Order has increasingly brought into question the relevance of the state system in the developed world, African governments fail to see the “writings on the wall”. These governments, he maintains, are still holding on tightly to the obsolescent state system even though it is quite clear that it has failed in Africa. Bakut proposes a classic functionalist approach to integration in Africa. Previous attempts failed, he argues, because they were Eurocentric approaches to a different reality. For him the African reality, one of severe underdevelopment and one in which the concepts of tribal and ethnic loyalties override that of state loyalties, makes it impossible for any state-centered approaches to work. Abounding in the same direction and expanding on the remarks, Muchie contends that the key constraint to African integration is political. For the dual system to work, he argues, it requires an African consensus and the political will to create an African general will. This can happen if African leadership transforms itself from governing by force, deception and blackmail to governing by permanent consent. The key is the transformation of the quality of leadership -- to become and be guided by moral and intellectual power (Muchie 2002). In this thesis, I use the concept of good leadership to refer to a leadership that is willing to sacrifice political and personal gains for the greater good of Africa. It refers to a type of leadership that does what is takes so that the union may be saved.
These preceding lines show that Africa’s leadership has played a key role in the disintegration and demise of Africa. However, one is forced to admit that other variables have played their part. The transatlantic slave trade and the colonial era have left Africa a legacy that has destined the black continent for internal division and underdevelopment (Rodney 1981). The Berlin conference of 1884, which drew Africa’s current borders with a total disregard for African realities, is the key factor to the “balkanization” of Africa. However, this balkanization lived on because Africa’s leadership has allowed it to live on.

II. The Concept of Unity: an African Obsession

As for the question of continental unity, it would hardly be exaggerated to state that it has been an African obsession from the 1960s to this day. Yet, the approach to unity has been a source of opposing views. There is a general agreement among scholars and politicians that African unity in whatever form or shape is a question of necessity.

Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania contends that “Africa’s states are too many, too small, some make no logic, whether political logic or ethnic logic or anything.” (Nyerere 2000, 20). Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana, argued that Africa’s leadership had the responsibility to rally behind the cause of unity in the context of the newly independent nations of Africa if they were to win the battle of development and maintain their independence. “To go it alone”, lamented Nkrumah, “will limit our horizons, curtail our expectations, and threaten our liberty (Nkrumah 1963, 7). For him it became increasingly clear that nothing sort of a continental government, a continental army and a continental economic system would save Africa. As for the opposing side, independence meant the
preservation of the "national sovereignties" that the end of colonial rule had bequeathed them. For this reason, they perceived the very idea of a "united continental government" as a major threat to something they spent their lives fighting for.

The bulk of the existing literature on this question is mainly focused on the main organization that was charged with the responsibility of promoting unity in Africa: the Organization of African Unity. Because the OAU was mainly concerned with the total liberation of the African continent from the yoke of colonialism, this literature has given a special focus to the militant aspect of unity in Africa. In other words this literature relates the prevailing climate in which, the newly independent African nations sensed the urgency to cooperate in order to rid Africa of domination but at the same time the necessity to preserve the colonial borders of the continent (Cervenka 1977, Gordon 2002). With the end of colonialism and the fall of the Berlin wall, however, questions of economic and developmental nature have surfaced and become Africa's top priority. The death of the OAU and its subsequent replacement with the African Union in July 2002 could be understood under this light. It is the tragic expression of an Africa in search for the magic potion to unity one way or the other. Remarks from observers of the African scene are similar in their recognition of the need for Africa to tilt the balance in favor of a united front. The political balkanization of Africa into arbitrary nation-states, it is often argued, elicits from Africa the understandable impulse to restructure the fragmented region into a more coherent and stronger economic and political entity (Economic Commission for Africa 1989). Adedeji (1991, 12) contends that "[n]o African country, no matter how big it is, can really go it alone in the world we are entering in the 1990s. The economic integration of Africa is part of the solution to the crisis of Africa". The
same idea on the need for a genuine form of union is recognized today by President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda who contends that the way forward for Africa is the establishment of a single continental government and army. He adds as an avow of a failing leadership throughout the black continent: “I am afraid that we are making the same mistakes as our forefathers made, failing to evolve a strong political unit that can guarantee the security of future generations” (cited in Mwakikagile 2001).

Griffiths (1995) abounds in the same direction in his support for Nkrumah’s contention that a political union in Africa is a must. But he also recognizes that for any form of union (political or economic) to work, all the parties must be willing to be part of the union. For him, the Ethiopian experience with Eritrea and the Moroccan experience with Western Sahara constitute convincing illustrations to the fact that parties can not be forced into some type of union. These coercive measures to bond together clearly bear of an obsessive quest for unity in Africa. Clearly, what could be called Africa’s new leadership had this concept in mind when they were setting up the New Partnership for Africa’s Development. They had the same idea in mind when the delivered the African Union. Thus Mbeki, Obasanjo, Bouteflika and Wade, by presenting the world with an authentic plan, through NEPAD, to move Africa towards the direction of unity and development, are attempting to operate a decisive and historic break. These leaders have exposed their determination to give African politics a new meaning. Muammar Khaddafi in spearheading the creation of the African Union is sending a message of survival of the proponents of genuine unity in Africa. The quest for unity is also expressed through the creation of the many regional and sub-regional organizations in Africa like the South
African Development Community, and the Economic Community of West African States.

III. Africa’s Leadership and the Inability to Unite

Africa, it is generally argued is the land of despair and disunity, not because of the character of its people but because of the betrayal of its leadership. As suggested earlier, the general literature argues that the main obstacle to Africa’s unity and development is its political leadership, which has displayed a regular pattern of inability to work together within the framework of a united front (Killick 1993, Hope 1997). Hope (1997, xii) points to the heart of the matter. “It is undisputed” he maintains, “that Africa needs to develop a new shared vision of regional cooperation and integration. Improving policies alone can boost growth substantially, but if neighboring countries adopt a policy change together, the effects on growth would be more than double what they would be with one country acting alone.” He further argues that Africa’s leaders have to show a genuine willingness to work together but also to disengage from authoritarianism, to dismantle the bureaucratic obstacles to policy reform and change. Ihonvbere (2000) argues that ideological differences, nationalistic interests, the inability to generate sufficient political will, corruption, regime turnover, and political instability constitutes some determinant variables limiting the ability to implement the various charters and cooperation agreements. With his usual literary eloquence and clarity, The Nigerian writer, Achebe’s remarked that: “[T]he trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which are the hallmarks of true
leadership.” (Achebe 1985, 3) This remark, beyond the case Nigeria, is applicable to Africa at large.

Davidson’s (1992) remark on the other hand goes from inside out. His main focus is on the state level in order to determine the conditions under which a larger scale system of unity. In his analysis of African leadership through the Liberian crisis, he remarks that it has not been a constructive one. Rather, this type of leadership has proved to be even incapable of maintaining the unity of the nation-state. He cites the pile of examples like Samuel Doe of Liberia, Mobutu Seseko of former Zaire, Idi Amin of Uganda, Jean B. Bokassa of the Central African Republic. These names represent what Kobina sekyi called cultural hybrids who lacked the basic knowledge and clarity of vision to be agents of unity throughout Africa.

The basic inability of Africa’s leadership to bring about a genuine united front through the Organization of African Unity explains the pressing need to transform the OAU especially in its principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of member states (Mwakikagile 2001). This principle has only served as a pretext for African leaders to ossify the balkanization of Africa and hold a firmer grip on their pieces of territory to the detriment of the common good of the African people. For this reason, some of its most virulent critics have argued that the OAU was more preoccupied with integrating the leaders of Africa in their common search to secure their kleptocratic powers than with the integration of the African people. Expressions like “cartel” of “OAU gangsterism”, “mutual admiration club for leaders,” “trade union of African leaders” and similar metaphors abounded in daily newspapers and tracts to capture the
failure of the OAU to embrace the aspirations of the African masses (Walraven 1999, 313).

A major question, however, is what are the prerequisites for unity schemes to function in general and in Africa in particular? In other words does the concept require intangibles in order to be effective. Deng and Zartman (2002), in their analysis of regimes, argue that the leadership of the countries in question is the determinant factor to the success of such an endeavor. Most fundamentally, these authors insist on the existence a regional hegemon and its role in establishing and maintaining a regime of cooperation for security, stability, and development. In the case of Africa, they point to Nigeria who because of its economic potential could play a locomotive role in the unity and development of Africa. In the case of Africa, the potential is available, but the missing link is leadership, direction and the mobilization of that potential to the greater benefit of the African people.

IV. Summary of the Literature Review

The literature on the relationship between African leadership and the concepts of unity and development is quite extensive. There is a quasi unanimity among the specialists of African politics that there exists a correlation between poor leadership and Africa’s absence of unity and its problems. Most importantly, the creation of the first unity scheme (the OAU) has not meant greater unity for Africa (Cervenka 1977, Walraven 1999, Gordon 2002). However, this literature calls for a reexamination with the creation of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) in June 2002 and the African Union (AU) in July of the same year. These two organizations are
creations of “Africa’s new leadership” and are aimed at giving a fundamentally different meaning to the concept of unity in Africa. Because of the novelty of these developments in Africa (the creation of NEPAD and the AU), my research aims at reexamining Africa’s Leadership. I will also examine a typical regional organization, ECOWAS, in order to broaden the scope of this thesis. In these choices, I am primarily interested in diversity. ECOWAS, because its represents a major regional organization and is representative of the functioning of regional integration schemes in Africa. NEPAD, because as a creation of four major Africa democratically elected leaders (Mbeki, Obasanjo, Bouteflika, and Wade) it constitutes an integration scheme under the democratic angle. As for the African Union, it constitutes a premier in the history of Africa both in its nature and scope. First, it is an African creation meant for Africa. Second, and most importantly, as an organization regrouping the entirety of the African countries from its beginning, the AU constitutes an interesting testing creation.

However diverse the authors studied may seem in their approach, their observations share a common trait. They all recognize the African dilemma: an absence of a continental leadership and the need for a continental scheme. This research aims at examining the role of African political leadership in the integration of African states through the creation of ECOWAS, NEPAD and the AU. In chapter three, I intend to focus on an extended analysis of ECOWAS using macro-economic variables. In chapter three and four I will respectively analyze the New Partnership for Africa’s Development and the African Union as original creations of Africa’s leadership. Chapter five will sum up the ideas developed throughout the thesis.
Chapter 2

Political Leadership and the Politics of Regional Unity in Africa: The case of ECOWAS

The quest for unity and development in Africa has brought the African leadership to advance a myriad of plans designed to create a united front in Africa. This quest explains the creation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The creation of ECOWAS has to be placed within the broader context of regional groupings that shaped the world in the post World War II era. Different countries have sought to establish special ties with their geographical neighbors. This quest has resulted in the creation of the European Union (EU) in Europe, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between the US, Canada and Mexico and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in South East Asia among others. In the case of Africa, ECOWAS is one of the major the regional organizations along with the South African Development Community, and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). The vision that the founding fathers had at the time of the creation of ECOWAS was one of collective self-sufficiency through the integration of the sixteen West African countries. This concern was born out of the realization that the domestic markets of the member States taken individually were, as a result of their smallness, far from being competitive in a world environment marked by the existence of large trade blocks (ECOWAS Website).

In this chapter, I propose to focus on the creation of Economic Community of West African States. ECOWAS was created in 1975 and is a regional group of sixteen countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote D’Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea,
Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. The aims and objectives of ECOWAS are defined in article 3 of its treaty. It reads as follow: “The aims of the Community are to promote co-operation and integration, leading to the establishment of an economic union in West Africa in order to raise the living standards of its peoples, and to maintain and enhance economic stability.” To achieve this goal, ECOWAS proposes the “establishment of a common market.” This chapter seeks to assess the role of Africa’s leadership in the building or weakening of African unity through ECOWAS.

The idea of a West African community goes back to President William Tubman of Liberia who made the first call in 1964. In April 1972, General Yakubu Gowon of Nigeria and General Gnassimbe Eyadema of Togo re-launched the idea and toured 12 West African countries for support. A first meeting was organized in Lome, Togo in December 1973 to study the draft of the treaty. This meeting was followed by the Accra (Ghana) meeting of January 1974. This eventually paid off with the signing of the treaty establishing ECOWAS on May 28, 1975 in Lagos, Nigeria. The role of the states of West Africa, through their heads of states is central in the creation of ECOWAS. However, other non-states actors took some part in making possible the creation of the regional organization. Oloruntimehin (2000) contends that the Federation of West African Chambers of Commerce (FWACC) has had a decisive impact on the creation of ECOWAS. For him, the prominent leadership of the federation has put it in a position where its members could exercise influence on the government in their respective countries. Yet despite this fact concludes Oloruntimehin, ECOWAS has been rigidly built around the leadership of state actors. This, in his view, is largely imputable to the
tendencies of political leaders in West Africa to political and economic restrictions. In Sum, the founders fathers of ECOWAS sought to create the framework that would allow a fluid trade flow between members countries of the organization by eliminating customs duties, abolishing quantitative and administrative restrictions on trade among the members states, by establishing common customs tariff and a common commercial policy toward third countries, abolishing the obstacles to the free movement of persons, services and capital (Senghor 1999). These are the defining principles of the founding of ECOWAS.

But what do the concepts used in this chapter refer to? What exactly does the concept of “West African States” refer to? Where is its geopolitical delimitation? What are the conditions to being part of West Africa? The concept, in itself constitutes a geopolitical arbitrariness (Ajulo 1985). In this chapter, I intend to consider the sixteen West African Countries that signed the treaty that established ECOWAS.

What is understood by economic and political integration? I decided to examine the twin questions of economic and political integration because, in the context of West Africa, the two variables are inextricably linked. Any economic policy, in order to be viable, must have the support of the political leadership in the different countries of the community. This political leadership must create not only the legal conditions to serve as a framework, but it must also ensure the security base, which is a sine qua non condition for any economic integration, is in place. This explains largely the place of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), the de facto military wing of ECOWAS. The ECOMOG is a non-standing military force that was set up by member states of the community to deal with the security problems that followed the collapse of the state in
Liberia in 1990. Since then, it has been called upon to deal with a variety of conflicts in West Africa. I intend to examine ECOWAS' attitude toward the four major conflicts within Africa and try to measure its impact. Most fundamentally, I intend to examine how Africa’s leadership in the western part of Africa has used ECOMOG to promote an integrated regional security mechanism and what are the effects of that use. The reason for this is that an integrated West Africa is inextricably to an integrated security mechanism within the region.

This issue is both timely and crucial. As Africa is still searching for a true formula through which she could pose a firmly united front, a study of her earliest attempts to promote regional groupings is fundamental if she is to learn from these experiences. With the creation of the African Union in July 2002, scholars and politicians alike bring to surface the relevance of regional organizations in Africa. ECOWAS is among the first in line. Africa cannot afford to do without constantly evaluating and reevaluating the successes of her regional organizations. This paper intends to revisit previous assumptions taking into account new data available from various sources.

But first, I intend to examine the macro-economic variable. In order to operationalize this variable, I will focus on the trade flow among member countries of the Community.

I. The Disintegration of West African Markets

To examine the variable of trade and its effects within the ECOWAS, I focus on three member countries of the community: Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Senegal. I have
chosen these three countries for many reasons. My first concern is one of fairness and balance. Nigeria and Sierra Leone constitute two extremes of African economies. Nigeria represents wealth in West Africa, whereas Sierra Leone symbolizes political and economic collapse. As for Senegal, the country is somewhere in between in the sense that she enjoys a relative political stability, yet is not the best of West Africa’s economies.

I gathered the material for these three different countries through the country profile index from the web site of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. I first start with Senegal. I am primarily interested in the trade variable. Table I, which displays Senegal’s main export partners, shows that only four members of ECOWAS (Mauritania, Mali, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia) figure in the “top eleven” list. In this list, France, Senegal’s former colonial master, represents $165 million in exports, whereas, Mauritania and Mali, the closest ECOWAS member represents only $49 million each. Furthermore, when the share of export of these four members of ECOWAS is added together, it does not even make up for France’s share alone.

As far as import is concerned, Table II does not reveal any integration evidence between Senegal and the other members of the Community. France is the top import partner and its share largely surpasses any other country’s share. In addition, except for Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire, no other member of the Community figures in the table. One could even argue that Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire are Senegal’s partners not through ECOWAS, but because of their status as the leading economies in West Africa in 2002. As such, their deals are negotiated on a bilateral basis. These data do not take into
account the recent developments that evolved in a civil war in Cote d’Ivoire and is likely even to get Cote d’Ivoire out of the table.

One would naturally expect that with the creation of ECOWAS, the trade flow within the member countries would exceed those of the trade flow between ECOWAS and non-members. The trade statistics, both in table I and table II, show that in the year 2000, twenty-five years after the creation of ECOWAS, the three first major export destinations of Senegal are not members of ECOWAS (e.g. France, Italy, and India) and except for one country (Nigeria, the leading economy of West Africa), none of Senegal’s major sources of imports is a member of the Community.

A comparison to Nigeria’s trade index, another major member of ECOWAS, reveals an even more disintegrated image of the Community. The statistics in Table III, which depicts Nigeria’s import partners, show that none of Nigeria’s top 10 markets is part of the ECOWAS zone. The United Kingdom, Nigeria’s former colonial master, is at the top of the list. And for that matter, no African country is part of the list.

Sierra Leone is no exception to the general rule. With no member of ECOWAS on in its top ten-export partner list, Sierra Leone symbolizes the failure of ECOWAS to promote trade among the members of the Community. The only surprise, Table IV (Sierra Leone’s export partners) provides, is that the UK ranks only third in position with a share far below that of Belgium, Sierra Leone’s top export partner.

As for Table V (Sierra Leone’s import partners), it shows that with only two ECOWAS members (Cote d’Ivoire and Nigeria) on its top ten imports partner list and no ECOWAS members as a major import partner, Sierra Leone exemplifies an absence of trade integration in West Africa. As in the case of Senegal and Nigeria, the former
colonial power of Sierra Leone, the UK is on top of the list with a share that exceeds by far any other country’s share.

What these cases from three representative members of the ECOWAS reveal is an absence of integration in the trade variable within West Africa. The three countries examined (Senegal, Nigeria and Sierra Leone) share a common characteristic: their main area of business is outside the scope of ECOWAS. These findings are consistent with previous studies on trade within West Africa. David J. Francis contended that the export of African countries is directed mainly to the industrial countries of the West, and some to Asia. Industrial countries and Asia, he maintains make up about 80 per cent of the continent’s GDP (Francis 2001). This remark holds true for the member states of the ECOWAS. Compared to the East African Region, one may conclude with Oloruntimehin (2000) that ECOWAS has had very little by way of achievement. The reason for the comparison is that as the second largest regional bloc in Africa (thirteen members), East Africa could be an interesting area to compare to West Africa in terms of GDP. I collected data for these individual countries of East Africa from the same source and the same date as the GDP data on ECOWAS. Then I drew a comparative table (table VI). I calculated the average GDP of East African states through the same procedure that I used to calculate the average GDP of ECOWAS. The result for East Africa is $1,111. When this GDP is compared to that of ECOWAS ($353), the difference is telling. This East African Economic Community is under the leadership of the core states of Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda.

II. Africa’s Leadership: a factor of regional integration or disintegration
An equally determining factor to be considered is the security variable. Has West African leadership, through the creation of ECOWAS and the ECOMOG (ECOWAS' peacekeeping force) made the concept of collective security a reality for the region? Or more broadly, has the ECOWAS brought the countries of West Africa closer in terms of their approach to security?

Analyzing the violent stir in West African states in general beginning in 1991, Zartman differentiates two cases. In the first case composed of Mali, Guinea-Bissau, Niger, Ivory Coast, and Nigeria, military coups succeed military coups but by and large the population is not seriously endangered. Second, in the cases of Liberia and Sierra Leone, however, civil wars caused enormous damage on the population, with a third of Liberia’s population displaced and as many as 250,000 killed and half of the 5 million Sierra Leoneans displaced and 100,000 killed during the decade. (Zartman and Deng 2002) Within the framework of this study, I intend to focus on the Liberian case for two main reasons. The first one is that the Liberian conflict constitutes a founding event in the history of ECOWAS and the second is the regional meaning of the conflict in question and its economic and political implications. The Liberian crisis has ushered ECOWAS into a new era. ECOWAS was created to promote economic integration in West Africa. But as the war in Liberia threatened the stability of the region as a whole, ECOWAS was called upon to constitute a security branch for the region through the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). Article 4 of the ECOWAS Charter provides for collective security if a member state is threatened by internal armed conflict that is supported by an external entity which threatens the peace and security of the region. However ECOMOG has
largely failed due mainly to internal divisions based on differences between states’ “national” and “leadership” interests in the region.” (Kalu 1995) It appears from this point that leadership is a stumbling block, not a building block from the integration perspective. In the case of Liberia, there is a virtual consensus among the analysts that ECOWAS’ intervention in Liberia was a fiasco. Adibe notes the beleaguered attempt by Liberia’s neighbors, acting under the aegis of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), to prevent the regional spread of the conflict through direct political and military intervention. (Adibe 1997). However, Francis provides one explanation. He contends that the decision of ECOWAS to intervene in the Liberia was depicted by Francophone West African states leaders as a move by the Anglophone section of the organization (Francis 2001). In a gesture of retaliation, and for personal motivations and interests, Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso and Houphouet Boigny Cote d’Iviore (both French speaking countries and members of ECOWAS) supported Charles Taylor, the opposite party in the war. At this level, the theory of political institutionalism does not hold since membership in the ECOWAS did not alter state behavior. The Liberian case, more than anything else, proves the legitimacy of the political realist theory. States, on both sides intervened primarily to secure the survival of their own regimes.

This perennial Anglophone/Francophone rivalry was thus manifest in the ECOMOG and undermined the capacity to secure peace in Liberia. Ecowas peacekeeping force consisted mainly of troops from four Anglophone West African states and one Francophone State, Guinea, which has historically been the outcast of the Francophone group. Kieh gives a sense of the existing tension between these two blocs. Gnassimbe Eyadema of Togo, he argues, withdrew his offer as a manifestation of his loyalty to *la*
Francophonie. Burkina Faso has vehemently opposed the peacekeeping efforts.

Senegal has consistently cast doubt on ECOWAS ability to handle the Liberian problem.

And Ivorian president Houphouet Boigny, the doyen of the Francophone group, called a meeting of ECOWAS heads of state in late 1990, in contravention of the organization’s charter. (Kieh 1994)

This argument is supported by Zartman who contends that President Ibrahim Babangida of Nigeria, a personal friend of Doe, sent the ECOMOG to rescue Doe and end a war that was launched from Ivory Coast and supported by Burkina Faso and, more distantly, Libya of Muammar Khaddafi (Zartman and Deng 2002).

However, the declaration of moratorium for three years on the importation, exportation, and manufacture of light weapons signed by the sixteen members of ECOWAS on October 31, 1998 in Abuja, Nigeria shed a light of hope in the region (Murray 2000). Nevertheless, in the light of the recent developments in Cote d’Ivoire, which has always been a model in West Africa, and the incapacity of ECOWAS to come with a viable formula, this hope has been shattered.

In addition to this political rivalry, Kieh argues that the Francophone states, despite their membership in ECOWAS, formed a rival economic organization, Communaute Economic de l’Afrique de l’Ouest (CEAO). This organization opposes, among other things, ECOWAS trade liberalization efforts and duplicates its compensation fund for trade deflation. (Kieh 1994)

Most dramatically, instead of providing West Africa with a homogenous political leadership, ECOWAS seems to have provided West African leaders only the option to side with either the Anglophone camp or the Francophone camp of the organization.
Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, Cote D'Ivoire and the state of quasi-permanent political violence with the rest of West African States constitutes a failing grade for ECOWAS in terms of regional security.

The last point that this chapter addresses is the issue of population flow within West Africa. The objective here is to examine the impact of ECOWAS on migration movements within West Africa since the concept of free movement is closely related to the idea of unity among West African countries. A protocol was signed in 1979 by the 16 members of ECOWAS relating to the free circulation of the region's citizens and to rights of residence and establishment. The first provision (the right of entry without a visa) came into force in 1980 following ratification by eight numbers. The second provision, allowing unlimited rights of residence, was signed in 1986 although by mid-1997 only one country had ratified the protocol on rights of residence. Articles 2 (2d) and 27 (1,2) of ECOWAS Treaty stress the need to maintain, if not encourage, intra-regional movements of persons as a way of rationalizing and optimizing resource use within the scope of West African states. For this purpose, the Protocol designed a clear process that would operate in a three-step fashion:

Phase 1 – Right of Entry and Abolition of Visa – 1980-1985
Phase 2 – Right of Residence – 1985-1990

One could legitimately formulate some reservations on this subject however. First, these statistics account poorly for the bulk of population movements, which took place outside the official scope of ECOWAS Treaty and Protocol. Because of the porous nature of borders in West Africa, unofficial movements of persons as well as goods are
not accounted for properly. The unofficial migratory flow of persons and goods between Senegal and The Gambia, for instance, may exceed what the statistics of official statements report. This is all the more correct since statistics in West Africa and Africa in general, as one Senegalese sociologist put it, are like a bikini: they only hide the most essential parts, leaving off the bulk of the material relevant to the study. The second argument is related to the implementation of these paper agreements. In practice, these agreements on free movement have not been implemented in West Africa. The numerous checkpoints that are still effective in virtually all ECOWAS countries, the administrative harassment and extortion that ECOWAS citizens are subjected to in the major ECOWAS member countries are clear signs of violations of these agreements. Meyers argues that Nigeria, for instance, deported over two million immigrants in 1983 and 1985 and Cote d’Ivoire pressured ten of thousands of immigrants from Burkina Faso to leave the country in 1999 and 2001 (Meyers 2002). When the jobs of the “natives” are threatened, political leaders usually resort to these methods as a means to regain popular support. Thus the capacity of the host country to absorb the flux of immigrants constitutes a determining factor in the population flow within West African since some especial countries, like Nigeria and Cote d’Ivoire, are the targets. The civil war in Cote d’Ivoire was a direct result of this confrontation between the Ivoirian authorities and those they considered non-ivoirians. However, it is outside the scope of this chapter to make judgments as to the moral or legal basis of these practices that lead to an interruption of the social, political, and economic peace in the region. The evidence simply supports that ECOWAS has not promoted free population movement in West Africa.
III. Conclusion

Does the integration of West African states depend on ECOWAS’ leadership? The evidence examined does not establish any relationship between the independent variable (ECOWAS’ leadership) and the dependent variable (integration). The trade variable examined for three countries of the ECOWAS (Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Senegal) shows that in all the three cases, the major trading partners are outside the scope of ECOWAS.

There is no doubt, however that these figures have to be taken with maximum care. Statistics in the case of Africa in general do not necessarily reflect the absolute reality. The black market is usually poorly accounted for. The import / export data between Senegal and the Gambia, for instance, is certainly much different from the official statistics. The same is true for human transit from one country to another within the region. These population movements, in the case of West Africa, are not always documented. Khobe argues that internal official trade between member states is low due to poor interstate infrastructures (particularly road, railway and telecommunications); different colonial histories and heritages; and deep-seated distrust between the ruling élite. He also argues that informal crossborder trade and population movements are quite widespread (Khobe 2000).

On the other hand, the goal of a monetary union in ECOWAS has long been an objective of the organization, going back to its formation in 1975, and is intended to accompany a broader integration process that would include enhanced regional trade and common institutions (Masson and Pattillo 2001). Unfortunately, this objective has not
been achieved. Muchie argues that money and financial flows still occur between Africa and the West rather than within Africa itself (Muchie 2003). This remark holds true in the case of West Africa. The trade flow in the three cases examined (Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Senegal) supports Muchie’s argument. This gradualist approach to integration has also been questioned for the very same reasons (Irele 1990). The concept of gradualism or of union through concentric circles can pose a serious problem because in the absence of institutions, political will gets substituted to political whim. Thus these concentric circles are created in one day and foregone the next day. The Mali federation with Mali and Senegal and the Senegambian confederation with Senegal and The Gambia, for instance, were thrown in the dustbin of history mainly because they were not institutionalized. For one thing, political realism in West Africa is much alive today than ever before. Instead of fundamentally altering state behavior, ECOWAS has become a tool in the hands of some West African countries in pursuit of their own national agendas.

Has the creation of ECOWAS positively altered the security variable in West Africa? The answer to this question seems to be negative. Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Cote d’Ivoire are the extreme cases of ECOWAS’ failure to positively impact on security in West Africa. These extreme cases hide less extreme forms of violence, social and political disorders in various pockets of West Africa including in Senegal (Casamance) and Nigeria (ethnic and religious violence). Francis’ argument should be put within such a context. Twenty-five years after the creation of ECOWAS, he echoes the words of a renowned expert. West Africa, he says, has been pessimistically portrayed by analysts such as Robert Kaplan as the new “strategic danger” in contemporary world politics because of the many civil wars and intracommunal violence, political stability,
fragile economies, poverty and underdevelopment, weak and collapsing states, and environmental problems facing the sub-region. (Francis 2001)

In terms of the population flow within the West African Region, we have seen that ECOWAS has attempted to create a free movement zone through signing different protocols in 1979 and 1986. However, the effectiveness of these protocols has been impeded by various factors discussed earlier. It is ironic that the most notorious population movement within West Africa is a forced population movement. Thousands of people are forced to seek refuge into their neighboring states in order to escape mutilation and death. The UN refugee agency, for instance, reported that some 36,000 Ivorian refugees had fled to Liberia. Guinea, because it shares borders with the three major conflict areas of West Africa (Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Cote d'Ivoire) has hosted more refugees than any other country in Africa for much of the past decade. Its number of refugees is estimated to 400,000 refugees. This is the sad but real picture of population mobility in West Africa. This type of mobility in return causes instability and disorder in the host country. Guinea for this reason is on the brink of war.

While any variables that have been taken into account, in the course of this study, could lend themselves to alternate explanations, the most significant determinant of ECOWAS' failure to become a factor of integration in West Africa seems to be the divide between Anglophone / Francophone leadership. This quarrel of leadership between the Anglophone side and the Francophone side of the organization has specifically undermined the capabilities of ECOWAS to successfully intervene in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and Cote d'Ivoire. The failure, which is political and military in nature, has had pernicious effects on the economic integration of West
Africa in the sense that integration in West Africa is dependent upon the security of the region.

Onwuka argues that the French-speaking West African leaders, through a series of treaties of co-operation with metropolitan France, and the formation of such organizations as OCAM, *Conseil de l’Entente* and many others showed to cohere under virtual French leadership. He maintains that the solidarity among the French West African states has helped to widen the barrier between French and English-speaking areas in the region (Onwuka 1982). Some authors have argued that this attitude is dictated by an attempt from the Francophone leadership to counter Nigeria’s hegemony. Adibe, for instance, notes that the fact that Nigeria is perceived as an hegemonic threat by her francophone neighbors constitutes impediment to the success of ECOWAS (Adibe 1997). On this account, the fact that six Anglophone and one Francophone West Africa countries, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, Liberia and Guinea (the historical outsider of the Francophone zone) are hoping to use a single currency by 2003 is not good news for the integration of West Africa. This may result in an “ossification” of the pernicious divide between the two rival camps of the region. Its ramifications in terms of ECOWAS’ incapacity to face the challenges of integration will only become extensive.

Lastly, for any serious integration to be envisaged, the leaders ECOWAS have to demonstrate a genuine willingness to bridge the Anglophone/ Francophone divide, to cooperate and build a better regional transport networks and communication systems. In a region spread across more than 6,800,000 square km, only a modern transportation system will guarantee a fluid flow of persons and good from one state to the next. Ezenwe (1983) stressed, twenty years ago, the need for an effective transport system and
the need to adapt West Africa’s postcolonial institutional heritage to the new political realities in order to meet national needs and aspirations in the context of ECOWAS. This remark is still valid today. What is desperately needed in Africa is also needed in West Africa: to institutionalize the mechanism of conflict resolution (Adebajo 2002, Huntington 1968). From these perspectives, it is clear that, judged by the objectives that the founders of ECOWAS set up in its creation which is to promote co-operation and integration and to establish of an economic union in West Africa in order to raise the living standards of its peoples, and to maintain and enhance economic stability through a secure West Africa, ECOWAS has failed. Today, West Africa is neither more secure nor more integrated than it was prior to the creation of ECOWAS. However, Kalu (1995) argues that ECOWAS states and their leaders have the potential if they act collectively and decisively in cooperative efforts to diversify their economies and engage in technological development and manufacturing, trading among themselves and also in resolving conflicts within the region.
### Tables

**Table I – Senegal (Exports)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>World Exports from Senegal</th>
<th>US $ Millions</th>
<th>% Share</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>19.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>97</td>
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<td>Italy</td>
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<td>Mauritania</td>
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<td>Spain</td>
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<td>Netherlands</td>
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<td>Mali</td>
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<td>Cote d'Ivoire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
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<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambia</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK (13th)</td>
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<td><strong>Total World Exports</strong></td>
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<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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**Table II – Senegal (Imports)**

<table>
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<th>World Imports to Senegal</th>
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<td>France</td>
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<td>Nigeria</td>
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<td>Thailand</td>
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<td>Netherlands</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
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<td><strong>Total World Imports</strong></td>
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<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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### NIGERIA'S IMPORTS OF GOODS - 2000 (Top 10 Market Shares)

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<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>US$ Mn</th>
<th>% Share</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>UK</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>USA</td>
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<td>France</td>
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<td>Germany</td>
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<td>10</td>
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### Table IV - Sierra Leone (Exports)

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<th>World Exports from Sierra Leone</th>
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<th>% Share</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
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</table>


### Table V - Sierra Leone (Imports)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>World Imports into Sierra Leone</th>
<th>US$ Millions</th>
<th>% Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cote d'Ivoire</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
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<td>1.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
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Table VI – ECOWAS & East Africa: a Comparative Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>East African Countries - GDP per capita</th>
<th>ECOWAS - GDP per capita</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comoro Island</td>
<td>238</td>
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<tr>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>873</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>191</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>301</td>
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<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>4,194</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>282</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seychelles Isl.</td>
<td>7,453</td>
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<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>140</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>268</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>257</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>185</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cape Verde</td>
<td>1,297</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cote d'Ivoire</td>
<td>573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambia, The</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
<td>196</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
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<td>Mali</td>
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<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>322</td>
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<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Chapter 3

Political Leadership and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

When on June 26, 2002, four African Presidents met with the leaders of the eight major industrialized democracies at Kananaskis, Canada, to discuss an initiative by the African leaders to get Africa out of poverty, most commentators drew immediately a parallel between the just born plan and another one of its kind that saved Europe after the devastation of Second World War. The plan that African leaders came to discuss with the G8 is known as the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) which is a merger of the Omega Plan by the Senegalese President, Abdoulaye Wade, and The Millennium African Recovery Plan by President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, President Olusogun Obasango of Nigeria, President Abdel Aziz Bouteflika of Algeria. Like the Marshall Plan, NEPAD is an attempt to save a devastated continent. But there, the similarity ends. If the Marshall plan was meant to reconstruct the different parts of the European engine destroyed by World War II, NEPAD is a creation of Africa’s new leadership and is meant to build the engine from scratch.

A cursory look at contemporary African history shows a series of assistance plans that started from the birth of the African nations in the 60s and went on to this date with variations in times and places. Jeffrey Herbst (1992, 1) notes that since 1980, the international community has committed a total of $27 billion to Africa in aid. The major donors are the former colonial masters of the African continent (France, Great Britain, Germany) and the US. Whatever their aim might have been, these aid programs share a common denominator: failure. These aid programs failed mainly because, as external solutions to African problems, they were systematically infused into Africa without any
precise and organized control on the part of the African countries. NEPAD, on the contrary, is a partnership for the development of Africa. Its originality lies in the fact that it is not a handout. It is a pledge by African Leaders to the people of Africa to promote sound economic management, democracy, peace, security and development.

For the first time in the history of the black continent, leaders came up with a clear and defined plan to save Africa. What they are asking for is no less than the financing of a project that they intend to implement. This time, they do not intend to sit at the side and watch some pundits or experts from the World Bank or International Monetary Funds do the job for them. They want to do it themselves and bear the responsibility to the future generations (Africa News 2003). In this respect, NEPAD constitutes a major development in the history of African Politics and as such deserve a more acute attention.

This chapter seeks to examine how NEPAD was created and its implications for Africa. In doing so, I intend to focus on Africa’s leadership in the process. This analysis is both timely and crucial. Timely, in the sense that it deals with an organization that has been around for barely a year now. Crucial, seen that the destiny of the black continent could be linked to the success or failure of this plan. In this chapter, I intend to test the literature review with a focus on the New Partnership for Africa’s Development. The material will be gathered mainly from newspaper articles, official statements, and the website of the organization. Unlike the previous chapter, which had a regional focus, I propose to start with a brief continental description of the African background. Understanding this background is essential for any understanding of the physical and psychological background under which this leadership operates.
I. The African Context

Judged by any parameters of economic and political development, the black continent lags behind by a far and ever increasing margin. What explains this fact? Answers are numerous and complementary. They are the combinations of external and internal factors. The external factors could be mainly attributed to three centuries of slavery, one century of colonization, and another century of neocolonialism (Walter Rodney 1981). The internal factors are mainly constituted by the lack of political will of African leaders. My argument here is that while we may have no control over the past, the future is what African leaders make of it. For this reason this chapter will be devoted to examining the internal conditions in Africa.

A major variable to look at is the political one. While the overall political situation in Africa could be legitimately given a poor grade, it is nonetheless noteworthy to mention that some mixed progress is being made (van de Walle 2002, Young 1996). For instance, since the end of the Cold War, at least 11 countries have seen the peaceful transfer of power to opposition rivals following multi-party elections (Government of Canada 2002).

The political variable aside, all others receive a failing grade. By economic standards, the black continent is by far the poorest region of the planet. Out of its 807,419,000 people, over 340 million people live on less than a dollar per day. Africa is the only continent where poverty is on the rise. In terms of international trade, Africa accounts for less than 1% of global investment flows, while an estimated 40% of Africa's own private savings are invested outside of Africa (Government of Canada 2002).
The black continent is also the most indebted of all continents. Thirty-three of the region's 44 countries are designated heavily indebted poor countries by the World Bank; most of the rest nearly qualify for that ranking (IMF/World Bank 2002). The burden of this debt today swings unjustly like a Damocles swords over the heads of innocent people who have never seen the benefits of the reckless loans that the IMF delivered mainly to the dictators of the seventies. This debt amounts today to approximately $200 billion and is now equivalent to over 100% of Africa's gross national product (Meilink 2003).

As for the health balance sheet of Africa, it is simply a horror. Life expectancy in Sub-Saharan Africa is the lowest of the world (47 on average). Millions of children die in Africa every year due to acute respiratory infections, malaria, diarrhea, measles and neonatal tetanus. In most of the cases, the real cause is malnutrition. Next to this, the prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS is higher in Africa than anywhere else. Africa accounts for 70% of the global population of people infect with HIV/AIDS (5). As far as agriculture is concerned, Africa's share of world agricultural trade fell from 8% in 1965 to 3% in 1996. The rate of illiteracy is on the rise. Enrollment trends since the Jomtien Conference in 1990 indicate that in 2015 Africa will account for 15 percent of the world's primary school-age children, but 75 per cent of children not in school (SAPA NEWS Agency 2002). As for the digital divide, the number of telephone mainlines is only 14 per 1000 people and there are 8 personal computers per 1000 people. There are more internet connections in New York City than on the entire African continent (Government of Canada 2002).
II. How NEPAD was created

What accounts for this catastrophe in a continent that is home to the world’s greatest natural reservoirs? As suggested in the literature review of this thesis, it is usually argued that the leadership failed to deliver. For the most part, political leadership has emerged in Africa only to serve itself, not the people. This leadership, since independence governed without vision. In most cases they are viewed as political geniuses whose talents are only geared toward power preservation at the expense of political and economic development (Londregan, Bienen, and van de Walle. 1995). However, the survival of these leaders could be attributed to the context of the cold war where major western countries, in order to thwart the advance of communism, systematically poured money on entrenched dictators like Mobutu Seseko in Zaire, Siad Barre in Somalia, and Gaafar Numeri in Sudan (Herbst 1992,11). The collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1989, however, sounded to both the African leadership and the masses like a resounding reminder that African problems would call for an African solution. The post Cold War atmosphere became fertile for stock taking and awareness on the part of the leadership of Africa. Movements were being formed to create adequate “think-tanks” for an African recovery program. In May 1990, in Uganda, a movement was born under the leadership of Obasango. This movement known as the Kampala Movement proposed an organization that could allow the continent to free itself from dependency on the rest of the world. This organization, the Conference on Security, Stability, Development, and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA) meant to be an African solution to the African problem and intended to succeed where the Organization of African Unity (OAU) failed. Following the same drive, and with similar aims, Africa’s new leadership at the G8
summit in June 2002, presented the world with a plan to save Africa: The New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). NEPAD was born out of the merging of two major plans: the Millennium Africa Recovery Plan (MAP) by South African president Thabo Mbeki, Algerian president Abdel Aziz Bouteflica, and Nigerian president Olusegun Obasago, and the Omega plan by Senegalese president Abdoulaye Wade (Le Soleil 2002). The MAP is deeply rooted in Mbeki’s favorite theme: the need for an African Renaissance. It is an expression of the will of Africans to extricate themselves and the continent from the malaise of underdevelopment and exclusion in the context of the irreversible process of globalization. In this respect, the plan seeks to reposition the continent in terms of global economic relations. Like The MAP, the Omega plan was conceived by Wade to bring an African solution to the African plight. The Omega plan laid the emphasis on infrastructure, agriculture, education, and health, and the need for the developed nations to contribute to their financing. The main contention of the Senegalese president on this account is that infrastructures in Africa, like Airports, practical roads are equally, useful to Africa as they are the industrialized world. As these two plans were becoming increasingly influential and accessible to scrutiny, their similarities and eventually their complementary nature came to light. Through a difficult, and testing process, leaders from both sides finally accepted to consider merging their two plans into a wider one; one that would draw from the strengths of both. Thus, on July 3, 2001, the amalgamation between these two plans was formalized into a new entity: the New African Initiative (NAI). NAI was approved by the OAU Summit Heads of State and Governments in Lusaka on July 11, 2001 and endorsed by leaders of G8 countries on July 20. Its policy framework was finalized on
October 23, forming NEPAD. Thus NEPAD was born out of the necessity to correct the shot and to alleviate the suffering of the black continent on a wider scale (Kaunda 2003).

III. The Originality of NEPAD

Soon after NEPAD was launched, analysts from all corners of the world shiftily draw a parallel between this plan and one that sprang from a similar context to uplift Europe out of the Chaos of Post World War II. That plan was concocted from the U.S by the then American Secretary of State George C. Marshall and proposed during his Harvard Speech of June 5, 1947. The Marshall Plan was a calculated effort by the United States that sought to tackle the crucial problems of “hunger, homelessness, sickness, unemployment, and political restlessness” that were ravaging 270 million people in sixteen nations in West Europe. This program cost the American taxpayers $11,820,700,000 (plus $1,505,100,000 in loans that were repaid) over four years (George C. Marshall Foundation 2002).

In what measures is this new African initiative an African version of the Marshall Plan? At first look, this parallelism looks justified. The African continent of the beginning of 21st displays some striking similarities with post World War II Western Europe. Both entities are war ruined; both entities lack so much in terms of basic needs. This could explain why on the local level as well as on the global one, different moves were being made by African leaders in favor of an “African Marshall Plan. Outstanding personalities, like Reverend Desmond Tutu, sought to lobby the U.S. Congress for a “Marshall Plan for South Africa” (Tutu 2000). South African President Thabo Mbeki, himself, used the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos to promote a homegrown
African "Marshall Plan" (Mbeki 2001). Equally interesting, in the aftermath of the Davos conference (February 2001), as well as that of Kananaski (June 2002), both African and international media evoked the move that African leaders were making in terms of a Marshall Plan for Africa. However, a closer look at some other key variables reveals a fundamental difference between the two. First, the fact that the Marshall Plan was conceived from outside Europe constitutes a major difference. If the Marshall plan was an American solution the European problems, NEPAD proposes a solution to Africa's trials in an African way. Second, and most fundamentally, if the Marshall Plan was meant to reconstruct the destroyed parts of the European Engine, NEPAD has to build the engine from scratch. In the European context, the capitalist machine was already working and became rooted in the everyday life of the people. The machine was simply interrupted by the war. The main reason why the Marshall plan worked is because it was aimed at aiding a well-educated, industrialized people temporarily down but not out. (Boyle 2001) In the case of Africa, a bewildering illiteracy rate and a permanent state of violence from the 60s (birth of most African states) to this date makes the case for a unique situation. In this sense, NEPAD is more ambitious and more difficult to materialize than the Marshall Plan. Unlike the Marshall plan, which was unilaterally financed the US, NEPAD's financing will come from the broader source of the G8.

IV. Africa's New Leaders

"We march into the new era of the African century as Africans who have made the determination that this century will be a hundred years in which we cease to be
victims of our circumstances but victors. Through our own actions we will ensure that poverty gives way to prosperity." (Mbeki 2001) This extract from Thabo Mbeki’s speech at the South African Parliament in February 2001 sums up in a rather eloquent manner the magnitude of the new reality that African leaders, for better or for worse, will not escape. In the 1990s a combination of the collapse of the communist bloc and the Baule summit in France in June 1990 ushered the black continent into a new era that led to awareness among African leaders.

Who are these new leaders? It might be interesting to proceed to a short presentation of the four African leaders that played key roles to bring about NEPAD: Thabo Mbeki (South Africa), Olusegun Obasango (Nigeria), Abdel Aziz Bouteflika (Algeria) and Abdoulaye Wade (Senegal).

Thabo M. Mbeki is often introduced as the champion of the concept of “African Renaissance” (Christen 1999). Through this concept, he dreams of creating a new Africa in which poverty and oppression will be ended. Mbeki participated in the struggle to rid South Africa of the plague of Apartheid. His story is intertwined with the story of South Africa, which is one of injustice and domination of a majority by a minority on the basis of race. It is both an irony and an indication of his passion for justice that the champion of NEPAD, liberal in essence, joined the Communist Party of South Africa in order to combat the Apartheid regime. His activism, since primary school, led to his ultimate exile first in Britain and then in Moscow before his return to South Africa to succeed the African pride, Nelson Mandela at the head of the Africa National Congress and as President of South Africa.
As for Olusegun Obasanjo, he is a relentless crusader for the dignity of the African people. He served as president in the late 1970's. He voluntarily relinquished power in 1979 to a civilian government that was later overthrown by the military. Obasanjo spent three years in prison for criticizing military regime of Sani Abasha. One of his major contributions to Africa is undoubtedly the Conference on Security, Stability, Development, and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA) under the framework of the Africa Leadership Forum (Deng and Zartman 2002). Inspired by the strategic withdrawal of major Western powers, Obasanjo became increasingly aware, in order to ensure its survival, in the pitiless world economy Africa would have to depend primarily on itself. In this direction, he inspired scholars and political leaders from across Africa to meet and design a cure to the African problem. These scholars and political leaders met four times between November 1990 and May 1991. The last and main meeting resulted in what is known as the Kampala Movement; it also produced a vision for Africa captured by the Kampala document (Deng, Zartman 2002).

Abdel Aziz Bouteflika’s life, like Mbeki and Obasango, has been one of constant struggle. He fought against the French occupier in the National Liberation Army. He is considered to be moderate in his politics, with a political orientation that lies in the middle between socialism and capitalism. His faith in the unity of African countries were instrumental his acceptance to preside over the Organization of African Unity in 1999 (Casteran 1999). As the leader of a country with one of the greatest potentials in Africa, his conscience to be part of a greater ensemble has been crucial to his action towards a united continent. Algeria almost has it all from natural gas and petroleum, to iron ore, phosphates, lead, zinc, mercury, silver, salt, antimony, and copper.
Abdoulaye Wade, for his part, has a passion for a unified Africa. Affectionately called “Gorgui” (the man in Wolof), his life has been a constant struggle against mal governance. His political beliefs in Africa, expressed in his book, *Un Destin pour L’Afrique*, gave him a political come-back every time he was considered politically dead. He toppled the Socialist regime at age 74. His victory and the telephone call from the incumbent president Abdou Diouf propelled Senegal to the restricted court of world democracies. Soon after he got elected, he submitted to Africa what he believes could save the continent: the Omega Plan with a noted emphasis on infrastructure building.

The confluence of leaders of this caliber is determinant to the creation of an “African Initiative” and ultimately to the birth NEPAD. First and foremost, NEPAD is meant to be a locomotive to drag Africa out its plight and tell the world that Africa means business. In this, it is a new vision. The G8 (the eight most industrialized countries in the world) had this in mind when they publicly supported this new African Initiative at the Kananaski summit in Canada in June 2001.

V. NEPAD: a New Vision

NEPAD is a revolutionary program in many respects. It is truism to say that this homegrown project is an authentic African initiative ratified by African leaders. It is a clear vision in which Africans themselves set the agenda and decide what the priorities are and what the process should be. They are in charge. NEPAD is different from all the previous partnership programs that linked the African continent to its former colonial master on one hand and to the U.S., Canada and other emerging powers on the other hand. From the sixties onward the north-south rapport have been paternalistic in nature.
The relationship consisted of orders from the developed world and execution from Africa with heavy assistance. In the 1990s, the developed world, through the World Bank and the IMF, systematically infused loans to the African continent, and systematically dictated the policies with total disregard to the realities of the continent. Such a policy, led analysts, scholars, and politicians in Africa and around the world to question whether the institutions of Bretton Woods are really development-driven. For instance, Joseph E. Stiglitz, an economics professor at Columbia University, and Nobel prize of economics, contends that the IMF and the World Bank imposes upon the third world its own will based on dry statistics drawn from central banks and finance ministries by their experts who never get out of the four star hotels of the capital cities of the third world countries (Stiglitz 2002). This attitude, he maintains, as demonstrated in the case of Ethiopia does not serve the economies of the third world. Salih Booker, executive director of Africa Action, for instance, maintains that these institutions must be made accountable for their role in causing the worst health crisis in human history, which Africa now faces (Lobe 2002). All analysts agree today that the structural adjustment programs that the World Bank and the IMF imposed on a defenseless Africa helped disrupted and already decadent economic tissue (Logie and Woodroffe 1993).

NEPAD seeks to break decisively with this way of doing business. African leaders realize that Africa cannot take off without loans from the most fortunate countries. Yet, they are aware that it is in the best interest of Africa that the West serves only as a jump-starter for the African economies. The job has to be done by them. What’s in essence this New Partnership? The New Partnership for Africa’s Development, as the name suggests, intends to be a genuine partnership between Africa
and the Developed world on African terms. It is a total partnership at the national, bilateral, multilateral, sub-regional, and regional level as well as a partnership at the international level with the rest of the world. It is a program of the African Union (AU) and pervades all aspects of life. Through a clear vision, African leaders have assessed the needs of the continent and established an agenda to follow. They intend to do so, following a rigorous methodological approach. They intend to start by bridging the infrastructure gap that divide Africa to the rest of the world. Aware of the fact that the road to economic development fares through the development of roads. For this reason, the infrastructures considered include roads, highways, airports, seaports, railways, waterways, and telecommunications facilities (NEPAD 2002). Private foreign finance is necessary for the achievement of this titanic project. African leaders have recognized that the resources required to finance development in Africa will not come from aid alone – they must come from increased productivity, investment and trade. NEPAD, in this sense, is a new partnership with Africa based on mutual responsibility and benefits. Practical infrastructures would play a decisive role in the productivity of Africa. Most of the existing infrastructures were built by the colonial masters and are specifically designed to facilitate the transportation of raw materials from Africa and to transit manufactured goods the other way around. In the new development-driven context, the emphasis is laid on cooperation within the continent. African leaders are also aware that no economic development is viable without peace, security, stability, and cooperation. For this reason they are determined to tackle vigorously these questions. In this sense, NEPAD is a commitment of African leaders to the peoples of Africa and the rest of the world to put Africa on the path of sustainable development. On this account, it is an
encouraging sign that some African businesses are already showing the way. NNCP and Sonatrac Algeria have signed an agreement on a Trans-Saharan pipeline to link Nigeria, Algeria, and Europe. The total funds involved are estimated at $7 billion (NEPAD 2002). But this enthusiasm should not distract from the challenges ahead that NEPAD has to pick up.

VI. The Test of NEPAD

Can Africa halve poverty by 2015? – This question, posed by the 2000 UN special assembly, will constitute a defining challenge to the New Partnership for Africa’s Development. The initiative is expected to address issues like: “a reduction by half of the proportion of Africans living in absolute poverty; an increase in the enrollment of children of school going age; the reduction of infant mortality levels by two thirds; the improvement of access to reproductive health facilities and services, the elimination of all dimensions of gender inequality side by side with the empowerment of women; and improvement in the information technology profile of the continent; reversal of the brain drain; increased investment in the human resources of the African continent.” (Short 2002).

Like its predecessors, NEPAD will inevitably face challenges that will seal its fate. The first of its challenges is the context and the environment in which it evolves. The size of most African countries, the unpredictable nature of the wars in Africa, the debt problem, the health problem, the digital divide gap, the brain drain issue, mal governance, only to mention these. It would be hardly exaggerated to state that in Africa, basically everything is a problem and for this reason, NEPAD’s survival as a credible
program will depend on its ability to surmount this multitude of hurdles. While, it's out of the scope of this chapter, to study this myriad of problems on a separate basis, I propose to consider the most relevant ones in relation to the topic.

The war variable is a major challenge that African leaders will have to face if any foundation for sustainable development is to be laid on the black continent. Africa is a continent at war, not with an external enemy, but at war with itself. Governments are being toppled by extra legal means, people are being displaced by the thousands, economies are falling apart, anarchy is being the rule in many areas of the continent. The concept of a “Somalization” of Africa refers to the sad picture of an Africa of failed states. In this context, surmounting her internal conflicts is one of Africa’s top priorities on the way to political development and economic integration. In this respect, it is remarkable that the concepts of peace, security, and stability occupy a central place in NEPAD. Wars do make of Africa a risk-prone area for investors. On this account, NEPAD’s war against poverty is first and foremost a war against war itself.

Next to this problem, the size of the bulk of African countries makes it extremely difficult for any economic plan to function viably. Countries like Djibouti, Rwanda, Burundi, Lesotho, Swaziland, The Gambia, Senegal, etc. do not have any real chance of competing in a global economy. The size of these markets works toward an increasing marginalization of the African economies since they do not constitute a major attraction for private capital. In a 1961 memo by the Policy Planning Council, African experts noted that the extremely small size of many African countries foreclosed the possibility of any real autonomous domestic economic development. Should these countries try to industrialize, they argue, scarce resources will tend to be misdirected into parallel and
overlapping investments; and the possibilities of attracting private capital from abroad will be reduced. (Herbst 1992) This remark holds true today.

Other critics have often focused on NEPAD’s neoliberal leanings, which in their view does not correspond to Africa’s historic and cultural realities. They contend that NEPAD is inspired by the international Monetary Fund-World Bank strategies of Structural Adjustment Programs, trade liberalization that continues to subject Africa to an unequal exchange between its exports and its imports, and structures on governance borrowed from the practices of Western countries and not rooted in the culture and history of the peoples of Africa. These critics point to NEPAD’s neo-liberal framework and its disregard for earlier African initiatives such as the Lagos Plan of Action of 1980 and the Alternative to Structural Adjustment Programs, which were rejected by the Western powers (Turray 2002). In the same direction, the debt problem also constitutes a bloc on the way of NEPAD that will have to be removed in order to give the continent a fresh start. This is all the more legitimate since the bulk of this debt was contracted following the logic of the cold war in which it profited the “dictator club” of Africa and not the people.

Fundamentally, how NEPAD is going to deal with mal-governance and the entrenched dictators still in Africa will define the partnership for better or for worse. In this direction a special eye should be directed to the peer review program contained within NEPAD. The most vocal critics of NEPAD argue that the problem with African initiatives is not their brilliance. Most of them are just shiny, but they fail at the level of implementation. In other words, NEPAD, like its predecessors may turn out to be a “tiger without tooth” (Melber 2002). For this reason, many influential newspapers on the
African continent contend that NEPAD might not work. (Tandon 2002) On this account, however, it is encouraging that, in theory, an agreement has being signed to outlaw the rulers that would not conform to the basic rules of democratic governance. The challenge, however, would be to see how far they are willing to go to make good governance a reality in Africa.

On the other hand, NEPAD, in order to be effective, has to turn an open ear to the grassroots and civic society. Good governance cannot solely be the business of the leadership; it cannot even only be the reserved domain of ruling and opposing parties, developed as they may be. Democratic governance, in essence, calls for a critical discourse, a dissenting voice from actors outside the political party boundaries. These healing voices should be allowed to come from all aspects of social life. One of NEPAD’s biggest challenges lies in its ability to allow a third voice and also to sacrifice the tacit “African brotherhood” in favor of an uncompromising transparency. On this account, NEPAD’s endorsement of the flawed election in Congo-Brazzaville, Madagascar, Zambia and Zimbabwe, despite some dissident voices within itself, constitutes a shot that needs to be corrected. The effectiveness of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) under NEPAD’s “Democracy and Political Governance Initiative” (DPGI), both essential components of NEPAD, in this case, will be a defining parameter of the new programs acceptance by Africans. NEPAD’s success will require a very strong commitment to reform from Africa’s leadership, and a real partnership from the industrialized countries to support that effort. The price tag of $64 billion a year to meet commitments outlined in NEPAD requires something of a trial. One could be wondering, however, if NEPAD has an alternative in store in case the projected finance
does not come forth. In this respect the profound disagreement between some prominent African leaders and some potential donors countries about the elections in Zimbabwe serves a test of what the future may be made of.
Chapter 4

Political Leadership, the African Union and the Quest for Unity in Africa:

What Explains the Creation of the African Union?

It is often argued that the fall of the Berlin Wall opened a new era in international politics. The same is true for African politics. The symbolic event of November 9, 1989 in the capital city of Germany, indeed, ushered African politics into a new era. This era corresponded to the great wave of democratization. The collapse of the Soviet bloc and the triumph of liberal democracy set the flame for a reverberating democratization movement on the black continent. It has been a period of change and challenge to the whole black continent. But, more than anything else it has been a test of political leadership. The Baule summit in France in June 1990, which tied economic aid to democratic transitions, constituted both a logical and an additional impact on this process in a significant manner. These external factors were coupled by feigned and somehow real efforts to democracy on the part of the African leadership. About a decade later, Africa’s new leadership has successfully led to the creation of the African Union at the Durban Summit on July 8, 2002. The Durban summit was an expression of unity for the black continent. The Union was perceived as a guarantee of economic integration, but most importantly, the birth of the Union meant a concern for political stability and good governance via a genuine democratization process in Africa.

The idea of a Union, however, goes back to the early days of African independence. When Ghana became the first Sub-Saharan African country to free itself from British yoke in 1958, its leader, Kwame Nkrumah, took a strong stand for the
liberation of all of Africa and expressed the idea of a continental government. This tradition of leadership favored the idea of one-Africa and was also nurtured by leaders such as Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, with his dream of a rehabilitation of the historic pre-colonial African communities, and Patrice Lumumba of the Congo-Kinshasha, the “prophet of the transcontinental society and a unitary state”, as well as Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, and Haile Selassie of Ethiopia. The same ideal was revived by modern African leaders in the caliber of Muammar Khaddafi of Lybia, Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Olusegun Obasango of Nigeria, Abdel Aziz Bouteflika of Algeria, Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal, to name but a few. The birth of the African Union on 8 July 2002 at the Durban summit in South Africa was incontestably the direct product of informed leadership. The idea of the union, a coalition of 53 states was first emitted in official terms during the Syrte summit in Libya in September 1999 when Khaddafi proposed a United States of Africa. Support for his idea was overwhelming during the 37th OAU summit in July 2001 at Lusaka, Zambia. Support for the Union was also apparent in UN Secretary General’s “tribute to leader [Khaddafi] for spearheading this development” (Annan 2001)

Who is Khaddafi? What are his motivations? Why did Mbeki, Obansanjo, Bouteflika and Wade, the champions of good governance and democratic principles follow Khaddafi who does not share their basic philosophies of government? Most amazingly how was it possible that the G8, a coalition of the world’s leading democracies, accepted to back a project launched by a leader who, by their standards, is nothing more than a ruthless dictator and an international outcast? How did the African Union become a reality? What are the policy implications and recommendations? This chapter intends to shed a light on these different questions. The fact that no academic
research has been geared toward this issue makes it both interesting and challenging, and ultimately rewarding. Most fundamentally, a genuine understanding of how the African Union was created, and its implications, is crucial for the future of the black continent. For all these underlined reasons, I decided to take on the subject of political leadership, the AU and the quest for unity in Africa with a special interest in the factors that made the creation of the Union a possibility.

I. The African Union’s Precursor: the OAU

On July 8, 2002, 40 African heads of states and governments met at Durban, South Africa with the agenda to bury the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and deliver the African Union. What went wrong with the Organization of African Unity? What would be fundamentally different with the AU? How did the new African leadership get to the point where they felt the AU to be a necessity? These are the main questions I intend to test in this section of the chapter.

The OAU was created on May 25th, 1963 in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) in a time of need for Africa’s total independence. The OAU was created to free the continent of colonial rule and to promote the Unity of the African continent. However, the Addis Ababa meeting was finally possible after enormous compromises between the Casablanca faction and the Monrovia faction. The first one was composed of Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Egypt, Algeria, and Morocco and the second one known as the Monrovia group was essentially made of Nigeria, Liberia, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, and Togo. More than anything else, the Addis Ababa summit was a shock of leadership and personalities. It was Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana against the majority of African Leaders. Nkrumah,
whose well-timed manuscript "Africa Must Unite" was already circulating among the delegates at the summit wanted nothing sort of a genuine United Africa. His idea of unity embedded the concepts of a common citizenship, a common currency, and a common defense system all necessary components for the security and stability of Africa (Nkrumah 1963). Opposition to his views was carried out, in its most noticeable form, by Houphouet Boigny of Ivory Coast, Habib Bourguiba of Tunisia, Philibert Tsiranana of Malagasy. "I should underline" declared Tsiranna, "that our adhesion means by the same token a rejection of a formula for a Federation of African States because federation presupposes the surrender of a large part of national sovereignty" (Olisanwuche 1994, 194). This statement of rejections of Nkrumah's ideas is symptomatic of the general feeling at the conference. The factionalism in Africa's leadership translated into the acceptance of the colonial frontiers of Africa. The organization whose name had been suggested by Hubert Maga of Dahomey thus sowed ironically the seeds of dislocation, not of unity. Yet, the OAU should be credited for its invaluable contributions to the decolonization process. The liberation of Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau was possible to a large extent because of the OAU's support. Ridding South Africa of Apartheid constitutes, in part, a credit to the continental organization. At the level of uniting these countries, however, the OAU's record is a dismal failure. The present condition of Africa is a witness to this fact.

Makumi Mwagiru of the Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies at the University of Nairobi, Kenya, for instance, points to Article 3(2) of the OAU Charter as an indication of a crisis which is ruining of OAU and especially its Conflict Management mechanism (Mwagiru 2003). The OAU, by laying a strong emphasis on the principle of
non-intervention in the affairs of another state, through article 3(2), constitutes by itself a hindrance to conflict resolution in Africa. Rwanda with 800,000 Tutsis and anti-government Hutus hutus killed constitutes a case of resounding failure of the continental organization. While most analysts agree that the direct cause of the genocide was the incitement of the country’s Hutu majority against the Tutsi minority by a small group among the Rwandan governing class, there is little doubt that “this terrible conspiracy only succeeded because certain actors external to Rwanda allowed it to go ahead” (The Perspective 2003). The OAU also failed to be a peace broker in the Ethiopia-Eritrea border disputes just in the same way as it failed to prevent the senseless massacre and maiming of innocent civilians in Sierra Leone and Liberia. The OAU, many scholars argue, became a club where dictators and weak democrats met to talk with no political will to address Africa’s urging needs. CNN European Political Editor Robin Oakley, for instance, referred to the OAU as a talking shop. It has done little to boost Africa’s economies or combat the scourge of AIDS and other infectious diseases. (Oakley 2001)

II. The Creation of the AU

Although the idea of the African Union idea goes back to the independence days of Africa, it was rekindled at the Syrte Summit in September 1999, when Libya’s charismatic leader Muammar Khaddafi, launched the idea of a United States of Africa in place of the Organization of African Unity. Who is Khaddafi? What does the African Union mean? Why are his motivations for launching this project? What are the conditions, internal and external that dictated the creation of the AU? What other major development in World Politics made the creation of the AU a sine qua non condition for the survival of Africa? This section will peruse these questions. Africa’s leadership,
following the call of one leader, agreed to a Union in order to save Africa. Who are these leaders and most definitely who is Khaddafı?

Khaddafı
Khaddafı is without a doubt one of the most captivating leaders of twenty-first century Africa. He came to power in a time of great need for liberation. Libya had experienced over three decades of Italian colonial rule from 1912 until World War II, when the U.S-U.K attacks swept the Italian and German presence out of North Africa. After the war, Libya was granted independence, with King Idris installed as a compliant regent with a demonstrated propensity to take orders from the U.S. and Britain. The U.S. maintained a huge Air Force base near Tripoli, the Libyan capital, with the British holding on to their military barracks at Azizia. Khaddafı’s overthrow of King Idris in a bloodless revolutionary act intended to restore the independence of Lybia. He started by nationalizing the oil companies and drove the foreign bases away from its soil. Wheelus Air Force Base, a major American military installation located on the Mediterranean Sea just east of Tripoli, was shut down.

His confrontation against what he calls “the western enemy” would make him an international pariah. His alleged involvement in international terrorism worsened Libya’s isolation. The alleged involvement of two Libyans in the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103, which exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland, on Dec. 21, 1988, killing all 271 on board triggered a series of international sanctions on Lybia. These events did set off a pitiless campaign of international isolation of Lybia and its leader. His quarantine became unbearable after the rejection of the Arab World. After, condoning the mantle of Gamal Abdel Nasser, Gaddafi’s efforts to promote a Pan-Arab front were met with a cold
reception in the Arab World in 1998. In this sense, Khaddafī became the epitome of a marginalized continent in desperate need for a united front. Thus, shunned “by the West, held at arm’s length by his Arab neighbors, Colonel [Khaddafī] has been reduced to courting African leaders in a effort to gain the international recognition he craves” (Dynes 2002, 1) From this perspective, one could legitimately contend, without ruling out his genuine passion for a United Africa, that Khaddafī’s decision to launch the idea at this point in time had something to do with a desire for international recognition. The champions of the New Partnership for Africa’s development (NEPAD), also in search of an African solution to the African problem, would join Khaddafī in this endeavor. The new leaders had previously merged two rival plans to give birth to the New African Initiative, which in turn became NEPAD. NEPAD is the result of the fusion between the Millennium Africa Recovery Plan (MAP) by Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and Abdel A. Bouteflika of Algeria, and the Omega Plan by Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal. NEPAD constitutes an essential, if not the most essential component of the AU. So to answer the question: why did Africa’s leadership follow Khaddafī in his proposal to destroy the AOU and replace it with the AU, one must consider a various set of variables. The first one is the African context: one of abject poverty, diseases, and wars. Second, Khaddafī’s proposal came at a time when other leaders in Africa, fed up with the OAU, were already working on alternative solutions. The lingering question, however, is how could these three champions of good governance have followed Khaddafī. The answer lies in “realpolitik”. In the context of Africa, the Union should foster democracy and not make of democracy an entrance prerequisite.
Should democratic governance be a condition, one could realistically ask how many countries would be eligible for membership.

III. The Battle for Leadership in the AU

The creation of the African Union, among other things, has unveiled a fierce battle of leadership. Mbeki himself admits the existence of competition in the leadership of the Union (Xinha News Agency 2002). Each of the architects of the Union has done what they possibly could to win the leadership of the black continent. But most remarkably, the battle has opposed two leaders: Khaddafi of Libya and Mbeki of South Africa. The two most powerful men in Africa are waging parallel battles for the soul of the continent. Their duel is conducted in public, in conferences and in meeting rooms across the continent (Sunday Times 2002). They constitute two different styles. The first one is very strong on ideology and is imbued with a historical sense of a conflict between the developed and the underdeveloped world. As for Mbeki, he has been painted very often as a pragmatic leader. For one thing, each of them undoubtedly nourishes a deep conviction that unity is the only way out for the poorest continent on earth. But they disagree on the methods, the procedures and ultimately, the meaning of unity. Mbeki is an advocate of cooperation between the different states of Africa and between Africa and the world. Khaddafi wants to settle for nothing less than a single federal entity for Africa with one president and one army. This may explain why Mbeki is opposed to Khaddafi’s dream for a single state across Africa just in the same way as he rules out support for an African federal army (SAPA News Agency 2002). Mbeki believes in the immediate democratization of the whole continent, and leans more towards capitalism. Whereas
Khaddafi is an advocate of the “third way” which is somewhere in between capitalism and socialism. He contends that power lies in the people, and that parties do represent partisanship and division, and therefore undermines the power of the people. For this reason, he does not allow parties in Libya and rules in an autocratic manner. Michael Dynes contends that “In contrast to the vision of an Africa made up of democratic governments that respect the rule of law and human rights, as championed by Thabo Mbeki, the South African President, Colonel [Khaddafi] has been campaigning for the creation of a United States of Africa in which he would in effect be crowned Emperor of Africa.” (Dynes 2002) Other newspapers abound in the same direction. The Independent evokes Khaddafi’s ambitions to “hijack” the African Union by using his country’s oil wealth to buy influence across Africa (Peta 2002). Africa is indeed the continent of extremes, and these two leaders represent two clear caricatures of these differences.

In their race for continental leadership Mbeki has found allies in Africa’s “democratic leaders”, whereas, Khaddafi appeals most to the other dictators of the continent and other leaders with their own understanding of the concept of democracy. The strategies used to secure their alliances reveal differences in personality. Mbeki’s demarche is an appeal to reason, and the intellect, as in his Millennium Africa’s Recovery Plan, and NEPAD, which lays in a logical way his intentions for the African continent. Khaddafi on the other hand is endowed with a natural intuitive gift and a rare intelligence to exploit circumstances in his favor. He seduces African leaders with his liberal gifts and Libyan oil money (Sunday Times 2002). Khaddafi’s strategy to win the leadership contest also includes paying off the arrears of six African countries, enabling them to
regain voting powers in the OAU, after they were suspended for non-payment of subscriptions (Butcher 2002). In terms of development strategies, Khaddafi argues in favor of African countries pooling their natural and financial resources and build the economies of the continent from within. As for Mbeki, he argues that presently, Africa simply does not have the capital and technological resources to make the best use of its vast natural assets, and compete in the global economy. This explains Mbeki’s leanings towards the G8 in order to secure the necessary capital for a kick-start of the economies of Africa.

Ultimately, Khaddafi’s efforts to host the launching of the AU in Sirte, Lybia so that he could become the chairman was aborted so is he likely to lose his bid to host the Parliament of the African Union (Peta 2003). Mbeki won the chairmanship of the Union. However, the fact that Amara Essy, who sees Khaddafi as his ticket for a prolonged stay as the AU’s General Secretary, was chosen for the job could be indicative of a status quo. In fact Essy’s loyalty to Khaddafi is a proven fact. For him, the “culmination, or rather, this new phase, owes a lot,…. to the personal efforts and total commitment of one man, who was completely imbued with the vision of a strong, interdependent and dignified Africa”. (Sunday Times 2002, 2) He makes no mystery about the man he is referring to. Khaddafi lost in his bid to host the first AU summit in his country, but he undoubtedly succeeded in stealing the show from Mbeki at the Durban summit in South Africa. The reports are impressive and the splendor of his journey to Durban is reminiscent of Mansa Moussa, the emperor of Mali in his Pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324. The Libyan leader landed on Saturday in dramatic style, accompanied by his signature fleet of aircraft, reportedly carrying 60 vehicles – and two camel. He was swathed in flowing brown
robes and a finely hand-embroidered gold kente cloth from Ghana as he flew into Durban. (PanAfrica 2002). The same source indicates that on the following day he invited heads of state and ministers to a banquet at his temporary residence, an act usually reserved to the host country. The Durban summit, the "Biggest Show in Town" (PanAfrica 2002, 1) ranks high certainly among Africa's most theatrical expression of leadership contest in the history of the black continent. This battle was most dramatically captured by "live television pictures beamed from the official opening [showing] Gaddafi's rotund chief bodyguard wrestling with beefy South African police as he tried to force himself into the meeting" (The Financial Gazette 2002).

One thing, however, remains clear: the shape of Africa in the future will owe a lot to the duel between these two styles. Ultimately, the two styles can be complementary in some aspects. Mbeki's diplomatic aptitudes to get an attentive ear among the leaders of the developed world could be completed by Khaddafi's grassroots approach. Even if Khaddafi rules like an utter dictator, by western standards, Libya is not on the spotlight for human rights violations as is the rule in many African countries (Sunday Times 2002. For one thing, the Durban conference will go down in history as one of Africa's most remarkable leadership duel.

IV. The International Urgings and the creation of the AU

The fall of the Berlin wall constitutes a founding-event in the evolution of world politics. It also marked a turning point in African politics. During the Cold War, Western and Soviet strategic interest in Africa was a sufficient cause for support for African regimes regardless of their nature. But with the changes in world politics at the
end of the Cold War, it became increasingly clear that Africa needed a change to cope with a new era and new challenges. In this new era, political development and economic integration gets on top of the agenda. The OAU, created to promote political solidarity, was not able to pick up the democratic or economic integration challenge. For this reason, the African Union was created with the primary purpose of promoting political development and economic integration and guarantee the continent a decent place in the global economy. It was created out of the necessity for African leaders to take into their own hands the destiny of the African continent. First and foremost, the Union is a pledge that the people of Africa will be released from the grip of under-development, poverty, ignorance and diseases (Mantu 2002).

How was it possible for the African Union, an idea launched by a known detractor of the democratic model of governance and an “international outcast” to get the backing of the Champion of good governance and even the G8, the world’s major 8 democracies. This fact, in itself, expresses all the complexities of international politics and obeys the logic of realism in international relations. My contention is that the champions of good governance joined in the proposal of Khaddafi as a result of a cost benefits analysis and “realpolitik”. The African Union, in a purely African context, is marriage of convenience not of love. By joining with Khaddafi, Mbeki, Obasanjo, Bouteflika, and Wade were seeking venues to make Nepad a more effective tool, as the AU would mean greater market opportunities. Otherwise, how is it comprehensible that these leaders would join Khaddafi whose blasts at NEPAD as an instrument of Western domination in the hands of African puppets is common knowledge. During his improvised speech, in response to Mbeki at the Durban summit, he lashed out: “If they
(the West) want to impose on us conditions, we refuse that …” (Sunday Times 2002, 2) The African Union’s decision to retrieve the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) from the AU could be read as a measure to accommodate Khaddafi. The APRM is a device, comprised within NEPAD, aimed at promoting democratic principles of government. As for the G8, I contend that their support for this African initiative is a means to secure international security. The invocation of moral obligations may just be a self-satisfying device. Helping the African continent cope with the disasters of poverty and HIV/AIDS may be one of the best ways to prevent world contagion. Their backing of the AU, however, was made easier by the presence in the AU of the defenders of democratic principles (Mbeki, Obasanjo, Bouteflika and Wade). To ensure support from the West, the latter did not manage their efforts to get more involved in the formation of the AU and to try to “steer [the] Union out of [Khaddafi] clutches” (Gumede 2001) One is also forced to recognize that Khaddafi’s efforts to project a new image constituted a facilitating factor in these new developments. On this account, his acceptance to hand over his son in-law for judgment and conviction over the Lockerbie tragedy may constitute an explanation factor to a certain degree. In addition, the Sunday Times (a South Africa Newspaper) underscores that Libya is not known for any glaring human rights violation and that Libyans have access to free housing, education, health care, water and electricity (Sunday Times 2002).

At the end of the day, foreign support is needed to make the most out of the potentials of the continent but the essential part will have to be performed by Africa’s leadership. This is certainly what Amara Essy, Secretary General of the African Union means when he argues that external support is essential, but development is an internal
affair (PanAfrica 2002). In this respect, the African Union was born out of a relentless effort to put the African house in order and to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

V. A World of Big Groupings

The world is increasingly becoming the reserved domain of big ensembles. The classic argument is that if the European powers feel the urge to create a Union through the EU and the American hemisphere through the North American Trade Agreement, the African continent is not left with a wide range of choices but to unite. The African Union is a pure product of Africa’s leadership in search for a remedy to the African drama. It was created to ensure Africa a place in the changing international arena. It is a message from the new generation of African leaders to their people and to the international community that they want to close the pages of the past and open a new era; an era in which the world will reckon with Africa. This new leadership intends to be the master of its own house. At the economic level, the AU is, to a large extent, a pact between Africa’s new leadership and the wealthy nations, in which international investment is traded for good governance, fiscal responsibility and respect for human rights (Parkinson 2002).

Soon after African leaders gathered at Durban to bury the 39-year-old OAU and deliver the African Union, news around the world and even in Africa referred to the event in relation to the European Union. How accurate is this comparison? To what extent was Africa’s leadership taking cue from Europe? Interestingly enough, Khaddafi, himself, admits that he borrowed heavily from the structural blueprints of the European Economic Union. In fact, he selected from the EU’s economic model, aspects he thought could be
applied to Africa and added much of his own (Nevin 2001). To a large extent, the AU was consciously modeled on the European Union. Like the European organization, the AU plans to have a continental parliament, a common market, a single currency and a court of human rights. Its is also true that, like the European Union, the African Union has sought to include a socioeconomic development program covering its member states. This program is both inseparable and part of the global organization that is the AU. Other similarities lie in the way these two organizations function. Like the European Union, the executive of the AU is no longer vested in a Secretariat General, as was the case with the OAU, its predecessor, but in a President of the Commission of the African Union (Bourgi 2002). But do these similarities make the African Union a European Union biz? The facts seem to militate against an abusive parallelism between these two organizations.

It is indeed true that, like the European Union, the African Union was created in order to drive Africa into the future with a sense of confidence, vision and purpose. But the African union both in the way it was created and in the way it functions contains elements, which make it a clearly distinctive creation and an original vision. The gradual process that the European Union took to come into existence is contrasted by the "spontaneous" way in which the African Union became a reality from the Syrte Summit of September 1999 to the Durban Summit of July 2002. The EU took nearly fifty years to form and it did not start by including every European country. As for the AU, it was much like a call by a leader, Khaddafi, answered with the sudden and spontaneous reaction of the rest of Africa's leadership. It included all 53 African countries as members from the onset. This unique situation makes the question whether there should be standards, such as democracy and good governance for joining the AU like in the EU,
a daunting one. Equally, the African Union, in view of the economic position of the continent, can’t afford to make of economic standards a condition for entering the Union. How many countries would meet the minimum standard? Can the African Union afford, for that matter, to grant loans to poorer members? These questions are indicative of a continent that is suffering from an internal dilemma. How to be inclusive and yet rest on some fundamental principles necessary for the preservation of the Union. The following extract from Thabo Mbeki’s letter to Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien should be understood within such a context. “As Africans, like any other people in the world,” argued Mbeki, “we have the capacity to determine what is in our best interest, the determination to promote this interest to the best of our ability, and the resolve honestly to confront any tendency that is inimical to the advancement of these interests.” (Mbeki 2002).

VI. Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has argued that in order to understand why the African Union was created, one needs to take a look at some key variables namely, the leadership variable, the leverage variable in relation to NEPAD, and developments on the international scene as expressed in the European Union and NAFTA who constitute both models and reasons urging for an African Union. Ultimately, my findings do suggest that the African Union was created mainly for reasons of realpolitik. It was realism that dictated Africa’s leadership’s endorsement of Khaddafi’s idea, in spite of seemingly insurmountable differences. It was the same logic that dictated the G8’s backing of the project. This wave of support was made possible by calculations on the part of the champions of
Nepad, especially Mbeki, that they could ultimately “steer [the] Union out of Gaddafi’s clutches” (Gumede 2001). In sum, the fact that African leaders, despite these essential differences, were able to find a common platform is dictated by their overwhelming awareness that collective action is needed in order to curve the spiral of poverty and that of countless diseases, one of which is the aids pandemics. Thus each of these leaders had their own national agendas, yet they were able to beyond these considerations in order to posit a common purpose.

I also contend that the creation of the African Union is a decisive but not sufficient step towards economic integration and political stability in Africa. This union, however, with its economic, political and security sections could well constitute the basis on which a genuine united Africa may be built. While I recognize that the AU is not immune of legitimate criticism, I contend that its idea bears hope for political stability in the black continent. It could play a significant role in the democratization process based on African realities, the resolution of the endless conflicts across the continent, and the promotion economic and social development. The Organization of African Unity was buried on 8 July 2002 and replaced by the African Union precisely because the former rapidly became a “club of dictators” incapable of delivering on its promises of economic integration and political and social development. And this is precisely where the African Union may have to amend itself if it is to endure. At its current stage and specifically, the dispositions in Article III of the constitutive act of the AU which, is related to the sacrosanct nature of the colonial frontiers, the African Union calls for an amendment. In other words, the African Union should become a process, not a self-satisfying end in itself. This is probably one meaning to be given to UN Secretary General Koffi Annan’s
warning. “Let’s us not imagine that, once proclaimed,” he hammered, “our Union will become a reality without further effort” (Nevin 2002). This warning is a degree of measurement to the task ahead, which promises not to be an easy one.

If nothing else, one thing is clear; the journey from dislocation to unity will call for the synchronized energies all the children of Africa, from all wakes of life. The grandeur of Africa’s leadership will lie in its willingness and ability to catalyze this tremendous amount of input. As Amara Essy, the Secretary General of the AU, puts it “it is not the texts that will make [the] African Union, it is the human beings – the men and women who believe in this African Union, who make the African Union (Essy 2002, 3). This is where the future African parliament will fit in. On this account, the drafters of the constitution of the Union showed a remarkable sense of history in ranking this parliament as one of the major organs that will drive the worlds’ second largest inter-national bloc. Once again, whether this organization will be able deliver, as a genuine voice of the people will depend less on what the text says than on two other major factors. The first one is the kind of room for maneuver that the top leadership will be willing to make for the “direct representatives” of the continent. But, second and most importantly, it will depend on the willingness and the capacity of the latter to play their historic share.
Chapter 5

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have examined the role of African political leadership in the quest for unity and development in Africa. I examined the previous literature on the related subject in order to test it. And, because of the new developments that this study seeks to analyze, data has also been collected from newspaper articles, official, government statements, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. This in itself may constitute one of the weaknesses of this thesis. In choosing to deal with two organizations that are still the making, NEPAD and the AU, both of them barely a year old, I was aware that I was shooting at a moving target. Further research may be in a more comfortable situation of studying these developments in retrospect. I also focused on a study of individual leaders through the complexities of their interactions. One of the lessons of history is that exceptional circumstances do call for exceptional leaders. In the case of Africa, this may be true. My findings suggest that this is true in the way the three integration organizations were created by Africa’s leadership, especially in the case of NEPAD and the AU. However, my findings are also in keeping with the literature I examined (Gordon 2002, Ayittey 2000, Konneh 2002, Adewoye 2000, Muchie 2002) in the sense that Africa’s leadership, as the main factor for the disintegration and degeneracy of Africa, is still a constant.

I started with a study of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). This has revealed a variety of findings. First ECOWAS has not translated into West Africa’s leadership’s ability to promote greater integration in West Africa as shown by the leadership’s inability to promote trade within West Africa. Most
remarkably, the failure of the leadership is also evidenced by its incapacity not only to secure a united West Africa, but by its incapacity to secure peace within the Sub-Region. Sierra Leone and Liberia are living testimonies to this fact. On this account, one could point, with a bit of disappointment, for instance, that a single sentence, “In order for there to be peace and stability in Liberia, Charles Taylor needs to leave now” (Wilson 2003) by President Bush may be having more impact than the 14 years old monologue of Africa’s leadership under the auspices of ECOWAS.

My second chapter examined the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). Unlike ECOWAS, NEPAD was born at the conjuncture between four major African leaders belonging to different regions of the continent but who have in common their concern for the principle of good governance. Its creation was dictated by Africa’s leadership, and both the African context and the international context. Its originality lies in the fact that Africans are the sole architects of this program that intends to be an African cure to Africa’s problems. However, like the previous plans that were meant to save Africa, NEPAD will inevitably face some defining tests. A case in point, if not the most significant so far, is the Zimbabwean example. Zimbabwe, with its recent election masquerade, provided the young program with a failing test to its peer review mechanism, an essential component of NEPAD. The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), despite the Zimbabwean faux pas, will to a great extent define NEPAD’s future. Whether NEPAD will go down in the annals of history in positive and memorable terms or not will largely depends on the success or failure of the Peer Review Mechanism. While it may not be fair to posit Zimbabwe as a make-or-break try-out test for NEPAD, it is certainly true that it is a case in point. As Professor John Strelau, head
of the international relations and co-director of the Center of Africa’s International
Relations at the University of Witwatersrand, puts it “Zimbabwe provides a limus test for
NEPAD ideal (Melber 2002). In addition, NEPAD should not become an end by itself,
but rather a means towards a genuine united Africa. This is certainly what African
leaders understood when they decided to make of NEPAD an essential, if not the most
esential element of the African Union (AU).

Like NEPAD, the African Union is a creation of Africa’s leadership as a response
to Africa’s problems and also as a means to secure Africa a descent place in an
increasingly globalized world. My findings suggest that despite serious philosophical and
political differences between its founders, necessity was a key factor to why the African
Union became a reality. It was the same realism that dictated the G8 support for both
NEPAD and the African Union. NEPAD and the African Union, I argue can succeed
where subregional organization, like ECOWAS failed. In order for this to happen, they
should be a means to a greater end and not an end by themselves. The greater end is a
genuine continental unity for Africa. This unity can only be guaranteed by an
uncompromising rejection of the colonial borders. The current borders of Africa do not
correspond to any African cultural realities, nor do they correspond to any historic
realities and are the source of division, not of unity. Real economic development, in the
case of Africa, could only be guaranteed by a single political unit and a single economic
unit, that only a federation of Africa could guarantee. This remark is all the more
legitimate since in Africa the question of national identity is becoming a growing source
of discord. A genuine federation based on the rejection of the colonial borders could
guarantee the end of nationality wars on the black continent. These wars are fought on
the basis of a desire to have an exclusive control over a given artificial territory. The OAU failed to question these borders and became a club of dictators. This policy recommendation, however, goes beyond my findings in its formulation of the remedy for Africa’s problems. My conviction is that neither the continental nor the regional organizations have worked so far largely because Africa’s leadership failed to establish the right institutions. A major lesson from perusing into the different insights of the above scholarship is that the drastic nature of Africa’s problems calls for a radical and unequivocal solution. This type of uncompromising solution in turn calls for a leadership with courage and determination. It will take what Edmund Burke calls trustees not just delegates. It will take a leadership that is willing to make the necessary steps to promote a genuine united front regardless of mere political calculations. This fundamentally begins with the questioning of the current borders of Africa, which do not correspond to any African reality. For the good of the African continent, real and pragmatic actions should take precedence over wishful thinking. On this account, If Mbeki’s proposition of an establishment of a court of justice, through which despots, tyrants and warlords would be brought before a tribunal, tried and, if found guilty, sentenced, becomes a reality, good governance would mark a decisive win. Unfortunately, the Constitutive Act and the various conventions that the African Union has inherited from the Organization of African Unity may contain the very seeds that defeated the purpose of the buried organization of African Unity. For this reason, the latest move by President Mbeki and his confirmation that NEPAD’s African Peer Review Mechanism will not review the political governance of African countries, even if it seeks to accommodate dictators in Africa, is not good news for the continent (Chiahemen 2002).
Ultimately, the defining challenge for the African Union, the world's second largest inter-national bloc will be that of leadership and genuine political will to make the Union work. If poor leadership played a key role in the devastation of a once beautiful continent, the new leadership has the awesome and historic responsibility to absolve the "sins of the fathers". During the African Union's annual summit in Mozambique on July 10, 2003, UN secretary General Kofi Annan, an African citizen, had a pertinent remark. "The U.N and the rest of the international community", he told African heads of states, "can appoint envoys, urge negotiations and spend billions of dollars on peacekeeping missions, but none of this will solve conflicts, if the political will and capacity do not exist here, in Africa" (Annan 2003).

There is no doubt that history has not been a fairy tale for Africa. Slavery and colonialism degraded and exploited the continent, and left behind a bitter legacy; neocolonialism, the cold war, and poor leadership finished the damage. This history still reverberates in Africa today. But it is also true that the leadership has failed Africa. Today, the challenge for Africa's leadership is to escape from the grips of the past and create the conditions that will allow the people of Africa a life of dignity. And there has never been a better opportunity to do so. These are the challenges of modern days; these are the defining challenges of political leadership. The battle for political and economic emancipation could only be won with a mind resolutely turned towards the future. When African leaders met at Kananaski in June 2002 and at Durban in July of the same year, that is what they were signing: a pledge to the people of Africa to promote sound economic management, democracy, peace, security and development within the framework of a united Africa. At the end of the day, this exciting road to unity and
development promises not to be an easy one. More than anything else, it promises to be a
test of leadership.
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