Federalism, Economic Development, Science and Technology for a United States of Africa: An Ubuntu-clustering Approach

by

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Abstract

Ubuntu-clustering will be an innovative approach for a vibrant economic development policy based on the concept known as "cluster-building" couched within the tenets of *ubuntu*. An *Ubuntu*-cluster will initiate the networking of all participants in a value-added chain. The objective is to bundle the potentials and competencies for increasing the innovation power and competitiveness of the partners in a cluster. Given Internet technology, even business and government networking in rural areas can obtain a driving force. Internet technologies such as infrastructure, applications, platforms, and broadband can enable the business processes among companies, academic institutions, research institutes and governments to be networked. E-business and E-government/E-administration cause fundamental structural changes of the private and public sectors.

Given this reality, there is a need for a continental economic technology approach to spur sustainable economic development in a United States of Africa. This need is taken into account in *Ubuntu*-clustering. The various geographical regions in Africa in an *Ubuntu*-cluster can be networked by processes that are more standardized and so able to be supported by online applications. The *Ubuntu*-cluster will require a central infrastructure and services. Knowledge management, E-learning, E-marketplaces, personnel management and E-government will be the main processes and services of an *Ubuntu*-cluster.

Introduction

This essay, as its title indicates, is an attempt to show how *Ubuntu*-clustering can be used to spark sustainable economic development in a United States of Africa. It begins with an explication of the tenets of *ubuntu*. This is followed by a discussion of the concept of "cluster-building." After that, an *Ubuntu*-clustering strategy for a United States of Africa is suggested. In the end, a conclusion is drawn. Before doing all this, however, it behooves me to note that the scientific notion of "clustering" is not new, although *Ubuntu*-clustering is.

Scientific clustering emerged as an important statistical application in the early 1980s as researchers studying similarly situated entities employed the Cluster Analysis methodology: a number of techniques that are utilized to create a classification. A clustering method is a multivariate statistical procedure that empirically forms "clusters" or groups of highly similar entities. It starts with a dataset containing information about a sample of entities and attempts to reorganize these entities into relatively homogenous "clusters" or groups (Aldenderfer and Blashfield, 1984:7).

Ubuntu Tenets

Based on the premise that it "brings the spirit of *Ubuntu* to the software world," the *Ubuntu* distribution of the Linux computer operating system is inspired by the concept. Former United States President Bill Clinton employed the term during his speech at the 2006 British Labour Party conference in the United Kingdom to explain why society is vital. The concept is the founding philosophy of the *Ubuntu* Education Fund, a nongovernmental organization (NGO) working with orphans and vulnerable children in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. The Boston Celtics, champions of the 2008 National Basketball Association (NBA) in the United States, have chanted *ubuntu* when breaking a huddle since the start of the 2007-2008 season. *Ubuntu* Cola is a soft drink made with Fairtrade sugar from Malawi and Zambia. *Ubuntu* is the theme of the 76th General Convention of the Episcopal Church (in the United States), whose logo includes the text "I in You and You in Me."

The concept of *ubuntu* is illustrated in the film *In My Country* about the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission starring Samuel L. Jackson and Juliette Binoche. The concept also inspired the title of the documentary film *I Am Because We Are* directed by Nathan Rissman and produced by *Raising Malawi* founder Madonna (Wikipedia, 2009). So, what is all this talk about *ubuntu*?

To begin with, *ubuntu* is a word from the Southern African Nguni language family (IsiNdebele, IsiSwati/IsiSwazi, IsiXhosa and IsiZulu) meaning humanity or fellow feeling; kindness (http:www.wordreference.com). In the Shona language, the majority spoken African language in Zimbabwe, *ubuntu* is *unhu* maning the same. In Kinyarwanda, the mother tongue in Rwanda, and in Kirundi, the mother tongue in Burundi, *ubuntu* means, among other things, "human generosity" as well as humanity. In Runyakitara, a collection of language varieties spoken by the Banyankore, Banyoro, Batooro and Bakiga of Western Uganda and also the Bahaya, Banyambo and others of Northern Tanzania, *obuntu* refers to the human characteristics of generosity, consideration and humaneness towards others. In Luganda, the language of the Baganda in Central Uganda, *obuntu* means being humane and refers to the same characteristics (Wikipedia, 2009).

By drawing from many works that have dealt with the concept of *ubuntu* and similar African thoughts on communalism, I (Bangura, 2005) deduced that *ubuntu* serves as the spiritual foundation of African societies. It is a unifying vision or worldview enshrined in the maxim *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*: i.e. "a person is a person through other persons." This traditional African aphorism articulates a basic respect and compassion for others. It can be interpreted as both a factual description and a rule of conduct or social ethic. It both describes the human being as "being-with-others" and prescribes what that should be.

Also, from the consulted works (for these works, see Bangura, 2005), at least three major tenets of *ubuntu* can be delineated. The first major tenet of *ubuntu* rests upon its religiosity. While Western Humanism tends to underestimate or even deny the importance of religious beliefs, *ubuntu* or African Humanism is decidedly religious. For the Westerner, the maxim, "A person is a person through other persons," has no obvious religious connotations. S/he will probably think it is nothing more than a general appeal to treat others with respect and decency. However, in African tradition, this maxim has a deeply religious meaning. The person one is to become "through other persons" is, ultimately, an ancestor. By the same token, these "other persons" include ancestors, who are extended family. Dying is an ultimate homecoming. Not only must the living and the dead share with and care for one another, but the living and the dead depend on one another.

This religious tenet is congruent with the daily experience of most Africans. For example, at a *calabash*, an African ritual that involves drinking of African beer, a little bit of it is poured on the ground for consumption by ancestors. Many Africans also employ ancestors as mediators between them and God. In African societies, there is an inextricable bond between humans, ancestors and the Supreme Being. Therefore, *ubuntu* inevitably implies a deep respect and regard for religious beliefs and practices.

The second major tenet of *ubuntu* hinges upon its consensus building. African traditional cultures have an almost infinite capacity for the pursuit of consensus and reconciliation. African style democracy operates in the form of (sometimes extremely lengthy) discussions. Although there may be a hierarchy of importance among the speakers, every person gets an equal chance to speak up until some kind of an agreement, consensus, or group cohesion is reached. This important aim is expressed by words like *simunye* ("we are one": i.e. "unity is strength") and slogans like "an injury to one is an injury to all."

The desire to agree within the context of *ubuntu* safeguards the rights and opinions of individuals and minorities to enforce group solidarity. In essence, *ubuntu* requires an authentic respect for human/individual rights and related values, and an honest appreciation of differences.

The third major tenet of *ubuntu* rests upon dialogue, with its particularity, individuality and historicality. *Ubuntu* inspires us to expose ourselves to others, to encounter the differences of their humanness in order to inform and enrich our own. Thus understood, *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* translates as "To be human is to affirm one's humanity by recognizing the humanity of others in its infinite variety of content and form." This translation of *ubuntu* highlights the respect for particularity, individuality and historicality, without which a true African communal paradigm cannot reemerge.

The *ubuntu* respect for the *particularities* of the beliefs and practices of others is especially emphasized by the following striking translation of *umuntu ngumentu ngabantu*: "A human being through (the otherness of) other human beings." *Ubuntu* dictates that, if we were to be human, we need to recognize the genuine otherness of our fellow humans. In other words, we need to acknowledge the diversity of languages, histories, values and customs, all of which make up a society.

Ubuntu's respect for the particularity of the other is closely aligned to its respect for *individuality*. But the individuality which *ubuntu* respects is not the Cartesian type. Instead, *ubuntu* directly contradicts the Cartesian conception of individuality in terms of which the individual or self can be conceived without thereby necessarily conceiving the other. The Cartesian individual exists prior to, or separately and independently from, the rest of the community or society. The rest of society is nothing but an added extra to a pre-existent and self-sufficient being.

This "modernistic" and "atomistic" conception of individuality underscores both individualism and collectivism. Individualism exaggerates the seemingly solitary aspects of human existence to the detriment of communal aspects. Collectivism makes the same mistake on a larger scale. For the collectivist, society comprises a bunch of separately existing, solitary (i.e. detached) individuals.

Contrastingly, *ubuntu defines* the individual in terms of his/her relationship with others. Accordingly, individuals only exist *in* their relationships with others; and as these relationships change, so do the characters of the individuals. In this context, the word "individual" signifies a plurality of personalities corresponding to the multiplicity of relationships in which the individual in question stands. Being an individual, by definition, means "being-with-others." "With-others" is not an additive to a pre-existent and self-sufficient being; instead, both this being (the self) and the others find themselves in a whole wherein they are already related. This is all somewhat boggling for the Cartesian mind, whose conception of individuality must now move from solitary to solidarity, from independence to interdependence, from individuality *vis-à-vis* community to individuality *à la* community. In *African Peace Paradigms* (2008), I explore the following five African cases that are undergirded by *ubuntu* tenets: (1) the Transformative Impact of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission; (2) Ameliorating the Pains and Cicatrix of the War in Liberia through *Bartee*; (3) the Road to Recovery for Former Child Soldiers via the Ritual Bath in Sierra Leone; (4) the *Gacaca* Peace Initiative in Rwanda; and (5) Monarchical Rule in Swaziland. In a more recent essay titled "African Peace Paradigms: Examples from Barack Obama" (in press), I examine the *ubuntu* underpinnings in some of President Obama's discourse and actions.

The Cluster-building Concept

In a series of six papers (2004a, 2004b, 2005a, 2005b, 2006a, 2006b), Ute Hansen points out that the goal of a policy that is geared towards cluster-building is to support regional networks of competitive and cooperative actors in a cluster. An economic cluster initiates and pushes the networking of all participants in a value-added chain, which are companies, institutions such as universities and research institutes, customers, suppliers, employees, representatives of interest groups, and the public sector. A cluster consists of independent organizations that strive for economic growth and efficiency. In accordance with the concept of cluster-building, it is the intensity of the interaction of the actors, not the individual actors, that has a positive effect on the competitiveness of a regional cluster.

The focus of cluster analysis then is the regional or geographic agglomeration of networked organizations and individuals. Efficiency and specialization are derived because the geographic concentration of firms in internationally successful industries often occurs as the influence of the individual determinants in the "diamond" and their mutual reinforcement are heightened by the close geographic proximity within a region. A concentration of rivals, customers, and suppliers will promote efficiencies and specialization. Even more important is the influence of geographic concentration on improvement and innovation.

The cluster-building concept inherits a new dimension because the innovative time-technologies provide new technological possibilities to support the process of cluster-building. Independent of time and location, the actors of a cluster are able to take part in information, communication and transaction processes with internal and external partners of a cluster. The ability of a cluster to be competitive hinges upon its capacity to digitalize the internal cluster processes and the processes among different clusters. Thus, the competitive advantages of a regional and local cluster-building are enforced by the digitalization of the cluster processes. The concept of local and geographic clustering has to be extended by the cluster-building concept.

A paradox concerning regional clustering and the process of globalization implicitly undergird the cluster-building approach. Since the classical factors of production are now more accessible due to globalization, competitive advantage in advanced industries is increasingly determined by differential knowledge, skills, and rates of innovation that are embodied in skilled people and organizational routines. The development of skills and the important influences on the rate of improvement and innovation have become local. The paradox is that as global competition becomes more open, the home base becomes more, not less, significant.

Processes of knowledge management and learning are increasingly being supported by information and communication technology (ICT). As a result, the competitiveness of a regional cluster in the global market will depend on the extent to which the cluster specific process of knowledge management and learning are standardized and digitized. Employing E-knowledge management and E-learning applications will allow the cluster to concentrate on the cluster specific and regional competitive factors described in the paradox of regional clustering and the process of globalization.

A cluster-building approach of a regional economic and technological policy means, on the one hand, a digitized network of the actors of a process-oriented cluster organization and, on the other hand, a digitized network of different clusters. Consequently, distinction should be made between internal and external processes.

A cluster is characterized by a critical mass of actors in a value-added chain that can be focused on technology, processes, or industries. Thus, cluster-building will yield the following positive effects: (a) accelerate the distribution of knowledge, (b) reduce transaction costs, (c) provide for an infrastructure, (d) produce economies of scale, (e) cause external economies, (f) produce economies of specialization, (g) stimulate competition and cooperation, and (h) enforce the internationalization of the economic and cluster-specific relations.

The focus of a cluster policy then is the potential growth of a regional cluster. The acceleration of the innovation processes fostered by cooperation and competition leads to increased employment and growth in the region. An all-embracing cluster has to take into account and to balance out business, economic, technological, employment and educational objectives in order for a management instrument to be applied that meets these requirements. Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton's "balanced scorecard" (1996) is a management instrument that can be applied to delineate a concept for a comprehensive cluster strategy. The outcome will be a strategic frame for cluster-building that is transferable to all regional cluster initiatives or strategies.

Ubuntu-clustering Strategy for a United States of Africa

What I suggest here is a prototype cluster that would enable various entities/actors in a United States of Africa to manage critical aspects of their operations from a single interface. The *Ubuntu*-cluster aims to identify some possible solutions to sustain and support a federation. Thus, the *Ubuntu*-cluster will entail tools designed to pull down geographical distances and facilitate information and knowledge sharing. The general key elements are (a) geographical concentration, (b) specialization, (c) multiples actors, and (d) critical mass. The main challenges for the *Ubuntu*-cluster are globalization and dematerialization, both of which call for radical redefinitions of physical proximity (local or global) and cultural identity (new or old). These developments have created the need for social or indigenous knowledge preservation while at the same being open to internationalization.

I recommend three project steps. The first step is to set up a model of the *Ubuntu*-cluster and test it. The second step is to implement the model, and I suggest the use of action research methodology: i.e. research that involves the active participation or inclusion of groups under study (for more on this technique, see, for example, Bangura and McCandless, 2007). The final step is to evaluate the outcomes of the model in order to be able to replicate it in similar circumstances.

As represented in Figure 1, I identify 14 potential clusters that can be digitized into a network for the *Ubuntu*-clustering strategy: (1) government/administration, (2) geographical, (3) higher education and research institutes, (4) customers/population, (5) commodities, (6) interest/political pressure groups, (7) communications, (8) security, (9) transportation, (10) internationalization, (11) health, (12) tourism, (13) religious, and (14) refugees. The following subsections entail brief descriptions of these clusters.
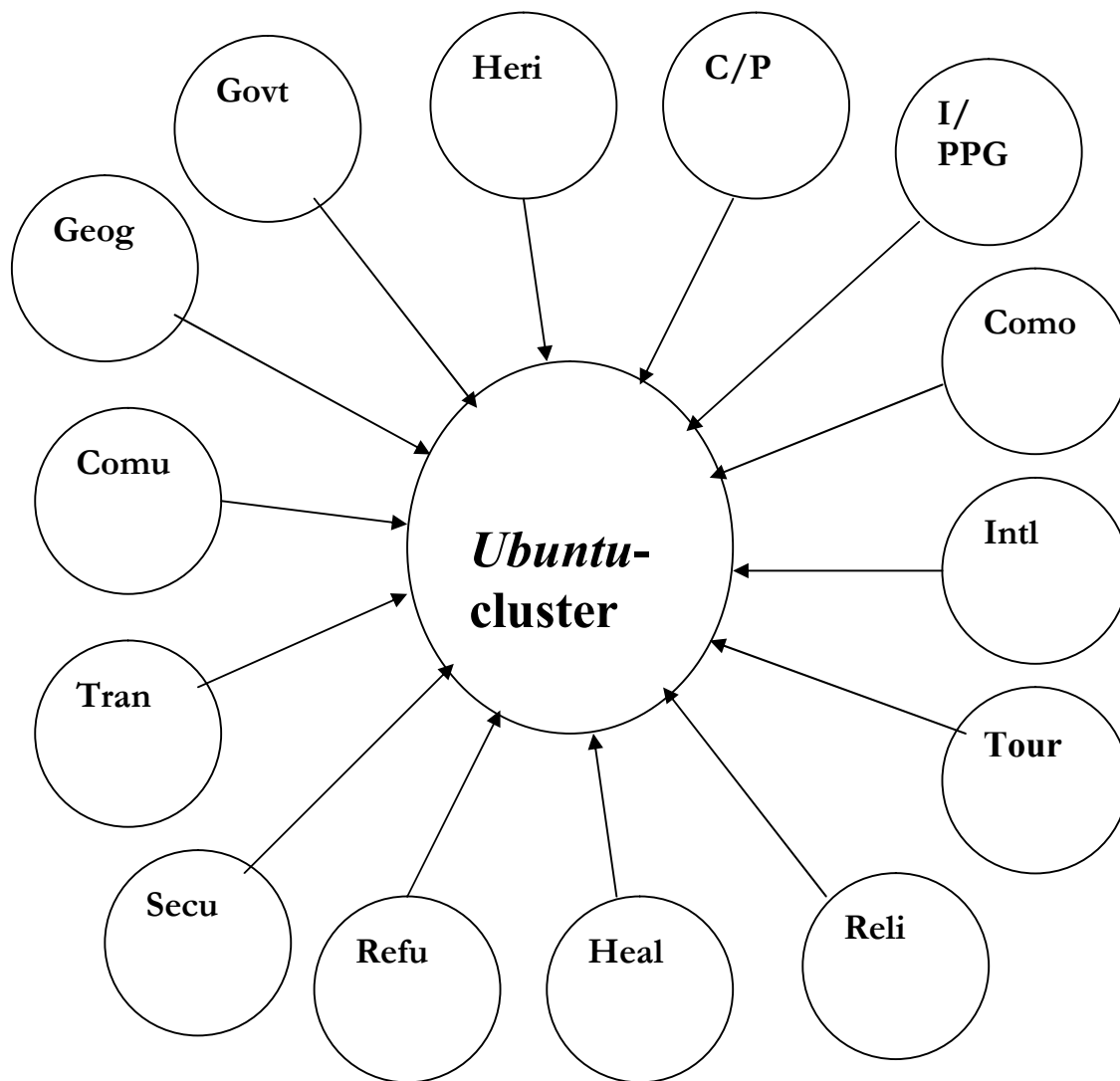
Figure 1: *Ubuntu*-cluster

Note on Abbreviations: Govt = government/administration, Geog = geographical, Heri = higher education and research institutes, C/P = customers/population, Como = commodities, I/PPG = interest/political pressure groups, Comu = communications, Secu = security, Tran = transportation, Intl = internationalization, Heal = health, Tour = tourism, Reli = religious, and Refu = refugees

Indeed, there is there is possibility to interlink the preceding clusters—in essence, creating meta-clusters. But to do so without first piloting one and then a few clusters could lead to some fuzzy connections and/or miss connections that may not be obvious.

Government/Administration Cluster

As Brian Levy (2004:5), among many other observers, points out, when they got their independence, many African countries inherited governance structures with strong trappings of both formal political and bureaucratic institutions. These seemingly richly articulated formal institutions were nothing more than a shell reflecting a combination of colonial legacy and high-minded aspirations of independence. Absent from all this was the capacity of many African states to structure, beyond a narrow urban segment, political interests in a way that was supportive of a developmental project.

The short-term consequence was that the mode of governance shifted quickly from a formal system of checks and balances to a *de facto*—and, in many countries, also in part *de jure*—system of patrimonial rule. During the 1970s and the 1980s, neopatrimonialism appeared to provide a stable, albeit not dynamic, form of rule. Eventually, however, slow-moving, but strong, forces were bound to unravel the neopatrimonial framework (Levy, 2004:5).

One area of governance decay was in the bureaucracy. At independence, most African bureaucracies were governed by formal rules and initially subject to relatively slight pressure from informal interest groups. The rise of neopatrimonialism shifted the mode of bureaucratic governing from the clarification, monitoring, and enforcement of formal rules to informal rules set without transparency, and sometimes increasingly capriciously, by the political leaders. The inevitable result was a decline in bureaucratic performance. This decline in turn influenced economic performance by affecting policymaking, regulation, and service delivery. Neopatrimonialism generally operated by conferring discretionary rents on favored allies, ignoring the impact of rentier policies on economic growth, the efficiency of public services, or the quality of business regulation. The outcomes, which were evident in country after country, included the disruption of markets, rising costs of doing business, urban bias, and increased protectionism. In some countries, the neopatrimonial downward spiral led to state collapse; in others, domestic political intervention preempted the cycle of decline (Levy, 2004:5).

In a United States of Africa, mechanisms for nurturing a vibrant African style consensual democratic governance (for details, see Muiu and Martin, 2009) will entail what Ladipo Adamolekun points out in his book, *Public Administration in Africa* (2002), one of the very few books on the subject. The first mechanism is rule of law which, when underpinned by an independent court system, implies a predictable legal framework that helps to ensure settlement of conflicts between the state and individuals on the one hand and among individuals or groups on the other. The second mechanism is freedom of expression and association that must not only be enshrined in a constitution but must also be respected. The third mechanism is electoral legitimacy that must be derived from periodic open, competitive, free, and fair elections that provide to the elected political executives a mandate to govern.

The fourth mechanism is accountability and transparency that makes leaders, both elected and appointed, to be responsive to the demands of the governed. The fifth and final mechanism is development-oriented leadership which requires the leader to be committed to the development of the entire society over which s/he rules, ensuring the formulation and implementation of policies geared toward enhancing the quality of life of all the citizens. These mechanisms will mean an end to military coups and civil wars in Africa. The military can be professionalized and used to help meet the basic human needs of the populace via a government/administration cluster.

Geographical Cluster

Geographically speaking, as Ali A. Mazrui (1986) points out, three definitions have dominated the discourse on the where Africa is. He then offers a fourth definition that captures the natural geographical boundaries of Africa based on sound empirical evidence—recent findings by geneticists and paleontologists are in line with Mazrui's definition (see, for example, the report by Gray, 2009). The first definition of Africa is the racial one that restricted identity to the Black populated parts of the continent. The second definition of Africa is the continental one and is the principle upon which the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was and now its successor, the African Union (AU), is based: i.e. Africa is a continent as a whole. The third definition is the power one that excluded those parts of Africa that were under "non-African" control—a definition that is now obsolete. The fourth definition Mazrui offers pushes Africa's boundaries not only across the Sahara but even across the Red Sea. Restating the details provided by Mazrui for his definition will take many pages; thus, the interested reader is urged to consult his book. Two other good books on this topic are Alan B. Mountjoy and David Hilling's *Africa: Geography and Development* (1988) and Samuel Kasule's *The History Atlas of Africa: From the First Humans to the Emergence of a New South Africa* (1998). But as Mazrui himself concedes, although decidedly under protest, we are stuck with the geopolitical definition of Africa being mainly west of the Red Sea and both north and south of the Sahara: i.e. the continental one (see Figure 2).

So, continentally defined, Africa is indeed a very large area. It is the world's second largest continent after Asia. Its land area is 11.6 million square miles stretching nearly 5,000 miles from Cape Town, South Africa to Cairo, Egypt and more than 3,000 miles from Dakar, Senegal to Mogadishu, Somalia. The African continent is nearly three and one-half times the size of the continental United States. Africa's political geography consists of more than 50 modern nations, including island republics off its coasts. Details on the richness of the African continent's location, rivers, lakes, seas, surrounding oceans, valleys, mountains, hills, swamps, waterfalls, weather, etc. can be found in Vincent B. Khapoya's *The African Experience: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (1998:2-8), among numerous other sources, of course.

A United States of Africa will be geopolitically very well endowed. A geographical cluster that coordinates the various geopolitical facets will make it possible for Africa to benefit from its strategic geographical location and endowments, particularly from major powers seeking such access. Nonetheless, Africans must not give up on the idea of pushing Africa's boundaries not only across the Sahara but even across the Red Sea because, as Mazrui correctly states, we live in an age when a people's perception of themselves can be deeply influenced by which continent or region they associate themselves. What is the basis for such hope? Mazrui's observation is instructive:

> Until the 1950s the official policy of the government of Emperor Haile Selassie was to emphasise that Ethiopia was part of the Middle East rather than part of Africa. Yet it was the Emperor himself who initiated the policy of re-Africanising Ethiopia as the rest of Africa approached independence, fearing to be outflanked by the radicalism of (Gamal Abdel) Nasser of Egypt and (Kwame) Nkrumah of Ghana. In particular, Nasser's strong support for continental Pan-Africanism and active support for anti-colonial liberation struggles both north and south of the Sahara encouraged Haile Selassie to emphasise that Ethiopia, too, was part of Africa. Yet cultural similarities between Ethiopia and the rest of Black Africa are not any greater than cultural similarities between north Africa and the Arabian peninsula. Nevertheless, a European decision to make Africa end at the Red Sea has decisively dis-Africanised the Arabian peninsula, and made the natives there see themselves as West Asians rather than as north Africans (1986:37-38).

Mazrui continues:

> The most difficult people to convince of a greater territorial Africa may well turn out to be the inhabitants of the Arabian peninsula. They have grown to be proud of being the 'Arabs of Asia' rather than the 'Arabs of Africa'….Yet if Emperor Haile Selassie could initiate the re-Africanisation of Ethiopia, and Gamal Abdel Nasser could inaugurate the re-Africanisation of Egypt, prospects for reconsideration of the identity of the Arabian peninsula may not be entirely bleak. At the moment the re-Africanisation of the Arabian peninsula is only an idea in the head of a scholar. It may never become a cause in the hearts of men. But its advocacy may help to keep alive the issue of where Africa ends and Asia begins, and encourage other individuals on either side of the Red Sea to re-examine the validity of Africa's north-eastern boundaries and question the arbitrariness of this boundary (1986:38).

Indeed, earlier Western prejudices against Arabs exacerbated by the backlash after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, DC on September 11, 2001 has prompted many Arabs to reexamine their cultural connections. The appointment of Sheikh Adil Kalbani as the first Black Imam at the Grand Mosque in Mecca (Worth, 2009), Islam's holiest city whose guardian is the Saudi Arabian King, is a hopeful sign.

Figure 2: Map of Africa; Source: US CIA *The World Factbook*, 2009 (governed by fair use law).

Higher Education and Research Institutes Cluster

The Association of African Universities (AAU), the International Association of Universities (IAU) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) *Guide to Higher Education in Africa* (2007) entails entries for over 900 institutions of higher education, university and non-university level, and research institutes in 47 African countries. It provides background information on the countries' educational systems, qualifications, and higher education agencies.

In almost every African nation, however, there is dissatisfaction with the performance of the higher education system. Universities and colleges are characterized by frequently failing administrations, incessant strikes, wage crises, poor standards, and student violence. When the idea of privatizing higher education gained prominence in the mid-1980s, it seemed to be the ideal answer to the malaise that affects the university systems. The idea was quite simple: privatizing academic institutions will lead to efficient and improved academic systems. Privatization is defined as a situation whereby "governments divest themselves of functions by transferring them to private voluntary organizations or allowing them to be performed by the private sector" (Rondinelli et al., 1990:128). Africa's privatization initiatives in higher education are of two types: (1) full privatization, whereby a government provides no funds to an institution; and (2) partial privatization, whereby a government provides part of the funding of an institution and the rest is provided by the private sector. Believers in the free market felt that privatization was the panacea to the dissatisfaction with the performance of Africa's higher education institutions, since it provided a system of free choice in the educational world analogous to the market system in the economic world. The appeal of privatizing higher education was that the move would encourage competition, which would thereby shake up the educational systems and force them to be more attentive to the diverse needs that the systems should satisfy. In short, privatization appeared to be the economist's ideal answer to a complex question.

Joel Samoff and Bidemi Carrol (2004a) note that the higher education private sector in Africa is small but growing. In countries where private institutions exist, they include universities, specialty colleges, open universities, distance learning institutions, and more. Providers of private higher education include religious institutions, private companies, nongovernmental organizations, and extensions and private universities overseas. With a few exceptions, most of the private institutions are teaching institutions specializing in particular fields, and their funding approach focuses on student fees. Some of the overseas institutions that once participated in the launching of African universities are now directly competing with those universities for students and public resources (Samoff and Carrol, 2004a:110-111).

Another major aspect concerning privatization initiatives in Africa's higher education is the role of international financial institutions. In another study by Samoff and Carrol (2004b), they demonstrate the changing agenda and consequences of the World Bank as an example of the role of international financial institutions in Africa's higher education. They note that in the early 1960s, the bank's agenda was clear, as it sought to help Africa develop the specific skills that African countries needed. Human development, couched within the concept of "manpower planning," was to be higher education's major mission. This high priority objective called for the investment of significant public resources in higher education. Within a decade, note Samoff and Carrol, that independence era perspective of the bank began to change. The bank's position was that since university graduates could expect substantial individual personal benefits, public expenditures on higher education, particularly student accommodation, meals, transport, and stipend, investment in higher education was not a contribution to national development but a misdirection of resources. Employing rate of return analysis as the assessment tool of choice, the bank showed that African societies could benefit more by investing in basic education. The agenda pushed was for universities and other institutions of higher education to reduce per-student costs, substantially increase student fees, and privatize. By the 1990s, Samoff and Carrol point out, severe deterioration of higher education institutions, African insistence on a holistic perspective to the development of the education sector, and fascination with the knowledge era all combined to force another policy reversal. The new agenda insists that student fees and privatization should continue, but notes that since knowledge has emerged as the most important factor of production, higher educational has a special role and once again should receive significant public support and funding. As dependence has become a fact of life for many African countries, these nations' universities are scrambling to fit the new agenda and secure the resources with it and at the same time seek to preserve some autonomy of action in the face of strong national and international constraints.

But the privatization schemes have met storms of protest from inside and outside the establishments all across Africa. Professors view it as a way of union busting, administrators are afraid that they would lose control over budgets and appointments, and students whose parents cannot afford to pay college tuition are afraid of being left to relatively deteriorating academic institutions. Moreover, while privatization provides freedom of choice, it also destroys the egalitarian principles of education since rich parents could send their children to more expensive schools while poor parents could not. Consequently, the simple economics of the privatization schemes have been placed in direct confrontation with the political economy of the higher education systems, reflecting vested interests and views of groups that saw their values threatened.

Still, in the face of widespread opposition, the idea of privatization has persisted and has led African governments to embrace it. Nonetheless, since higher education systems usually are intransigent   in their opposition, governments have found it difficult to implement the idea fully. Thus, whether one evaluates privatization of higher education in Africa as a success or a failure, it will show how the simple economics of choice applied to an institutional structure can be modified by the realities of political economy, in which vested interests alter the way the market is permitted to work.

In essence, under a system of educational privatization, competition will cause a larger variety of educational environments to exist. If public universities and colleges are allowed to co-exist with private academic institutions, public institutions would have to provide services of equal quality to those of private ones. Not surprisingly, officials of public institutions have routinely fought the implementation of privatization systems.

Furthermore, several major aspects account for the undercurrent of globalization and internationalization in Africa's higher education. To begin with, the theoretical and policy implications of globalization in the continent's higher educational systems require a broader context in investigating the educational and development goals of the various states. This means that analysts must go beyond the narrow market perspective and factor in the broadest socio-cultural and political dimensions of the phenomenon. Next, even though proponents of globalization and structural adjustment programs (SAPs) continue to insist on a minimal state, Africans must be equally united in insisting on their relevance in shaping and providing the contexts for social development. Moreover, Africans must realize that development continues to be a contested process; thus, they must be united in insisting that the implicit proposition of homogenizing both policy and outcomes within globalization is untenable.

A higher education and research institutes cluster will promote inter-exchange, contact and cooperation among higher education institutions in a United States of Africa; collect, classify and disseminate information on higher education and research; promote cooperation among academic and research institutions in curriculum development and in the determination of equivalent degrees; encourage increased contacts between Africans and the international academic world; study and make known the educational and related needs of African institutions and, as far as possible, to coordinate the means whereby those needs may be met; encourage the development of wider use of African languages; and organize, encourage and support seminars and conferences among African faculty members, administrators and others dealing with problems of higher education in the continent. In essence, this cluster will serve as the apex and principal means for consultation, exchange of information and cooperation among the universities and other higher education institutions in a United States of Africa.

Customers/Population Cluster

As can be seen from Table 1, the total population of Africa is estimated at 976 million as of July 2009. According to United Nations estimates, Africa's population has doubled over the past 28 years and has quadrupled over the past 55 years. It is projected to reach one billion before 2010. Burkina Faso, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo—Kinshasa, Liberia, Madagascar, and Uganda have annual population growth rates above 3% (UN, 2009). From Table 1 again, it can be noticed that the most populous African country is Nigeria with approximately 149.2 million as of July 2009, followed by Ethiopia with about 85.2 million and Egypt with approximately 83.1 million.

Table 1: Africa's Population by Country (approximately 976 million)

Country	Population	Country	Population
1. Nigeria	149,229,090	2. Ethiopia	85,237,338
3. Egypt	83,082,869	4. Congo—Kinshasa	68,692,542
5. South Africa	49,052,489	6. The Sudan	41,087,825
7. Tanzania	41,048,532	8. Kenya	39,022,772
9. Morocco	34,859,364	10. Algeria	34,178,188
11. Uganda	32,369,558	12. Ghana	23,832,495
13. Mozambique	21,669,278	14. Madagascar	20,653,556
15. Cameroon	18,879,301	16. Côte d'Ivoire	20,619,068
17. Burkina Faso	15,746,232	18. Niger	15,306,252
19. Malawi	14,268,711	20. Senegal	13,711,597
21. Angola	12,799,293	22. Mali	12,666,987
23. Zambia	11,862,740	24. Zimbabwe	11,392,629
25. Tunisia	10,486,339	26. Guinea	10,057,975
27. Rwanda	10,473,282	28. Chad	10,329,208
29. Somalia	9,832,017	30. Burundi	8,988,091
31. Benin	8,719,832	32. Sierra Leone	6,440,053
33. Libya	6,310,434	34. Togo	6,019,877
35. Eritrea	5,641,790	36. Central African Republic	4,511,488

37. Congo—Brazzaville	4,012,809	38. Mauritania	3,129,486
39. Liberia	3,441,790	40. Lesotho	2,130,819
41. Namibia	2,108,665	42. Botswana	1,990,876
43. The Gambia	1,782,893	44. Guinea-Bissau	1,533,964
45. Gabon	1,514,993	46. Mauritius	1,284,264
47. Swaziland	1,123,913	48. Comoros	752,438
49. Equatorial Guinea	633,441	50. Djibouti	516,055
51. Cape Verde	429,474	52. Western Sahara (SADR)	405,210
53. São Tomé and Príncipe	212,679	54. Seychelles	87,476

Source: Gleaned from the various country Web pages of the US CIA *The World Factbook*, 2009.

Furthermore, in most African states, more than 40% of the population is below 15 years (UN, 2009). In sum, this large and relatively younger population cluster suggests an enormous economy of scale for potential consumers.

Commodities Cluster

Abiodun Alao (2007) has grouped Africa's major resources into four commodity categories, with attendant listings of countries that produce them. The resources are as follows:

   (1) Agricultural Resources
        (a) Trees: oil palm, raffia palm, coconut, cocoa, kola, rubber, coffee, exotic tree crops, fruits, tea, cassava, yams, and cocoyams
        (b) Grains: rice, maize, Guinea corn, millet, wheat, barley, and sorghum.
        (c) Fibers
        (d) Other crops: plantains, bananas, groundnut, sugarcane, sweet potato, tobacco, beans, dates, shear butter, pineapple, and vegetables

(2) Animal Resources
      (a) Cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, camels, horses, donkeys, mules, and fowls
      (b) Bees and snails
      (c) Wild game
(3) Mineral Resources
      Bauxite, coal, cobalt, columbite, copper, diamonds, gold, iron ore, lead, limestone, manganese, natural gas, petroleum oil, phosphate, rutile and ilmenite, salt, tin, uranium, and zinc

(4) Water Resources
      (a) Great rivers: Nile, Niger, Benue, Congo, Orange, Limpopo, Zambezi, Senegal, Kunene, and Okavango
      (b) Great lakes: Chad, Victoria, Okavango Swamp

As Alao points out, agricultural resources are arguably the most important of Africa's resources, as they comprise the largest source of labor employment and sustenance. He notes that Africa has the most significant pastoralist activity in the Third World and that in several parts of the continent where the environment is unsuitable for agriculture, nomadic herding represents the only human activity possible for survival. He adds that as with agricultural crops, there are clearly defined livestock zones in Africa. He points out that Africa is generally considered the birthplace of mining activities, with the oldest mining operation to be discovered (approximately 45,000 years old) in Swaziland; mineral such as copper, gold and iron have been in use on the continent from time immemorial. Alao further points out that rivers and lakes remain the most important source of water in Africa; the continent has some of the world's greatest rivers and lakes, serving a wide variety of economic, social, political/strategic and cultural purposes (Alao 2007:47-54). A commodities cluster will help to reverse the marginalization of Africa in the global market and also allow a United States of Africa to leverage for fair prices of its products.

Interest/Political Pressure Groups Cluster

Besides a small number of online articles on interest or political pressure groups in South Africa, an Africa-wide treatment of the topic is to no avail. Yet, looking at the United States Central Intelligence Agency (USCIA) *The World Factbook* (2009), one can see the listing of many interest groups for each African country, suggesting that these groups are important actors in the political processes of African countries. This is mainly because interest groups, as George S. Blair defines them, are organized aggregates of individuals that attempt to influence some phase of public policy (1977:87).

Interest groups can be very effective in getting problems to government or getting issues on what political scientists call the "institutional agenda." Of course, bigger and financially well-endowed interest groups have more success in tilting public policies in their favor than the resource-starved and poorly organized groups.

Also, as Wilson Graham (1990:3) observes, interest groups provide an alternative form of political participation to voting or membership in a political party and may, in certain respects, provide a superior form of participation. Interest groups help in raising issues that are too detailed or specialized to be the concern of political parties or central in election campaigns. Thus, interest groups allow intense minorities: that is, groups vitally affected by a policy issue to prevail over majorities to whom the issue matters little. In addition, Jeffrey M. Berry lists the roles played by interest groups as follows: (a) to represent their constituents before government; (b) to afford people the opportunity to participate in the political process; (c) to educate the public about political issues; (d) to get involved in agenda building, which basically turns problems into issues that become part of the body of policy questions which government feels it must address—i.e. institutional agenda; and (e) to monitor programs to make sure that they deliver to their constituents what they were intended to deliver, and that program implementation is in compliance with the law (1989:6).

From the US CIA *The World Factbook* (2009) listings, the prominent interest groups in Africa comprise those organized by students, labor organizers, peace activists, civil society organizers, and former military personnel. These aggregates can learn from one another about how to support one another and effectively advance their causes peacefully. The government in a United States of Africa can also gain these groups' support in critical societal matters by soliciting their opinions on such matters via an interest/political pressure groups cluster.

Communications Cluster

Of the approximately 934.3 million Africans, about 20% speak an Arabic language variety, the vast majority of who are in North Africa. About 10% speak Kiswahili, the lingua franca of Southeastern Africa, and about 5% speak Hausa, a lingua franca in West Africa. Other major West African languages are Yoruba, Igbo, and Fula/Fulbe. Major Northeast African languages are Oromo and Somali. Major South African languages are Zulu and Afrikaans. English, French, and Portuguese, spoken by 130, 115, and 17 million Africans, respectively, are major languages as well, albeit spoken mostly in formal circles. Many linguistic features are particularly common among African languages. The shared linguistic features are mainly due to two factors: (1) similar cultural backgrounds of some languages and (2) language contact resulting in borrowing (Heine and Nurse, 2000).

Also as I state elsewhere (Bangura, 1996), Africa is the home of about 3,000 languages, making it the most multilingual continent in the world. African language influences in other languages around the world also are quite numerous. Yet, this wealth of languages contrasts with the very limited number of those languages being taught and studied. Indeed, African languages have been categorized as the "lesser taught languages." One may measure the irony of such a label in light of the fact that it includes such widely used lingua francas as Amharic, Hausa, Kiswahili, Krio, Lingala, Shona, Yoruba, and Zulu.

Furthermore, as I also note, many African languages have never been recorded or written down. For some, only their names are known. In an important classification proposed in the 1960s, four main families of African languages were delineated. However, this classification is quite tentative, as it is based on the comparison of a small number of features from those languages that have so far been analyzed.

Today, the global situation is characterized by transitions in different domains—political, economic, social, cultural. The current political climate in most parts of the world does not seem very favorable to the development of African language teaching. Indeed while there are 'push' forces (for example, the world economic environment and the competition for new markets) which encourage African language learning, there also are 'pull' forces (fueled by persistent budget deficits, institutional retrenchment, and growing xenophobia) which would like to restrict African language learning.

As I also argued, the essence of the foregoing discussion hinges on the fact that dramatic changes in the contemporary international business landscape have created conditions that offer compelling reasons for a sea change in every country's attitudes toward cross-cultural communication. The reduction of trade barriers and the steady growth of international transactions have created an enormous need for effective communication among different groups of people. Never before has the economic and social well-being of each nation been so linked to its citizens' ability to function effectively in a multilingual environment.

One of the most graphic illustrations of this phenomenon can be seen in the ramifications of international trade agreements, such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Many of the pitfalls of this trade agreement for Western nations hinged on the glaring lack of expertise in non-European language skills and cross-cultural competence on the part of Western professionals. Concern about this issue prompted, for example, the United States Trade Representative's office, in collaboration with the Center for Quality Assurance in International Education (CQAIE), to sponsor a meeting in February of 1995 with a number of service professionals to discuss the nature of the American economy in the era of the General Agreement of Trade in Services (GATS), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

The transformation of the economies of the major industrialized nations from manufacturing into service economies, both domestically and internationally, has had tremendous implications for the communication competence of these countries' professionals. Unlike the sale and transfer of goods which require personal communication among different parties in the period leading up to a transaction, the sale and provision of services require comprehensive interaction on a regular and ongoing basis. In addition, transactions of goods are usually carried out by a circumscribed number of elites with specialized training who negotiate agreements and exchange technical information. Such elites can generally be counted on to have a mastery of the major European languages. In contrast, the provision of health care services, for example, implies a setting where the professional is interacting with a broad cross-section of the population. Providers of services must be able to speak the target language with a degree of fluency and have a basic comprehension of the cultural assumptions and norms of the society in which they operate.

As long as much cross-cultural competencies are lacking, it is unlikely that the highly touted trade agreements of recent times can achieve the desired effects. Furthermore, without a deeper comprehension of the linguistic frames of reference of other peoples, ethnic conflicts and intercultural hostilities will continue to breed strife and impede economic growth, if not economic development, for all.

It is clear, then, that the citizens of any nation can no longer afford to be complacent about their inability to comprehend the dimension of another culture when economic competition is increasingly dependent on cross-cultural competence. This climate calls for a redefinition of our commitment to the study of African languages and linguistics in our educational systems. Not only should language programs be prompted more widely, but a shift in emphasis is also necessary. Business and professional leaders must take the lead in calling for a work force well-trained in language and cross-cultural communication skills, and political and educational leaders must orchestrate national campaigns to make the study of African and other non-European languages and cultures a top priority in the educational systems of the developed countries.

Moreover, as can be seen from Table 2, even though the number of Internet users in Africa has grown exponentially since 2000, the continent is still far behind the rest of the world. Mobile cellular telephones are becoming the major mode of communication in the region, albeit radio is still the most prevalent means of reaching the masses. It is therefore not surprising that the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) has lamented that "the media in Africa are, with notable exceptions, far from being a promoter of the information society in Africa" (ECA, 203:2).

Table 2: Latest Data on Internet Usage in Africa Compared to the Rest of the World

Region	Population % in World	Internet Users, Latest Data	Penetration (% Population)	Use Growth (2000-2008)	% Users In World
Africa	14.5%	54,171,500	5.6%	1,100.0%	3.4%
Rest of World	85.5%	1,527,400,089	26.6%	328.5%	96.6%
World Total	100.0%	1,581,571.589	23.6%	338.1%	100.0%

Source: Miniwatts Group, 2009.

By pooling available telecommunications resources via a communications cluster, a United States of Africa will have an excellent chance to develop its telecommunications capacity, particularly because of some of the advances that have already been made by a number of countries in this sector. It will also be in a strong position to bargain for lower prices with bandwith providers due to its overall teledensity. With the explosion of satellite technology, a United States of Africa will be well poised to leapfrog the telecommunications impediments.

Security Cluster

That Africa is besieged with many security challenges is hardly a matter of dispute. A 521-page publication by the United Nations Peace University titled *Compendium of Key Documents Relating to Peace and Security in Africa* (2006) and edited by Monica Kathina Juma, Raphael Valásquez Garcia and Brittany Kesselman documents more than 100 Western styled resolutions, protocols, declarations and treaties covering from 1963 to 2005 designed to prevent and resolve conflicts and promote peace in Africa. Yet, as Ambassador Said Djinnit who wrote the foreword of the publication laments, very few areas in the world have witnessed the diversity and intensity of conflicts that have taken place in Africa in recent years.

Also evident in Africa is the potential for increased terrorist and retaliatory activities. On August 7, 1998, the United States embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar Es Salam, Tanzania were bombed by terrorists, killing more than 250 people. To retaliate for the bombings, the United States on August 20 used 16 cruise missiles to bomb the Al Shifa Pharmaceuticals Industry plant in Khartoum, the Sudan, claiming that the plant was a chemical weapons-making plant connected to Osama bin Laden. On May 17, 2003, terror blasts in Casablanca, Morocco left 26 people dead. What these cases show is that Africa is not immune from terrorist attacks and retaliatory activities. And what the first case in particular makes very clear is that when a country, especially a superpower for that matter, feels threatened, it will find ways to respond to wherever it believes the threat may emanate.

There is no question that the parlous state of African economies, the poverty of its people and the desperation of many governments in Africa make survival the first commandment of life. The majority of the world's poorest nations are in Africa. Hunger, disease and chronic illiteracy are a way of life in many of those countries, where a dollar a day will be a privilege. These nations are laden with foreign debts in the billions of dollars, while their citizens battle with perennial droughts. But these countries are endowed with large deposits of natural resources and/or vast uninhabited territories that are conducive for military activities. And since they cannot export cars, like Japan, or computer chips, like the United States, or electronics, like South Korea, or missile technology, like North Korea, their natural resources and territories become simply market commodities.

Sadam Husein, we now know, did not seek to buy uranium from Niger; but had he wanted to do so, he could have obtained it from any one of several nations in the Saharan region. Life is so harsh for the people in the southern edge of the Sahara that exporting any commodity that would provide hard cash—for health care, education, decent roads and shelter—would be difficult to resist.

That good governance is critical to prevent the expansion of terrorism in Africa and other regions across the globe is underscored by the discussions held at the United Nations 63rd General Assembly Plenary 7th and 8th Meetings of September 24, 2008 appropriately titled "Good Governance, Democratic Institutions Crucial in Combat against Terrorism, Organized Crime." During the sessions, world leaders denounced organized crime fueled by illegal drug trafficking and the wave of terrorism "spreading like wildfire" across the globe. They also expressed unwavering support for improved legal frameworks, institutional capacity-building and, in some cases, full transition to democracy to provide a hedge against future destabilization (United Nations, 2008).

Indeed, tremendous international support has been provided to various African countries to develop and enhance their security capacity. As it is a well observed truism in international relations, however, the security of any nation or region hinges mostly upon that state's or region's own capabilities. African countries already have plenty of troops and adequate amounts of other military resources. What is needed is a coordinated strategy via a security cluster to keep a United States of Africa secure and stable. This requires a shift of focus from military security to human security. According to Eboe Hutchful (2008:63-64) and Angela Ndinga-Muvumba (2006:185), unlike traditional notions of security, the concept of human security deals fundamentally with the relations between a state and its citizens, rather than relations between states. It seeks to shift the focus from the protection of a state and a regime to the protection of individuals and communities. Consequently, human security stretches both horizontally (beyond merely military objectives) and vertically to incorporate not just states, but also regional and international structures, as well as local and individual actors.

Transportation Cluster

A total of 31 African countries own airlines, with a small number of countries having many and most of them having one each. These airlines offer services within Africa and to overseas. They offer valuable services to a continent that is very large and does not have the best of roads, especially during the rainy season. There are safety concerns with some African airlines and some change from month to but, one can count on the national airlines to stay in business for longer than that (Zijima, 2009).

There are approximately 60 African passenger rail and transit systems in Africa. Most of them operate within their countries and a small number do offer services to other African countries. While many of these systems offer freight services, there are also many that offer luxury services. In fact, Rovos Rail of South Africa is touted as the most luxurious train in the world (www.RailServe.com).

Camel caravan, or a group of people traveling together through the desert, has for centuries been the best way to travel immense distances through the desert in North Africa. Even today, caravans are still used because of the many problems associated with using automobiles in the desert. Only a few major roads travel through the Sahara and only a few places exist to stop for fuel or get repairs. Massive sandstorms can also make the road ahead suddenly disappear.

Motorcycles and bicycles are often used for transport in rural areas in Africa, as they are well suited for the many gravel roads. They also do not cost as much, use as much fuel, or require as much maintenance and repairs as cars.

Buses and trucks take people back and forth between places within and outside the capital cities in Africa. Many people do not have cars, and the buses and trucks get them where they need to go quickly and efficiently. Buses and trucks are also used by businesspeople and traders to transport goods. As modern road networks spring all over Arica, lots of cars and jeeps travel on these roads.

Walking is the mode of transportation perhaps most often used by people in most of Africa. It is not uncommon to see people setting off on foot to their destinations, confident that along the way they will be able to get a ride in a car or truck or bus. People with automobiles are more likely to stop and pick up others who need a ride, often for a small fee, especially on rural roads. Walking is also the means by which most children go to school, which could be two or more miles away. Students wake up at 5:00 AM to get ready, finish their chores, and be at school by 7:00 AM.

There is no question that for a United States of Africa to benefit from intrastate and international trade, it must invest in the roads and transportation sectors. Efforts must be made through a transportation cluster to connect the transportation networks in Africa in order to entice investors looking for economies of scale and to also boost intrastate tourism. Transportation in Africa is not an end in itself but a vital means to other ends: economic, educational, personal, and social. Transportation is a link to opportunities; it links workers to places of employment, producers to consumers, students to schools, patients to healthcare, and everyone to family and friends.

Internationalization Cluster

According to Crawford Young (2000:23), colonial heritage is the necessary starting point of departure for analyzing Africa's international relations. This is because, for him, the state system—which, transnational vectors notwithstanding, is the fundamental structural basis of the international realm—inherited the colonial partition. Young adds that a small number of African states have a meaningful pre-colonial identity (Botswana, Burundi, Egypt, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Madagascar, Morocco, Rwanda, Swaziland, and Tunisia), but most are products of the competitive subordination of Africa mostly between 1875 and 1990 by seven European powers (Belgium, Britain, France, Italy, Portugal, and Spain).

Skipping the lengthy history of colonialism, its defeat, and the emergence of neocolonialism in Africa, as this is well documented in many sources, it suffices to evoke what Ali A. Mazrui has characterized that emerged from colonialism: i.e. a caste system. According to Mazrui, Africa is clearly part of the lowest caste in the international hierarchy as it has a preponderance of the least developed and poorest countries. He adds that to the extent that Sub-Saharan Africa is a Black region, there is also caste in the racial sense, involving generations of degradation (1977:17).

The end of the Cold War in 1990, according to George Klay Kieh, Jr., witnessed the signing of the requiem for the previous global order and its attendant ideological rivalry between the Western and the Eastern blocs that handcuffed cooperation and interdependence. He adds that the disintegration of the Soviet Union robbed Stalinist socialism of its preeminent "heavy weight" status and removed the major ideological, economic, political and military-security barriers to the consolidation of the global capitalist order as the systemic suzerain. This development set the stage for the consolidation of global capitalism in almost every corner of the globe. The emergent nascent order referred to as the "new globalization," Kieh, Jr. adds, has taken the world by "storm" since its inception in 1990 (2008:1).

Today, observe Mueni wa Muiu and Guy Martin, the new globalization has allowed the West to impose its hegemony on Africa through the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and the Western and African elite. Muiu and Martin argue that while the international financial institutions have encouraged liberal democracy, the reality is that these "sham democracies" are merely a cover to better exploit the natural resources of the continent.

They note that as a result of privatization, African countries have been further marginalized, as some countries sell off and mortgage their natural resources to pay off or reschedule their debts. They add that poor health conditions continue to claim millions of lives, and Africans have lost control of their economies. This situation, they posit, has led to the occurrence of the following five types of differentiation: (1) the gap between Africa and the developed countries has become greater; (2) the division between rich and poor African countries has increased; (3) the gap between the rich and the poor within African countries has increased; some people are completely left out of the economic and political processes; (4) women and children have been the most severely hit by globalization; and (5) various groups, including social classes, have been further fragmented, thereby increasing conflict in these countries (2009:101-102).

Despite all of these challenges, African countries have managed to be very active in international organizations. Each country is a member of many international organizations, with most of the countries belonging to the same organizations (see US CIA, 2009). They also have maintained embassies in most of the countries around the world. Through an internationalization cluster, a careful consolidation of diplomatic missions and services can save a United States of Africa a tremendous amount of money. Such a state can also win permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council due to its undeniable major power status.

Refugees Cluster

Locally- and internationally-orchestrated conflicts in Africa have resulted in millions of refugees. For example, notes Assefaw Bariagaber (2006:19), in 1974, about one in 14 of the world's refugees was from Africa, as compared to about four in 14 at the end of 2004. Bariagaber also mentions that while the 1974 world refugee population of approximately 14.2 million has actually decreased to about 11.5 million at the end of 2004, the number of African refugees increased from a little over 100,000 to almost 3.3 million during this period. This represents a 30-fold increase over the 1974 figure (see Table 3).

Table 3: World and Africa Refugees, Selected Years

Year Ending	World	Africa	As Percentage Of the World
1974	14,195,451	1,105,217	7.79
1977	8,485,347	1,692,041	19.94
1980	15,965.250	4,045,200	25.34
1983	7,186,200	1,921,000	26.73
1986	11,698,000	3,112,950	26.61
1989	15,093,900	4,524,800	29.98
1992	16,647,550	5,340,800	32.08
1995	15,337,000	5,222,000	34.01
1998	13,469,000	2,922,000	21.69
2001	14,921,000	3,002,000	20.12
2004	11,498,100	3,295,900	28.70

Source: Reproduced from Bariagaber (2006:19),
with the permission of the author

Furthermore, according to Bariagaber, the refugee crisis in Africa escalated mainly because early African refugee-generating states were unable to end their wars by forcible means. They were also unable to resolve the crises peacefully. In addition, there emerged new refugee-generating states in West Africa, where the state structures in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Côte d'Ivoire had collapsed, mainly due to countrywide economic problems but also because of the exclusion of some segments of the population from economic and political processes. Another recent refugee formation in Africa occurred in the Great Lakes region of Central Africa. Although this region, as Bariagaber observes, has witnessed sporadic massacres and refugee flows, a more disturbing phenomenon of recent origin has been the apparent application of the "final solution" as a way to solve the conflict in Rwanda (2006:19-20).

The issue of how to deal with the refugee situation in Africa must be paramount on a United States of Africa agenda through a refugees cluster. Of particular importance is developing modalities on how to accommodate the desire of those refugees who have found their new environments more hospitable and would prefer to stay there. Furthermore, a United States of Africa will be well positioned to address the root causes of the refugee crisis, especially the aspect of internal displacement, which Francis Deng says include the "mismanagement of identify conflicts, gross inequities in the reshaping and sharing of power, national wealth and opportunities for development, and chronic abuse of power resulting in flagrant violations of human rights" (2008:196).

Health Cluster

A literature search on health related issues and health care providers and services in Africa yields works on the devastating effects of HIV/AIDS on the continent (e.g., Barnett and Blaikie, 1992), albeit as I have demonstrated in an essay in press earlier statistics on HIV/AIDS infections had been overstated (Bangura, in press); the continued devastation of malaria (e.g., American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1991); how African hospitals are getting worse (e.g., WHO, 2003), and how China is building hospitals (and schools) across Africa (e.g., Nguvu (2007). What is missing and sorely needed is a work that has a comprehensive listing of hospitals and other health care providers with their specializations and services across Africa. Two attempts at providing such a listing has not been quite fruitful. The first attempt is that by Stockholm Challenge (2008) which sought to develop a network of hospitals of Africa, the Indian Ocean and the Caribbean (RESHAOC) in order to share their human and material resources within the framework of an inter-hospital collaboration. Thus far, only nine countries comprising eight in Africa and one in the Caribbean have adhered to or expressed their intention to adhere to the RESHAOC: (1) Burkina Faso, (2) Cameroon, (3) Gabon, (4) Mauritania, (5) Madagascar, (6) Mali, (7) Niger, (8) Chad, and (9) Haiti. In addition, only 15 hospitals are currently entered in the RESHAOC databank. The second attempt is the one by Medical World (2009) which is working to develop a comprehensive databank on hospitals across Africa. As of this writing, information is available on only six African countries: (1) Zimbabwe, 24 hospitals; (2) Uganda, 51 hospitals; (3) Tanzania, 15 hospitals; (4) South Africa, 31 hospitals; (5) Nigeria, 14 hospitals; and (6) Liberia, 13 hospitals.

Evident from some of these is that African countries face serious health challenges. With very few exceptions, citizens of the countries are being infected by the same diseases, most of which are now curable. Despite the challenging health problems, African countries spend relatively little on healthcare. Given these challenges, pooling their resources and their scientists engaging is serious collaborative research via a health cluster can help hospitals and other health care providers in a United States of Africa to find cures for and effectively combat diseases. This suggestion is akin to that made by Angela Ndinga-Muvumba (2008:180) for combating the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa. As she puts it, the African Union's efforts to abate the epidemic will fail without a mainstreamed approach. She adds that non-traditional, transformative approaches are urgently needed to build credible and effective institutions to combat the pandemic.

Tourism Cluster

Africa is home to many of the most touted tourist attractions in the world. The following are brief descriptions of some of the most mentioned (http://www.touristdestination.com and http://hillmanwonders.com/top10/):

(a) Grand Bay, Mauritius is said to be the best place in Africa for a vacation with loved ones. It is endowed with the natural beauty of the sapphire sea and splendid white beaches. There are beautiful landscapes in the form of waterfalls, forests and a stunning underwater world. There also are innumerable places of tourist attractions which include parks, gardens, and hotels.

(b) The Pyramids of Giza have been among the top most attractions in the world for ages and continue to rule the tourist's mind to this day. They are so massive that one can see them when flying four miles away.

(c) Johannesburg, South Africa is called the "City of Many Colors" for its multidimensional quality that attracts tourists from all over the world. The older surroundings have been well maintained in conglomeration with its rising needs of modern living. Residents and visitors coexist with history in this city. Nevertheless, Johannesburg is a very modern city; and since it is the financial capital of South Africa, it houses many attractions and shopping centers.

(d) Serengeti Migration is a mega migration of more than two million wildbeasts, buffaloes, zebras, etc. It is a united force proceeding to the Northern plains (Maasai Mara Conservation Area) located hundreds of miles away. The animals are unmindful of the national barriers, a phenomenon that has always attracted the curiosity of scientists as well non-scientists.

(e) Ngorongoro Crater, often described as the world's largest volcanic crater, is in fact the world's largest unbroken and un-flooded volcanic caldera. It was formed three million years ago when a giant volcano of about 19,000 meters in height collapsed as the magma beneath it exploded.

(f) Victoria Falls is the largest water curtain in the world. It is formed by the River Zambezi flowing quietly through the vast plains of Africa and all of a sudden trips as such into a 360 feet deep gorge making a water curtain that is 5,577 feet wide. The residents call it *Mosi oa Tinya*, meaning "the thundering smoke."

(g) Karnak temple is located on the eastern banks of River Nile near Luxor in Egypt. It was the spiritual center of Early Egyptians from the Pharaoh Kings to common people. Ancient Egyptians called it *Isut* (the sacred place). A village by the name of El Karnak is about two miles north of Luxor, and the name came to be associated with the temple.

(h) Nile River, called by Ancient Africans *Aur*, *Iteru*, etc., meaning "black," in reference to the rich sediments that made it black. For Egyptians, River Nile was their Holy "God Hapi" visible to their eyes; they called the Nile valley Black-Land and the rest of Africa Red-Land because the rich sediments made the Nile valley basins black and fertile.

(i)   The Egyptian Museum was established in 1835 by the initiative of Ismail Pasha, the architect of modern Cairo. It was first opened with the collections received from Augusto Mariette, a French archaeologist engaged by Ismail Pasha. It was first located in Azbakia Gardens at the center of Cairo. It was later moved to Bulaq, a nearby place, in 1858.

(j)   Valley of the Kings was exclusive for the Pharaoh Kings and the tombs were made by digging the side of a hill beneath the Al Qurn, building a good entrance and cutting long stairways that lead to the crypt where a body is placed. The Al Qurn Peak which oversees both of the valleys is shaped like a pyramid. The reason for selecting it as the site was that its isolated position offered better safety to the tombs. It was carefully selected by checking the condition of the soil.

(k)   Abu Simbel Temple is a twin-rock temple that is famous for its historical relocation from its former position between two-rock cliffs and the river beneath (under threat of submergence) to its present site which involved tremendous effort, technology, and resources. A relocation of such a massive structure was unheard of in history.

(l)   Sahara Desert is the largest desert in the world that occupies half the area of the Great African Continent. In area, it equals the United States and larger than the continent of Australia. Its rich history and culture defeat those of any other place on earth whether fertile or desert. Numerous cultures and ancient cities flourished in these desert areas. It had been the cradle where human beings evolved from humanoids to hunters and gatherers before becoming farmers.

It is therefore ironic that a Google search of the words "tourism in Africa" would first yield a huge number of Web sites of companies based in Europe that promote tourism in Africa before stumbling onto a few pages of South African companies. For example, the African Travel and Tourism Association (ATTA) is based in the United Kingdom. While the company conducts seminars in the United Kingdom and Africa, its annual dinner and dance is held in London during World Travel Market week.

Thus, it is only fitting that the strategic framework document for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) arose from a mandate given to the five initiating Heads of State (Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal, and South Africa) by the Organization of African (OAU) to develop an integrated socioeconomic development framework for Africa. In July of 2001, the 37th Summit of the OAU formally adopted the strategic framework document. NEPAD is designed to address the current challenges facing Africa and the continent's marginalization (NEPAD, 2001 & 2005). The actions proposed to address the partnership's objectives relating to tourism are as follows (NEPAD, 2001):

(a) forge cooperative partnerships to capture the benefits of shared knowledge, as well as providing a base for other countries wishing to enter tourist-related activities;

(b) provide the African people with the capacity to be actively involved in sustainable tourism projects at the community level;

(c) market African tourism products, especially in adventure tourism, ecotourism and cultural tourism; and

(d) increase regional coordination and tourism initiatives in Africa for the expansion and increased diversity of products.

Based on Anna Spenceley's observations, however, individual African countries have taken different approaches to implement the NEPAD tourism action plan and toward promoting sustainable tourism growth. The outcome has been uneven tourism growth and equally uneven responsible nature-based tourism practices in Africa (Spenceley, 2008:4, 16).

It is quite evident from the preceding discussion and that on the geographical cluster that a United States of Africa would have a great potential for joint beach-based and ecotourism industries that will be very lucrative. Through a tourism cluster, well advertised state tours in a peaceful and safe environment will attract many tourists within and outside Africa.

Religious Cluster

Religion in Africa is multifaceted. Most Africans adhere to either Christianity or Islam, both of which are widespread throughout the continent. Many Africans also practice African religions, and some of these adherents syncretize their practices alongside Christianity or Islam (Chavis Butler, 1994; Mazrui, 1986). According to the *Encyclopedia Britanica* (2003), as of mid-2002, there were 376,453,000 Christians, 329,869,000 Muslims, and 98,734,000 people who practiced traditional religions in Africa. Adherents of Judaism (who make up less than 1% of the continent's population) too can be found scattered across Africa: Zakhor in Mali; Israel Friendship Society in Cape Verde Islands; Beta Israel, Beth Abraham of Kachene in Ethiopia; House of Israel in Ghana; Igbo in Nigeria; Abayudaha in Uganda; Israelites in Cameroon; Nairobi Hebrew Congregation in Kenya; Tutsi-Hebrews of Havila in Rwanda nd Burundi; Baluba Jews in Congo; Descendants of David in Madagascar; Jews of Rusape in Zambabwe; and Lemba in South Africa and Zimbabwe (Bruder, 2008:iii). While not as well known as the history of Christianity and Islam in Africa to the outside observer, Judaism has an ancient and rich history on the continent of Africa. Also to be found in Africa are very small numbers of adherents to Hinduism, the Bahá'í faith, and Atheism (*Encyclopedia Britanica*, 2003).

The multiplicity of religious views and the very large numbers of Muslims and Christians call for concerted efforts through a religious cluster to get all citizens to respect indigenous religions and to expose them to the connections between the Abrahamic faiths. Such efforts will help to prevent religious conflicts that beseech a country like Nigeria.

Conclusion

That a comprehensive and balanced cluster will be required to expand the potentials of the development and competitiveness of a United States of Africa in the global market is unquestionable. Thus, the process orientation and the application of times-technologies are the key factors for the development of an *Ubuntu*-cluster and for the realization of the innovation and growth objectives of the cluster couched on sound African cultural tenets.

To optimize the strategic process in an *Ubuntu*-cluster, the participation of all Africans is imperative. The determination of the vision, mission and strategy in particular requires the process of participation. From the *Ubuntu*-cluster strategy, individual strategies and balanced scorecards of the various clusters can be deduced. The strategic network of all actors will decisively improve the competitiveness of an *Ubuntu*-cluster.

An important issue in the implementation process of innovative actions is the existence of innovation management of tools necessary to support the innovation process from the generation of ideas to launching successful ventures throughout the innovation life cycle. The availability of regional innovation infrastructure and support tools becomes a crucial factor for the deployment of innovative actions in a United States of Africa. This action line will provide the necessary tools and methods needed to enhance the state's innovation capacity and the networking interoperability. These goals and tools should be widely and freely available to all actors using Internet technologies. The collective effort will take the form of a portal for innovation management, concentrated in supporting innovation actions.

Indeed, as Ron Eglash (1999) has demonstrated, the origins of the Binary Code, which is essential to every digital circuit from alarm clocks to supercomputers, can be traced to Africa. Thus, it is only fitting that the inventor of the supercomputer, Philip Emeagwali, is an African and that the computer is bound to play a major role in the economic development of a United States of Africa. Were he to be alive today, even the great Cheikh Anta Diop would have been very pleased to learn that his fundamental African-centered disputes with Eurocentric classification methods have been echoed in modern DNA and skeletal study methodology, thanks to the results of computer programs used by researchers to find matches between sets of data correlated with geographic origins of race (see, for example, Williams et al., 2005).

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