

SUMMARY**THE AFRICAN RENAISSANCE AS A RESPONSE TO DOMINANT WESTERN
POLITICAL DISCOURSES ON AFRICA: A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT**

by

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The African Renaissance is a call for African renewal. It is an attempt to unite Africans in a common vision for a prosperous and propitious future for the African continent. One of the African Renaissance's goals is to empower the African continent, changing its global position from one of marginalisation and powerlessness to one of dignity and influence. This dissertation critically assesses the concept of an African Renaissance in terms of its ability to challenge dominant Western political discourses on Africa.

In order to provide such an assessment of the African Renaissance, it is firstly necessary to examine the concept 'discourse'. This study summarises the contributions made by critical theorists and postmodernist thinkers to understandings of this concept. The way in which discourse can function as a junction where power and knowledge meet, is discussed. The contributions made by critical and postmodernist thinkers draw attention to the way in which power can be both reflected and perpetuated by discourses. Any attempt to change Africa's position of relative powerlessness in the global arena, necessitates a scrutinisation of Western discourses in order to determine how they reflect and perpetuate current power relations. The dissertation presents the argument that the Renaissance should examine and challenge Western discourses on Africa.

The presentation of this argument is followed by a study of several Western discourses on Africa. An overview and assessment of Western discourses on the African situation and Western discourses on democratisation and development in Africa is provided. These

discourses are shown to reflect and perpetuate current power relations between Africa and the West.

Once Western discourses have been discussed, the dissertation moves on to provide an outline of the African Renaissance. The multiple conceptualisations of the Renaissance are explored, and the various components of the Renaissance are summarised. South Africa's role in the Renaissance is critically examined and tensions in the conceptualisation of the Renaissance are identified. The roots of the African Renaissance and the branches which have grown out of the Renaissance, are discussed.

Finally, the extent to which the African Renaissance provides a challenge to Western discourses is assessed. An examination of the Renaissance's response to Western discourses reveals the inadequacy and limited nature of this challenge.

In conclusion, the dissertation assesses the overall response provided by the African Renaissance to dominant Western political discourses. The response is shown to be a mixed one, with some Western discourses being challenged, while others remain unchallenged or are confronted only with an ambiguous response. While the African Renaissance shows some potential to provide the necessary challenge to Western discourses, this potential is not being fully realised. The African Renaissance could be improved through a recognition of the necessity of a challenge to Western discourses, through the development of a critical stance towards Western discourses, through the provision of an arena where alternative discourses can emerge, and through the cultivation of a more self-critical stance.

KEY CONCEPTS

African Renaissance
 African renewal
 African recovery
 discourse
 power
 postmodernism
 critical theory
 South Africa
 Foreign Policy
 New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

SAMEVATTING**DIE AFRIKA RENAISSANCE AS 'N REAKSIE OP DOMINANTE WESTERSE
POLITIEKE DISKOERSE OOR AFRIKA: 'N KRITIESE BEOORDELING**

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Die Afrika Renaissance is 'n wekroep om die vernuwing van Afrika. Dit is 'n poging om die inwoners van Afrika in 'n visie te verenig wat 'n voorspoedige en voordelige toekoms vir die vasteland inhou. Een van die oogmerke van die Afrika Renaissance is om die vasteland te bemagtig en om daardeur Afrika se gemarginaliseerde en magtelose globale posisie in een van waardigheid en invloed te omskep. Hierdie verhandeling behels 'n kritiese beoordeling van die Afrika Renaissance en van die mate waarin dit dominante Westerse politieke diskoerse oor Afrika uitdaag.

Om sodanige beoordeling van die Afrika Renaissance moontlik te maak, word die konsep diskoers as 'n vertrekpunt omskryf. Die studie bied 'n oorsig van die bydraes van kritiese teoretici en postmodernistiese denkers tot die verskillende betekenis van die term diskoers. Die wyse waarop diskoerse 'n raakpunt tussen mag en kennis vorm, sowel as kritiese en postmodernistiese denkers se beklemtoning van die manier waarop diskoerse mag weerspieël en perpetueer, word bespreek. Enige poging om Afrika se posisie van relatiewe magteloosheid in die globale arena te wysig, vereis egter 'n noukeurige ontleding van Westerse diskoerse om te bepaal in welke mate hierdie diskoerse huidige magsverhoudinge reflekteer en laat voortduur. Die betoog van hierdie studie is dus dat die Afrika Renaissance dominante Westerse diskoerse oor Afrika moet ondersoek en uitdaag.

Die uiteensetting van hierdie betoog word gevolg deur die bestudering van verskeie dominante Westerse diskoerse oor Afrika. 'n Oorsig en beoordeling van Westerse diskoerse oor die situasie in en demokratisering en ontwikkeling van Afrika word gebied. Hieruit blyk dit dat hierdie diskoerse bestaande magsverhoudinge tussen Afrika en die Weste weerspieël en perpetueer.

Hierdie bespreking word gevolg deur 'n oorsig van die Afrika Renaissance. Die veelvoudige beskouinge van die Afrika Renaissance word ondersoek en die komponente daarvan word saamgevat. Suid-Afrika se rol in die Renaissance word krities ondersoek en spanninge in die konseptualisering van die Afrika Renaissance word geïdentifiseer. Die oorsprong van die Afrika Renaissance en die vertakkinge daarvan word ook in oënskou geneem. Ten slotte word die mate waarin die Afrika Renaissance 'n uitdaging aan Westerse diskoerse bied, beoordeel. 'n Nadere ondersoek van die Renaissance reaksie onthul die onvoldoende en beperkte aard van hierdie uitdaging.

Ter afsluiting – die verhandeling beoordeel die oorkoepelende reaksie van die Afrika Renaissance op dominante Westerse politieke diskoerse. Hierdie reaksie is egter 'n gemengde reaksie - sekere Westerse diskoerse word wel uitgedaag, terwyl ander nie uitgedaag word nie of met 'n dubbelsinnige reaksie gekonfronteer word. Alhoewel die Afrika Renaissance oor die potensiaal beskik om die gewenste uitdaging aan Westerse diskoerse te bied, word hierdie potensiaal nie ten volle verwesenlik nie. Die Afrika Renaissance kan dus verbeter word deur die erkenning van die noodsaaklikheid dat dit wel 'n uitdaging aan Westerse politieke diskoerse moet bied, deur die ontwikkeling van 'n kritiese ingesteldheid jeens Westerse diskoerse, deur die verskaffing van 'n arena waarbinne alternatiewe diskoerse kan ontwikkel, en deur die kweek van 'n meer selfkritiese ingesteldheid.

SLEUTELKONSEPTE

Afrika Renaissance
 Afrika-vernuwing
 Afrika-herstel
 diskoers
 mag
 postmodernisme
 kritiese teorie
 Suid-Afrika
 Buitelandse beleid
 Nuwe Vennootskap vir Afrika Ontwikkeling (NEPAD)