

**LOCATING THE AFRICAN RENAISSANCE
IN DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE:
A CRITICAL STUDY**

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ABSTRACT

The concern of this study is “*locating the African Renaissance in development discourse: a critical study*” and aims to investigate how the South African President Thabo Mbeki has conceptualized the African Renaissance. Through this the author has discovered the meaning of Mbeki’s African Renaissance discourse with regard to its context in African development and how it is located in historical conceptions of development in Africa. Through this what innovation to development in Africa is presented by the discourse of the African Renaissance has been identified. Therefore this study is based primarily on an extensive literature research on conception of development and the African Renaissance.

In comparison with other discourses on development, the study finds that Mbeki’s African Renaissance discourse has been inspired by Pan-Africanist discourses such as self-reliance and African regeneration combined with dominant political and economic discourses such as globalization, good governance, structural adjustment and democracy.

The study finds that the great contribution of Mbeki’s African Renaissance is to call again on the Africans to realize their self-discovery and to restore the African’s self-esteem without which Africans will never become equipped for African development. However Mbeki stops short of attempting to suggest practical strategies to do so. The study finds that Mbeki’s African Renaissance discourse is moralistic and can no longer challenge global economic inequalities.

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This whole thesis is my original work, unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In the last decade we have witnessed the re-introduction of the African Renaissance discourse by the South African president, Thabo Mbeki. According to Bota:

The concept (of the African Renaissance) has become a catch-all phrase and that as presently used it is too vaguely defined to be of much practical use (Bota, 2000:36).

He argues that the African Renaissance is still in its infancy and there is still a lack of agreement about what it involves. As Bota and other writers stop short of attempting to locate this concept in the body of literature around development, the concern of this thesis is “*locating the African Renaissance in development discourse: a critical study*”. In other words this study will develop the reader’s understanding of Mbeki’s African Renaissance discourse within the African development framework. Therefore the first chapter aims to clarify the research aims and to clearly develop the methods and the way measurements are going to be administrated to enable a precise and accurate finding. In so doing the writer gives an idea of her research question, the scope of the study and the methodology used for data collection and its analysis.

1.2 Research aims

The objective of this research is to locate the notion of the African Renaissance within specific theoretical and conceptual frameworks. In seeking to execute this task the writer asks two main questions:

Firstly, how does the South African President, Thabo Mbeki conceptualize the African Renaissance and what is the nature of the African Renaissance development discourse employed by Mbeki? In other words what are the problem definitions Mbeki presents and what are his proposed solutions? Has he proposed practical steps to achieve the African Renaissance or is the African Renaissance just empty political rhetoric used to mobilize political support, which rhetoric changes its content to suit the audience?

Secondly is this African Renaissance discourse any different from other discourses of development identified by Rist (1998)? Through this question it is hoped to show how the African Renaissance is related to the historical conceptions of development in Africa and to identify what it could bring to Africa as a new discourse of development

The South African President, Thabo Mbeki, points out that “investing in the African future requires that Africans themselves should think, act, understand the reality and change it” (Mbeki, 2000a: 8). In a more concrete sense this will mean mobilizing social sectors and individuals in Africa as the major role players in the socio-economic and

political life of Africans. This requires NGOs, politicians, business people, the youth and women, to make efforts, not only at the intellectual level, but also at a physical, cultural and spiritual level.

The notion of an African Renaissance seems to point to the necessity for African unity. Despite this necessity the questions remain. One might ask whether Africa can be mobilized to take up this task in the midst of the conflicts it is experiencing today? Wars across tribal and ethnic divisions within countries cause internal instability, which in turn lead to interstate conflict (Penguin, 1970: 40). These conflicts are at the heart of African problems today and present obstacles to such mobilization.

One important question seems to be the way in which the discourse of African Renaissance could shift from dream and rhetoric to real implementation of socio-economic and political development. According to Rist:

The strength of development discourse comes of its power to seduce in every sense of the term: to charm, to please, to fascinate, to set dreaming but also to abuse, to turn away from the truth, to deceive. How could one possibly resist the idea that there is a way of eliminating the poverty by which one is so troubled? (Rist, 1998: 01).

The questions investigated aim to explore the problem definitions and solutions constructed by the African Renaissance discourse as employed by Mbeki, to see if he suggests any practical steps to overcoming these problems.

On the other hand this study will look at the question of the African Renaissance as a discourse of development in Africa. Many African intellectuals as a point of reference have used this concept for African Unity, Africinity and development (for example, Makgoba (ed.) (1999), Mbigi (1996) and Legum (2000). It is critical to understand which direction development as envisaged by the concept of the African Renaissance is taking. Is it a discourse different to other discourses of development adopted and implemented before but without any success for Africa?

1.3 Research question

Is Mbeki's concept of the African Renaissance a new discourse of development in Africa?

1.4 Scope of the study

The concept of the African Renaissance has an extensive history in Africa and African development has been analyzed and justified by several sociologists, economists and other researchers especially since 1950s. However in the last decade we have witnessed an interesting conceptualization of the African Renaissance introduced by the President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki. Other writings have come out as reaction to the concept of Mbeki's idea of The African Renaissance. Some of these such as Maloka and le Roux (2000) and the English press (Mail and Guardian, Natal Witness, CODESRIA bulletin

etc) have to a certain degree been produced as reactions to Mbeki's speeches. In that attempt, the intention is therefore to undertake a critical analysis of the African Renaissance by comparing it with other discourses with special reference to the concept of development as reflected in the African Renaissance concept. How the current notion, as articulated by Mbeki, suggests African development should take place, will be focused on.

1.5 Research methodology

This study will be based primarily on extensive literature research on socio-economic theory of development and its discourses, which have been shaped by the African context. In order to achieve this aim the tool of discourse analysis will be employed. Discourse analysis implies paying attention to the use of language and its intended effect on the audiences. In this sense the research will consider if Mbeki's speeches and statements about the African Renaissance apply a particular use of language, appropriate for African development purposes. In other words the research will attempt to discover the meaning of Mbeki's African Renaissance discourse with regard to what it means for African development. The development discourse concerns the problem definitions, solutions constructed and main actors in addressing these problems. The aim is to find what cultural, social, economic and political problems are identified by Mbeki and which practical steps he suggests to overcoming these problems.

Another method employed in this study is a comparison, which pays attention to historical use of other development discourses in the African context. Therefore the African Renaissance discourse is compared with other discourses of development such as modernization, good governance, globalization, self-reliance and African regeneration. This reconsiders the research question and asks if the African Renaissance is a new discourse of development or not. For this reason, this study is critical and involves primarily library research aimed at gathering data from books, journals, periodicals and web sites.

1.5.1 Sampling and Limitation of study

The first step to engage in this venture has been to locate transcripts of Mbeki's speeches, which mention the African Renaissance and African development. Limited by the time available for research it was impossible to focus on all speeches. As result the study was limited to the period between 1996 and 2000. This period was chosen because it corresponds with the period that Mbeki's speeches mention the African Renaissance officially (on the occasion of the adoption of the new South African constitution) in May 1996 (Maloka and le Roux, 2000: 2) and is the starting point of this research.

As a result of time constraints it was necessary to further reduce the number of speeches and statements analysed. Two South African websites consulted by the writer, such as <http://www.anc.org.za/history/mbeki> and <http://www.polity.org.za/search/>, listed 64

speeches between 1996-2000 by Mbeki about the African Renaissance and African development. Only eight of them have been chosen. The speeches to be focused on are the following:

- I am an African: The statement on a behalf of the African National Congress on the occasion of the adoption by the Constitutional Assembly of the Republic of South Africa Constitution Bill, 1996, Cape Town, 8 May 1996.
- Africa's time has come: An address to the corporate council on Africa's Attracting Capital to Africa Summit, Chantilly, Virginia USA 19 to 22 April 1997.
- The African Renaissance, South Africa and the World: An address at the United Nations University, Tokyo, Japan, 9 April 1998.
- The African Renaissance: Opportunities and Challenges for Asian Society and the South African Business Forum, Hong Kong, 17 April 1998.
- The African Renaissance: A statement of Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, South African Broadcasting corporation, Gallagher Estate, Midland, 13 August 1998.
- Speech at the Launch of the African Renaissance Institute, Pretoria, 11 October 1999.
- Second National Institute for economic policy (NIEP), Oliver Tambo lecture delivered by the President of the South African, Thabo Mbeki, Johannesburg, 11 August 2000.
- An address by President Thabo Mbeki on the African Renaissance to the Ghana-South Africa friendship association, 5 October 2000.

As shown above, the speeches analysed are those which were delivered to a variety of audiences (within South Africa, in Africa, in Asia and America). They are representative in terms of time (each year from 1996 to 2000 represented) and variety of occasions related to economic, cultural, social and political events.

The third limitation is that among several discourses of development the African Renaissance discourse is compared with only five of them. Those are chosen to represent the dominant and diverse views of development in Africa.

1.6 Structure of thesis

This study is divided into four chapters. This chapter, which is an introduction to the whole dissertation, lays out the basic problems and aims of the study and the method to be employed in dealing with these problems. Chapter two defines the key concepts of the study such as discourse, development and the African Renaissance and links them to the study as a whole. Chapter three analyses the African Renaissance as a discourse of development while Chapter four locates it within other discourses of development in the African context. The paper is ended by the concluding remarks in Chapter five.

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSES

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a theoretical framework of the concepts used in this thesis, which informs African development. It aims to clarify the meaning of the key concepts, which in turn will help in the greater comprehension of the dissertation. It is about the conceptualization of discourse, development discourses, the African Renaissance and locating the African Renaissance within development discourses.

2.2 Discourse

The point of departure is what is understood by the word “discourse”. According to Chambers, 21st Century Dictionary, discourse is defined as “a formal speech or essay on a particular subject” and “discoursing” is taken as a noun in the modern sense and it is defined as a “meaning or an understanding” (ibid.) of a spoken or written statement. In this work the word discourse will be used to refer to the meaning or understanding behind Mbeki’s written statements on the African Renaissance which will be examined to trace the features and limits of certain kinds of words and conceptions. “Discourse” also refers to its own relations to social institutions, systems of power, the use of intellectuals

through the world and its place within the "realm of common sense as it imposes its universal recognition" (Jay, 1995: 23). From this point of view Jay points out that "each discourse in itself has an identity to be discovered, defined and understood" (ibid). The analysis of this research focuses on the meaning and essence of development discourses throughout the world. It draws attention to the constructed discourses of development employed in African development and to the way in which discourses so constructed have or not promoted development in the African continent.

2.3 Development

The problem of development has become a major issue to theorists in the different human sciences who have approached it from various perspectives and with regard to each given discipline and ideology. On the one hand, the economists believe that by accelerating the rate of economic growth in a given country human welfare will be enhanced and hence the degree of well being of the inhabitants will be raised. Most sociologists claim that economic growth is a quantitative process involving principally the extension of production, whereas development suggests qualitative changes. In this conception economic parameters are accompanied by or even preceded by social and institutional policy change that takes account of equitable distribution. The economists on the other hand focus on promoting competition and cost effectiveness.

At another level, the paradigm of development is characterized by a western social evolutionist's view of change and of development in the sense of the growth behavior of natural phenomenon such as plants (Rist, 1998). Social evolutionism obviously did gain a certain scientific acceptance as a result of its semantic proximity to Darwinism. This biological analogy is evident in Rostow's theory of development, which identifies five stages of development (the traditional society, the preconditions for take-off, the take-off, the drive of maturity, the age of high mass-consumption) through which each country must pass to achieve socio-economic progress. Hence the African continent is still somewhere in the first or second stages of growth whereas the developed region is at the stage of high mass-consumption (Rist, 1998: 43). By defining the common road of development and showing that there is a great difference in the speed of progress towards development as a goal, it becomes necessary to "help more or less backward societies along the road to civilization"(ibid: 43) and hence the emergence of the development project. At this point start different discourses of development used to promote African development.

2.4 Development discourse

Discourses of development bear the traces of social and economic histories of development. To inquire into the meaning of one or another discourse of development, is to see the way we understand the world's development through the different ideologies. Since the nineteenth century successive discourses of development have identified

problems facing Africa and proposed solutions. At an international level institutions (World Bank, IMF, UNDP, several NGO) and governments have tried to act through economic growth by creating new jobs, providing loans and repaying debts, promoting globalization of production and consumption of goods and services through markets or humanitarian aid. At the domestic level development discourses concern first of all the policy makers in a given country, who might think about different problems and propose different solutions. Since development discourses have shaped so many different concepts of development, Rist argues that "the images associated with development and the practices it entails vary from one extreme to another depending on whether we adopt the view point"(Rist, 1998: 2). The following shows the different views adopted by some thinkers in the North -Western region and some others in the Southern region.

2.5 African development in dominant economic theories

"Western civilization understands itself as the universal civilization and universalizes its history as development history for others"(Galtung, 1998:131). In this view, development equals western development and modernization, which depends on the speed of economic growth. Growth consists of increased production of goods and services that in turn depend on increased division of labor and specialization, especially in a competitive economy. The major conditions of economic growth are hard work, investment through processing (industry) and active trade in the free market. According to Galtung:

for success to ensue, three variables have to be watched: Q/P (highest

possible quality at lowest possible price), C/N (highest amount of culture imprinted on the lowest amount of 'raw nature' in other words highest possible degree of processing) and F/R (a good balance between finance economy and real economy) (Galtung, 1998: 132).

Therefore in the logic of the economic growth system, the First World view treats its own civilization or development as the center of the world. The Third World is condemned to periphery status with, " a dramatic picture of the conditions of people in the South, who are unable to take their destiny into their own hands because they can not satisfy their most essential needs" (Rist, 1998:162 quoting Robert McNamara, President of World Bank in 1972).

In the name of social justice, development assistance is necessary not only in meeting the needs of people in the south, but also developing their needs further. Thus, Galtung argues that today

development assistance is a covenant whereby the receiver gets some pocket money for basic services and the sender gets inner growth deriving from all the challenges (Galtung 1998:130).

Galtung argues that even when development assistance fails to produce a reduction of misery but leads instead to its reproduction, this is seen as one more reason to continue the development assistance exercise. The recipients are then blamed for poor results thus: "they are simply too traditional, their culture is not right and in addition they are

lazy"(ibid.). In this regard, development assistance can take several forms and have different contents like: meeting basic needs, humanitarian agencies' aid, international bank loans, community development, good governance and participation, structural adjustment for the poorest in poor countries, for the development of women, for environmental and sustainable development. This as well as globalization will be discussed in more detail in Chapter four where the African Renaissance will be located within some of these discourses.

According to Castells (1998: 66 -76) globalization and the informational economy are the new modes of development and production. However, the global economy is not the same as the world economy, in the sense that the world economy is the economy in which capital accumulation proceeds throughout the world. The global economy came into being in the late 20th century. In the global economy, the linkage between production, consumption, and circulation of goods, services and technology occurs in different places throughout the world with their capacities being shared across the globe in real time. This has resulted in a system, which is called "the network" by Castells (1998). Hence the society in which it is active is called the "network society".

The system is global, integrating those who make contributions to needs of the system by their technological skills and excluding those who are devalued economically and hence are not incorporated in the informational economy. In this view the western donors and World Bank have the responsibility to bring foreign investment and technical assistance

to developing countries depending on the economic policy in place. According to the developed countries' view each project is valued according to the quantity of means it brings rather than the quality of ends achieved. This is witnessed when the budget for a project design is always done with technical assistance and is more important than the budget allowed for the project implementation in the field. This is contrary to the view of Southerners such as Julius Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah and Samir Amin in Africa and Asians such as Mahatma Gandhi and Naila Kabeer (an environmental and feminist author who criticizes inequalities throughout the world). They argue that production by one's own forces is more important than being propped up by external assistance.

2.6 African development in the work of prominent African and Asian theory

Development is the unfolding of a culture and there are many cultures and civilizations, thus as a consequence, there are many developments. If one civilization imposes its definition of development on another it must be illegitimate. Kabeer argues that when development is imposed from without, it becomes a straitjacket because people react to it passively or by inefficiently maintaining it because it is not experienced within their own socio-cultural life (Kabeer, 1994). In this regard, several African thinkers led by Julius Nyerere, the former president of Tanzania, advocated a populist strategy of development. They argued that a given social group must survive through its own resources and by its own capacities. Self-reliance, self-determination, autonomy or 'autocentred development'

became the dominant African discourse of development (Rist, 1998). Rist points out that self-reliance is a

... kind of humanist socialism which rejects western individualism in favour of a social ethic characteristic of traditional African family...because Africans are incapable of becoming true capitalists (Rist,1998: 130).

Development assistance must be rejected because it is an effort from someone else to develop when the major effort has to come from inside. The major concern is to move from the center-periphery relationship to south-south cooperation so as to initiate dialogue, and share technical assistance and expertise between equals over common problems. In Chapter four, views of African theorists on development will be discussed in greater detail and compared with the solutions proposed by the ideas of the African Renaissance for ending poverty. As Mbeki reminds us at the African Renaissance Festival that "as Africans, we are faced with the urgent challenge of ending poverty and underdevelopment on our continent"(Mbeki, 2001).

2.7 The African Renaissance

Opinions vary concerning the precise origin of the concept of the African Renaissance. Origins suggested by some writers such as Barrel (1998), include the Renaissance on the continent of Europe between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Japanese Renaissance in the fifteenth century and, the Africano-American Renaissance. Those who support the argument that the African Renaissance is rooted in the Africano-American

Renaissance such as Sitole (1999), argue that it has four phases. Firstly, there arose the consciousness of Africans living in Diaspora in the Caribbean under oppressing conditions. These Africans started to think about their identities as Africans and tended to idealize Ethiopia because it was one of the countries in Africa, which was not colonized. Secondly, several scholars in New York advanced the idea of an African Renaissance and the concept spread with the liberation of Black America. Thirdly, the concept of an African Renaissance was important in the Pan-Africanism movement of the 1950s led by Nkwame Nkrumah, the President of Ghana, and the concept was associated with political, economic and cultural independence of African countries from imperialist domination. In this view, the fourth phase of the African Renaissance is associated with Thabo Mbeki and the ANC, and has been since 1994, the period, since which South Africa gained freedom as the last colonized country in the Africa continent. According to Maloka

The concept (of African Renaissance) dates back to 1994 after the first democratic elections, but it was only after May 1996 in the wake of the famous “I am an African” speech by Thabo Mbeki (on the occasion of the adoption of the new Constitution for the country), that it entered the public discourse (Maloka and le Roux, 2000:2).

Thabo Mbeki uses the African Renaissance discourse as

key pillars of his conception of socio-cultural, political (democratization) and economic regeneration, and improvement of Africa geo-political standing in the world affairs (Maloka and le Roux, 2000:3).

However Murobe (2000:43-45) points out that there are two contradictory schools of thought about African development with regard to globalization. The first school is Africano-pessimist, claiming that Africa has failed to establish itself decisively on the road to development. Consequently, it is claimed that Africa finds itself increasingly marginalized because of continuing economic and political crises. These crises emanate from the failure of Africa to move towards economic liberalism and democracy in the model of developed countries. The second school is that of cultural vindicationists, who claim that no culture is a closed system. They perceive colonial and neo-colonial interference as hegemony of western culture in African lives, which must be deconstructed. However Murobe argues that

the weakness of the cultural vindicationists is that, while they have been prolific in their deconstructionist project, they do not offer an alternative ethical theory and practice for Africa (Murobe, 2000:44).

In light of Mbeki's statement that "African problems will be solved by Africans themselves"(Mbeki, 1998), one can ask if Mbeki introduces a new line of thought. This dissertation aims to unpack the discourse of "African Renaissance" and to highlight the practical solutions proposed by Mbeki for redressing those problems. In the next Chapter,

the discourse of the African Renaissance is identified and the problems and the solutions the discourse proposes for African development.

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS OF MBEKI'S VIEW ABOUT THE AFRICAN RENAISSANCE

3. 1. Introduction

In this Chapter, focus will be on how the discourse of the African Renaissance as articulated by Mbeki, constructs the concept of development. This involves a consideration of what Mbeki identifies as problems facing the African continent and solutions to these problems. According to Weiss (1989:97) “a problem definition is a package of ideas that includes at least implicitly an account of causes and consequences of some circumstances that are deemed undesirable” and implies “a theory about how a problem may be alleviated” (ibid). In this Chapter discussion will be undertaken of the practical steps Mbeki suggests to overcome the problems he identifies and the main actors he identifies to address these problems. The analysis of Mbeki’s discourse of the African Renaissance identifies three historical moments that he considers as shaping the African continent. The first is a relatively idyllic African past with glorious discoveries. The second moment is identified by the impact of colonialism, which destroyed the African idyll. The third moment is the present and requires a change for African Renaissance or a rebirth of the entire continent, to occur.

3. 2. Glorious African past

Mbeki's view of the glorious African past is constructed through three arguments.

Firstly, the nature of the African continent is seen as a land of harmony, which influences the daily lives of its people. According to Mbeki, Africa is an ensemble of

...the hills and valleys, the mountains and glades, the rivers, the deserts, the trees, the flowers, the seas and the ever-changing seasons, that define the face of our native land ... that fragrances of nature that have been as pleasant to us as the sight of the wild blooms of the citizens of the Veld... It is a land of gold, and diamond... A human presence among all these, a feature on the face of our native land thus defined, I know that none dare challenge me when I say: I am an African! (Mbeki, 1998a: 31).

This landscape is seen by Mbeki as a feature of the African harmony, which gives him the great desire to proclaim his solemn identity as an African, "I am an African" (Mbeki, 1998a: 31-35). He reveals his devotion to, and identification with the African continent because, according to him, the proud dignity of an African comes from the consciousness that he is part of the environmental harmony surrounding him and his community.

Secondly, Mbeki argues that in the Africa of the past political policies were perfect and people were patriotic which enabled many countries and kingdoms to implement the required political, social and economic development. For example, in his address at the United Nations Unity meeting of 1998, Mbeki quotes Reader (1997), in which Leo

Africanus, a Spaniard resident in Morocco in the sixteenth century visited West Africa and wrote the following about the royal court of Timbuktu, Mali.

The rich king of Timbuktu... keeps a magnificent and well-furnished court... Here are great store of doctors, judges, priests, and other learned men that are bountifully maintained at the king's cost and charges. And hither are brought diverse manuscripts or written books out of Barbarie, which are sold for more money than any other merchandise (Mbeki, 1998d:240).

Mbeki is dealing with how great were African kingdoms, economically rich, intellectually strong to create strong human beings.

Thirdly, Mbeki's view of the glorious African past clearly indicates that African people were educated, cultured and participated in social, economic and political governance of their kingdoms as their co-temporal people in other parts of the World. Furthermore, in another speech he shows for example that African economic trade was at an international level. Trade had existed between Africa and Asia since the fourteenth century when a historic cooperation emerged between Asian and African kings who confirmed mutual trade in commodities, symbolized by the gift of a giraffe sent by the African king to the Asian king (Mbeki, 1998c: 225-226).

Regarding technology and arts as a part of Africa's glorious past, Africans made fine art, sculptures, architectural monuments and built cities as well as universities. The continent was excellent in this regard when compared with others all over the world. Therefore,

Mbeki proposes that the African Renaissance must consider the past creativities as roots of the future rebirth:

The beginning of our rebirth as a continent must be our own rediscovery of our soul, captured and made permanently available in the great works of creativity represented by the pyramids and sphinxes of Egypt, the stone buildings of Axun and the ruins of Carthage and Zimbabwe, the rock paintings of the San, the Benin bronzes and the African masks, the carvings of the Makonde and the stone sculptures of the Shona (Mbeki, 1998e: 296).

Summarizing the points made by Mbeki when he discussed the glorious past of Africa, he shows Africans not as the savages and sub-humans as the slave-masters and colonizers thought when they came in the name of 'civilization and modernization'. Hence in Mbeki's perception of what is necessary for a successful rebirth of Africa, there needs to be a strategic focus on the potentiality of the past to build an African future. But this necessitates a fight against the masters, "who imposed themselves on Africans" (ibid), introduced the African stereotypes such as barbarians, savages, and sub-humans and created the conditions of misery and underdevelopment.

3. 3. The impact of colonization on African development

The glorious past of Africa was followed by an oppressive historical legacy in which Africa experienced poverty, hunger, backwardness and marginalization:

I have seen what happens when one person has superiority of force over another, when the stronger appropriate to themselves the prerogative even to annul the injunction that God created all men and women in his image (Mbeki, 1998a: 33).

In this quote, Mbeki shows how the colonizers treated the Africans as sub-human and imposed themselves as the masters of the colonized.

This racism has defined us who are Africans and blacks as primitive, pagan, slaves to the irrational superstitions and inherently prone to brute violence (ibid).

The colonizers acquired all benefits by lording it over people in every sector of life. Economically, the “system enriches some few and impoverishes the rest”. At the political level, they installed a situation of “political oppression and exclusion”, a system of injustice and political violence. At the social level, there was and is “individual superiority of force over another” as well as a social discrimination “based on race or color exclusion in human and sub human vision” which created deep inequalities in “relation master slaver” and consequently “destruct the black self-esteem” (Mbeki, 1998a:32-33). To illustrate this point of view, Mbeki gives as an example the impact of

apartheid on black people within South Africa and as he said he experienced it in his own life as an African. At this stage his “I am an African” means that Mbeki speaks on behalf of all Africans who experienced discrimination, colonization and apartheid. Culturally, Mbeki (1998) in quoting Ngugi WA Thiong’o (1986), talks about corruption of the native mind and the denial of black dignity as human beings under oppressive and repressive activities. It is an enculturation of the natives by imposing the culture of their masters. Mbeki in his speech delivered at the Second NIEP Oliver Tambo lecture, 11 August 2000, cited several black authors who wrote about black American and Pan-African liberation. This refers to the fact that through slavery, colonization, apartheid, and imperialism, Africans lost their identity. They suffered from land dispossession, the transformation of the majority into proletariat, the destruction of traditional societies, the suppression of their culture, the diminution of indigenous languages and traditional religions which were to be replaced by foreign languages and religions.

As a consequence, the suffering of the African people did not end in the de-colonization period because, on the one hand, among Africans themselves were people who were the “product of immoral and amoral past-killers and have non-sense of the worth of human life... and those who have learnt to kill for a wage” (Mbeki, 1998a: 33).

On the other hand, the interpretation of the African history still had an Euro-centric vision and

...the former colonial powers continued to hold in their hands the power to determine what would happen to the African people over whom, in terms

of international and municipal law, they no longer had any jurisdiction. This signified a neocolonial relationship rather than genuine independence (Mbeki, 1998d: 244-245).

Mbeki refers to “petty gangsters who would be our governors by theft of election positions, as a result of holding fraudulent elections, or by purchasing positions of authority through bribery and corruption” (Mbeki, 1998c: 226). Africa faces not only corruption and immorality; other problems as consequences of colonization are all embodied in Africa. Problems such as conflicts and wars: “guns have usurped the place of reason”(Mbeki, 1998c: 226)

The poverty of the masses of the people becomes a necessary condition for the enrichment of the few, and the corruption of political power the only possible condition for its exercise. It is out of this pungent mixture of greed, dehumanizing poverty, obscene wealth and endemic public and private corrupt practice that many of Africa’s coup d’etat, civil wars and situations of instability are born and entrenched (Mbeki, 1998e: 298).

This highlights for the needs of the African Renaissance. Mbeki argues that the impact of colonization, which did not end with independence, becomes internalized and continues to destroy the African continent as “both, the harbingers of death and the victims of their wrath, are as African as you and I”. Therefore “Africa needs her Renaissance”.

The time has come that we call a halt to the seemingly socially approved deification of the acquisition of material wealth and the abuse of state power to impoverish the people and deny our continent the possibility to achieve sustainable economic development (Mbeki, 1998e:297).

However the departure from the African political stage of personalities such as general Mombutu Sese Seko, of the former Zaire which symbolizes the end of neocolonialism in Africa and the emergence of new indigenous African movement of liberation gives hope to Mbeki. It is possible in his view to change the politics and governance and economy of Africa. (Mbeki, 1998c: 227). Hence Mbeki calls on the Africans themselves and the world community to rectify the problems facing the African continent.

3. 4. Rebirth of Africa: Mbeki's conceptualization of the African Renaissance

In this third critical moment, Mbeki's African Renaissance is seen as being aimed at delivering the African continent from the colonial and neo-colonial powers to democracy and from marginalization to inclusion in the global or world economy. In trying to understand how he aims to achieve this it is necessary to consider how Mbeki constructs the concept of 'development' in the African Renaissance discourse. In other words what developmental problems does Mbeki see Africa facing, and what are his proposed solutions to these problems or what steps does he propose towards an African rebirth?

The foundation of the problems facing Africa identified by Mbeki, which have also attracted the attention of many other scholars and politicians are those from the past. The continent at that time experienced slavery and colonization that left Africa underdeveloped and resulted in the devaluation of African culture. As result, Africa experienced both internal and external problems. The internal problems such as

criminality, illiteracy, abuse of women, disease, immorality, dictatorship, conflict, wars, corruption, mismanagement, and poverty have now become commonplace. As an example of an external problem, a great difficulty for Africa is its exclusion from the global economy.

Mbeki calls for a rebirth of the whole continent with Africans themselves being their own liberators. For instance he asserts, “we are our own liberators from imperial domination” (Mbeki, 1998d: 243). He believes that Africans can remove the burdens and fruits of colonialism such as dictatorships, conflicts, wars and corruption. However concerning this point in his speeches, he does not mention specifically how they should achieve this. But he indicates that at the time of the European Renaissance in the fifteenth century where there were “advances in science and technology, voyages of discovery across the oceans, a revolution in printing and an attendant spread, development and flowering of knowledge and a blossoming of the arts”(ibid: 241), Africa was also at the same level of prosperity and intellectual creativity. By being conscious of this “glorious past” Africa can also attain the level of prosperity that the Europeans have attained. The continent should shift from colonial stereotypes of “cannibalism, savages, sub-humans, which describe all who are not white as not being human”(ibid) “to rebel, to assert the principal of her humanity- the fact that she is in the first instance not a beast of burden but a human and African being”(ibid: 242).

Furthermore to achieve the African Renaissance, Africa’s exploitation through

colonization must be questioned. This Mbeki characterizes as where the colonizer has “legal title both to the commodity she (Africa) transports on her back and the labour she must make available to ensure that the burden on her shoulders translates into dollars and yen” (Ibid). Through this he draws attention to the trade relations, which continue structural neo-colonialism between African countries and the former colonial powers. Although “African countries have attained independence from the colonizer the fundamental, structural relationship between these states and the former colonial powers did not change”(Mbeki, 1998d: 244). By being aware of this Africa can move forward to a period of development. Once again it is clear that for Mbeki African Renaissance is “to rebel against imperial domination” to rebel “ against those tyrants and dictators, those who seek to corrupt our societies and steal our wealth that belongs to the people” (Mbeki, 1998e: 300). Achieving an “African Renaissance” means to move from this hold that colonizers have over African states even though it is said that they have gained independence.

But the question still remains how does Africa liberate itself from the neo-colonist domination when it depends on this system? What strategies does Mbeki propose in order to achieve this goal?

Mbeki draws on the Japanese Renaissance or Meiji Restoration that occurred 130 years ago to suggest how Africa could be renewed, and calls for foreign help to achieve this.

I am moved by conviction that this particular period in the evolution of Japan, to the point, today, when her economic problems are those of a surfeit rather than those of poverty of resources, has a multiplicity of lessons for us as Africans, which we cannot afford to ignore or worse still, not to know. And if we, as students, are badly informed, you (Japanese) have a responsibility to be our teachers. We are ready to learn and to become our own teachers as a result (Mbeki, 1998d: 243).

With this view Mbeki believes that the Meiji Restoration should inspire Africa and Africa should rethink about the glorious past and be confident of its future, as were the Japanese. Mbeki emphasizes the importance of recognizing and valuing Africa's past to provide strength for an African Renaissance:

When the world of fine arts speaks to us of the creativity of the Nubians of Sudan and its decisive impact on the revered and everlasting imaginative creations of the African land of the pharaohs – how can we but be confident that we will succeed to be the midwives of our continent's rebirth? (Mbeki, 1998d: 243).

Mbeki says furthermore:

when we recall that African armies at Omduraman in the Sudan and Isandhlwana in South Africa out-generalled, out-soldiered and defeated the mighty armies of the powerful and arrogant British Empire in the '70s of the last century – how can we but be confident that, through our efforts, Africa will regain her place among the continents of our universe (ibid).

In looking at the past Mbeki emphasizes the rediscovery of this idyllic culture as a strategy for Africans to gain confidence in themselves and through this to develop the continent. For Mbeki the glorious past “tells that the time for Africa’s Renaissance has come”, because Africans will be able to answer questions such as what shall we be? What problems are facing us today?

Although Mbeki does not indicate strategies on how Africa should liberate itself, he does suggest several aspirations for Africa’s development. These could be divided into political, socio-cultural and economic aspirations

3.4.1. Political aspirations

What we have been talking about is the establishment of genuine and stable democracies in Africa, in which the systems of governance will flourish because they derive their authority and legitimacy from the will of the people. The point must be made that the new political order owes its existence to the African experience of many decades which teaches us, as Africans, that what we tried did not work, that the one-party states and the military governments will not work... that the people must govern (Mbeki, 1998b: 201).

In this, Mbeki abandons the glorious past of African monarchies and calls for the establishment of democratic political systems and good governance. He asserts his earlier view that Africa must learn from its past, when he indicates that African states must be aware that what they had been doing before was not beneficial to African development.

He further goes on to say that fortunately this political change that Africa should aspire to is already taking place.

The emergence of renewal energy is already among the African themselves, a new indigenous and energized African movement for the liberation of the continent has surely emerged. It is set to change the political governance and economy of Africa (Mbeki, 1998c: 227).

This he maintains is evidenced by the “fact that during the present decade more than 25 sub-Saharan countries have established multiparty democracies”(ibid:227). An example is South Africa where the constitution of the country creates a situation in which all South Africans are equal and no one can use political power to deny them this right. However Mbeki has been asked why democracy never worked for Africa during the de-colonization period. He argues that in the past the conditions required were not available but currently they exist. He holds that we have experienced the end of the cold war, the process of globalization, and the end of the colonial system in Africa by the liberation of South Africa and the recognition of the bankruptcy of neo-colonialism by the masses of people throughout the continent (Mbeki, 1999:2).

However he does not give reasons why even though these processes have already occurred, African states are still experiencing war and conflict even today. Although several African states have been liberated from colonialism their governments, whom he terms as “winner liberators” (Mbeki, 1998c: 227), have become dictators and do not tolerate any opposition. In several African countries the legitimacy of power is not in the

satisfaction of people's interests but in building a solid strategy to maintain political power for as long as possible. Instead, Mbeki argues that global political and economic interests and neocolonialism have prevented the emergence of democratic governance in Africa.

3.4.2 Socio-cultural aspirations

Culturally Mbeki identifies the first task of the African Renaissance as de-colonizing the mind of the African. It is the discovery of African roots that gives Africans pride in themselves (Mbeki, 1998d: 242). But combining African cultures and traditional beliefs with modern and post modern conditions always causes problems. Mbeki, looks at African culture as a linear evolution, he does not integrate the changes that occurred in African culture during the colonization period as a result of the contact between cultures contact (dynamic and conflict aspects). It may be time to integrate the changes occurred as African writers propose to find an appropriate system that can integrate both African values and conditions of modernity. At this point, several authors such as Makgoba (1999) and Mbigi (1996) propose Ubuntu as a system of African values in which the vision of human life is integrated in the community and in itself. According to Makgoba Ubuntu is

A philosophy of humanness imbued with infinite love, which makes us as individuals within community to feel, see, and recognize our being, our existence, efforts, successes and failures, interests, ambitions and

aspirations in other members of the community. The community and we individuals become fused into each one of us (Makgoba, 1999:154).

In Mbeki's speeches, the term Ubuntu is not employed but concerning the philosophy of Renaissance in Africa, he talks about African solidarity, through which African rebirth should be achieved. For example he says that South Africa owes her "emancipation from apartheid in no small measure to the support and solidarity extended to her by all the peoples of Africa" (Mbeki, 1998d: 249). As far as the social issue is concerned Mbeki, refers to several social aspirations, which he would like to see fulfilled especially in South Africa.

We (South Africans) must succeed to meet the needs of people so as to end poverty and improve the quality of life by ensuring access to good education, adequate health care, decent homes, clean water and modern sanitation...to challenge the spread of HIV/Aids...to create a non-racial and non-sexist society, by the process of fighting against racism and securing gender equality (Mbeki, 1998d: 249).

Mbeki places great emphasis on the moral obligation of everyone to ensure an African Renaissance, but seems to accord anyone this role as actor in the African Renaissance without any analysis of the deep causes of all those problems facing Africa. It is utopian and moralistic to think that for example a problem of racism in South Africa will be solved by the citizens without any strategy to deal with the problem of inequalities between poor and rich. As long as South Africa is a capitalist country the periphery and the center relations will continue, similarly, the world community can not help Africa to

develop within a context of global economic competition.

3. 4. 3. Economic aspirations

Mbeki's African Renaissance is also conceptualized as being incorporated into the global economic system and as having both international and regional market cooperation as well as growth in the domestic economy. Mbeki calls all African partners over the world to help in the implementation of the African Renaissance. Mbeki argues that many countries in Africa have already implemented the social, political and economic conditions required by the international investor community. Africa has established these conditions to enable the investors to make rational business decisions and to make long-term investments in Africa (Mbeki, 1998b: 200-202). At this point his goal is to attract private investment and foreign investors. Among these implemented conditions Mbeki talks about the economic growth of Africa. He lists the changes in the African economic environment:

- The economy in Sub Sahara region has grown faster than its population since 1996.
- The Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) is in negotiations to transform the subcontinent into a trade area with a vision of enhancing the regional investment and reaching into the larger African market.
- Especially in South Africa, there is infrastructure for modern communication and energy, which will be extended to the Southern Africa region (ibid).

He seems to suggest that global investors have now an obligation to invest in Africa because African countries have met all the conditions they required. However he forgets that the old imperialism and exploitation for profit still drive the activities of investors.

According to Mbeki there are also two major economic problems facing Africa: firstly, foreign indebtedness and secondly, the small inflows of foreign capital in Africa. The world should help Africa to resolve this unsustainable debt burden and enhance larger inflows of capital into the continent and in return they would benefit from an enormous African economic potential. Regarding the issue of enhancing African economic development, Mbeki argues that African developmental obstacles cannot be removed without the help of the former colonizers and so it is urgent to link Africa to the West (Mbeki, 2000b: 2).

According to the above view Mbeki proposes that for Africa to move from the periphery of the world, developed countries must help Africans on their “African liberation struggle”. However how can the same economic system that he claimed raises inequalities within countries and the widening gap between developed and developing countries, initiate the development of the poor?

According to Fisher, “It is possible to reframe policy without controversy and to have controversy without reframing. Policy can change without a frame choice and we can debate frame choice without any political change resulting” (Fisher and Forestier,

1993:154). Does Mbeki frame African development without any concrete evidence of how economic development has addressed poverty in Africa or does he debate a frame without any concrete strategies of addressing the permanent poverty in Africa? When Mbeki points out “the African Renaissance is upon us”, does he leave room for other Africans such as the African intelligentsia, African businessmen and political leaders to contribute to the African Renaissance as main actors? In the next Chapter an attempt will be made to address these questions.

Looking at the analysis of the African Renaissance in this chapter, one can conclude that Mbeki conceptualizes the Africa Renaissance through three historical moments. He begins his idea with a previous period when Africa was great, creative and contributed to world development as an equal partner with other countries. The second period is characterized by the impact of colonization that defined Africans as savage and sub-human and destroyed the creativity of Africans. Finally, by de-colonizing or liberating themselves Africans can move from social diseases such as poverty, wars, famines, corruption, dictatorship and discrimination to the rebirth of her greatness as in the past. Mbeki further indicates his political, socio-cultural and economic aspirations of how Africa should develop. He maintains that in order for these aspirations to be reached both Africans and all people throughout the world should be involved in an African rebirth. However he does not clearly outline how Africa will achieve this liberation. All the concepts he mentions are those that have been discussed through mainstream development discourse. These are concepts such as good governance, democracy,

accountability, better life for all and so on. He does not indicate a practical program by which these can be achieved. In the next Chapter an attempt will be made to locate Mbeki's African Renaissance discourse within other development discourses used before and to see if he has provided any new proposals.

CHAPTER FOUR

IS THE AFRICAN RENAISSANCE A NEW DISCOURSE OF DEVELOPMENT?

4.1. Introduction

The following chapter studies the African Renaissance in relation to discourses and strategies of development, which emerged in the post World War II period. Escobar argues

The organizing premise (of development discourse) was the belief in the role of modernization as the only force capable of destroying archaic superstitions and relations, at whatever social, cultural and political cost. Industrialization and urbanization were seen as the inevitable and necessarily progressive routes to modernization (Escobar, 1995: 39).

Therefore as the last step in analyzing the African Renaissance is to locate it within discourses of development, it will now be located it in the modernization discourse and in other development discourses such as good governance, self-reliance and the discourse of globalization, which has worldwide dominance today. People in developed countries have dominated some of these discourses, while people from developing countries dominate others. In concluding this Chapter, what innovations the African Renaissance brings to the discourse of development will be focused on.

4. 2. Self-reliance, regeneration of Africa and the African Renaissance discourses

According to Legum (2000: 91) Mbeki analyzes the problems facing Africa internal to the African continent and in relation to the industrialized nations, as inspired by W.E.B du Bois, one of the founders of Pan-Africanism who declared that the problem of the 20th century is the problem of the colour line namely the relation of darker to the lighter races of men. Like du Bois, Mbeki points out that “the problem of the 21st century is the problem of Africa’s relations inside the continent and with industrialized nations”(Legum, 200: 91). Mbeki’s view of African rebirth will be explored in comparison to the view of other African thinkers such as Julius Nyerere, Tom Mboya, Kenneth Kaunda, Leopord Senghor and Kwame Nkrumah. All these writers have a common view that African societies were traditionally socialist, collectivist with a common spiritual solidarity that needs to be re-discovered and re-applied at the present. Their approach was based on the idea that Africa must use its cultural resources for development.

A good example is the case of Tanzania where the former president Julius Nyerere tried to raise the productivity of peasants by applying the African ethic of collectivity (Ujamaa) together with modern economic methods of production. This aim was not much to drive economic growth and develop a competitive economy, as it has to provide for the basic requirements of Tanzanians (Shivji, 1976:104). His concern was a better distribution of wealth that capitalism, which stimulates competition, cannot provide.

Capitalism is good in producing wealth but very bad in distributing wealth... there you need the sense of community and this should be handled by a state which has power (Nyerere, 1994: 16).

He recognizes that capitalism is taking over and that economic growth is important as capitalism stimulates it, but he rejects the perception that a government should just fold its hands and leave everything to the market. He is concerned not with economic development per se, but with the broader needs of Tanzanians and ensuring political stability.

Although we were not very strong economically, but there (in Tanzania) was political stability. Politically we were strong and there was a feeling of solidarity. It was slow, but it was tangible and visible for everybody. This was a tremendous achievement (Nyerere, 1994: 18).

He did not believe in democracy as conceptualized by developed countries because he found that both internationally and nationally, institutions and government did not function in a democratic way as they claimed. He found that the rule “is not one man one vote but it is one dollar one vote” (ibid: 21).

He adopted the villagization policy to encourage the farmers of Tanzania to live together in village communities to achieve socio-cultural change. He declared:

ujamaa or 'family hood' to describe Tanzanian socialism. This is opposed to capitalism, which seeks to build a happy society on the basis of exploitation of man by man, and equally opposed to doctrinaire socialism, which seeks to build its happy society on the philosophy of inevitable conflict between man and man (Kaufman, 1999:4).

The use of one language (Swahili) as a national unification language was helpful in creating social solidarity. Therefore self-reliance is the application of all those strategies of development such as a balance of economic production and its distribution among citizens, political stability and socio-cultural transformation. Development in this sense means liberation for all and each individual person as a member of a community. He argues that any action that gives Tanzanians more control of their own affairs is an action for development even if it does not offer them more health or more bread in comparison with an outsider aid (Coulson, 1979: 5). According to Rist:

Self-reliance involves various forms of development and rejects the imitation of imported models. It reduces the alienation stemming from lack of control over the economic process, and promotes horizontal solidarity (Rist, 1998:181).

By self-reliance, Nyerere focuses on national development and African cooperation between the Eastern and Southern African regions. In talking about south-south cooperation, he said:

The great charms and blessings of civilization are mutual aid and mutual reliance, associated effort and right to trust in one another. It would be

impossible to obtain any confidence, dependence and cooperation unless a mutuality of interests, rights and duties were guaranteed by common understanding (Langley, 1979: 181).

Looking at Mbeki's African Renaissance discourse and comparing it with Nyerere's self-reliance discourse, one could say that Mbeki has been inspired by the self-reliance discourse. Firstly, his initial problem is that after a glorious past Africa experienced slavery, colonization and imperialism, which left Africa in a terrible state of poverty. The African Renaissance aims at delivering the African continent from poverty and neo-colonial discrimination as does Nyerere's self-reliance discourse. Secondly, the African Renaissance and the self-reliance, both call Africans to be their own liberators by developing self-confidence and pride in their identity as Africans (Mbeki: 1998d; 241-242). But a great divergence comes in terms of economic strategies to achieve these objectives. Self-reliance prioritizes the democratic control of production and redistribution of goods useful to the population as a whole (Rist, 1998:134), while the African Renaissance prioritizes economic growth and just international trade relations (Mbeki, 1998c: 229). Self-reliance is opposed to capitalist inequalities, while the African Renaissance seeks to stimulate capitalist spirit. Politically, self-reliance differs from the African Renaissance in the meaning of good governance and accountability. Self-reliance has roots in traditional socio-political African values and rejects the imitation of imported models such as modernization, civilization, democracy, economic growth, structural adjustment and globalization, while the African Renaissance takes into consideration some of these models without a rigorous analysis of their suitability.

Additional evidence of the ideology of self-reliance in Mbeki's African Renaissance discourse is its similarity to the thoughts of Pixley Isaka Seme (1905-1950).

According to his speech quoted by Langley (1979:261) he said " I have chosen to speak to you on this occasion upon the Regeneration of Africa. I am an African, and I set my pride in my race over against a hostile public opinion". The "I am an African" in Mbeki's speech was obviously inspired by Seme's speech. Then like Nyerere, Mbeki's African Renaissance discourse was inspired by Seme's discourse of African regeneration. Mbeki also argues that the African Renaissance is not his own original concept but that it was used and failed in the past. Seme suggests this idea in very similar words when he related the glorious African past: – the capital of Egypt, its ruins, art, architecture, pyramids in Ethiopia, sepulchers. They all belong to Africa and her people by virtue of their original genius. Like Seme, Mbeki relates also how from the beginning of the sixteenth to the middle of the nineteenth century, the relationship between Europe and Africa was that of master and slave exploitation as practised by a selfish European system. Thus, Mbeki refers to Seme when he points out that "the African time has come", recalling Seme's statements that:

The day of great exploring expeditions in Africa is over... a great century has come upon us by independence... you too would be convinced that the elevation of the African race is evidently a part of a new order of things that belong to this new and powerful period because the African already recognizes his anomalous position and desires a change... the brighter day is rising upon Africa (Langley, 1979: 261).

According to Seme, regeneration means “entrance into new life, embracing the diverse phases of a higher, complex existence with the basic factor, resides in awakened race-consciousness” (Langley, 1979: 262). Indeed it is a moral regeneration a thoroughly spiritual and humanistic consciousness to fight against colonization.

Other Pan-Africanist writers such as Nigerian Azikiwe has shown that the preconditions of African “development” were first of all a de-mystification of the white who has been seen as a parent to the African child while he destroyed Africa since the time slavery. He said:

slavery played its shameful role in depopulating Africa; capitalism denuded it of its wealth; colonialism deprived it of its birthright, and imperialism emasculated its will to live as a human being and to enjoy its fair share of bounties of good earth(Langley, 1979: 301).

For Azikiwe, quoted by Langly (1997), to enable the despoiled African continent is to restore the past dignity of Africa lost under European imperialism. The same view of Africa’s glorious past is revealed by the black Africano American such as Edouard du Bois and Marcus Garvey who emphasize the importance of black consciousness and, by their poems and jazz songs, appreciate Africa as their glorious motherland. Therefore one can understand that Mbeki’s critique of colonialism and his view of the African past has roots in the idea of all liberalist black movements.

Derived from this analysis, it is evident that Mbeki attempts to suggest that efforts must be made by Africans to seek African solutions to African problems. It is imperative to

create room for African development, but Mbeki's African Renaissance discourse which is moralistic, can no longer challenge global economic inequalities. It cannot indicate concrete strategies of how African development should occur. Even the other authors mentioned earlier did not provide any strategies except Nyerere. They had a messianic vision by which they argued that by a consciousness of the African glorious past and a belief in an African development discourse, something would automatically happen to change the situation in Africa. Nyerere, on the other hand had concrete strategies such as the villagization program, which emphasized rural development. Other strategies included the implementation of the use of Swahili as an African language, which could unify not only Tanzanian people but also the Eastern African region. Mbeki like Nyerere should have strategies that portray how the African Renaissance should be accomplished and should speak about "a global ethic, which has to rise from the conscious relation of fact that our (worldwide) existence depends on well-being of the whole" (Murobe, 2000: 43). Unfortunately his discourse is an idealistic discussion on how Africa should be. How do African leaders take it into account and translate it into suitable national, regional and international strategies?

4.3 Discourses of modernization, good governance, globalization, and the African Renaissance

Autonomy is the goal of development according to all definitions. But while some African thinkers discussed self-development because "an other cannot be the cause of

development in self, without harming the autonomy of self'(Galtung, 1998: 130), the doctrine of economic intervention designed by developed countries was for awakening the underdeveloped countries. In fact, they believe that the socio-economic level of developing countries is primitive, stagnant and far behind that of the developed countries. To improve such a state is the priority of the developed areas that possess the knowledge and skills for making the benefits of its technological advances available for improving the growth of underdeveloped countries. On the basis of such a belief, modernization, good governance and globalization are defined as strategies to achieve the goal of development in developing countries. This section will discuss these development discourses and how they differ or are similar to the African Renaissance discourse.

4.3.1 Discourses of modernization and the African Renaissance

Modernization as a concept of development has taken many centuries to shape it into the dominant concept. Its roots can be traced from the widening of the gap between the ancients and the moderns, whose philosophical and theoretical battles over issues of development gave birth to such discourses as civilization, progress and later development. Hence modernization as a discourse of development emerged at the end of the Second World War. Its origins can be traced to the USA aid given in response to economic disparities between the countries of the West and the East and the South. Countries in these areas were categorized on the basis of economic development as being developed in the West and being underdeveloped in the South. The characteristics of a

developed society from the Western perspective were strong manufacturing industries, a strong political system with less powers of intervention in economic affairs, high levels of education, scientific and technological development as well as a complete shift away from traditional and religious authorities to modern bureaucratic authority structures (Rist, 1998: 10-12). Private and public life are two separate entities while individual and private property are necessary freedoms of the people (Rist, 1998: 36-37).

By definition, these characteristics did not exist in “underdeveloped” societies. By modernization developed societies aimed at transforming the underdeveloped societies so that they also could embrace the above characteristics. That means that they were aiming at reshaping what they called the primitive societies into modern ones. That is, they aimed to recreate them in their own image. The ideological roots of the modernity discourse came from the assumptions that were made by the social evolutionists of the nineteenth century that “progress has the same substance or nature as history; that all nations travel the same road, and that all do not advance at the same speed” (Rist, 1998: 40). Furthermore, it has informed the economic intervention of Western societies in developing countries by providing human resources, aid and loans to enhance socio-economic growth in developing countries.

The modernist arguments were centered on the power of scientific knowledge. They attempted to shift away from what they viewed as stagnant human history due to its dependence on the wisdom of the ancients (ibid). This challenge to the reliability and

relevancy of ancient wisdom was to mark a break from the feudal and monarchical systems. The superiority attached to their wisdom was no longer valid and it was therefore imperative to take a path towards growth and progress currently spoken as development. The assumption above was therefore a final acceptance of the significance of history or past experiences (primitive life) as the lowest stage of nature and the necessity for the continuity of society towards the highest stage of human development that is, progress (Rist, 1998: 41). However within the African experience modernity was another form of colonialism with its tendency to look down on Africans as primitive due to their slow pace of social evolution and hence modernization or civilization of the “uncivilized” nations did not only become a matter of necessity but a sense of duty which the developed nations had to take into their shoulders (Rist, 1998: 39).

The above evolutionist idea of development is also evident in Mbeki’s African Renaissance discourse. Mbeki’s view of African Renaissance indicates that to move to African development necessitates an acceptance of the African glorious past as a great stage of development that was equal to the developed countries of that time. He argues that it is colonization and neo-colonization that has compromised the welfare of Africa. Mbeki argues that Africans must look beyond colonization to the glorious African past that was as much a part of the fifteenth century renaissance as was Europe. Just as the European Renaissance provided a foundation for European development so this period should have provided a foundation for African development.

After all, in the context of the evolution of the European peoples, when we speak of renaissance, we speak of advances in science, a revolution in printing and an attendant spread, development and flowering of knowledge and a blossoming of the arts...As African, we recall the fact as European Renaissance burst into history in fifteen and sixteenth centuries, there was a royal court in the African city of Timbuktu, which, in the same centuries was as learned as its European counterparts (Mbeki, 1998d: 241).

In a way typical of the evolutionist's view of modernization, Mbeki's view of the African Renaissance projects into both the past and the future. But there is a difference between both views. The evolutionist view of modernization claims that modernization is a shift from traditional beliefs to scientific progress, while Mbeki calls to build development on indigenous strategies like the previous development of arts, skills of doctors and judges and especially, the traditional good governance of Timbuktu in the fifteenth century. However, deeper insight into the discourse of the African Renaissance is gained from considering Mbeki's view of 'good governance', which is an essential element in the concept of 'development'.

4.3.2 Discourses of good governance and the African Renaissance

"Good governance" was first used as a discourse of development by the World Bank with a report titled *Sub-Saharan Africa: From crisis to sustainable growth (1989)*. The main aim was to correct the sharp contrast between the modern and traditional societies and to suggest that modernization strategies should not again impose alien systems on traditional societies. According to Abrahamsen's interpretation of the World Bank view,

“good governance discourse asserts that it seeks to create ‘a modern sector’ that supports the traditional sector, rather than one that aims to replace it”(Abrahamsen, 2000: 61). In quoting Landell-Mills (1992) he asserts that the aim of the good governance challenge initiated by the World Bank

is to build on the elements (of African tradition) that are compatible with modernization and development and reject those that are not and, where necessary and appropriate borrowing wittingly from foreign models, western and eastern (Abrahamsen: 2000: 60).

In the discourse of good governance the World Bank claims to have discovered the real solutions to the problems of development in Third World countries. In this view previous development efforts have failed because the strategy of development was misconceived. The new strategy of development consists of three main points.

Firstly, the point of departure for development lies within the indigenous culture of liberal capitalism as shown in the African entrepreneurial spirit throughout the long history of African trade in all parts of the continent.

Secondly, as massive resources have previously been directed to public enterprises and misconceived policies, the good governance discourse claims to empower ordinary people by implementing economic Structural Adjustment Programs (ESAP) and economic liberalization.

Thirdly, this economic liberalization is expected to decentralize decision making from the state and multiply the centers of power. This in turn is assumed to lead to the development of a civil society capable of limiting the power of the state and of providing the basis for liberal democratic politics (Abrahamsen, 2000: 51). Then, on the basis of democratic policies the government will be more flexible and offer greater public accountability. One can conclude that good governance is about embracing democracy and economic liberalism. However Abrahamsen shows that it is utopian to impose a

political change on the African civil society as it is currently constructed and operates. The weakness of civil society in many African countries is that it works hand in hand with state officials and then merely enables them to serve their own interests without fear of being called to account. In other countries civil society does not play a large role in political life.

Many associations in civil society do not involve any self-conscious political intention or action and do not seek to limit the reach of the state or influence its policies. Other groups, in turn, may espouse authoritarian ideologies and pursue undemocratic strategies and goals. Civil society cannot therefore be seen as either inherently democratic or undemocratic; rather, its character may vary across time and space (Abrahamsen, 2000: 54).

The same idea as that of the World Bank can be found in Mbeki's view about African development in that he argues that political legitimacy, good governance and public accountability are indispensable to development and growth, and that economic liberalism within Africa will attract external donors and investors to Africa and lead to successful development.

What we have been talking about is the establishment of genuine and stable democracies in Africa, in which the systems of governance will flourish because they derive their authority and legitimacy from the will of the people. The point must be made that the new political order owes its existence to the African experience of many decades which teaches us, as Africans, that what we tried did not work, that the one-party states and military governments will not work... that the people must govern (Mbeki, 1998b: 201).

He clearly points out that political change will make Africa a suitable destination for foreign investments (Mbeki, 1998b: 202). His goal is to enable private investment and economic growth for Africa to take place, yet without any strategy to deal with inequalities raised by the system of a liberal economy. This is shown by his pride in the privatization of public services, which has already taken place in Africa and which he sees as indicative of its development.

Many countries across the continent have embarked on programs to privatize these assets (social, educational, health services), thus giving primacy to the domestic and foreign private sector in the struggle to achieve economic growth and development” (Mbeki, 1998c: 228).

For successful economic growth he calls all throughout the world to invest in Africa, but one must ask about the poor people who will not be able to cope with the system of global economy? The problem here is that Mbeki seems to equate economic growth with development without taking into consideration the problem of inequalities that exist in the global neo-liberal economic order.

4.3.3 Discourses of globalization and the African Renaissance

According to Castells (1998), the new global economy has emerged from the initiative of restructuring capitalism since the 1970s and has spread all over the world through international technology. As was said in Chapter one, the economic system is global

because it is concerned with the linkage between production, consumption, circulation of goods, services and technologies that are connected in different places throughout the world with its capacities being shared across the globe in real time. This has resulted in what Castells calls “the network system”. Hence the society in which the term is applied is called the network society. With its informal character, the network system has the capacity to significantly change socio-economic behavior by flows of interactions throughout the world (Castells, 1998: 136-147). However only some societies are able to benefit from such a system while others are exploited. Castells argues that by being both global and informal, the new economy came to be gradually characterized

by the variable geometry that results from such processes of innovation and competition struggles with the historically produced architecture of the world economic order, inducing the creative chaos that characterizes the new economy (Castells, 1998: 147).

Thus the world is polarized between the affluent areas that are socially developed, and the peripheral areas that are economically devalued and socially excluded. Castells points out that Africa is socially and economically excluded whereas Europe, North America and Asia Pacific are three economically dominant regions that are integrated due to their potential to make contributions to the system. As a result of this exclusion African countries are connected only in so far as they are suppliers of raw materials, which are needed by the industrialized countries who in this case are well connected. Under the dominance of the international free market, Africa cannot attain even a modest standard of global competition. The only country which could be linked to the global economy, is

South Africa since it has a strong economy and hopefully can link its neighbors to the global economy as *primus inter pares* (Castells, 1998: 135-136).

However globalization is not so much an option for Africa but an imperative in the sense that Africa cannot be excluded from the global economy with which it has been connected since colonialism, as a supplier of raw materials. Rist (1998) sees globalization as a refined version of colonization and he observes that the globalization process seeks to solve the problem of liberal economic inequalities by denying it.

The real problem is that in any competitive situation (even open to all) the winners cannot fail to realize that their success is also creating losers, because the race is always based on the knockout principle (Rist, 1998: 236).

Indeed he argues that the problems of inequalities and exploitation still exist because on the road to growth no one can stop and wait for the slow-movers. However it is not necessary to challenge the virtual reality of development and inclusion as a refuge for continuing the eternal belief in development (*ibid*).

Contrary to Rist, Mbeki argues that globalization is one of the pre-conditions for a successful African Renaissance in the sense that

the process of globalization emphasizes the fact that no person is an island, sufficient to himself or herself. Rather all humanity is interdependent (Mbeki, 1998d: 250).

The implication here is that African underdevelopment must be a matter of concern to everybody else in the world and that development and integration in this network society is possible in Africa. He thinks that there are two solutions possible from the international community that are required to help Africa to emerge from economic marginalization to development. Firstly, the international community must “bring about debt relief to the many countries on our continent which suffer from a debt burden”. Secondly

measures must be taken to encourage larger inflows of capital into the continent... with regard to the creation of circumstances which make for high and sustainable economic growth (Mbeki, 1998d:250).

Once again Mbeki’s aspiration to achieve African development is moralistic, arguing that the same capitalistic system, which creates the economic dependence of Africa, should now be, used contrary to nature to help Africa to be developed.

On the other hand Mbeki agrees with Castells that South Africa is achieving the conditions for integration into the global economy such as “ensuring higher levels of growth and employment, increasing the international competitiveness of the economy and maintaining healthy macro-economic balances”(Mbeki, 1998c: 229). He also mentions that South Africa, as part of the Southern African Development Community, will be involved in transforming the sub-continent into a free trade area, which will further enhance the attractiveness of Africa for foreign investment. He finds in South Africa a great promise to invigorate the rest of the continent, when the South African

partners will discover the large African market. One can conclude that Mbeki's view of African development is primarily one of enhancing economic growth whereas other African thinkers have emphasized self-reliance and self-liberation rather than economic growth.

As the above explanation shows that the African Renaissance discourse can be related to several other discourses of development, one question remains; is the African Renaissance a new discourse of development in Africa?

The response could be yes and no.

It is not a new discourse of development in that it borrows the objectives of other development discourses used before by Pan-Africanists such as African regeneration and self-reliance. It aims to achieve the objectives by strategies taken from the western discourses of development such as good governance, democracy, accountability, structural adjustment programs and globalization. Mbeki does not present anything new.

However it is a new discourse in its capacity to mix the Pan-African discourse with the western conceptions of development. However, from the discussion thus far, it is clear that the idea of the African Renaissance cannot be attributed solely to Mbeki. His great contribution is to call again for Africans to realize their "self-discovery and the restoration of the African's self-esteem" without which Africans will never become combatant for African development.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND REMARKS

This study concludes with three points, which will give an overview of this dissertation. The first point focuses on the background of this study; the second is directed to the debate of the African Renaissance discourse located within development discourses in the context of the African continent; and the last is concerned with conditions required to achieve the African Renaissance.

Firstly, this study has tried to make some sense of the background to the African Renaissance as a discourse of development in Africa. The African Renaissance continues the successive discourses of development since the nineteenth century, which have identified problems facing Africa and proposed solutions for African development without any success. Several sociologists, politicians, economists and other researchers have drawn on different discourses to suggest ways to achieve development and consequently this study shows that there are two global views of how to achieve African development. On the one hand, dominant economist views focus on economic growth, liberalism of international trade and globalization with major conditions of its success being good governance and structural adjustment, democracy and cultural modernization.

On the other hand, most African thinkers have engaged in discourses based on ideas of self-reliance, self-determination and autonomy as dominant requirements for African development. Consequently there are two schools of thought about African development

with regard to globalization. The first school, identified by Murobe (2000) as Africano-pessimist school, finds that Africa is increasingly marginalized because continuing economic and political crises emanate from the failure of Africa to move towards economic liberalism and democracy. The second school created by cultural vindicationists, is based on the idea of African humanism as an antithesis to developed countries' thinking, which sees Africans as sub-humans, savages and uncivilized people. However they do not propose any strategy to help Africa to achieve its development. In the light of Mbeki's statement that African problems should be solved by African themselves, this dissertation sets out to analyse the discourse of Mbeki's African Renaissance discourse and to highlight the practical solutions proposed by him for redressing those problems and for achieving development.

The second point of this conclusion follows: It has been argued that the African Renaissance as a discourse of African development is constructed through three arguments in relation to three great periods of African development. The first moment is seen as a relatively idyllic African past with glorious discoveries. Mbeki sees this as a feature of the social African harmony, with perfect political policies and economic development as it was in other parts of world. The second moment is characterized by the impact of colonization and the consequences experienced in Africa such as the loss of African identity, the appearance of corruption, immorality and poverty. The third moment is highlighted by the need for an African rebirth, which means a shift from neo-colonization, poverty, underdevelopment, devaluation of African culture and

marginalization to development and rediscovering African identity. He argues that the conditions to achieve this are now present in Africa. He highlights the last moment of decolonization of the continent since the end of South African apartheid, economic globalization and the mass consciousness of African struggle against corruption and towards good governance.

Looking at Mbeki's conceptualization of the African Renaissance discourse and comparing it with other discourses of development, which have shaped development in Africa, one can find that Mbeki has been inspired by Pan-Africanist discourses such as African regeneration and self-reliance combined with dominant political and economic discourses such as globalization, good governance, structural adjustment and democracy. While Mbeki refers to several aspirations, which he would like to see achieved through African development he does not give any practical strategy to do so. It seems agreed that it is imperative to create room for African development, but Mbeki's African Renaissance, which is moralistic, can no longer challenge global economic inequalities. It cannot indicate concrete strategies of how African development should occur. The problem here is that Mbeki seems to equate economic growth with development without taking into consideration the problem of inequalities that exist in the global neo-liberal economic order. This view of strategies for African development seems to be theoretically inadequate and, in ending the study, two propositions are suggested to realize the African Renaissance discourse.

Firstly the African Renaissance must not end with the surface needs and problems facing Africa but it must honestly focus on the root problems, which this writer presents as being twofold, and the following nature. Problems of Africa are rooted in social inequalities within each country. This inequality can take the form of ethnic divisions, class and gender inequalities or regional discrimination. Several African theorists have shown that discrimination is a long term result of colonization and neo-colonization in order for its adherents to excuse themselves or their co-temporal policy makers. This should be now seen as an internal problem, which causes multiple community violence, wars, genocide, rape, and individual insecurity. The deep character of the problems facing Africa is a result of African policy, which does not take care of the majority of poor people but focuses on satisfying the elitists. The rebirth of Africa must be concerned with reform in education for all, land reform, social services facilities, and rural development. This must be achieved by government policies for the disadvantaged sectors of society. Without this some Africans will continue to be seen as sub-human by others; outside Africa as well as within Africa itself in the form of Xenophobia or Regionalism.

The second proposition is to strategically focus on an integrationist African policy. African co-operation must be a goal in itself and not a means to attract foreign investment from developed countries. With regard to organizations promoting African unity, these should provide an institutional framework for the promotion of Africanity. These propositions are not the only possible strategies of the African Renaissance and African

development but are shown as being important to deal with multiple problems experienced by African people.

The recent establishment of the Millenium Africa Recovery Program (MAP) could conceivably address the second proposition and provide the institutional framework and concrete strategies for achieving African integration and the African Renaissance. Unfortunately an evaluation of the Millenium African Recovery Program is beyond the scope of this thesis.

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