

# African Renaissance

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## Unveiling the Path to African Renaissance: An Examination of Development Agendas, Cultural Perspectives, and Afrocentric Solutions

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### Abstract

The study examines the discrepancy between Africa's desired development and its current challenges despite implementing commendable continental strategies like NEPAD and Agenda 2063 by the African Union. Despite aiming for sustainable growth and the African Renaissance, these initiatives have proven ineffective, leaving Africa plagued by poverty and declining governance. This research probes the underlying theories guiding these agendas and assesses their compatibility with the vision of an African Renaissance, utilizing a qualitative research method and an Afrocentric theoretical perspective. The findings highlight two key obstacles to achieving the African Renaissance: dependence on external development approaches and weak leadership. The paper argues that African culture, often overlooked in Western theories, is crucial for realizing the African Renaissance. It suggests Afrocentricity as a culturally rooted theoretical approach distinct from foreign theories, emphasizing the need for culturally based solutions and recommending the involvement of African-centred scholars in devising strategies for Africa's challenges.

**Keywords:** *African Renaissance; NEPAD; Agenda 2063; Afrocentric perspective; Development strategies; Pan-Africanism; Eurocentric theories; Cultural revitalization*

## **1. Introduction**

Today, Africa is almost synonymous with poverty, debt, and corrupt leadership. Many African countries remain the least developed, with the highest level of poverty, insecurity, and an unacceptable low standard of living. Official data estimate that about 40 percent of the African population is living on less than \$1.90 a day (World Bank, 2022). According to Mama (2013), the current Africa was not the dream of citizens who supported nationalists during the struggles for independence. Ordinary citizens fought and died to ensure that they would have independent governments of African people, by African people, and for African people. African people hoped that having their own states would empower them to end the structural underdevelopment of Africa set in place by colonialism. Unfortunately, over six decades after the independence of most African countries, African people are still seeking freedom and self-realisation.

However, there has always been some optimism about the future of Africa. One of the most important developments in this direction has been the establishment of the African Union (AU) in Durban in July 2002 and the adoption of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in Abuja, Nigeria, in October 2001. Furthermore, in January 2013, the African Union Summit adopted Agenda 2063, "The Africa We Want," as Africa's blueprint and master plan for sustainable development and economic growth on the continent (AU DA-NEPAD, 2020). These initiatives represent the revival and re-emergence of pan-Africanism under the general rubric of an African Renaissance with a vision for an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa that will be a dynamic force in the global arena driven by its own citizens (Agupusi, 2022).

The problem, however, is that, despite being in existence for two decades, the AU has grappled with effectively propelling Africa's economic development in alignment with its outlined goals. Furthermore, the economic growth witnessed in Africa over the past twenty years pales in comparison to the transformative successes experienced by newly industrialised economies like South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore (Ochieng, 2016; Agupusi, 2022). Official reports indicate a decline in the standard of living and a concerning trend of deteriorating political governance across numerous countries (AU, 2019).

Against the backdrop of persistent challenges in governance and development across Africa, despite the African Union's efforts through various development agendas, this study probes the underlying theories guiding these agendas and explores their compatibility with the vision and principles of an African Renaissance. The central argument posited in this paper is that the African Renaissance cannot be achieved with Western theories or imported strategies. This assertion stems from the evident shortcomings of externally imposed development frameworks in developing nations and the observed significance of indigenous strategies, tailored to local attributes, in propelling the rapid progress of emerging economies like China and Brazil (Agupusi, 2016; Arestis et al., 2021).

The main objective of this study is to establish that attaining the African Renaissance demands the adoption of African-centred theories and strategies. The methodology employed in this study involves a thorough analysis of literature, publications, and official documents related to African development strategies, African culture, and the reality on the continent. The inclusion criteria for selected materials were based on their relevance to the research objectives. The study adopts an Afrocentric theoretical perspective, ensuring that all data are scrutinised through a lens centred on African experiences and perspectives. Afrocentricity is a problem-solving tool that analyzes problems in the interest of Africans and gives insight into possible cultural solutions for them. The theory is discussed in detail later in the paper. This paper is important because it contributes to efforts towards finding what works for Africa's development.

The paper is organised into seven parts. The first section is the introduction; the second section conceptualises the African Renaissance; the third section discusses various continental initiatives towards developing Africa; the fourth section discusses the challenges of achieving the African Renaissance; the fifth section presents the importance of culture for the achievement of the African Renaissance; the sixth section recommends Afrocentricity as the cultural pathway to the African Renaissance; and the seventh section presents the summary and conclusion.

## **2. Conceptualising the African Renaissance**

Renaissance means rebirth, reawakening, renewal, or revival. Based on the works of Muchie & Gumede (2017), Cossa (2009), and Seme (1906),

the African Renaissance represents the revitalization of African culture, the regeneration of African innate creativity, the rise of Pan-Africanism, and the restoration of Africa's glory achievable through the provision of African solutions to African problems. Although the European Renaissance is popular in literature, the African Renaissance is different from the European Renaissance because African culture is different from Europe's. While the European Renaissance revived the European culture of individualism and expanded capitalism, the African Renaissance was aimed at reviving the African cultures of communalism and humanism.

During his epic speech at Columbia University in 1906, Pixley Isaka Seme asserts that African cultural regeneration is different from other renaissances because it is deeply rooted in spirituality, humanism, and an everlasting moral regeneration (Seme, 1906). The African Renaissance Institute (2000) also emphasises the importance of the community in achieving the African Renaissance, which is defined as a change in individual consciousness to revive diverse traditional African values, emphasising personal responsibility to the community and recognising collective agency in shaping their own destiny alongside others. Accordingly, Africa must reawaken its culture and philosophies for self-determination and to improve the welfare of its people.

Moreover, the African Renaissance has been particularly linked to pan-Africanism (Cossa, 2019). Historically, Pan-Africanism is a movement dedicated to opposing the oppression of Africans and combating white supremacy. This movement recognizes the uniqueness of African civilizations and celebrates the richness of African cultures (Taye, 2019). The Pan-African Congress of 1945, held in Manchester, United Kingdom, issued a declaration asserting that all colonized peoples must be free from foreign imperialist control and empowered to elect their own governments. Pan-Africanists' advocacy for emancipation goes beyond political independence. According to Nkrumah (1970), breaking free from European ideologies and perspectives is crucial, as these have historically marginalized Africa's traditional knowledge systems and cultural heritage.

While Pan-Africanism, was able to achieve the independence of African states from colonial rule, it failed to liberate Africa from corruption, and economic backwardness (Mandela, 2008). Post-colonial Africa therefore needs another renaissance that is well-targeted to improve welfare. According to Mandela (2008),

*"Africa cries out for a new birth; Carthage awaits the restoration of its glory. If freedom was the crown which the fighters of liberation sought to place on the head of mother Africa, let the upliftment, the happiness, prosperity, and comfort of her children be the jewels of the crown."*

It was in this context that Thabo Mbeki formally introduced the term African Renaissance in an address in Johannesburg in 1998. Mbeki's speech is characterised by an emphasis on the need to advance developmental agendas that would bring Africa to a position of competitor in the global world economy, and Africa's intelligentsia must drive the agenda (Marumo & Chakale, 2018). Consequently, the African Renaissance is defined in this study as the conscious reawakening of valuable principles, theories, resources, and institutions within African culture by African intellectuals to inform the creation of indigenous development strategies encompassing governance, economic approaches, and financing strategies. Governance in this study refers to political governance, defined as how a society is managed for the achievement of societal goals and the good welfare of its members (Adejumo-Ayibiowu 2020a). Central to this definition of African Renaissance is the unwavering commitment of the African people, including leaders, to actively implement these strategies, working collectively towards the realisation of a united and prosperous Africa as envisioned by African nationalist and pan-African leaders.

This definition does not negate the possibility of African intellectuals borrowing or adopting development theories and strategies from other cultures or socio-political environments. However, any such borrowed ideals must be tailored to the local context and aligned with the best interests of Africans. Consequently, the African Renaissance advocates for Africa's self-reliance and sustainability, envisioning a shift from a state of external and aid dependence to one of self-determination and welfare improvement. Importantly, this definition does not advocate for the isolation of the continent from the global community. Instead, it signifies a redefinition of Africa's interdependence and interconnectedness, emphasising the pursuit and defence of African interests in the face of Western hegemony. Scholars such as Gyekye (2011) and Asante (1997; 2020) have proposed that postcolonial Africa must undertake initiatives focused on self-determination, decolonization, and deconstruction to revive the cultural values prevalent in pre-colonial Africa, under which African societies flourished before the impact of European imperialism. In pursuit of realising the African Renaissance

and a prosperous Africa, several efforts were launched by African leaders.

### **3. Efforts Towards Achieving African Renaissance and a Prosperous Africa**

In the efforts to develop Africa, numerous initiatives, development plans, and action programmes were launched under the defunct continental body, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). Some of these programmes include, the Bandung Conference, (1955), the *Monrovia Declaration* of 1979; the *Lagos Plan of Action* of 1980 and the Final Act of Lagos (1980), *Africa's Priority Programme of Economic Redressing* (APPER) (1986–1990), and the Africa Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programme for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP), (1989). These initiatives can be categorised as indigenous responses to European domination of the Third World.

The Lagos Plan of Action (LPA), in particular, outlined concrete strategies to counter Africa's underdevelopment by adopting alternative development approaches that diverged from the neo-liberal prescriptions of the World Bank. The principles embedded in the LPA encompassed a commitment to people-focused development, economic diversification, utilisation of indigenous strategies, fostering a spirit of self-reliance, recognising the importance of culture, and promoting regional economic integration and cooperation (OAU, 1980). African scholars, such as Adedeji (2002) and Nwakanma (2016), contend that earlier homegrown development initiatives such as LPA and the AAF-SAP held the potential to drive economic growth and development on the continent. However, their translation into effective implementation and impact has been hindered by various challenges.

Finance, in particular, emerges as a major obstacle to the success of homegrown strategies, with African countries heavily relying on developed nations and their financial institutions for funding (Adedeji, 2022; Nwakanma, 2016). Unfortunately, Western development institutions, especially the World Bank, tend to disregard African initiatives that deviate from their policies. For example, in response to the self-reliance philosophy outlined in the Lagos Plan of Action, the World Bank introduced the "Berg Report" (1981), advocating structural adjustment and increased economic cooperation with advanced capitalist countries as the solution to Africa's development challenges. The structural adjustment recommendations included the adoption of free-

market principles, reduction in public spending, and elimination of subsidies—policies viewed as stringent and anti-welfare in the African context. Despite their controversial nature, in the 1980s, many African countries were compelled to adopt the Structural Adjustment Programme as a precondition for foreign assistance.

Corruption and poor governance in African countries also compound these problems. Post-colonial African history is marked by military dictatorships, corruption, human rights violations, and civil conflicts (Hassan, 2022; Nwakanma, 2016). To tackle these challenges more effectively, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was formed in 2001, serving as a strategic socio-economic development framework for Africa. Shortly after the establishment of NEPAD, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was replaced by a more focused African Union (AU) in July 2002. Like the OAU, the new continental organisation has a vision of promoting unity and sovereignty. Issues such as democracy, good governance, and human rights are also important elements of the AU's agenda. NEPAD was ratified by the AU in 2002 (AU, 2015). Moreover, in 2013, the AU launched Agenda 2063 to serve as a long-term strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of Africa over 50 years. It aims to build on the achievements and lessons learned from NEPAD and other prior initiatives.

### **The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)**

NEPAD was the AU's strategic socio-economic development framework for Africa. NEPAD is acclaimed as Africa's own development strategy, and it is claimed to be pan-African and embedded in the vision of the African Renaissance. NEPAD aims to foster Africa's development in collaboration with developed nations, based on the concept of reciprocal benefits. That is, in return for adopting donor-recommended governance reforms, Africa would receive more aid and trade concessions. The G-8 summit in June 2003, for the same reason, secured conditional pledges to Africa worth £4 billion annually (Burnell, 2004). The NEPAD document emphasized good governance as being key to the renaissance of Africa. To review progress and address problems and delays, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) was adopted in 2002.

However, the NEPAD initiative faced criticism, especially for its adoption of the World Bank's good governance framework (Omotola &

Saliu, 2009; Agupusi, 2016; Burnell, 2004). While advocating for good governance aligns with the desires of the African populace burdened by poor and corrupt leadership, the World Bank's good governance framework and its neoliberal conditionality place a great burden on the African poor (Adejumo-Ayibiwu, 2020a; 2020b). The implementation of NEPAD also reveals the persistent nature of the North-South partnership as a donor-recipient relationship. Regrettably, donor countries often prioritise bilateral diplomatic interests, leading to inconsistencies and contradictions in the political demands they impose through aid relations, sometimes at the expense of pro-democracy objectives (Burnell, 2004). Arguably, in its pursuit of global partnerships and foreign aid, NEPAD perpetuates Eurocentrism, neocolonialism, and Western hegemony over Africa's economic and political systems. More so, despite two decades of AU and NEPAD initiatives, African development challenges of poverty and poor governance persist (Agupusi, 2022).

### **African Union Agenda 2063: A Development Based on the African Renaissance, Self-Reliance, and Self-Determination of Africans**

According to the African Union Agenda 2063, the desired African state is prosperous, peaceful, politically united, self-reliant, well-governed, and has a strong cultural identity. Thus, the Africa we want and which the AU envisages by 2063 is one in which poverty is eradicated and the people have a high standard of living and well-being. The AU agenda projects that by 2063, Africa will have modernised infrastructure and seamless borders (AUDA-NEPAD, 2020). The AU Agenda 2063 aims to rekindle the solidarity and unity of purpose and to create a universal culture of good governance. The agenda emphasised that Africa's development must be based on the African Renaissance, self-reliance, and self-determination of the African people. Notably, the NEPAD Agency was transformed in 2019 into the African Union Development Agency, and it is the implementing arm for the AU's Agenda 2063 development strategy.

It has been about a decade since the inception of Agenda 2063 and nearly two decades since the establishment of NEPAD. However, these laudable initiatives remain consistently imperilled by the African Union's weakest aspects: governance and economic development (Agupusi, 2016; 2022). Africa's economic performance has not been robust enough to transition the majority of African countries into industrialised

economies (Ochieng, 2016). With 60 percent of Africa's population still living in poverty, Africa's promising growth has not been inclusive (Kuyoro et al., 2023). Moreover, elections have not notably improved accountability, or reduced corruption across Africa. Instead, insecurity and corruption have led to a disturbing trend of democratic reversals and military takeovers in several nations. Between 2020 and 2023, nine military coups or attempted power grabs occurred in various African countries, including Chad, Burkina Faso, Sudan, Guinea, Niger, and Mali (Felix, 2023).

The stark disparity between the desired Africa and the current undesirable situation, despite the existence of laudable development strategies, raises a critical question: to what extent can the AU effectively achieve the objectives outlined in the AU Agenda 2063? This question prompts reflection on the historical performance of the AU and its precursor, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). Both entities have formulated several agendas that fall short of comprehensively addressing Africa's governance and development challenges. The study argues that Africa's external dependence is a major factor inhibiting the African Renaissance and the positive outcomes of Africa's development efforts. This is further discussed in the next section.

#### **4. The Challenge of Attaining African Renaissance**

Many of the development initiatives undertaken by the OAU and AU, such as NEPAD and the AU Agenda 2063, are rooted in the vision of the African Renaissance. Consequently, African policymakers acknowledge the imperative of cultivating a spirit of self-reliance, leveraging indigenous strategies rooted in African culture, and harnessing Africa's resources while relying on the potential and agency of African people. However, achieving the African Renaissance, especially the cultural revitalization necessary for Africa's economic development, has been fraught with serious challenges. The reasons why achieving the African Renaissance has been difficult can be attributed to at least two factors: the external dependency of approaches and the weakness of leadership or agency. These factors are further explained below.

Despite their African Renaissance rhetoric, what is notable about Africa's development strategies enumerated earlier is their external dependency, either in terms of funding or in terms of theory, which contributed to their ineffectiveness. The earlier Indigenous development

strategies under the OAU, which emphasised self-reliance, mainly depended on rich countries in the West and their financial institutions for funding. Given that the self-reliance philosophy of these initiatives contradicts donors' free market ideology, indigenous initiatives received no financial assistance from the West and were wasted. In contrast, the launch of NEPAD received international accolades and generous donors' support but still could not achieve the African Renaissance. But is NEPAD a homegrown initiative or an externally dependent initiative with the buy-in of African countries? It is important to differentiate between the two types of arrangements.

In delineating between 'homegrown development' and 'country ownership'—terms often used interchangeably—Agupusi (2016) clarifies that in most international agendas, ownership primarily pertains to the commitment of borrowing countries to implementing reforms urged by donors and complying with loan conditions within the aid discourse. On the other hand, homegrown development embodies distinct characteristics essential for sustainable development: complete independence and autonomy in the development process; a focus on local imperatives and comparative advantages; the establishment of robust institutions; and the enhancement of local capacity to foster self-reliance.

Arguably, NEPAD does not align with the homegrown criteria. NEPAD is premised on the principle of global partnership as opposed to the principle of self-reliance of earlier African development strategies like LPA. Moreover, the nature of the partnership in NEPAD is that African countries will receive foreign aid in exchange for meeting Western donors' governance and neoliberal conditions. Further to this partnership, NEPAD's growth strategies have largely been predicated upon the World Bank's one-size-fits-all neoliberal economic reforms with little or no consideration of African culture and the peculiarities of each local economy. Good governance in NEPAD was also predicted by a country accepting Western donors' institutional reforms. Adejumo-Ayibiwu (2020a) specifically states that the neoliberal aspects of the World Bank's good governance agenda embraced by NEPAD do not only detrimentally impact the welfare of impoverished Africans but also extend Western capitalist interests within African nations.

The second challenge that makes Africa's battle against underdevelopment and neo-colonisation hard to win is poor leadership. This can be called the weakness of the agency of development. Whether LPA under the OAU or NEPAD and Agenda 2063 under the AU,

continental development initiatives depend on African political leaders as the agency of development, especially for implementation and funding. Regrettably, African post-independence political history is littered with various forms of corrupt authoritarian regimes (Hassan, 2022). Examples include Siad Barre of Somalia, Muammar Qaddafi of Libya, and Gnassingbé Eyadéma of Togo. Despite the evidence of corruption and brutality in these regimes, they enjoyed aid inflows from the West, especially during the Cold War.

In numerous African nations, such as Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe, regular multi-party elections have become customary since the 1990s. However, these democracies exhibit recurring issues such as electoral manipulation, unfair media practices, the misuse of state resources, and tendencies towards authoritarianism among political leaders. Insights gleaned from Hassan (2022) highlight how autocratic regimes adeptly manipulate ostensibly democratic institutions to perpetuate their authoritarian grip on power. This is what Levitsky and Way (2010) define as "competitive authoritarianism," which is a form of governance that portrays itself as operating within formal democratic institutions like multiparty elections, yet it lacks the essential elements of true democracy.

Africa's political outcomes indicate that although aligning a country's political system with the World Bank's institutional model might appease donors' calls for good governance, these reforms alone cannot ensure achieving the governance that genuinely serves and represents the interests of African people. For Africa to achieve the African Renaissance, it is becoming imperative to pivot towards strategies that are less reliant on external factors, such as aid conditions and borrowed frameworks, while prioritising strong leadership and good governance. This calls for fostering homegrown solutions that are attuned to local realities, cultures, and needs. It is for this reason that this study proposes that African policymakers must exploit cultural approaches to development. Afrocentricity, in particular, is a theory and methodology that is compatible with the African Renaissance and that holds the potential to foster good governance and development in Africa. This recommendation is elaborated on in the next sections.

## **5. The Importance of Culture for the Achievement of the African Renaissance**

What is noteworthy is the fact that mainstream development theories often imposed on Africa are rooted in Western culture and work to expand Western capitalist interests. Notable in this regard is modernization theory and its offshoots, neoliberalism and globalisation (Ukwandu, 2017). These theories are founded on the assumption that the local cultures of developing countries are the obstacles to their development and that development can only occur in Africa and other third-world countries upon the internalisation of Western cultural values by the local populace (Parsons, 1964). However, the failure of modernization has led to the questioning of development strategies that are premised on the subjugation of local culture and imitation of Western philosophy.

Even though Western theories and ideologies have been presented as universal, it remains that they are rooted in European culture; put differently, they are culture-based theories, and that fact highlights the importance of culture in development planning. For example, newly industrialised East Asian countries, which have achieved remarkable growth in recent times, attributed this to the resistance of Western culture and the revitalization of their local culture (Arestis et al., 2021). Asian growth success particularly signifies that culture is a missing link in finding the appropriate development path and strategies for African development. Culture is the way of life of a set of people, and culture provides the pillar that holds the effectiveness of any development strategy. Culture is the totality of the way of life of African people. The destruction of the culture of any people is the destruction of the people's lives, and it is a difficult process to try to develop a local society using another society's culture.

The application of Western development models in African countries rests on incompatible and unrealistic assumptions, disregarding crucial cultural and historical differences that significantly shape African behaviours. Asante (1998, 2020) argues that embracing African culture is pivotal for Africa's development and validates Africa's worldview. Therefore, the challenge for African scholarship is creating theories and strategies rooted in African culture and socio-economic realities. However, acknowledging the importance of African culture in shaping development strategies does not imply that all aspects of

African culture are totally beneficial, as some require refinement to align with modern African life (Awoniyi, 2015; Gyekye, 2002).

The problem, however, is that while there is a proliferation of Western theories of development and governance, there is a scarcity of well-articulated theories that are based on African culture and which truly reflect African reality (Basheka, 2015; Adejumo-Ayibiowu, 2022). This scarcity is not because African philosophy lacks critical thinking to create modern African-centred models that can promote development. Rather, it is due to the European epistemological hegemony which subjugates African knowledge systems. However, in recent times, Afrocentricity has emerged as a scientific approach well suited for African reality as it is based on African culture and history rather than an imitation of any foreign theory or approach (Adejumo-Ayibiowu, 2022). The next section briefly discusses Afrocentricity Theory and recommends the paradigm as a cultural pathway to analyse African problems and the African Renaissance.

## **6. Recommending Afrocentricity as the Cultural Pathway to the African Renaissance**

The position of this paper is that Africa must follow a cultural and context-specific development pathway to achieve the African Renaissance and the desired vision for Africa. Thus, it is a necessity that African policymakers adopt well-articulated scientific theories that are compatible with African culture and prioritise the interests of African people. Afrocentricity has emerged to bridge the gap of a lack of well-developed, home-grown, and context-specific scientific paradigms in Africa. The origin of Afrocentricity as an academic theory and methodology can be traced to Molefi Asante. According to Asante (2020), Afrocentricity is a philosophical paradigm used to generate theories and methods of analysis of the social, economic, political, and cultural conditions of African people.

Afrocentricity involves conscious research of African culture for important principles, theories, patterns, institutions, and ideas that can be adapted for contemporary usage. Despite the diversities of culture, the common core cultural characteristics that shape the perception of reality in Africa include the importance of the community, a high level of spirituality and ethical concern, harmony with nature, belief in veneration of ancestors, and the unity of being (Asante, 1998). These characteristics form Afrocentric assumptions. The African culture of

communalism and humanness particularly differentiates African societies from European individualistic societies. The spiritual cannot be ignored in any analysis regarding Africa. For example, the spiritual element of humanness in Yoruba culture helped in regulating social and political behaviour and in achieving good governance and development (Adejumo-Ayibiowu, 2022).

Afrocentricity's compatibility with the African Renaissance stems from its emphasis on centring African perspectives and experiences in shaping solutions. The Afrocentric paradigm is founded on African cultural and historical context. Afrocentricity acknowledges that African culture is different from Europe's and, likewise, the African experience. For example, for about half a million years, Africa suffered economic exploitation, cultural and intellectual subjugation, and marginalisation by Europeans (Asante, 2020). Meanwhile, Europe was neither colonised nor was its economy exploited by another race. Understanding this unique history and reality and putting it into consideration during development planning and foreign negotiations is important for achieving good development outcomes and the African Renaissance.

Afrocentricity empowers African voices and narratives, contributing to more inclusive, contextually relevant, and effective strategies for governance and development. To achieve the African Renaissance, African policymakers must be conscious that Africa exists within an international environment that imposes Western economic and political interests over developing countries through the global spread of capitalism and neoliberalism. Afrocentricity raises this consciousness among African scholars so that they only recommend theories that are compatible with African reality and policies that work in the interest of African people.

Afrocentricity equips African policymakers with scientific theories and methodologies to develop policies in the interest of Africans. Afrocentric methodology identifies the African people as the main actors in the study of any African phenomenon. The local people must be fully involved, as senior partners, whose viewpoints, interests, and concerns matter (Mkabela, 2005). There is no argument that Afrocentricity is a scientific paradigm given that it fulfils Kuhn's (1962) premise of a scientific paradigm (Mazama, 2001). By studying various aspects of African culture and African life, Afrocentricity can be used to develop context-specific models to solve African problems. For example, to improve governance and development in Africa, Okafor (2006) proposes the Afrocentric theory of political systems, while a

culturally and context-specific good governance model has also been put forward by Adejumo-Ayibowu (2020a, 2022). Recently, some Afrocentric funding innovations have also been proposed by Adejumo-Ayibowu (2024) to improve infrastructure financing in Africa. This paper recommends that involving Afrocentric scholars in crafting and executing policies centred on Africa's interests is a viable route to free Africa from neocolonialism and realise the African Renaissance.

Some critics argue that Afrocentricity's emphasis on African culture overlooks the diversity among African ethnic groups and the transformations brought about by Westernization (Ferguson, 2011). However, Afrocentricity acknowledges these ethnic diversities while highlighting shared cultural commonalities that influence the African worldview. Afrocentricity also places significant importance on the study of Kemet (Ancient Egypt), viewing it as a critical source for the renaissance of African culture. Historical evidence suggests that Kemet provided the foundational ideas that unified African thought and philosophy (Asante, 2005). Furthermore, Afrocentricity recognizes the erosive effects of Westernization on African culture. While this cultural erosion is undeniable, it underscores the urgency for Africans to actively pursue the revival of their cultural identity, values, and philosophy (Asante, 2005). Without deliberate efforts to reclaim and rejuvenate their cultural heritage, African nations risk remaining reliant on European interpretations of African phenomena and external solutions to their challenges.

## **7. Conclusion**

From the analyses of this study, culture represents the missing element necessary to achieve the African Renaissance and foster a prosperous Africa. The study contends that African policymakers must leverage cultural approaches to development. To bridge the gap of a lack of well-developed and culture-based scientific theories in Africa. Afrocentricity has emerged as a scientific paradigm grounded in African culture and history, distinct from any imitation of foreign theories. Afrocentricity's alignment with the African Renaissance comes from its focus on prioritising African perspectives and experiences in shaping solutions. This study suggests that the African Union and leaders across African nations should engage Afrocentric scholars to devise culturally rooted solutions for African problems, providing a cultural pathway towards

achieving the African Renaissance and realising the desired future for Africa.

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