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"The Hopeless Continent?" A critical comparative analysis of 2007/2008 representations of Africa in Time, The Economist and Financial Mail

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Abstract

This study investigates the representations of Africa in three magazines; *Time*, *The Economist* and *Financial Mail*. *Time* and *The Economist* are American and European publications, whereas *Financial Mail* is South African, enabling a comparison of their coverage to be undertaken. The study focuses on representations of politics, economics and HIV/AIDS. A multi-faceted, complementary theoretical framework of critical political economy of the media, theories of news production and cultural studies is utilised. This study triangulates quantitative and qualitative content analysis as a methodological approach. The findings of this study reveal that representations of Africa fall within three typologies: negative, positive and mixed. Negative and stereotypical representations dominate, with very few positive representations detected. Many mixed representations of Africa are presented, which offer both a negative and positive view of the continent and its countries. Overall, local media perpetuate a majority of negative frames of meaning around Africa and so support traditional and current foreign representations of the continent. As much of the language and images used in African stories focus on negative issues, Africa is consequently presented as a largely hopeless continent.

Plagiarism Declaration

I, Janeske Botes (Student Number: 0703926P) am a student registered for a Master of Arts in Media Studies degree in the years 2008 – 2009. I hereby declare the following:

- I am aware that plagiarism (the use of someone else's work without their permission and/or without acknowledging the original source) is wrong.
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Signature: Date:

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Table of Contents

1. Chapter One: Introduction …….....1

2. Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework …….....4
    2.1 Critical political economy of the media…….....5
        2.1.1 Media ownership and control…….....6
        2.1.2 African media ownership and control…….....8
    2.2 Theories of news production……..9
        2.2.1 Political factors……9
        2.2.2 Economic factors…….....11
        2.2.3 Organisational and professional factors…….....12
            2.2.3.1 News selection……... 13
            2.2.3.2 Agenda-setting……... 14
        2.2.4 Sources…….....15

    2.3 Cultural studies……..... 17
        2.3.1 Representation…….. 17
        2.3.2 Language…….. 18
        2.3.3 Visual images……... 19
        2.3.4 A typology of representation……... 20
            2.3.4.1 Negative frames of meaning……. 20
            2.3.4.2 Positive frames of meaning……... 21
            2.3.4.3 Mixed frames of meaning……. 22
        2.3.5 Representations of Africa……..... 22
        2.3.6 Power relations……..... 23
    2.4 Conclusion…….. 25

3. Chapter Three: Methods …….. . 26
    3.1 Quantitative and qualitative content analysis……. 26
    3.2 Using qualitative content analysis…….. 27

3.2.1 Selection of articles for analysis…….. 27
3.2.2 Selection of themes for analysis……... 28
3.2.3 Semiotic analysis…….. 29
3.3 Conclusion……... 31

4. Chapter Four: Findings ……..... 32
4.1 Theme breakdown……... 32
4.2 Countries covered…… 35
4.3 Sources……53
4.4 Breakdown of sources…….....54
4.5 Images…….....74
4.6 Breakdown of images……..... 75
4.7 Conclusion……... 77

5. Chapter Five: Analysis ……..... 78
5.1 A typology of representation……... 78
5.1.1 Negative and stereotypical frames of meaning…….....78
5.1.1.1 The crisis-ridden continent……..... 79
5.1.1.2 The censored continent…….....84
5.1.1.3 The doomed continent ……...85
5.1.1.4 The dark continent……. 88
5.1.1.5 The diseased continent……...90
5.1.2 Positive frames of meaning……...90
5.1.3 Mixed frames of meaning…….....92
5.2 Conclusion……... 96

6. Chapter Six: Conclusion …….....97

Bibliography…….. ... 100

List of Tables

1. Table 1: Overall figures for July – December 2007……... 33
2. Table 2: Overall figures for January – October 2008…… 33
3. Table 3: Countries covered in the politics theme in *Time*, July – December 2007……... 35
4. Table 4: Countries covered in the economics theme in *Time*, July – December 2007……... 36
5. Table 5: Countries covered in the HIV/AIDS theme in *Time*, July – December 2007……... 36
6. Table 6: Overall countries covered in *Time*, July – December 2007……. 37
7. Table 7: Countries covered in the politics theme in *Time*, January – October 2008……. 38
8. Table 8: Countries covered in the economics theme in *Time*, January – October 2008……. 39
9. Table 9: Countries covered in the HIV/AIDS theme in *Time*, January – October 2008……. 39
10. Table 10: Overall countries covered in *Time*, January – October 2008……. 40
11. Table 11: Countries covered in the politics theme in *The Economist*, July – December 2007……..... 41
12. Table 12: Countries covered in the economics theme in *The Economist*, July – December 2007……..... 42
13. Table 13: Countries covered in the HIV/AIDS theme in *The Economist*, July – December 2007……..... 42
14. Table 14: Overall countries covered in *The Economist*, July – December 2007……..... 43
15. Table 15: Countries covered in the politics theme in *The Economist*, January – October 2008……. 44
16. Table 16: Countries covered in the economics theme in *The Economist*, January – October 2008……. 45

17. Table 17: Countries covered in the HIV/AIDS theme in *The Economist*, January – October 2008…… 45
18. Table 18: Overall countries covered in *The Economist*, January – October 2008…… 46
19. Table 19: Countries covered in the politics theme in *Financial Mail*, July – December 2007……..... 47
20. Table 20: Countries covered in the economics theme in *Financial Mail*, July – December 2007……..... 48
21. Table 21: Countries covered in the HIV/AIDS theme in *Financial Mail*, July – December 2007……..... 48
22. Table 22: Overall countries covered in *Financial Mail*, July – December 2007……..... 49
23. Table 23: Countries covered in the politics theme in *Financial Mail*, January – October 2008…… 50
24. Table 24: Countries covered in the economics theme in *Financial Mail*, January – October 2008…… 51
25. Table 25: Countries covered in the HIV/AIDS theme in *Financial Mail*, January – October 2008…… 51
26. Table 26: Overall countries covered in *Financial Mail*, January – October 2008…… 52
27. Table 27: Overall figures of sources used, July – December 2007……..... 54
28. Table 28: Overall figures of sources used, January – October 2008…… 54
29. Table 29: Summary of sources used per theme in *Time*, July – December 2007……..... 55
30. Table 30: Summary of sources used per theme in *Time*, January – October 2008…… 58
31. Table 31: Summary of sources used per theme in *The Economist*, July – December 2007……..... 61
32. Table 32: Summary of sources used per theme in *The Economist*, January – October 2008…… 63

33. Table 33: Summary of sources used per theme in *Financial Mail*, July – December 2007……..... 66
34. Table 34: Summary of sources used per theme in *Financial Mail*, January – October 2008……. 70
35. Table 35: Overall occurrence of images for July – December 2007…….. 74
36. Table 36: Overall occurrence of images for January – October 2008……... 74
37. Table 37: Breakdown of images in *Time*, July – December 2007…….. 75
38. Table 38: Breakdown of images in *Time*, January – October 2008……... 75
39. Table 39: Breakdown of images in *The Economist*, July – December 2007…….. 75
40. Table 40: Breakdown of images in *The Economist*, January – October 2008……..... 76
41. Table 41: Breakdown of images in *Financial Mail*, July – December 2007…….. 76
42. Table 42: Breakdown of images in *Financial Mail*, January – October 2008……... 77

List of Figures

1. Figure 1: Overall contribution of each theme for July – December 2007…….. 33
2. Figure 2: Overall contribution of each theme for January – October 2008……... 34
3. Figure 3: Breakdown of sources used in the politics theme in *Time*, July – December 2007…… 55
4. Figure 4: Breakdown of sources used in the economics theme in *Time*, July – December 2007…… 56
5. Figure 5: Breakdown of sources used in the HIV/AIDS theme in *Time*, July – December 2007…… 56
6. Figure 6: Breakdown of sources used in *Time*, July – December 2007……. 57
7. Figure 7: Breakdown of sources used in the politics theme in *Time*, January – October 2008……. 58
8. Figure 8: Breakdown of sources used in the economics theme in *Time*, January – October 2008……. 59
9. Figure 9: Breakdown of sources used in the HIV/AIDS theme in *Time*, January – October 2008……. 59
10. Figure 10: Breakdown of sources used in *Time*, January – October 2008……. 60
11. Figure 11: Breakdown of sources used in the politics theme in *The Economist*, July – December 2007…… 61
12. Figure 12: Breakdown of sources used in the economics theme in *The Economist*, July – December 2007…… 62
13. Figure 13: Breakdown of sources used in the HIV/AIDS theme in *The Economist*, July – December 2007…… 62
14. Figure 14: Breakdown of sources used in *The Economist*, July – December 2007…… 63
15. Figure 15: Breakdown of sources used in the politics theme in *The Economist*, January – October 2008……. 64
16. Figure 16: Breakdown of sources used in the economics theme in *The Economist*, January – October 2008…….. 65

17. Figure 17: Breakdown of sources used in the HIV/AIDS theme in *The Economist*, January – October 2008……... 65
18. Figure 18: Breakdown of sources used in *The Economist*, January – October 2008……... 66
19. Figure 19: Breakdown of sources used in the politics theme in *Financial Mail*, July – December 2007……. 67
20. Figure 20: Breakdown of sources used in the economics theme in *Financial Mail*, July – December 2007……. 68
21. Figure 21: Breakdown of sources used in the HIV/AIDS theme in *Financial Mail*, July – December 2007……. 69
22. Figure 22: Breakdown of sources used in *Financial Mail*, July – December 2007……. 70
23. Figure 23: Breakdown of sources used in the politics theme in *Financial Mail*, January – October 2008……... 71
24. Figure 24: Breakdown of sources used in the economics theme in *Financial Mail*, January – October 2008……... 72
25. Figure 25: Breakdown of sources used in the HIV/AIDS theme in *Financial Mail*, January – October 2008……... 73
26. Figure 26: Breakdown of sources used in *Financial Mail*, January – October 2008……... 73

List of Images

1. Image 1: Taken from *The Economist*, March 22 – 28, 2008……... 81
2. Image 2: Cover of *The Economist*, June 28 – July 4, 2008……. 82
3. Image 3: Zimbabwe's visual images in *The Economist*……..... 83
4. Image 4: Zimbabwe's visual images in *The Economist* ……..... 83
5. Image 5: Negative images accompanying texts…….. 84
6. Image 6: Negative images accompanying texts…….. 84
7. Image 7: Negative images accompanying texts…….. 84
8. Image 8: Taken from *The Economist*, February 16 – 22, 2008……... 86
9. Image 9: Taken from *Time*, March 10, 2008…….. 87
10. Image 10: Taken from *Financial Mail*, May 2, 2008……. 88
11. Image 11: Taken from *The Economist*, September 27 – October 3, 2008…….. 93
12. Image 12: Mixed images accompanying texts……..... 94
13. Image 13: Mixed images accompanying texts……..... 94
14. Image 14: Mixed images accompanying texts……..... 94
15. Image 15: Mixed images accompanying texts……..... 95
16. Image 16: Mixed images accompanying texts……..... 95
17. Image 17: Mixed images accompanying texts……..... 95