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Barack Obama and the African Idea: Topology, Tropology, and Stasis in Spatial Counter Narratives



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Abstract

There is no region of world outside of the United States where Obama's meteoric rise generated as much excitement as in Africa. It is also uncontroversial to assert that Obama's rhetorical skill was a major factor behind his success. Yet surprisingly little work has been done on the intersection of Obama's discourse and its effect on Africa. This study endeavors to fill this gap in the scholarship on Obama. Drawing on the tools of rhetoric--theories about topology, tropology and stasis, this dissertation traces the visions of Africa implicit in Obama's rhetoric and politics. The study analyzes Obama's ideas of Africa in three stages of his political career; before he was a national figure, during his campaigns, and in his Africa policy after he became president. In short, I argue that the ideas of Africa conveyed in the discourse of Obama challenge conventional wisdom on the continent's significance in global affairs. While demonstrating Obama's visions of Africa, the study also demonstrates the utility of rhetorical theories in both domestic politics and international relations. There are three findings that emerge from this study. First, is the finding that Obama does not subscribe to other people's ideas about the continent. He developed his own understanding of the continent from his experiences. Second, Obama believes that the wellbeing of Africans is fundamentally connected to American politics. Finally, Obama understands African countries' relationships with the United States outside of the narrow realism of war on which virtually all of his presidential predecessors have relied in their dealings with African nations in the past. In that regard, the study shows that Obama's discourse about the continent marks significant a break in the history of U.S.-Africa relations.

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of President Barack Obama and President Donald Trump. By adopting Conceptual metaphor theory and Blending theory, this. First, it is widely known that President Barack Obama was elected the first African-American president of the United States in 2008. President Barack Obama's inaugural speech took place on January 20, 2009. The speech main idea was based on his campaign using the slogan "Change We Can Believe In" and "Change We Need". The context of American at that time was Barack Obama: African souvenirs celebrate his election. A look at miscellaneous souvenirs from Africa that celebrate the 2008 election of Barack Obama as U.S. president. Barack Obama taking the presidential oath of office and delivering his inaugural address on January 20, 2009, Washington, D.C. White House See all videos for this article. Barack and Michelle Obama with their daughters, Sasha (in white dress) and Malia, in the Green Room of the White House, Washington, D.C., 2009; photograph by Annie Leibovitz. Photo by Annie Leibovitz/Official White House Photo. Barack Obama: inauguration.