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# Africa; still a silver lining



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# Africa; still a silver lining

valedictory lecture  
given by

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### **Silver-lining Africa in 2011**

In January 2011, I gave my inaugural address as professor of African development at this University and as director of the African Studies Centre in Leiden.<sup>2</sup> It was meant to provoke and it did. It was called 'Silverlining Africa' and given at a moment in history when Africa's economies were booming, but journalism and public opinion in Europe was still full of doom and gloom. Talking about Africa often meant talking about a continent of hunger, disease, war and violence, about development assistance that was either seen as a waste of money, as a drop in the ocean, or as a source of subsidies for corrupt leaders and their wealthy lifestyles who couldn't care less about the dire poverty surrounding them. In my inaugural address, I tried to show a much more positive and a more nuanced picture.<sup>3</sup> This was partly based on participatory research in Ghana and Burkina Faso,<sup>4</sup> where local people discussed the many changes during their lifetime and reported lots of improvements compared to the lives of their parents and grandparents decades earlier. But they also shared their worries about growing pressure on natural resources and about the impact of resource and identity conflicts. I introduced macro-level data about Africa's agricultural development, showing that food production had kept pace with rapid population growth since the 1950s. Indeed, when I was born, Africa had 230 million inhabitants. By the time I delivered my speech in 2011 it was more than a billion and, today, Africa's population stands at 1 billion, 254 million inhabitants.<sup>5</sup> I showed that Africa's average life expectancy had improved a lot since 1960, from less than forty years to currently more than sixty years of age<sup>6</sup>; and in eight African countries today people die, on average, when they are more than 70 years old, which comes close to figures for Europe. Adult literacy rates have also greatly improved and recently the African Studies Centre and ICLON published a thematic map on the occasion of a conference about education in Africa by the Netherlands Association of African Studies.<sup>7</sup> The thematic map is one of the hand-outs you will have found on your chairs: it shows (on the second page) that the adult literacy rate, the number of adult men and

women who can read and write, has reached majority levels in most African countries and on the first page it also shows that the majority of boys and girls are currently going to school. Yes, compared to almost everywhere else Africa is trailing behind and this is particularly true for men and particularly women who live in a belt that stretches from Mauritania to Somalia. And yes, numbers do often conceal the low quality of that education. However, the education situation in 2011 is so much better than the situation in 1960 and since 2011 the situation has further improved. In many parts of Africa young people today aspire to go to secondary school and the number of university students has recently exploded. Parents and other family members are prepared to invest a considerable part of their often meagre earnings in the education of their children. And with an enormous increase in smart phones and internet reach, many Africans now have access to the same overloads of information as we do.<sup>8</sup>

In 2011, I talked about the major economic and political changes since 1960 and I mentioned the many countries with considerable economic growth figures during the first decade of this century.

### **After boom came bust**

To show what has happened subsequently, I would like to use ice cream imports as a metaphor. See the thematic map about international trade. In 2001, Africa only imported a little bit of ice cream, with a total value of a mere 9 million US dollars. By 2011, this had increased fivefold to 46 million. And it would continue to increase to almost 70 million in 2014. And then the ice cream extravaganza began to melt: falling to 62 million in 2015 and 50 million in 2016. It is a telling metaphor. First, it shows that consumption of what can be called luxury food items by a growing middle class had increased greatly in those years of Africa's economic boom. As you see from the picture, even a political leader like former President Obasanjo enjoys it a lot. Apparently, Africa's infrastructure of ports, supermarkets and ice cream vendors has reached levels of sophistication

where fridges and transport with cooling function well. It also shows that the growth was very much over by 2015 and 2016: after boom came bust. And, of course, one wonders: ice cream imports? Can't Africa produce ice cream itself? The interesting fact is that part of Africa does: in particular, South Africa exports a lot of ice cream to other parts of the continent. But a lot of imported ice cream comes and came from Southern Europe. For Africa's number one economic tycoon, Nigerian entrepreneur Aliko Dangote,<sup>9</sup> ice cream was one of the reasons that he started investing massively in Africa's food industry.<sup>10</sup>

Let us look at the economic and social performance in Africa between 2001 and 2016. The first page of the info-sheet about Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, which is also in your possession, shows the average changes in the real values of gross domestic product per person for all African countries and it shows the changes in the so-called human development index, which measures levels of education and life expectancy in addition to economic performance and hence is a more comprehensive indicator of development levels.<sup>11</sup> For the economy the figures are very convincing<sup>12</sup>: most African economies experienced a boom, with 60 per cent higher real income levels in 2016 compared to 2001. The social improvements are less convincing: Africa's average Human Development Index only increased from 500 points out of 1000, to 530. In fact, 17 of Africa's 54 countries showed a deteriorating situation. Indeed, while it was party time for Africa's business and political elites as well as foreign investors, maybe only 20 or 30 per cent of Africa's people really benefitted. Africa's growth has been highly inequitable and public investments in education, healthcare, water provision, agricultural services and other infrastructure often lagged far behind the expansion of the economy, particularly where that economy was dominated by oil, gas and mining.

### **Africa's international trade**

If we look at the thematic map about Africa's international trade again, it becomes clear how dominant the exports of

oil, gas and mining have always been for the continent as a whole. But the graphs about trade dynamics also show how Africa's exports and imports increased tremendously between 2001 and 2012/2013. For exports of products it was an almost sixfold growth and for imports a growth of almost five times. Indeed, Africa was clearly emerging as an economic player of growing importance during those boom years.<sup>13</sup> Export and import figures also show how dramatic the economic bust has been during the last two years. For products and services together the year 2016 had 40 per cent less export value than in the peak year of 2012 and 25 per cent less import value than in the peak year 2013. As a result of lagging import adjustments, Africa as a whole currently faces a trade deficit of close to 30 per cent, which is already creating huge problems for many African economies and governments. Finally, this first page of the thematic map about African international trade statistics also shows the geo-political shift that took place between 2001 and 2016. The United States of America has lost its prominence as the most important destination for Africa's exports to China, while India has become very important too. France lost its pole position to China as provider of Africa's imported produce, while the USA dropped to fourth.

### **Growing worries again**

Was I right to highlight Africa's positive performance during the first decade of this century in my inaugural lecture? I still think I was. Can we still talk about a silver-lining Africa now, almost seven years later? I think we can. That said, I certainly don't want to give the impression that everything is bright and shining. Economically, since the end of 2014, there have been genuine reasons for worry again and socially and politically much of Africa has become more dangerous again. For the second time the African Studies Centre Leiden has published a thematic map about the security situation in Africa. The first time was at the height of the ebola epidemic in 2014, when a University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands was so worried about their students' chances of survival in Africa that they announced a ban on students travelling to anywhere in

Africa and we responded with our first no-go area map on the basis of travel advice given by our Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>14</sup> To be honest, we were also shocked by the abundance of red areas on this map, but of course, Cape Town and Freetown were very different places in 2014 so we were happy to help bring more nuance to that debate. Looking again at the security situation in March 2017<sup>15</sup> (the map is also in your hands), we see that the former ebola areas are accessible again, but that, on the whole, more areas in Africa have become no-go areas, with dire consequences for inhabitants, but also for researchers and students from the region and from elsewhere and hence for on-the-ground knowledge about what is going on. On the reverse of this map we show the current Fragile State Index of the Washington-based think-tank 'Fund for Peace'.<sup>16</sup> Not only is that map pretty red as well, but if we compare the ten-year changes in the fragility index we see considerable deterioration during the last decade. So, despite rapid economic growth during the last ten years, the social and political fragility and risks have grown. Most of Africa's population lives in countries that have seen a deteriorating security situation during the last ten years and a worsening of this situation in the last two years. These are very worrying statistics.

### **People on the move**

Every time there is a security crisis in an area, it produces people on the move, in forms of calamity migration towards areas that are regarded as more safe. This mobility often happens within countries, but also to neighbouring countries or to places further away. Currently, 18 per cent of Somalia's population lives abroad, 1 million in neighbouring countries, another 200,000 in other parts of Africa, 280,000 somewhere in Europe, 260,000 somewhere in Asia and 170,000 in North America. For 7 per cent of Eritreans it is the same story and if we look at, for instance, Mali and the DRC, we see a million Malians on the move and 1.4 million people originating from the so-called Democratic Republic of the Congo. And in all cases, the majority of these people on the move as a result of violence and state breakdown are living in neighbouring

countries. Other forms of calamity migration are related to the effects of severe droughts. 1.3 million people who used to live in Burkina Faso nowadays call Côte d'Ivoire their home.

### **The migration conundrum**

However, not all migration in and from Africa can be explained by calamities. Many people are looking for better living conditions. Some of it is because of better economic prospects elsewhere. More than three million Egyptians have left their country to work abroad, mostly in one of the Gulf states. Almost 2 million Moroccans have left their country, more than 8 per cent of Morocco's population and most of them have come to Europe. Nigeria currently hosts almost a million people from elsewhere in Africa. South Africa hosts more than 2 million immigrants from all over Africa, but also more than half a million who originate from Europe. And South Africa is an example of people being attracted to a country for lifestyle reasons: as one of the very few gay-tolerant countries in Africa, a city like Cape Town hosts many African homosexuals from all over the continent. By the way: it is very wrong to only talk about refugees or calamity migrants on the one hand and economic migrants on the other. Many young migrants also want to explore, to see the world, to fall in love. They want to escape from conditions at home that restrict their creativity or that feel like a prison of old customs that they want to escape, at least temporarily. They want to be away from the old patriarchs and, in some cases, matriarchs who become ever older and who rule countries, counties and families like feudal estates. These dinosaurs do not want to hand over property and power to the next generation and certainly not to the angry youth knocking on their doors.<sup>17</sup> Some dinosaurs were forced to step down, though, as former Presidents Ben Ali of Tunisia, Mubarak of Egypt, Khadafi of Libya, Wade of Senegal, Compaoré of Burkina Faso and Jammeh of the Gambia experienced in recent years.

The thematic map about migration shows the evidence of African people on the move to other countries. According

to migration specialist Prof. Hein de Haas [first Oxford, now University of Amsterdam; he was one of my students] migration is a result of aspirations and capabilities.<sup>18</sup> When countries and people have a low development level (as measured by the Human Development Index) especially young people with social media information about the world may have rising aspirations, but low capabilities to actually migrate. In a study based on global data about international migration, Hein de Haas has shown that higher Human Development Index levels initially go hand in hand with much higher emigration levels, while immigration levels are only rising slowly at first. Only at high Human Development Index levels do countries become net importers of migrants (see the map at the beginning of this booklet). If the same is true for Africa, Africa's relatively fast development during the last two decades must have resulted in rising migration levels and if Africa continues to develop economically and socially, this will result in MORE international migration, not less, until Africa has reached high Human Development Levels. Indeed, Africa's total emigration increased from 22 million in 2000 to 33 million in 2015, an increase of 51 per cent, above the increase in population numbers.<sup>19</sup> And indeed, immigration levels still lag behind (from 15 million to 20 million, an increase of only 35 per cent<sup>20</sup>).

### **More development is more migration**

The latest revision by the United Nations' Department of Economic and Social Affairs (Population Division) has been used here to check the evidence for 2015.<sup>21</sup> As I said before, in 2015, 33 million Africans were living outside their countries of birth, but 16.4 million of those international migrants migrated to other countries within Africa. Of the 16.2 million Africans living outside Africa, 9 million have gone to Europe, 5 million to Asia and Oceania and 2 million to the Americas. However, migration within Africa was largely a result of turmoil and calamities and that distorts the picture significantly. If we look at intercontinental migration, Hein de Haas's theory is very much confirmed, although at a lower level than his global

calculations of 2010. Africa's intercontinental migration has only started and the world better gets used to it!

The two maps on the first page of the thematic map about migration show the numbers and relative importance of Africa's intercontinental emigration. For the African countries at a relatively high level of human development, Mauritius, the Seychelles and Algeria, the weighted average of intercontinental migration is more than 4.5 per cent. For countries with low to medium values on the human development index, like South Africa, Egypt, or Ghana, the weighted average of intercontinental migration is 3 per cent. For countries with a low value on the human development index, currently the majority of African countries and people, the weighted average of intercontinental migration is only 0.7 per cent.<sup>22</sup> Let us suppose that African countries currently with low scores for human development go up one step on the staircase of human development, up to the low to medium level, only step two out of five. Then we can predict that intercontinental migration levels would increase from less than one per cent to what looks like the norm of three per cent. In terms of people on the move to Europe, Asia and the Americas this would mean a substantial increase in the numbers of intercontinental migrants coming from Africa. If Africa's population rises to 1.7 billion by 2030 and at the same time the Sustainable Development Goals are achieved and most of Africa has reached the second tier of the human development index, then we can predict that Africa's intercontinental migration will have reached 50 million people instead of the current 16 million at that point. I will deal with these future prospects shortly. But does this mean that Europe should prevent Africa from developing to higher levels of human development in order to avoid massive migration, like Europe did during most of the colonial period: keep them poor, rural and uneducated? This is a political position that can sometimes be heard and read in social media connected to the extreme right wing of Europe's and America's political spectrum. It will not surprise you that my political position is different and, as a scientist, I say: politicians should first and

foremost be realistic and should avoid saying things that might win them votes in the short run, but are counterproductive in the long term, as many voters will be clever enough to differentiate reality from nonsense.

But let me first go back to where I started. This intercontinental migration is only a tiny part of what is going on in terms of geographical mobility. An overwhelming number of Africans are on the move in their own countries and within the continent. It is an intertwined mixture of calamities caused by nature, war and oppression, economic motives, social desires and a quest for adventure, love and more freedom to live the lives they would like to live.

### **Destination Africa**

Before further speculating about the future, let me also look at the other side of the coin of intercontinental migration: Africa as a destination. The vast majority of Africa's international migrants are people from Africa itself: 14 million coming from neighbouring countries, close to 3 million from other parts of Africa and only two and a half million coming from outside Africa. Within Africa, five countries stand out as receiving hubs for African and intercontinental migration: South Africa, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Kenya and Ethiopia. Europe no longer provides the majority of intercontinental migrants to Africa. Currently, that is Asia, if we include the Asian part of the Middle East: with almost half of those from Palestine, more than 100,000 migrants from India and close to that same number from Iraq, followed by countries like Saudi Arabia, China, Lebanon and Jordan. And indeed, the figures reported for China are far below the wild stories in the media. It is also good to highlight the fact that most Middle Eastern migrants go to Libya, Egypt and Algeria, while most European migrants go to South Africa. In fact, four out of ten intercontinental migrants to Africa went to North Africa and three out of ten to South Africa. Among the Europeans who lived and worked in Africa in 2015 the United Kingdom leads, with 360,000 immigrants in 2015, followed by France, Portugal, Germany

and Italy.<sup>23</sup> The Netherlands is in sixth place, with 26,000 people in Africa, of which 22,000 are in South Africa.

Of course, many more people from Europe and from elsewhere visit Africa each year for business and tourism. The latest figures available on a website about African tourism shows a total of 45 million international visitors to Africa in 2014,<sup>24</sup> who together spent more than 55 billion US dollars on the continent.<sup>25</sup> By the way, this also shows that the African economy has been booming during the last fifteen years. In the year 2000, international tourists only spent 16 billion US dollars.<sup>26</sup> Tourist income has more than tripled. And if we're talking about money flows related to people's geographical mobility we should also talk about the importance of migrant remittances. According to the KNOMAD programme related to the World Bank,<sup>27</sup> the Global Partnership on Migration and Development, preliminary figures for 2015 show that Africa as a whole received close to 65 billion dollars in remittance income. Nigeria and Egypt were the most important recipients.<sup>28</sup> But in terms of relative importance, remittances have become a lifeline for small countries like Liberia, the Comoros islands, or the Gambia, where remittance income has become more than one-fifth of total income and certainly for Somaliland, where it is more than half.<sup>29</sup> Many governments in Africa recognize the importance of this flow of money. They also see the importance for their government budgets, for contributions to local development projects and for bringing in investments from abroad, often linked with innovative ideas about economy and society. Many African governments would be very reluctant to curb this stream of blessings and hope. Some governments even openly encourage their youth to go abroad and send remittances back home.

### **Africa in 2100**

Let me now turn to the future. In the info-sheet about Africa in 2100, the second page shows that Africa has been experiencing very rapid population growth since about 1950 and this growth will continue in the 21st century. Table 1 presents the

long-term population data and prospects and compares those with Europe. According to the medium-level predictions of the population specialists of the United Nations, Africa's population will have grown from the current 1.2 billion people to more than 4.4 billion by the end of this century and Africa's urban population from the current half billion to 3 billion. The reason for this continued growth is the fact that Africa's demographic transition started later than elsewhere and from higher levels. It is also slower than elsewhere. The figure about the demographic transition, comparing all continents and showing the evidence and trends of fertility levels between 1950 and 2100, is a figure that I would recommend you to make the opening page on your mobile, laptop or desktop and also make a print of it and put it somewhere you can see it every day. This figure says it all. And make no mistake: Africa's women are currently having less children than their mothers did. But even if Africa's women decided to have only two children, the sheer number of girls and young women living today will result in a massive population growth in the next few decades. Africa has the youngest population on earth, with a median age around 20 and in some countries it is as low as 17. And soon, the majority of these youngsters will live in cities, ever bigger cities. Africa currently has 55 cities with more than one million inhabitants and its 'megacities', cities with more than 10 million inhabitants, are increasing as well. According to a study quoted in the info-sheet,<sup>30</sup> six of the world's 41 megacities will be in Africa in 2030: Lagos, Cairo, Johannesburg, Kinshasa/Brazzaville, Luanda and Dar es Salaam. See map 3 on the info-sheet. Lagos will even become part of a super-megacity, one big urban coastal belt stretching from Abidjan up to Lagos, via Accra, Lomé and Cotonou. Currently, that city belt already has 33 million inhabitants.<sup>31</sup> In 2030, this Afro-Atlantic City might have more than 50 million inhabitants and by the end of the century one can expect an urban agglomeration that can be compared with Jing-Jin-Ji, the current city belt in Northern China that connects Beijing with Tianjin, which is expected to have 130 million inhabitants.<sup>32</sup> Four billion Africans in 2100 and most of them in cities, with

hundreds of millions in megacities creates a few challenges for Africa and for the world. But it also creates opportunities. Let me first deal with the challenges, so that I can devote the last part of my speech to more positive matters, so that you can enjoy the drinks afterwards with a glimmer of hope.

### **The challenges**

The need for goods and services by four billion Africans means at least a tripling of demand and particularly for food, water, shelter and energy. Most of the demand will come from urban centres,<sup>33</sup> and this will put increasing pressure on land and water and on natural resources, within Africa as well as on the world beyond Africa. It will certainly mean threats to the remaining forests and wildlife. And it will mean threats to the tourism sector.<sup>34</sup> It is right to fear that expanding demand will be at the expense of nature, biodiversity and climate stability. What's more, climate change scenarios show that, with the exception of East Africa, most of Africa will have to cope with increased risk of drought.<sup>35</sup> And like everywhere else, Africa's coasts will experience more storms and damage from rising sea levels. Many of Africa's poorest urban people will live in the most vulnerable areas along the coasts, which are highly prone to flood risks and some scholars predict massive climate change-related calamity migration every time a drought, floods or storms hit an area.

However, perhaps an even greater threat is the increased chance of violent conflicts over natural resources and between people with different identities. This can be identities related to indigenous claims in a particular area, claims of ethnic belonging, but also racial issues and religion<sup>36</sup> will play a major role in violent conflicts, which are partly based on the struggle for resources, but not necessarily so.<sup>37</sup>

The last fifty years of rapid population growth have shown that Africa's food production has generally kept pace with that population growth.<sup>38</sup> However, gradually, Africa is also starting to import more food. Between 2001 and the last few years,

the thematic map about international trade shows a four-to-fivefold increase in food imports by African countries. In 2010, a number of African countries had crossed the 50 per cent line in terms of food deficits. On the other hand, there are many signs of increasing agricultural productivity in Africa, although the levels are still far below those in Asia.<sup>39</sup> One might expect that the high population growth that Africa will experience during the rest of this century will result in further increases in food imports, both as primary products and as agro-industrial products. And food items are only part of Africa's increasing reliance on the world market for its consumption needs. This will create risks for Africa's balance of trade and balance of payments and what is probably also a matter of anxiety in some circles are the geo-political risks: we should be mindful of the well-known Dutch expression '*wiens brood men eet, diens woord men spreekt*', in English the equivalent is 'he who pays the piper calls the tune'. It is very interesting to see what has happened during Africa's boom years in terms of the origin of Africa's imported food. In 2001, the United States was still the dominant source of Africa's imported cereals. It is somewhat surprising that the USA lost that position during President Obama's reign and currently the USA is only in sixth place. France has taken over the number one spot, but is immediately followed by Russia. And for oils and fats, Malaysia leads, for sugars it is Brazil and for meat it is Brazil too. South Africa provides most of the import needs of other African countries when it comes to vegetables, fruits and beverage. Of all food items, cereals are the most politically vulnerable, particularly in countries where cereal products like bread and maize meal are subsidized by the government and where rising food prices often result in urban riots. The maps on the second page of the thematic map about Africa's international trade show the shifts in the most important cereal providers and this tells a story. Climate change scenarios show that the world's most important cereal food basket, America's Midwest, will be one of the major victims of the growing risk of drought, while Russia will be the most likely winner of the climate gamble. Not only will Russia's potential cereal production area move

northwards, predictions are that those areas will also receive more rain. In the long run, the big geo-political question will be: will China be the dominant buyer, or even producer of that cereal expansion in Russia, or will there be enough negotiation strength in Africa to get a share of the deal? I would say that, in general, Africa's wisest strategy would be to avoid this dependence on volatile and dangerous world markets for strategic goods like cereals. Africa would be wise to produce its own food, but with intra-African trade relations on a regional or even continental scale. If not, the risks of urban food revolts will continuously undermine political stability. This may fuel political opposition, eager to use Africa's urban angry and impatient youth as its vanguards. Africa's youth also demands more employment and particularly more decent employment,<sup>40</sup> and less inequality in terms of chances to improve one's life. And many young people have lost - and continue to lose - faith in Africa's failing political leadership. In response, many leaders have become harsh in their use of power and violence and in years to come one may fear that a further militarization may take place in Africa's urban centres and in those parts of the rural areas that produce crucial products, like minerals, agricultural exports and increasingly also green forms of energy. And it is quite likely that the cycles of violence in Africa's marginal peripheries will continue, occasionally spilling over into urban hotspots of turmoil.

### **The opportunities**

So these are the risks and the challenges and it will be clear that some of the risks may spill over to Europe, particularly in the form of calamity migration and in the form of exporting radical forms of hatred against those who are regarded as enemies and against those who are seen as responsible for Africa's predicament, due to slavery, colonialism, racism and exploitation. The current demands in South Africa and elsewhere to decolonize the mind and for instance also to decolonize academia and North-Atlantic dominance, certainly also has elements of anti-European and anti-white sentiments and reversed racism.

But let us now turn to the opportunities and to the bright side of Africa's future. As we have seen before, population growth and urbanization will result in a major growth in demand for all types of products. Those will overwhelmingly come from the hinterlands of the expanding cities in Africa itself. And that will trigger further economic transformation in those hinterlands. This will include rapid agricultural expansion in terms of area, volumes and productivity, Africa's 'green evolution'. In East Africa, there will be an additional gain; reaping the benefits of climate change-driven improvements in rainfall in an area that already shows signs of major innovations.

When economists talk about the impact of population growth they talk about demographic dividend. A predominance of young, energetic people, who have gone to school and know how to use social media, will create innovations in production and lifestyles. This information revolution will continue. Africa's well-informed youth will formulate political demands for better lives and more equal opportunities. There will also be more remittances as a result of increasing migration and some of those remittances will come with innovative ideas and examples from elsewhere. We have seen before that Africa is already experiencing a fast demographic transition. African mothers in my age cohort had close to seven children. Young African girls will now have an average of four children during their lifetime. By 2050, it is predicted that this will have fallen to three children per woman and in 2100 Africa's fertility levels will have plateaued, with two children per woman. However, a lot will depend on the speed of urbanization, on the trust in social security provision,<sup>41</sup> and most of all on the number of girls who will receive secondary education. Part of the innovation occurring in Africa involves parents investing in the quality of the lives and life chances of their children and they are no longer focused on having big families. Among urban, well-educated and well-connected parents, two or three children has already become the norm. However, Africa is also experiencing zealous religious campaigns

against fertility reduction and political-religious resistance to talking about population policies. And don't be fooled by media overexposure of what happens in Islamic societies in Africa. The same zeal can be found among Pentecostal<sup>42</sup> and Catholic circles and it is also very useful to understand more about African religious ideas about morality and evil in their indigenous religious practices.<sup>43</sup>

But let's go back to the positive prospects. The growing connectivity of Africa's economy and information technology is also fuelling regional integration and one may expect a growing importance of the African Union and of regional agencies.<sup>44</sup> Recent strategy papers by, for instance, the African Union and the African Development Bank, like "Agenda 2063; The Africa We Want" show much vision and optimism and I think these visions and plans will be more than just rituals. The emerging class of African entrepreneurs goes beyond individual country boundaries. We can see the start of African-owned multinationals, active in many African economies and they are getting used to dealing with different political elites in the continent. Together with foreign investors, these African business and political elites are expanding their investments in infrastructure and trying to align their strategies to make them regional or even continental. And part of these investments now takes the form of rapid development of green energy solutions: wind farms, like the huge project in Northern Kenya that is almost completed, or the mega-investment in Morocco's solar projects in the deserts, but also investments in geo-thermal energy along the Great Rift Valley. Some of Africa's political and business leadership is currently leapfrogging to green energy and to the next levels of information technology. Many observers note that the move away from cables and physical networks to point-based energy and information solutions is particularly suited to Africa.

We can also expect major industrialization, partly based on these advances in energy and information technology. African consumption of industrial products will grow significantly

and will become much more based on African production, although probably with huge investment by Asian, but also European and American investors, including the African diaspora.<sup>45</sup> And some of Africa's business leaders are rapidly expanding their investments in all types of industries and in industry-oriented services.<sup>46</sup> We are also seeing a major expansion of the entertainment industry and this is expected to grow, with Nollywood's film industry in Nigeria and the activities of the many Pentecostal churches all over Christian Africa, two sides of that same coin. It is also noticeable that many African leaders are using ever bolder statements about the need to build an African economy and the need to form urban growth coalitions where entrepreneurs, political leaders, academics and civil society work together towards shared economic and social goals.<sup>47</sup> One also hears demands for more and better protection of Africa's next generation of industries and services and pleas for so-called frugal innovation on a massive scale.<sup>48</sup> And the current era of protectionism, spearheaded by Brexit and by Trump's election, is fuelling protectionist policies in Africa as well.

### **That's why we need an African Studies Centre!**

Of course the future is uncertain and Africa's future will depend on the complex outcome of the risks and opportunities that I have just sketched. To be aware of what is going on in Africa and what that might mean for Europe and for the Netherlands as a tiny part of global society, we need an African Studies Centre. In the Netherlands we can be proud of the strength and quality of the African Studies Centre in Leiden, an important hub for the Africa-Europe Group for Interdisciplinary Studies, AEGIS<sup>49</sup> and well connected to relevant scholarship in Africa<sup>50</sup> and across the globe. And although I have highlighted the recent past and the future for Africa, let me end this speech by saying that we cannot understand what is currently going on in Africa and what will happen during the rest of this century, if we do not study Africa's past and the history of Africa's relationships with the world. Many young Africans are demanding a rewriting of that

history, for so long dominated by the language of the global and national political winners.<sup>51</sup> Decolonizing the minds will also mean a massive and bottom-up re-interpretation of Africa's history and connectivity and it also means connecting the academic world with the worlds of activists and artists.<sup>52</sup> This work will mainly be done in Africa itself. But scholars working in Europe, including those in the African diaspora, will play an important part too.<sup>53</sup> It has been and it will be an adventurous journey. And I gladly hand over my responsibilities for the African Studies Centre Leiden to a historian, Professor Jan-Bart Gewald!<sup>54</sup>

### **Words of thanks**

My years in Leiden were happy and fruitful. Earlier experiences have been important building blocks for what I was able to do in the more than seven years in Leiden, experiences in Bladel and Eersel, in Nijmegen, Amsterdam, Kapenguria, Eldoret and Utrecht. In Leiden I am truly grateful for the support I received from the former board of the African Studies Centre Foundation and I would like to thank Agnes van Ardenne, Bernard Berendsen, Janny Groen, Anton Lenstra and Hans Opschoor for their commitment and support and for guiding the process of integration with Leiden University. That process was very much supported by the Rector, Carel Stolker, by Jan van der Boon and by the current members of the ASCL Board Wim van den Doel, Hanna Swaab and Jan Michiel Otto. I am grateful to the Department of Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology for hosting my professorial position in African Development since I became director of the African Studies Centre in May 2010. And the good contacts with Gerard Persoon, Peter Pels and other Africanist colleagues were later expanded with many more Leiden-based Africanists in the Leiden African Studies Assembly and with other area studies colleagues in Leiden Global. I would also like to thank the many members of the Scientific Advisory Council of the African Studies Centre and also our non-academic colleagues from business, policy, diplomacy and NGO circles, who were and are very much

connected to our work at the Centre. I would particularly like to thank the many different colleagues in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with whom I shared many good moments and also colleagues at the Netherlands African Business Council, with whom we worked together to organize three Africa Works conferences. And it has been a great pleasure to participate in AEGIS with directors and colleagues of other African Studies Centres in Europe and elsewhere. The biennial European Conferences of African Studies were intellectual highlights in the last seven years. But of course, most of my work was at the African Studies Centre in Leiden itself. The support staff, the library staff, the senior researchers, the many junior researchers and PhD candidates, the research master and master students in African Studies, the many visiting fellows of the Centre and the members of the ASCL Community, have made my work hugely enjoyable and rewarding. At the Centre, I would particularly like to thank all former and current members of the Executive Board, the Works Council and the secretariat. First Gitty, then Anne and most of the time Trudi have managed my hectic and busy life very well, supported by sunshine Rebecca and her predecessors. They have kept me down to earth, with a smile. Our members of the support and library staff have been doing a great job and without them the ASCL would not be as good and dependable as it is, around a core of very productive and innovative researchers. I have tried to create room for intellectual creativity and I mostly tolerated, often even enjoyed the whims and habits of all those creative minds. I like to thank the members of the Works Council, first led by Marleen Dekker and currently by Rijk van Dijk. A lot of work was also done by our Publications staff: first led by Dick Foeken and now by Harry Wels and with a special word of thanks to Mieke and Machteld, to our language artists, first Ann and now Anna and to our visibility artist, Nel de Vink. Talking about visibility, the ASCL has a very committed V-team, our visibility managers Willem, Harro, Fenneken, Maaïke and Marieke. And of my former colleagues in management I would wholeheartedly like to thank Jan Binnendijk and his financial staff, Dick Foeken, Jos Damen

and his library staff, Jan Abbink, Benjamin Soares, Jan-Bart Gewald and Mayke Kaag. And thanks Han van Dijk, Azeb Amha and currently Karin Nijenhuis and Mayke Kaag for your coordination of our Research Master's programme, one of the pearls in the crown of our Centre and of this great University. And thanks to Young ASCL, currently so energetically led by Agnieszka Kazimierczuk and by Alice Kubo.

I am leaving the African Studies Centre Leiden in the capable hands of Jan-Bart Gewald and the care of the Leiden African Studies Assembly in the creative hands of Mirjam de Bruijn and Maaïke Westra. I hope to continue giving some support here and there. But I also hope to devote more time now to home, family and hobbies. Annemieke, Luuk, Richard, Eva and Josefien: thanks for supporting me in what I have tried to do and thanks for enriching my life so much! And to my mother I would like to say: half of the genes that brought me here are yours! Thanks for that gift of life and for your tenacity! I certainly inherited that part of your character! I wish Jan-Bart Gewald and the African Studies Centre Leiden the same tenacity!

## Notes

- 1 I dedicate this valedictory lecture to my parents and to my other genetic and intellectual ancestors.
- 2 Dietz, Ton, *Silverlining Africa*. From images of doom and gloom to glimmers of hope. From places to avoid to places to enjoy. Leiden, inaugural lecture, January 2011. <https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/16340/ASC-075287668-2795-01.pdf?sequence=2>.
- 3 In his “Season of Rains” my colleague Stephen Ellis tried to do the same, in a different way: Ellis S., 2012, “Season of Rains”, University of Chicago Press.
- 4 The PADev research, Participatory Assessment of Development, funded by ICCO, Woord en Daad and Prisma. See [www.padev.nl](http://www.padev.nl); and also: Pouw, N., T. Dietz, A. Bélemvire, D. de Groot, D. Millar, F. Obeng, W. Rijnveld, K. van der Geest, Z. Vlaminck, F. Zaal 2017, “Participatory Assessment of Development Interventions: Lessons Learned From a New Evaluation Methodology in Ghana and Burkina Faso”, *American Journal of Evaluation* 38 (1), 47-59.
- 5 <http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/africa-population/>.
- 6 <http://www.worldlifeexpectancy.com/life-expectancy>
- 7 Dietz, A.J., N. de Vink and W. Admiraal, 2017, “Education in Africa : recent dynamics and current situation”. African Studies Centre Leiden, Thematic Map 16. <http://www.ascleiden.nl/publications/education-africa-recent-dynamics-and-current-situation>.
- 8 This has been one of the key topics of research for Mirjam de Bruijn and her team, see among many examples: De Bruijn, M., I. Brinkman, F. Nyamnjoh, 2013, “Side@ Ways: Mobile Margins and the Dynamics of Communication in Africa: Mobile Margins and the Dynamics of Communication in Africa”, African Books Collective.
- 9 See for instance: Akinyoade, A. and C. Uche, 2017, “Development built on crony capitalism? The case of Dangote Cement”, *Business History*, 1-26.
- 10 <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-07-11/nigeria-s-aliko-dangote-to-invest-4-6-billion-in-agriculture>.
- 11 See <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi>.
- 12 Although we should be aware of major doubts about the quality of economic data in Africa; see Jerven, M., 2013, “Poor numbers: how we are misled by African development statistics and what to do about it”. Cornell University Press. Morten Jerven was the first speaker of the ASC(L) Annual Lecture Series, that later became the Stephen Ellis Annual Lectures.
- 13 But these figures need to be put in perspective: in 2001 Africa as a whole imported and exported less product value than The Netherlands and at recent peak levels almost the same (see [www.trademap.org](http://www.trademap.org)).
- 14 Dietz, A.J., F. Veldkamp and N. de Vink, 2014, “No-go gebieden 2014”. ASC thematic map, 13. <http://www.ascleiden.nl/publications/no-go-gebieden-2014>.
- 15 Dietz, A.J. and N. de Vink, 2017, “No-go areas in Africa March 2017”, African Studies Centre Leiden Thematic Map 15. <http://www.ascleiden.nl/publications/no-go-areas-africa-march-2017>.
- 16 <http://fundforpeace.org/fsi/>
- 17 The African Studies Centre published one of its African Dynamics books about this topic: Abbink, J. and W.M.J. van Kessel, 2005, “Vanguard or Vandals: youth, politics and conflict in Africa”. Leiden; Boston: Brill, African Dynamics. Recently Mirjam de Bruijn and Jonna Both contributed: De Bruijn, M. and J. Both, 2017, “Youth Between State and Rebel (Dis) Orders: Contesting Legitimacy from Below in Sub-Sahara Africa”, *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 28 (4-5), 779-798.
- 18 De Haas, Hein, 2010, “Migration transitions - a theoretical and empirical inquiry into the developmental drivers of international migration”. IMI working paper 24. International Migration Institute, University of Oxford. See: <https://heindehaas.org/working-papers/> .

- 19 Which increased with 46 per cent during this period.
- 20 Excluding the massive population movements after the split between Sudan and South Sudan in 2011.
- 21 Sources: Immigration and Emigration data for 2015: <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates15.shtml>. HDI data for 2015: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_African\\_countries\\_by\\_Human\\_Development\\_Index](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_African_countries_by_Human_Development_Index) Population in 2015: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_countries\\_by\\_past\\_and\\_future\\_population](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_past_and_future_population).
- 22 For Africa as a whole the figure is only 13 out of thousand.
- 23 France with 240,000, Portugal and Germany with 75,000 each and Italy with 50,000 migrants.
- 24 <http://tourismdataforafrica.org/>
- 25 <http://tourismdataforafrica.org/peqebqc/visitor-exports>.
- 26 And it was only 9 billion in 1990.
- 27 See World Bank (Global Partnership on Migration and Development). Migration and Remittances Factbook, 2016, third edition. <https://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPROSPECTSResources/334934-1199807908806/4549025-1450455807487/Factbookpart1.pdf>; also see [www.knomad.org](http://www.knomad.org).
- 28 With 20 billion dollars each.
- 29 For Liberia 25 percent, Comoros and Gambia 20 percent of GDP. For Somaliland even 54 percent is given as an estimate: <http://unohrlls.org/news/the-role-of-remittance-in-the-economic-development-of-somaliland/>.
- 30 Bello-Schunemann Julia and Ciara Aucoin , 2016, "In 2030 six of the world's 41 megacities will be in Africa"; <https://www.howwemadeditinafrica.com/2030-six-worlds-41-megacities-will-africa/>.
- 31 <https://www.citypopulation.de/world/Agglomerations.html>.
- 32 <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/20/world/asia/in-china-a-supercity-rises-around-beijing.html>.
- 33 See: Dietz, A.J., D.W.J. Foeken, S. Soeters and N. de Vink, 2012, "Africa: from a continent of states to a continent of cities". ASC thematic map 5: <http://www.ascleiden.nl/publications/africa-continent-states-continent-cities>
- 34 The political ecology of wildlife conservation and tourism has become a thriving field of study, see for instance: Büscher B. and , M. Ramutsindela, 2016, "Green Violence: Rhino Poaching and the War to Save Southern Africa's Peace Parks", *African Affairs* 115 (458), 1-22; as well as Draper, M. , M. Spierenburg and H. Wels. "African dreams of cohesion: Elite pacting and community development in transfrontier conservation areas in Southern Africa." *Culture and Organization* 10.4 (2004): 341-353.
- 35 As a geographer I know that long-term regionalized climate change scenarios are still contested. I find one of the most convincing studies the one by Aiguo Dai of the US National Center for Atmospheric Research when he did the study. See Dai, A., 2012, "Increasing Drought under Global Warming", National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR), Boulder, CO, USA. Talk at Institute of Tibetan Plateau Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences. July 20, 2012, Beijing, China. I was one of the first social scientists involved in research about the impact of climate change. That made me both worried about climate change and about habits in the world of science. With colleagues I coordinated and edited: Dietz, A.J. R. Ruben and J. Verhagen, 2004, "The Impact of Climate Change on Drylands with a Focus on West Africa". Dordrecht/Boston: Kluwer. During the late 1990s Mirjam de Bruijn and Han van Dijk were part of the research team and a link with the African Studies Centre in Leiden, while I was working at the University of Amsterdam and as CERES director also at Utrecht University.
- 36 For instance: Abbink, J., 2014, "Religious freedom and the political order: the Ethiopian 'secular state' and the containment of Muslim identity politics", *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 8 (3), 346-365, or Benjamin Soares: Soares, B. 2016, "Reflections on Muslim-Christian encounters in West Africa". *Africa* 86 (4), 673-697 .
- 37 The African Studies Centre has a long history of doing research relating natural resources to violent conflicts. For instance: Haller, T., H. van Dijk, M. Bollig, C. Greiner, N. Schareika and C. Gabbert, 2016, "Conflicts,

- security and marginalisation: institutional change of the pastoral commons in a 'glocal' world", *Revue scientifique et technique* (International Office of Epizootics), 35, 2: 405-416; Rutten, M.M.E.M. and A. Mwangi, 2013, "Do geopolitical and historical contexts in explaining conflicts over natural resources really matter? An example from Africa", African Studies Centre, Leiden; Shete, M. and M. Rutten, 2015, "Large-scale land acquisitions in Ethiopia: implications for agricultural transformation and livelihood security - Empirical evidence from Oromia region, Ethiopia". *Land Use Policy*, 47: 282-292. Also: Adano, W.R., , T. Dietz, K. Witsenburg, F. Zaal: "Climate change, violent conflict and local institutions in Kenya's drylands", *Journal of Peace Research* 49 (1), 65-80.
- 38 See an earlier thematic map: Dietz, A.J., A. Altaf, W. Klaver and S. Soeters, 2012, "Agricultural consumption and production, 1961 - 2009", ASC Thematic Map 4: (<http://www.ascleiden.nl/publications/agricultural-consumption-and-production-1961-2009>) and recent African Dynamics books edited by scholars at the African Studies Centre Leiden, like Akinyoade A.; W. Klaver; S. Soeters; D.W.J. Foeken, 2014, "Digging deeper: inside Africa's agricultural, food and nutrition dynamics", African dynamics; Issue: 13, Leiden: Brill.
- 39 See Berendsen B.; A.J. Dietz; H. Schulte Nordholt; R. van der Veen, 2013, "Asian tigers, African lions : comparing the development performance of Southeast Asia and Africa" . African dynamics; Issue: 12, Leiden: Brill.
- 40 See: Vlaminck, Z., U. Oberst, A.H.M. Leliveld, M.M.A. Kaag, W. Baah-Boateng, S. Maher and N. de Vink , 2013, "Africa's economic growth from a labour perspective: selected decent work indicators", Leiden: African Studies Centre Thematic map nr 6. <http://www.ascleiden.nl/publications/africas-economic-growth-labour-perspective-selected-decent-work-indicators> .
- 41 See for instance the work of Marleen Dekker at the ASCL; Dekker, M., 2012, Sustainability and resourcefulness: Support networks during periods of stress, *World Development* 32 (10), 1735-1751. Marleen currently coordinates the secretariat of the Knowledge Platform on Inclusive Development Policies, see [www.includeplatform.net](http://www.includeplatform.net) and <http://www.thebrokeronline.eu/>.
- 42 This is an area of study by ASCL researcher Rijk van Dijk. See for instance his studies in Botswana, for instance: Van Dijk, R., "Counselling and Pentecostal modalities of social engineering of relationships in Botswana", *Culture, health & sexuality* 15 (sup.4), S509-S522.
- 43 A field of study of ASCL's guest researcher Wouter van Beek, e.g., Van Beek, W. and W. Olsen: "African Notions of Evil: the Chimera of Justice"; in "Evil in Africa", 1-26. Also see Gerrie ter Haar's and Stephen Ellis' work: Ellis, S. and G. ter Haar. 2004, "Worlds of power: Religious thought and political practice in Africa". Oxford University Press on Demand.
- 44 See for instance: Dietz, A.J., P. Lange & M.L. Rau, 2016, Scoping report: "Improving the perspective for regional trade and investment in West Africa: the key to food security, economic development and stability in the region". Leiden: African Studies Centre. [https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/47249/scoping\\_report\\_final\\_1.pdf?sequence=1](https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/47249/scoping_report_final_1.pdf?sequence=1).
- 45 One of the ASCL's most productive Collaborative Research Groups has been the one on 'Africa in the World', led by Mayke Kaag and now also part of a CRG at the level of AEGIS. One of the first products was the ECAS-Uppsala book in 2011, that we co-produced: Dietz, T., Havnevik, K., Kaag, M. and Oestigaard, T., 2011, "African engagements: on whose terms? Africa negotiating an emerging multipolar world". Leiden: Brill. Later there were many info-sheets about connections between Africa and 'emerging partners', see: <http://www.ascleiden.nl/content/ascl-info-sheets> .
- 46 Together with co-editors Chibuike Uche and Akinyinka Akinyoade I am currently finalising an African Dynamics book about Entrepreneurship in Africa, that will be published by Brill.

- 47 For instance, see African Development Bank, 2016, African Development Report 2015, “Growth, Poverty and Inequality Nexus: Overcoming Barriers to Sustainable Development”. <https://www.afdb.org/en/documents/publications/african-development-report/>. Led by Ronald Wall, UN Habitat and the African Development Bank are currently preparing a very convincing document about the innovative potential of Africa’s cities: “The State of African Cities, 2017”, that will be published soon.
- 48 See: Knorringa P., I. Peša, A. Leliveld, C. van Beers, 2016, “Frugal innovation and development: aides or adversaries?”. *The European Journal of Development Research* 28 (2), 143-153.
- 49 <http://www.aegis-eu.org>.
- 50 For instance to CODESRIA ([www.codesria.org](http://www.codesria.org)) and the African Studies Association for Africa (<http://www.as-aa.org/>).
- 51 An example of this historical ‘counter-narrative’ scholarship at the African Studies Centre Leiden is Klaas van Walraven’s monumental study about the Sawaba movement in Niger: Van Walraven, K., 2013, “The yearning for relief: a history of the Sawaba movement in Niger”. Leiden: Brill and Van Walraven, K., 2017, “Le désir de calme: L’histoire du mouvement Sawaba au Niger”, Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, Collection Histoire. Other examples can be found in the work of Stephen Ellis, for instance: Ellis, S., 2013, “External mission: The ANC in exile, 1960-1990”, Oxford University Press (UK) and in the work of the Stephen Ellis Chair in the Governance of Finance and Integrity, Professor Chibuike Uche, such as Uche, C., “Lonrho in Africa: The Unacceptable Face of Capitalism or the Ugly Face of Neo-Colonialism?”, *Enterprise & Society* 16 (2), 354-380.
- 52 See for instance Voice4Thought, a project initiated by Mirjam de Bruijn of the African Studies Centre Leiden and Leiden University’s History Department: <http://voice4thought.org/>. Mirjam de Bruijn chairs the African Studies Assembly of Leiden University, a network of Africanists connecting the African Studies Centre Leiden with all other Africanist scholars in Leiden University.
- 53 See recent reflections by the ASCLs special research fellow Fantu Cheru: Cheru, F., 2016, “Developing countries and the right to development: a retrospective and prospective African view”, *Third World Quarterly* 37 (7), 1268-1283.
- 54 For instance see: Akinyoade, Akinyinka and Jan-Bart Gewald, 2015, “African roads to prosperity: people en route to socio-cultural and economic transformations”. Leiden: Brill, African Dynamics Series.

## TON DIETZ



- 1951 Born in The Hague
- 1976 MSc degree in human geography, Nijmegen University
- 1987 PhD degree, University of Amsterdam
- 1995 Professor human geography UvA
- 2002 CERES director and professor Social Sciences Utrecht University (half time)
- 2007 Doctor Honoris Causa Moi University Eldoret, Kenya
- 2010 Director African Studies Centre Leiden and Professor African Development Leiden University
- 2013 Laureat d'Honneur International Geographical Union, Kyoto

Ton Dietz was director of the African Studies Centre Leiden between May 2010 and September 2017 and Professor of African Development at the Department of Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology of Leiden University. As director, he led the process of integrating the Centre as an interfaculty institute of Leiden University from 2015 onwards and he co-created the Leiden African Studies Assembly. He was a member of the Board of AEGIS, co-organized three Africa Works Conferences and is a member of the Knowledge Platform for Inclusive Development INCLUDE. As a scholar his work mainly deals with vulnerabilities and development policies in drylands, the impact of climate change, political ecology, participatory assessment of development and change in Africa and long-term demographic and socio-economic dynamics and their geographical manifestations.



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