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A window on Africa: African Studies Centre Leiden's 75th anniversary celebration

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A window on Africa

African Studies Centre Leiden's 75th anniversary celebration

Fenneken Veldkamp, Germa Seuren (eds)





africanstudies centre leiden

Universiteit Leiden
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A window on Africa

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Foreword

The African Studies Centre Leiden celebrated its 75th anniversary at Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden on 8 September 2022. It was a day filled with reflection, dialogue, and festivities, looking back on 75 years of the Centre's rich past, and exploring its hopefully equally fruitful and exciting future.

This ASCL Occasional Publication presents the keynote speeches of the day. In addition, it highlights the ASCL Library's exhibition of special items from the collection, and is illustrated with pictures of the many activities and people that made the day such a success.

From a historical perspective, the publication is a valuable follow-up to the jubilee book *Leer mij Afrika kennen: vijftig jaar Afrika-Studiecentrum*, written on the occasion of the ASC's 50th anniversary celebration in 1998.

We hope you enjoy this fascinating read and look forward to at least 75 years more to come!

Fenneken Veldkamp and Germa Seuren

1

Word of welcome

Speaker: Marleen Dekker
Director



Dear all, welcome! Here in Leiden, and online. It is wonderful to see so many familiar faces. Thank you for joining us today to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the African Studies Centre Leiden.

In the first minutes of this day, I would like to begin with why we are here, with whom we are here, and what today's programme will bring us. To start with: *why* are we here? Of course, it is 75 years ago that the ASCL was established, and that is quite an occasion, worthy of celebration, of taking the time with all of you to share our history, and to showcase what is happening today.

How it all started

While some continuities can certainly be observed, many things have changed over the past 75 years. The world is clearly a different place and at times, rapid change seems to be the only constant. How we as academics, information specialists, Africanists, global citizens, understand and relate to and with Africa, African countries, and our colleagues and students in Africa, has changed as well, and this has of course changed our work.

But first, back to how it all started: The Centre was founded on 12 August 1947 in Leiden, as the academic division of the *Afrika Instituut*. This *Afrika Instituut* had a twin section, devoted to trade with Africa, in Rotterdam, that later became the Netherlands-African Business Council.

The focus of the academic division was on research, information and documentation. To date, we stay true to this academic origin, and emphasise the importance of undertaking independent research and documentation to promote a better understanding of historical, current, and future societal transformations and developments on the continent.

What is particularly relevant here, is that this academic research is multi-disciplinary, empirical, and based on field research. It is well informed by what is going on in societies, in people's lives. And it is often research conducted over a long period, building longstanding collaborations with in-country researchers.

Similarly, we acquire books and documentation material in Africa, emphasising that to understand African societies it is important to study what is published *in* Africa, and not just *on* Africa.

This empirical, long-term academic engagement with observing societal transformations is at the core of what we do and feeds into our academic publications, our teaching, and our societal engagements.

Diverse realities

Again and again, the ASCL's research, collecting and teaching activities have demonstrated there are many African realities, diverse narratives, and diverse images. This is also reflected in the images that we present here on the welcome slide.



A rural market along Lake Kivu in Rwanda, a street view with the skyline of Kigali, capital of Rwanda, and the launch of a satellite by Ethiopia in 2019. These are just three examples of diverse images, diverse narratives, and diverse realities on the same continent, and this diversity can often be observed even in the same country. At the ASCL, we study, document, and promote a better, or more nuanced understanding of this diversity.

Allow me to add another dimension to diversity, by asking *who* is here today. This may be a bit unusual, but I feel it is important to recognise who is here, as to me, this provides a perspective of who we are as the African Studies Centre, and how we are connected in Leiden, in the Netherlands, and in Africa. So, this is also a ceremonial welcome.

Welcome first and foremost to the ASCL colleagues, our support staff, library and documentation staff, PhD students, teachers, and researchers: without you there would not be an ASCL as it is today. A special welcome to Angela Robson from the library who is celebrating not only our anniversary but also her own birthday.

Welcome also to the Board of the African Studies Centre Leiden: the Deans of the Faculties of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Law; the University leadership; the current and former members of our Scientific Advisory Board and the Foundation African Studies Centre (with representatives of Dutch universities and societal partners respectively). Welcome to members of LeidenASA (Leiden African Studies Assembly), LeidenGlobal and other colleagues from Leiden University. Welcome to our alumni: PhD, master, research master, and Leiden-Delft-Erasmus minor students, and to the students who have very recently started. Welcome to representatives from the media, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Netherlands-African Business Council; and of course, last but not least, welcome to our former colleagues. It is good to have you here and celebrate.

I would also like to acknowledge those who cannot be with us today, either because they have passed away, or because they are visited by the Corona virus, or because they are teaching, or are finally able to travel for fieldwork or research fellowships.

I would like to especially acknowledge our immediate former director Jan-Bart Gewald, who is currently enjoying a fellowship at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study, and take the opportunity to publicly thank him for his committed leadership of the ASCL from 2017 to 2021.

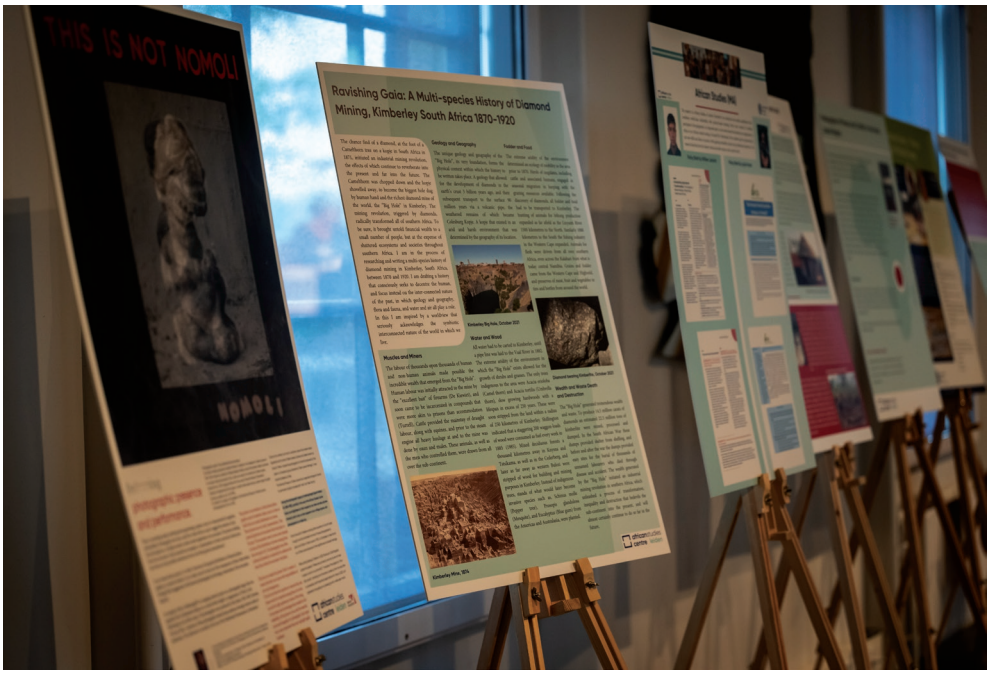
Today's programme

That brings me to *what* we will be doing today.

Let me start by saying that one day is far too short to celebrate what we have achieved over the past 75 years. Today's programme offers a few highlights and aims to strike a balance between deep academic work and festivities.

We will kick off the day from the perspective of the University leadership on academic collaboration in Africa and the relevance of the Centre. Next we will focus on academic research, with presentations on the origins of African Studies, and how the ASCL's research developed over the past 75 years - in dialogue with our research library - from very modest beginnings to the solid, field research-based and multidisciplinary 'knowledge enterprise' that we are today. This is followed by a panel with societal partners reflecting on these developments and sharing their perspectives on the importance of independent research in Africa. I am sure these morning sessions will provide sufficient food for thought to be discussed over lunch. In the afternoon we continue with a presentation by the library on how the practice of collecting and our collection as such have developed over the years. The importance of documenting and collecting will be further highlighted in a presentation by a researcher working with photographic material. This will be followed by the Africa Thesis Award ceremony, and a panel with ASCL alumni, former students who enjoyed their MA or PhD education at our institute. We will close with a short exchange with the Chief Science Officer of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the importance of academic research on Africa and the future of African Studies, followed by drinks and music.

As I said before, this programme does not fully do justice to the work that my colleagues and I do and that we are so passionate about. So we have also prepared a visual programme for you, a number of posters on our work, to elaborate on and for you to take in at your own pace.



There are five posters on research:

- A multi-species history of diamond mining in Kimberley, South Africa
- Language endangerment and linguistic documentation in Ethiopia
- Knowledge Platform INCLUDE
- Pedagogies of Peace and Conflict in the Great Lakes Region
- Sorghum Value Chain in Nigeria

Three posters on our academic teaching:

- African Studies (MA)
- LDE minors coordinated by the ASCL
- Serious Game - Uhuru: The Wicked Game

And three posters on the library and documentation work:

- Collection Development at the ASCL Library
- The ASCL photo collection on Wikimedia Commons
- Reframing: photographic presence and performing

But there is more!

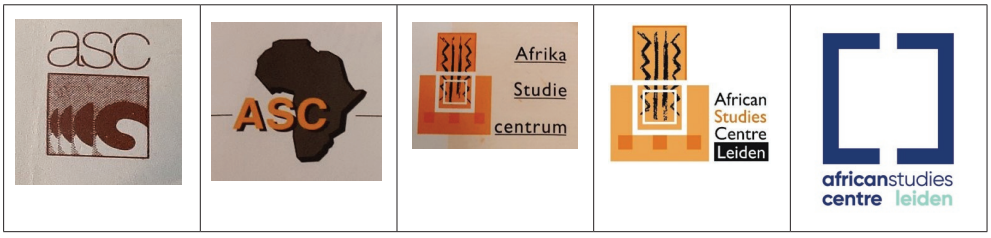
Library gems

As you can see on the colourful pillows in this room, the library staff has selected 25 items from our collection.[1] These are not necessarily representative of the collection at large, but each item reflects different aspects of our collection, telling a story of how collecting has changed over the years. The items are diverse in form and content, starting from the colonial perspectives *on* Africa to, increasingly, acquired items that were produced *in* Africa. The items on display here are accompanied by an explanatory text.

Let me share with you the first item, actually the first item in the ASCL Library collection, published in 1947, entitled 'The Colonial administration by European powers: a series of papers read at King's College'. This booklet contains lectures read in 1946 by 'authoritative' representatives of France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Portugal and Great Britain, on the evolution of the colonial policy of their respective countries. The Foreword states that the principle of self-determination was an unexpected consequence of World War I. And just after World War II, the 'concept of progress towards self-government' accelerated a movement for 'interracial adjustments'. And 'the major colonial powers of Western Europe are being called upon to adjust and redefine their relations with overseas dependencies'.

Depicting the ASCL

As we will be reflecting on 75 years of work on, with, and in Africa, it is fascinating to observe the changes in the work we do, how we do it, with whom we do it, and how we represent Africa. Similarly, it is important to reflect on how we present ourselves. This clearly is an ongoing process that requires constant debate and thinking. We realise that our former colleagues here in the room and broader network members may be wondering what happened to the orange image that came with the ASCL for many, many years.



1 See page 77.

Here you see the historical development of our logo. From today's perspectives, many would agree that the former logo may evoke a rather traditional image of Africa. Many of us no longer felt at ease with this image, recognising our diverse knowledges and experiences with the continent and its population.

Our new logo depicts a frame through which the ASCL observes, researches and aims to understand these diverse African realities. It is a window to contemporary, past and future developments, shedding light on the societal, religious, political, economic, demographic, cultural, and linguistic questions that are at the core of the ASCL's work. It is a window to new insights, the frame is not closed, but has openings: research continues to provide new and diverse insights into the continent.

Equally important, the colours we use in the logo represent our position as an integral part of Leiden University. We deliberately use the Leiden blue, with aqua and red colour accents. On an interesting side note: yesterday, one of our new master's students shared that in Indonesia, the colour blue signals wisdom and knowledge. Very fitting, and that comes with a responsibility as well.

Before I close and give the word to Annetje Ottow, the president of the Board of Leiden University, for the official opening remarks, I would like to thank the brains and hands behind today's programme, notably Elvire Eijkman, Rik Jongenelen and Jan Abbink being part of the committee preparing this day, as well as Trudi Blomsma and Fenneken Veldkamp who kept us on our toes! And of course to all colleagues contributing to today's programme and exhibition!

I look forward to today's exchanges. Thank you!

2

Opening speech

Annetje Ottow
President of Leiden University's Executive Board



It is a great pleasure to be with you today to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the African Studies Centre Leiden. 75 years is truly an impressive number. Founded in 1947 as a scientific documentation centre in Leiden and a trade office in Rotterdam, and now, in 2022, a globally leading African Studies institute. Since 1947, Africa and the world have obviously changed profoundly, as has the cooperation and engagement between our university and Africa.

A world class research institute

The ASCL is a world class research institute, which over the years has addressed a wide range of themes that have been taken up in, and inspired by, research elsewhere, such as ecology and climate, cultural studies, political culture, modern African history, agricultural development and policy, innovative economic development, comparative religious studies, and youth culture.

The multi-disciplinarity and diversity of the ASCL staff is not a slogan, but practice: researchers, who have a solid disciplinary background, have developed in the direction of open, multidisciplinary research through collaboration in research groups within the ASCL and beyond.

Without exaggeration, the ASCL is a leading global African Studies institute with a great reputation. Over the past 75 years, we have seen remarkable growth of the ASCL in all respects, characterised by adaptability at the

intellectual and institutional level. I experienced all this during our visit to the institute when the Ambassador of Ghana visited Leiden University.

The ASCL is a favourite place for visiting scholars from all over the world: the highly competitive visiting fellowship positions are always full. People come here because of the colleagues, the expertise, and for the rich library: the Africa collection at the ASCL Library is superb. With its many functions and services, it goes beyond a regular academic library, and is well integrated with ongoing research at the ASCL.

The importance of Africa

Africa is becoming increasingly important in the global economy and in the political arena, due to population growth, an ever younger population, political reforms, and economic development. Higher education and research institutions in Africa have shown immense growth over the past decades, and this is expected to continue. Strengthening connections with these partner institutions is vital for Leiden University.

At the same time, many African countries face challenges, including climate change, inequalities in global markets, resource dependencies, health issues, and lingering legacies of colonial rule. Population growth is a huge challenge, but also an opportunity: it invites us to think about the opportunities that a youthful population offers in terms of creative power, innovation and development, as well as opportunities for civil action, opening up alternative perspectives on global issues.

These challenges do not only have implications for life on the continent itself, but also for us here in the Netherlands, and Europe. Building a better understanding of the challenges in Africa and their impact on the world, is crucial. This is exactly what the ASCL does so well, which is what we are celebrating today.

Europe and Africa are next-door neighbours, with a longstanding and often challenging shared history. In recent years, the divide between Europe and its southern neighbour seems to have widened, while multilateral cooperation at the global level is in danger, however crucial it is - more than ever. Europe is struggling with challenges itself, not in the least because of the tragic war in Ukraine. These are worrying developments.

The role of universities

I believe we, as universities, have an obligation to reverse this trend. Science and education can play a role and help us to focus on our common future rather than on differences. In my speech for the Opening of the Academic Year I stressed the responsibility of universities to play a role in building bridges and finding solutions for the global challenges we encounter. And this is exactly what the African Studies Centre does, together with many more Leiden scholars throughout our university.

The role of Leiden University

Universities need to impact on these challenges in an equal partnership with African peers. That is why we have articulated in our Strategic Plan that we want to build further strategic partnerships in and with Africa, across the whole spectrum of our university, building on all the expertise and long-term experience available within the African Studies Centre.
I believe that various partners can be part of this endeavour. I am thinking of our institutes in Morocco and Egypt, the Leiden-Erasmus-Delft Majority World cooperation, the partnership with Edinburgh University, and, increasingly important, Una Europa, the European university network Leiden recently joined. Closer to home, the Leiden and The Hague municipalities share our interest in strengthening connections with Africa.

Integration

An important network that I would like to mention is the Leiden African Studies Assembly (LeidenASA), which has undertaken and supported a range of activities to promote collaboration between Africanists from the African Studies Centre and other institutes in our University. Through all its work, the ASCL is becoming an integral part of our university. It is my belief that there are still many possibilities to work further on this integration: the ambition in the Strategic Plan of Leiden University provides many opportunities and I am very pleased that initiatives are taken to implement this further. A multi-disciplinary approach throughout the whole university is a very important aspect of this strategy and you provide the necessary building blocks all together.

So, in short, I want to congratulate you with this impressive anniversary, and I am confident that your work will only become more important and

impactful in the coming years and decades, as our cooperation with Africa will evolve and increase as well.

Thank you for your attention.

3

From economic to development and back to economic: the changing explanations for the study of Africa

Speaker: Chibuike Uche[2]
Stephen Ellis Chair in the Governance of Finance and Integrity in Africa



Introduction: the origins of African Studies

An understanding of the historical foundations of any discipline is an important variable in the enhancement of its utility value. Gaining this however is not always easy. This is especially so when the knowledge output from the discipline has diverse economic and social implications for the different groups associated with the discipline. Under such circumstances, there is an incentive for the true origins of a discipline to be befuddled and contested. African Studies is a clear example of a discipline whose true origins have been confused and contested. Given the influence of European interests in shaping African Studies, it is not surprising that such contestations have their origins in the long and sometimes difficult relationship between Europe and Africa.

The reality is that Europe has arguably had the greatest influence on African Studies and African (under-)development. On one side of the contestations around the true essence of African Studies are those who believe that the economic exploitation of Africa is the main reason for European interests in

2 This paper is based on Prof. Uche's speech delivered during the ASCL's anniversary on 8 September 2022, from which his line of thinking has evolved.

Africa and African Studies. Advocates of this view include Sinclair (1901), Keltie (1890), and Rodney (1972). On the opposite side of the aisle are those who argue that it is the humanist interest of the West to develop Africa that has been the main driver of the development of African Studies. As John Lonsdale (2005) put it, this group sees Africans as feckless victims and the West as a rescue service. Unless the contested dynamics of European interests in Africa and African Studies are properly explored and understood, the continent may continue to make the mistakes of the past. In other words, unless Africa's past international economic relations are objectively studied and contextualised, it will be difficult for the knowledge produced in African Studies to have any meaningful developmental value for the continent.

It is in light of the above that Ton Dietz, who was the director of the African Studies Centre Leiden from 2011 to 2017, stressed the importance of understanding Africa in the context of its historical dynamics. According to him, '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' (Dietz, 2017).

In this short paper, I will demonstrate how the diverse contestations that have been driven by various interests have at different times in history conspired to shape our meaning and understanding of the essence of African Studies. In summary, I will show that African Studies has come full circle. I will specifically argue that the recent public acknowledgments by a growing number of western countries that their aid and trade policies in Africa are correlated, is at the very least a concession that their rescue service in Africa is incentivised by their national economic interests. This reconciliation of the theory and reality of African Studies has set the stage for the utility value of the discipline to be enhanced.

The changing explanations for foreign interests in Africa

Although Africa and Europe are sometimes referred to as twin continents, the reality is that the European exploration and exploitation of Africa was a by-product of the search by Europe for an alternative trade route to Asia in search of spices. In this direction, the Portuguese led the way and were later joined by other European powers like the Dutch, British, and French. At the time the main drivers of European exploration of Africa were gold, ivory, and slaves (O'Rourke and Williamson, 2009). The journals kept by such explorers laid the foundation for our understanding of the continent.

One such explorer was Vasco Da Gama, who became the first person to navigate around the Cape and find a way to India (Ravenstein, 2010). On the side of the Dutch, traders, especially those allied with the Dutch West India Company and with respect to South Africa, the Dutch East India Company, were also encouraged to keep journals of their exploits and explorations of Africa. The Journal of Jan van Riebeeck was arguably the most influential in the above direction (The Van Riebeeck Society, 1958). Such journals showed that the interests of the Europeans in Africa at the time were driven mainly by economic profits. Associations of Europeans interested in Africa were also formed in some European countries. One example was the African Association (UK), which was formed in 1788. Again, its focus was on economic exploitation. At the time there were no inhibitions against making such goals public. Similar associations were formed in France and Spain in 1802 (Boahen, 1961).

The exploitation of Africa and Africans at the time was made easier by the fact that they were seen as savages who were nearer animals than humans. It was arguably because of this perception that the Europeans had no moral boundaries in dealing with the Africans (Brantlinger, 1985).

From the above, it is clear that historically, the motivation for the interest of the West in African Studies was economic. Since at the time there were no opposing voices either from Africa or Europe, there was no need to change the real narrative behind the collection of information about Africa and the dealings of Europe with Africa.

Things are, however, different now. The economic narrative of African Studies has since been successfully replaced by a developmental narrative (Cohen, 1971). This change process commenced after the Industrial Revolution, which was one of the reasons for the abolition of the slave trade and which propelled the scramble for the hinterland of Africa by different European powers.

The morality debate in Europe about the slave trade, which led to its eventual abolition, helped to ensure that the exploitative economic practices of Europeans in Africa could no longer be openly discussed. This arguably led to a change of narrative where Africa's developmental interests began to be touted as the main reason for European involvement in Africa. This was so for all the unilateral ventures of European nation-states and international agreements that were employed to continue the economic exploitation of the African continent, like the advent of European missionaries, the Berlin

Conference of 1884-5, and the League of Nations Agreement of 1919 (Covenant of the League of Nations, 1919; Craven, 2015).

Unlike in the past, European explorers now had to devise more sophisticated developmental and social arguments to support their revised position. The fight among diverse European interests in Africa also did not help matters. By the last decade of the 19th century, for instance, the missionaries who had previously worked closely with the British traders in West Africa began to increasingly question the British exploitative commercial practices in Africa (Flint, 1963). Such traders were therefore forced to find robust ways of defending their practices. This sometimes entailed challenging the role of missionaries in Africa. The arrowhead of this intellectual defence was Mary Kingsley, who was the philosophic spokesperson of the British traders in West Africa. Her central argument was that Africa and Africans were different species and that it was wrong for the missionaries to tamper with the spirituality and institutions of the Africans, which had developed in the context of the specificities of their society. She also argued that alcohol, which was heavily criticised by the missionaries as an exploitative tool, should actually be seen as an important medium of exchange (Flint, 1963, 1965). So successful were her arguments that the Royal African Society was established in her honour shortly after her death in 1900 (The African Society Inaugural Meeting, 1901).

The relationship between Europe and Africa however changed fundamentally during WWII. This was because the Atlantic Charter of 1941, contrary to the provision in the 1919 League of Nations Agreement, acknowledged the right of all people to govern themselves. This pronouncement made the end of colonialism imminent. Despite this, the developmental focus of African Studies continued to reign largely unchallenged. This was because European countries proactively moved to establish African Studies Centres in their home jurisdictions and consolidate existing ones at the time.[3]

The establishment of the ASC

It was under such dynamics that the present ASCL was established in 1947 as the Study Centre of the Africa Institute. Although the Dutch were the most influential commercial players in Africa for the most part of the 17th century,

3 Letter from the Curators of the Africa Institute to the Minister of Foreign Affairs dated May 30, 1947, National Archives of the Netherlands, Catalogue Reference Number 2.05.117, Inventory Number, 12998.

they subsequently lost their influence in the continent and concentrated on Indonesia. The Atlantic Charter made the loss of this colony by the Dutch imminent.

It was at this stage that Africa again came into focus for the Dutch. Despite the economic origins of the Study Centre, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs was determined to disguise it as an independent scientific institute. This was why it advised that the Study Centre should be separated from the Africa Institute. This happened in 1958. Prior to that time, there was a push in 1955 to make the Study Centre part of Leiden University. The University was reluctant, however, partly because of the non-scientific aspects of the duties of the Study Centre.[4]

Arguably because of colonial influences, the European Centres for African Studies played important roles in establishing similar centres in many African countries. Such close relationships have at least in part led to the dominance of Eurocentric ideas across Africa several years after many African countries gained independence.

One consequence of the dominance of the developmental focus of African Studies is that issues targeted at aiding the development of the continent, such as development aid, dominate the policy space. It is because such development aid consistently lags behind what multinational businesses get out of Africa (Curtis and Jones, 2017), which is rarely mentioned in international policy debates, that I argue that the developmental perspective of African Studies has failed a cardinal empirical test for theory validation. Despite this and calls for the decolonisation of African Studies, the developmental focus continues to reign unhindered. The poor funding of education in Africa and the migration of several prominent Africanist scholars to the West have not helped matters. Those still resident in Africa remain dependent on western research and development, which are also sometimes entwined with Eurocentric interests (Olukoshi, 2006; Hyden, 2007). As a consequence of the above dynamics the calls for the decolonisation of African Studies have thus far not gained much traction.

4 Letter from the curators of Leiden University to the curators of the Africa Institute, dated 7 April 1955, National Archives of the Netherlands, Catalogue Reference: 2.11.57, Inventory Number 936.

Chinese influence in the continent

However, this is about to change because of the rise of China as a major force in Africa. This is so given the fact that Chinese influence in the continent has essentially been driven by their economic interests. Unlike the Europeans who previously pretended that their aid is simply aimed at helping wean Africa off poverty, the Chinese have historically linked their aid with the promotion of their economic interests in the continent. This strategy has at least partly helped China, a country that historically had very limited contact with Africa, to emerge as the largest exporter to the African continent. China has also become a major player in the funding and building of Africa's infrastructure.

Because of the emergent contestations for African resources and business opportunities with China, an increasing number of European countries have arguably started to use their aid as bait to enhance their trade and economic engagement with Africa. In other words, such countries have removed their developmental masks and brought out their economic claws. Examples of such countries include the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, Finland, and Denmark (van Ewijk et al, 2017).

Economic interests, which for a long time had been disguised as being an unimportant variable in the shaping of European interests in Africa and African Studies, are now gradually returning to the centre stage. The result is that Eurocentric Africanist scholars who have invested their careers propagating and defending the developmental focus of African Studies are gradually losing the support of their benefactor European states. It is at this time safe to predict that such scholars will also soon lose their audience.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have tried to explain how the traditional European economic interests, which were openly admitted in the African Studies literature up until the slave trade became a heavily contested moral topic in Europe, were transformed into a developmental issue - up until recently, more than half a century after most African countries got their independence. The emergence of China as Africa's largest exporter through its aid and trade policies has now caused an increasing number of European countries to adopt a similar strategy. This official admission and recognition that European economic interests are the main drivers of European interests in Africa and African Studies will help reconcile the theory of African Studies with the reality of

African Studies. The removal of the disguise of European incentives sets the stage for the real economic and political dynamics in Africa's international relations to influence the creation of knowledge in Africa. This will be in the interest of Africa and African Studies. At the very least, it will set the stage for the enhancement of the utility value of the discipline.

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4

From periphery to centre: the development of the ASCL research agenda over seven decades

Speaker: Jan Abbink
Professor Emeritus of Politics and Governance in Africa



Dear distinguished guests,

This is a memorable day: 75 years ASCL and we are still going strong. As suddenly the oldest ASCL member still in service (and therefore perhaps kind of uniquely qualified to do this...), I will give a bird's eye view of the development of the research agendas at the Centre over the past decades. Admittedly, that is an appropriate but an impossible task in 20 minutes, and I will not have much to say here on other issues, like our great library, although it is very well integrated with our research activities.

The written documentation on the ASCL[5] - produced by the Centre itself and by others, such as external Evaluation Committees since 1998 - is enormous and can only be digested selectively.

The very first founding document, the '*Notariële Acte*' of 12 August 1947, gives as the first aim (among three) of the 'Study Centre of the Africa Institute': 'the scientific study of Africa'. This aim was repeated in the renewed ASC legal statute of 28 August 1958, in which the Centre was described as specifically devoted to *research* rather than to business networking and reporting. But

5 The label 'ASCL' (African Studies Centre Leiden) became the name only after its integration into Leiden University as an interfaculty institute as of 1 January 2016.

until ca. 1963, the aim remained peripheral, and little if any (field) research was done.

Today I would like to make just two main points: a) since its early years the ASCL has seen incredible 'professionalisation', and b) it has shown remarkable 'organic academic growth'. Perhaps predictably, the ASCL has gone through a notable process of professionalising *all* its activities, from research to library to support staff work and to teaching. With 'organic academic growth' I mean that the scientific work[6] has continued to show cumulative trends over the years, in terms of quantity and quality, especially since the late 1980s. It originated from the research staff's intrinsic intellectual curiosity and (multi-)disciplinary ambitions. Notably, this did not come easily and happened despite the challenging conditions, such as phases of organisational turmoil, lack of clear research plans in the early phase, and financial dips that the Centre has seen.[7] In itself that is not so surprising, but it shows that the Centre, so to speak, developed great survival skills and despite certain weaknesses in its research output has shown real 'value for money' over the years. The professionalisation is the result of a) active exploration and development of research ideas and agendas (that were basically absent in the first approximately 25 years of research), and b) good directors' choices and a balanced policy of appointing new researchers in the past three decades. These two trends were *not inevitable*, because the ASC might also have succumbed to outside pressures. The annual reports of the first two decades make this clear.[8]

Business interests in Africa

In 1947 the ASC[9] had its origins in the emerging business interests in Africa as focus area for alternative markets and trading partners (replacing Indonesia, which became independent and antagonistic to the Netherlands), and also in a commitment among its founders, Karel Paul van der Mandele and Prof. Petrus Johannes Idenburg, to the post-WWII European agenda of

6 Incl. field research, publications, conference organising, networking, guest lecturing in so many places, and the Visiting Fellowship Programme.

7 I say this based on my reading of the dozens of annual reports since 1948 and especially since 1958 showing this process. The 'scientific history' of the ASC(L) will be the subject of a longer paper in the near future, based on this Introduction.

8 The challenging conditions that I just mentioned and to which the Centre responded over the years were scientific, budgetary, institutional, and in relation to the global 'knowledge economy'. Here the changes over the past decades have been tremendous.

9 As part of the 'Afrika-Instituut'.

development and 'furthering world peace' through economic connections and trade. In the first two decades of its existence this focus on economic issues dominated the ASC's agenda as well as its networking and advisory reports. But not much happened in terms of research before 1963.[10]

This impulse for the empirical research and in general the academic restart in the mid-1960s came from Prof. Hans Holleman, an accomplished Africanist researcher and ASC director from 1963 to 1969. He was the key figure in the early history of the Centre and the first to outline a sort of research agenda. This August 1963 agenda proposed four research themes: agricultural development; political developments; urbanisation & migration; and cultural development. Holleman kicked the researchers out of their offices into the field in Africa. He attracted new researchers and also gave a big impulse to the Library and Documentation section. After Holleman's departure in 1969, however, insecurity about the organisation of the ASC's research remained. Good relations with the various funding Ministries perhaps saved it over the years - as the Centre was seen to do interesting and useful research.

Since 1971 the ASC received its own specific core-funded research budget, and in the late 1970s up to 1990, more political and contemporary-historical research interests were developed, in line with the spirit of the times. New research staff addressed political, sociological, and historical issues, and with more academic ambition. This new approach gradually led to more publications in refereed outlets in and outside the Netherlands, especially after ca. 1990. As said, emerging political-historical research in the 1980s and 1990s did *not* exclude the continuity and focus among research staff on the 'sociology of development' in the broader sense - witness the FNSP.[11] This focus never disappeared, and it built on the experience with work on food economies and comparative nutrition research.

Research agenda: from brief notes to thematic groups

A full-fledged 'research programme' at the ASC was indeed slow in developing. Practice preceded planning in research in the years up to 1987, when Gerrit Grootenhuis still was the 'general secretary', *not* the scientific director, of the

10 There was no empirical/field research, only documentation and report-writing based on documentary sources and secondary literature. Even here, its 'economic information' mission was not very prominent.

11 The Food and Nutrition Studies Programme, since 1983.

ASC, and only brief notes on research plans were ever published.[12] They are not readily traceable in the archives. Researchers via their networks, e.g. with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation and with collegial links elsewhere, largely set the research agenda.

The first documents outlining a research strategy were the 1987 programmes of the two new Departments of Political-Historical Studies and of Social-Economic Studies, for 1987-1991. They led to steady growth of and overall continuity in the empirical research agenda.

Five years later, in 1992, after the adoption of a new ASC administrative statute in May and the nomination of a new director, Prof. Stephen Ellis in July 1991 (in office for three years), two new agenda-setting five-year programmes for 1992-1996 were written, again by the two Departmental Chairs, then Robert Buijtenhuijs and Prof. Jan Hoorweg. This was the decisive turn towards opening up the until then rather closed, or let's say 'not so visible', research culture of the ASC.

The Political-Historical group's programme - recognising the simultaneous movements in Africa towards both 'democratisation' and 'weakening of the African state', tuned in with policy concerns existing also at the Dutch ministerial level. It tackled three themes: a) the major political and social changes in African political systems; b) the specific political and economic organisation of states in Africa; and c) identity and ethnicity, which showed a big resurgence and were expressed through innovative forms of ethno-religious practices, language policies, and emerging urban cultures.

The Socio-Economic Department outlined a programme addressing prevailing socio-economic trends in Africa and the need, as they saw it, to produce 'policy-relevant' data and insights. From a general focus in the preceding years, on rural development, the programme continued a concern with a) 'food and nutrition issues' (with ministerial funding and local African partnerships), b) 'household resources and rural poverty'[13] and c) 'agricultural marketing and food policy in Africa'. Compared with the Political-Historical Department,[14] the Socio-Economic Department continued with work done in the previous 15 years, but innovatively built on its experience.

12 There was, however, an important 'Self-evaluation' report prepared by the Centre (in 1987), sent to the Ministry of Education, in response to the then notorious 1986 'Uhlenbeck Report'.

13 Incl. on household patterns of employment and income or wage earning.

14 Which also had less personnel.

The publication of these two Departmental programmes was a big step towards broadening and professionalising the research agenda and also towards increasing the 'output' of the Centre. It also initiated a *cycle* of drafting a new ASC research programme every five to six years. Research and publications took off, but growing tensions emerged between the two Departments, e.g. about funding and staff.

The specific advantage of the ASC, as a space for *independent academic research* with core funding without its own heavy teaching programme, was much emphasised and stimulated by director Stephen Ellis in the early 1990s. It allowed researchers to try out and experiment on perhaps more risky topics, like revolt and resistance, religion and politics, class formation, political experiments in Africa, urban cultures, or environmental conflict. But eventually, the dual Department structure collapsed and a kind of crisis ensued.

In June 1996, a new director, Prof. Gerti Hesseling, and Board came in, and a new, non-dualist and less antagonistic structure of 'thematic research groups ('*Themagroepen*') was proposed, as advised by an external '*Structuur-Commissie*'. It became effective in 1997, another turning point year. On 22 September 1997 the new ASC approach was launched: four 'theme groups' with their own research programmes: 'Conflict, Conciliation & Control in Africa', 'Society & Resources in Africa', 'Globalisation & Socio-cultural Transformation in Africa', and 'De-Agrarianisation in Africa: Labour, Locality & Identity in Transformation'. All were fieldwork-oriented and became quite productive in research and publications. Equally successful was the revamped Visiting Fellowship Programme.

We may say that all this inaugurated or continued a fruitful period of reorientation and renewed scientific energy at the ASC, much due to Gerti Hesseling's approach of broad, external networking, notably in Africa, and stimulating and respecting new, independent research projects among staff. She also gave new impulses to the ASC's Library and Documentation section.

Positive external evaluations

In 1998 the first External Evaluation, a new fashion in academia, was conducted (and also mentioned as obligatory in the new ASC statute). It reported positively on the ASC and the Centre went full steam ahead.

In 2002 the first cycle of the new Theme Group activities came to an end and on the basis of a new five-year Research Plan for 2002-2006 (counting 91 pages!), three new TGs were designed. Inevitably with recognisable continuity in terms of research staff, built-up expertise and research emphasis. The new TGs were: 'Culture, Politics and Inequality in Africa' (CPI), 'Economy, Ecology & Exclusion' (EEE), and 'Agency in Africa' (AiA), so a tripartite structure was effective as of 2002.

In 2004 Gerti Hesseling resigned after a successful eight years, and was succeeded by Leo de Haan, who would later become director of the ISS. Leo de Haan did a commendable job of solidifying the ASC, attracting new (research) staff, and extending some cooperative networks to Africa and the outside world. Under his tenure the ASC also, in 2007, hosted the 2nd European Conference of African Studies (ECAS), and later two externally funded research programmes were also brought in: the important comparative 'Tracking Development' programme[15], comparing Asian and African development paths, and the more complex Consortium for Development Partnerships, with CODESRIA, Northwestern University (USA) and some other institutions.

In 2004 a second External Evaluation[16] of the ASC was carried out - also positive. The recommendations were used in the preparations for the research programme for 2006- 2011.

In 2007 the new five-year research programme was launched, with three new research theme groups: 'Social Movements & Political Culture'; 'Economics, Environment & Exploitation' and 'Connections & Transformations in Africa'. On this renewed basis, the research groups and the Centre in general performed quite well in the first years, initiating various new research lines and a good number of projects by individual researchers.

In 2011, the regime of external evaluations was again set in motion, with another major exercise assessing the years 2004-2010. This was the third one since 1998. Its report coincided with the appointment of Prof. Ton Dietz in 2010 as the new director.

Based on the Evaluation Report recommendations there was a kind of overhaul, entitled 'ASC New Style', energetically led by Ton Dietz, with a

15 Funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation.

16 Under KNAW auspices, like the first one in 1997-98.

new, fortunately only 8-page, research programme for 2012-2016, called 'Africa and Global Restructuring'. The ASC was restructuring as well. The emphasis came to lie on four domains of research: 'Resources and well-being'; 'Constellations of governance'; 'Identification and belonging in a media age'; and 'Africa's global connections'. As usual, these research themes and their motivation were formulated in close consultation with research staff, but also more geared to the Netherlands' Development Cooperation agenda, with its then newly proposed four focus themes and fifteen focus countries. In 2012 the ASC's research was also reorganised in, up to seven, 'Collaborative Research Groups' *within* these four domains.[17]

Under Ton Dietz's tenure, the ASC reconnected with the Netherlands-African Business Council, our old twin of 1947. This was a probably inevitable, and certainly a positive, development, adding new elements to the research agenda.

Integration into Leiden University leading to synergy

The ASC's integration into Leiden University per 1 January 2016 led to 'LeidenASA' ('Leiden African Studies Assembly'), a new network of Africanist researchers of various backgrounds drawn from Leiden University. This enhanced synergy in research efforts and knowledge dissemination. The shifting emphasis to more economic and developmental issues occurred next to a flexible continuation of research on classic but enduring themes of security, political developments and innovations, cultural complexity, contemporary history, international relations, and resistance movements, among other subjects.

Today, such themes are still in the forefront of the ASCL's research, showing sometimes remarkable continuity with those of the 1970s and 1980s but much more geared to global academic discussions, and with quite original takes. While the focus of activities of NABC and ASCL remains different, this fact is mutually respected, and the collaboration and division of tasks seems to work well.

A lot more of the ASCL's publications are now appearing in global, peer-reviewed outlets, although the mixed and broad agenda of research activities,

17 Which have a common thematic aim for several common publications, and change in composition or theme every 3-4 years.

including advisory work and policy-geared background reports, also necessitates other publication formats.

In addition, the ASCL has been and is quite present in the (inter)national news media with interviews and quotes of researchers and also library staff, and thus has an impact on news reporting[18], although, as I noted, the media - like the 'policy circles' - certainly don't always listen to us (nor do they always have to).

The professionalisation and academic growth of the ASCL were amply demonstrated in the five respective External Evaluations, by committees of experts. The last one was in 2017, so we can expect another one soon. The important thing is that all Evaluations were *very favourable*. Both research and the library especially, scored always well above average. They confirm that the ASCL's 75-year history has shown the emergence of a solid and globally respected African Studies research institute. The Centre is now an important hub of African Studies - based on its production of a huge body of empirical data and of invaluable insights, as seen in the many products and publications. They were food for thought not only in academia but also in policy circles. We disseminate our work in many forums.

In this 75 years' venture we also must acknowledge the hard work, inventiveness, and resilience of those who preceded us - including colleagues who passed away in recent years, for instance after 2000, Rob Buijtenhuijs, Vernie February, Gerti Hesseling, Stephen Ellis, Marcel Rutten, and recently Jan Hoorweg, and several others. They were instrumental in shaping the ASCL to what it is now, and we build on their work.

Publication culture and societal impact

As I noted, the Centre's intellectual dynamics, activities and positioning today are different from those in the 1960s, and even from those in the 1990s. Its research initiatives showed variety and adaptability, although respecting the necessary continuity. The publication culture and standards as well as societal impact in the field of African Studies now are much improved and held in regard by many scholars, policymakers, NGOs, etc. To refer back to my two core statements: I think that 'professionalisation' and 'organic academic growth' were achieved.

18 Staff are a 'source of knowledge' and a counterweight to often superficial reporting – even if the media quite selectively appropriate our views and statements.

One proof of this is the strongly increased citation scores of our researchers - although these should not become a fetish - and the flourishing publication series, notably with Brill Publishers. A lot of really interesting and very readable articles, books and reports were produced.

Another is the continued close link with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs/ Development Cooperation, e.g. in programmes like INCLUDE, several other research projects, courses, and advice.

A third one is the always crowded Visiting Fellowship Programme, although recently reduced due to COVID-19 and budget cuts, and the number of 'self-financed scholars'. And not to forget, the seminar programme, with a good number of distinguished foreign guest speakers.

A fourth one is the fruitful link we forged with education: new research initiatives and projects have emerged from the students of our Research Master African Studies, started in 2006, Master African Studies, and Graduate Programme African Studies, who were and are educated here.

Lastly, what we also have done is collaborate more intensively with African scholars based in Africa - who will be more and more in the forefront of original research. I see this collaborative research as a growth point for the future work of the ASCL.

Perhaps these achievements were set in motion due to the shake-up of the Centre with director Stephen Ellis in 1991-93, and the subsequent guidance of the four directors[19] which we have had since then, Gerti Hesseling, Leo de Haan, Ton Dietz and Jan-Bart Gewald, and that are continued by current director Marleen Dekker. They have also been crucial in maintaining and negotiating the ASCL's links to the relevant institutions in the Netherlands and abroad.

To conclude. In emphasising the ASCL's process of professionalisation and organic academic growth here, it was not my intention to present a teleological story of an institute that started from amateurish beginnings to an inevitable apotheosis of scientific perfection. Each era, each phase, had its own limitations and opportunities. There were, and are, always challenges to overcome, e.g. as to external funding, institutional embedding

19 Not counting the two interim, 'care-taker' ones: Prof. A. Trouwborst and Ir. A. van Deursen (1994-96).

and positioning, and intellectual-theoretical ambitions. The latter are still to be improved upon. Some people also critically note that the ASCL, while being always open to wider audiences, should not become a 'beehive' of entertainment activities peripheral to academic research.

But - what the ASCL has done in the past decades of research is very noteworthy: building an impressive corpus of empirical data and interpretive-comparative studies on African society, politics, history, economies, and the environment. It became an indispensable resource of in-depth information and of 'running commentary' on Africa and its global relations. The work has greatly informed and inspired other scientists, policymakers, and the general public. The Centre thereby has shown flexibility and inventiveness. It could be said that historically the 'organic academic growth', as I mentioned above, driven by our independent research agenda, has in itself decisively contributed to that high level of professionalisation of the ASCL.

Today our research is in full swing under the 'Strident Africa' research programme, drawn up under previous director Prof. Jan-Bart Gewald, with as its four main themes: 'politics and security', 'economy', 'historical context', and 'society and culture'. Context-sensitive study of such themes is needed more than ever in view of Africa's problems and challenges.

The ASCL hopes to continue its research and other work within the fruitful institutional environment of Leiden University, and by keeping up its standards. A link with the University's new Strategic Plan has been made. We aim to insert ourselves even more in the societal, the policy-relevant, *and* the intellectual-scholarly discussions that affect our world and shape our relations with Africa, the fascinating and rapidly changing continent that, let's not forget, is our closest neighbour.

5

From 100 to 100.000 books and a digital library in 75 years: the library of the African Studies Centre in Leiden, 1947-2022

Speaker: Jos Damen
Head of the ASCL Library



The library of the African Studies Centre, like the Afrika-Instituut as a whole, dates back to 1947. It started as the Instituut's Leiden branch, a scientific documentation centre with three employees, and originally focused on trade and legal matters. The library grew from 2,400 books in 1957 to more than 100,000 books, films, journals, photographic material, e-docs and a large digital library in 2022.

Abstracts and web dossiers

Unlocking information has always been a key element of the library of the African Studies Centre. In the first decades (right from the start, as can be read in the first annual reports) this was done by making abstracts, thereby opening up scientific journal articles and books, and alerting researchers on certain new topics of interest. This was professionalised by indexing books and articles, and making an African Studies Thesaurus. This thesaurus was built in Leiden and today comprises more than 13,000 English terms covering the field of African Studies. Another famous service was *African Studies Abstracts,* an abstracts journal covering academic articles. It was published from 1968 until 2017, first in print, from 2003 onwards as *ASA Online.* The

library also creates other tools for exploring Africa information: the highly popular web dossiers (on a multitude of subjects, ranging from politics to art and from crime to feminism). Library Alerts are used to notify people of newly acquired publications, and the Library Weekly is built using Wikidata.

Going digital - open access

The library adopted an online catalogue relatively late (1989), but was quick in providing online open access and building repositories and databases. The ASCL Library was in fact the first Leiden partner who supplied academic publications to be included in the projects of SURF, the organisation for IT in Dutch education and research. Nowadays, online publications of academic books are taken for granted and Open Access is seen as a must-have, but the pioneering days took place only a few decades ago. The ASCL Library was one of the forerunners of this movement in the Netherlands. The ASCL also provided online information databases such as Connecting-Africa and AfricaBib. Even as part of an interfaculty institute of Leiden University, since 2016, the ASCL Library is still open to the general public. Any visitor can wander between the shelves - though a substantial part of the collection is currently housed in the stacks of the Leiden University Library.

Staff

Collecting books and making information about Africa available were central tasks of the African Studies Centre right from the start. At first, former colonial administrator Lucien Adam executed some of these tasks. Mrs. E.C. Nix led the library from the 1950s up to 1974, when Ph.A. Emanuel took over. Koos van der Meulen headed the library from 1977 up to 1996, and after him Elli de Rijk, Titia van der Werf and Jos Damen were in charge. The staff was evenly divided between administrative staff (acquisition, cataloguing, lending and visitor information) and information specialists (thesaurus, indexing, collection development, abstracts and web services).



The library in the early seventies. From left to right: A.J.C. Lach de Bère (documentation), S.M.S. Phillipse (documentation), Baroness A.M.C. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye (library employee), E.C. Nix (head of the library), K. van der Meulen (head of the library from 1977-1996).

Buildings

The African Studies Centre has had various addresses in Leiden over the years - Rapenburg 45, known as the Telders' house, where Queen Beatrix lived when she was a student at Leiden University, Rapenburg 8 and Stationsplein 10 - and the ASCL has been housed at Wassenaarseweg 52 since 1989. A move to new premises at the Witte Singel in Leiden is planned for 2024.

Future strategy

The Policy Plan of the library of the African Studies Centre for the period 2022-2026 focuses on four strategic goals: 1. A distinctive collection, with more books from Africa via targeted acquisition trips and a more open language profile, e.g. books in Swahili. 2. An attractive presentation of the collection, with changing physical displays and thematic digital presentations. 3. Targeting specific user groups, and an enhanced role of the library in education. 4. Expanding Open Access.

New directions

The collection of the library of the African Studies Centre has over the years developed into a library of about 100,000 paper books, thousands of journals, over 2,000 films and a large digital library, including scholarly material and digital newspapers. Sometimes collections lead to publications: 750 photographs by well-known medical doctor Roel Coutinho made in Guinea-Bissau in 1973 were published by the ASCL on Wikimedia Commons, and were recently used in a book[20] about a colonial war as seen through Coutinho's camera lens.

The library continues to stimulate access to information from and about Africa by actively buying books in Africa, by making publications available in Open Access and by developing all kinds of tools, such as alert services, web dossiers, library highlights, and Wiki applications built on Wikidata and Wikimedia Commons. The ASCL Library plans to continue doing this in the coming 75 years.

20 Coutinho, R. (2022) *De vrijheidsstrijd van Guinee-Bissau door de ogen van een jonge dokter, Roel Coutinho*. Leiden: African Studies Centre Leiden. Available at https://www.ascleiden.nl/news/de-vrijheidsstrijd-van-guinee-bissau-door-de-ogen-van-een-jonge-dokter-roel-coutinho

6

Titles and subject headings: about daily activities in the ASCL Library

Speaker: Heleen Smits
Information specialist ASCL Library



The library of the African Studies Centre Leiden has been praised throughout history. The jubilee book on the occasion of 50 years African Studies Centre[21] speaks of a library and a documentation centre *'die er zijn mogen'* - that stand out. The most recent external evaluation report on the African Studies Centre Leiden, from 2017, says about the library that it 'provides an unrivalled research resource within the country and one which is within the top few African Studies libraries in the world'. Go figure.

There are indeed a lot of special things to be said about our library and its documentation practices. There's the size and variety of the collection, which, since the early 2000s, has regularly been supplemented by acquisition trips to African countries - such as to Rwanda last year. You could mention the electronic services and products of our library, such as the Alert Service and the web dossiers, or the Wikimedia, Wikipedia and Wikidata activities and applications. You could talk about the personal service provided by our colleagues at the front desk and how nice and special it is that in the ASCL Library much - but not everything - is still on open shelves and that as a visitor you can wander between the shelves and pick out whatever interests you.

21 De Bok, M. (2000). *Leer mij Afrika kennen : vijftig jaar Afrika-Studiecentrum*. Leiden : Afrika-Studiecentrum. https://scholarlypublications.universiteitleiden.nl/handle/1887/18449

However special and valued all this may be, I did not want to talk about it now, because my colleagues might do so, and also because I would rather tell you something about perhaps the most common activity in our library - and I think in every library: cataloguing!

The craft of cataloguing

What about it? For starters, it is something we all do in one way or another, with the exception only of Jos, the head of our library, and Ella, who, as a front desk clerk, has already experienced almost half of the African Studies Centre's existence.

When cataloguing books and other items, a distinction is made between the so-called formal description and the description of the content of a work. Things like title, author, place of publication, publisher, and year of publication, but also the number of pages of the work, the language or languages in which it was written, even its size in centimeters in case it is a hardcopy book, etc. fall under the heading of formal description.

So, how does this work? One might think that nowadays a lot of information is entered automatically into library catalogues. To a certain extent this is true - I will briefly get back to this later. However, each and every item in our catalogue has, at some point in recent or more distant history, individually been added, and has been edited, at least to some extent, manually. And the same goes for all the other catalogues that can be searched under Leiden collections in the catalogue of the Leiden University Libraries.

Formal description

When we catalogue an item, say a book, we check if a useful formal description of the item is already available in WorldCat - the international catalogue that brings together the holdings of more than 10,000 libraries worldwide. If this is the case, we will import that description and reuse it for making our own catalogue record. Frequently, however, such a description does not yet exist, and we will just make the record ourselves.

The options our cataloguing system provides for describing certain properties are, in some cases, enormous. This is of course mainly an advantage. The fact that we can choose from a list of more than 500 language codes, means that we can not only add *eng, fre* or *por* to the catalogue records of items in our collection, but also *som* for books in Somali and *kin* for books in Kinyarwanda.

It is now possible to filter a search result in the library catalogue by these languages as well. Even so, still many more languages exist, in the world and also in Africa, so that codes such as *other Niger-Kordofanian* remain, as well as *none of the above*.

When we add a person's name to the catalogue record of an item, it is mandatory to also add a so-called *relator code*. This code designates the relationship between the name and the work described, such as author or editor. The list of codes to choose from is long. Apart from *author* and *editor*, some 300 roles can be stated, from *abridger, actor* and *adaptor*, to *writer of accompanying material, writer of added commentary, writer of added text, writer of introduction, writer of lyrics, writer of preface* and *writer of supplementary textual content* (there are no roles beginning with x, y or z). This list is a bit dazzling, and it is fair to say that we usually limit ourselves to the persons that have done something that is obligatory to mention: authors and editors, and, depending on the information carrier, a handful of others.

Content description

Whether we import a formal description or create one ourselves, in all cases we add 'content' to the record, and that brings me to the other aspect of cataloguing: the content description, or content metadata. All records in our catalogue have keywords from the African Studies Centre Thesaurus. In addition, we often add other content: a summary, a table of contents, anything to make the item easier to find; and in the past, famously, the self-made abstracts. With regard to the abstracts, let's take a look at our library's history.

For decades, making abstracts of journal articles and books was one of the main tasks, if not *the* main task of the information specialists in our library. The abstracts were published as the *Documentatieblad* (Documentation Journal) from 1968 till 1993 and as the three-monthly journal *African Studies Abstracts* from 1994 till 2002. From 2003 they were published online, as the *African Studies Abstracts Online*. The African Studies Centre was quite famous for these abstracts among Africanists in the world, especially in Africa.

But times changed. More and more often, summaries were supplied together with the articles. Nowadays it is such common practice that journal articles begin (or sometimes end) with a summary, that you would almost forget that, for many journals, this is a fairly recent practice. Moreover, more and more journals make their articles available online. Nowadays, articles are bought

in large packages from international providers, together with their metadata. They are directly made available online and can be searched in the 'All content' part of the Leiden catalogue - not in the institutional catalogues. With these developments, the end of the African Studies Abstracts Online inevitably came: it made no sense to do double work, and in 2017 we pulled the plug. Instead, we now provide a weekly list of recently published electronic articles on the library website.

The African Studies Thesaurus

Another product of the library that I would like to pay some attention to is the thesaurus. To be sure, what is a thesaurus: a thesaurus is a collection of keywords that exhibits some structure: a keyword, or preferred term, is typically related to variant terms - the non-preferred terms, as well as to broader, narrower and/or associated terms. Created in the early 2000s by our former colleagues Marlene van Doorn and Katrien Polman, the ASCL Thesaurus is still a much-valued product that is maintained and supplemented to this day.

In addition to a range of general terms relating to the study of Africa in the fields of the social sciences and the humanities, the thesaurus contains an enormous number of names: names of countries, of course, but also names - and name variants - of ethnic groups and of languages, and, for example, of kingdoms and of wars. The choice of which variant will become (or remain) the preferred term is not always obvious. *Swaziland* has officially become *Eswatini*, that is not difficult (apart perhaps from noticing this change on time). Sometimes objections to a term arise over time and we change the preferred term: *slaves* became *enslaved persons* and *disabled* became *persons with disabilities*. *Superstitions*, as a rather judgmental term, was taken out and replaced by *popular beliefs*. Different stakeholders or other groups may prefer different terms. The preferred term *Biafra Conflict* was at one point changed to *Nigerian-Biafran War*, with *Biafra Conflict*, *Biafra War*, *Nigeria-Biafra War* and *Nigerian Civil War* as variants.

An interesting aspect of the thesaurus is also that it gives some indication of new topics in African Studies, or topics that became increasingly important, so that additional terms in a certain domain became useful. Terms of fairly recent date include *remote working* and of course *Covid-19*, but also *fantasy novels*, *slam poetry*, and *motivational literature*, a term we typically use for popular booklets with all kinds of advice on how to live a virtuous, successful and/or happy life. Other relatively new thesaurus terms reflecting

newer topics in African Studies are *misinformation, plagiarism, customer orientation, bodily integrity, right to privacy, victim support, whistleblowing, cybercrime, cybersecurity, wind energy, geothermal energy, animal rights* and *human-animal relationships*. Last week, *snakes*, which until then had to make do with the term *reptiles*, finally got their own thesaurus term.

Which terms you create and when, which variant you choose as the preferred term and which terms you relate to each other are matters always open to discussion. The ultimate goal of thesaurus terms is always to make it easier to find items in the catalogue, as well as to give a short indication there of the content.[22]

A bit of history

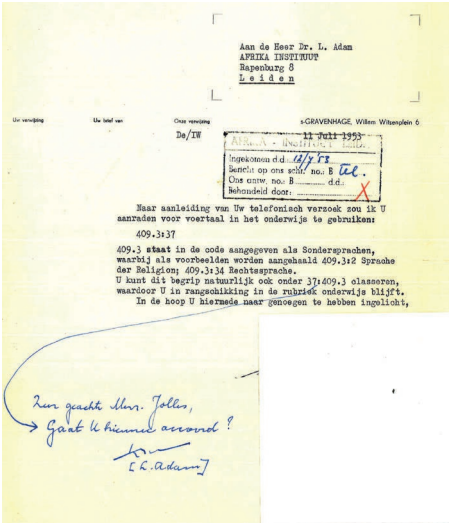
Finally, a short story about a long time ago, something from the library archive that Marlene van Doorn showed me when I first came to work at the ASCL: two letters from 1953. I must first say that, before the ASCL Library catalogue went online and thesaurus terms started to be used for subject indexing, our library used classification codes to make the books discoverable by topic. We used the UDC, the Universal Decimal Code, an international system of decidedly complex notations.

The first letter is from The Dutch Institute for Registration and Filing (*Het Nederlands Instituut voor Documentatie en Registratuur - NIDER*). It is a response to a telephone call from Mr Lucien Adam of the African Studies Centre, then the Africa Institute, asking which UDC code to use for the term *voertaal in het onderwijs* (language of instruction). Somewhat surprisingly, the answer suggests classifying this as a subtype of *Sondersprachen*[23]. The answer must have puzzled Mr Adam, because he scribbles on the letter a note to a Ms Jolles, on whose behalf he has apparently asked the question, *'Zeer geachte Mevr. Jolles, Gaat U hiermee accoord?'* - Do you agree with this? The other letter is Ms Jolles's diplomatic response to Mr Adam: '*tot mijn spijt [kan ik mij hiermee] niet geheel verenigen*' - To my regret, I cannot fully agree with this. She writes that, until further notice, she prefers to keep using her own code and that she will get in touch with the NIDER herself and let Mr Adam know the outcome in due course.

22 For examples of thesaurus terms, see the list of special library items (page 77 and further).

23 The NIDER used a German-language version of the UDC. A Sondersprache can be defined as a subvariety of a language only understood by a certain social group (i.e. jargon, argot, cant, slang) https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Sondersprache

How this ended we unfortunately don't know. There are no further documents in the archive.



Aan de Heer Dr. L. Adam
AFRIKA INSTITUUT
Rapenburg 8
L e i d e n

Uw verwijzing | Uw brief van | Ons verwijzing | 's-GRAVENHAGE, Willem Witsenplein 6
De/IW | 11 Juli 1953

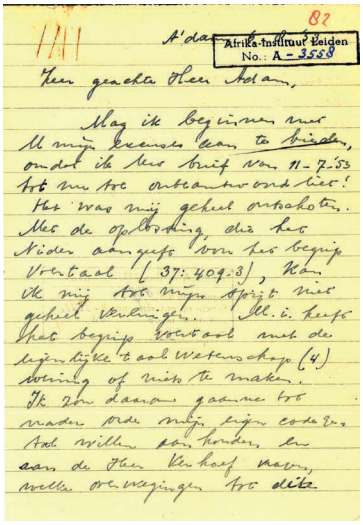
AFRIKA - INSTITUUT LEID.
Ingekomen d.d. 14/7 53
Gericht op ons schr. no.: B tel.
Ons antw. no.: B ..... d.d.:
Behandeld door: X

Naar aanleiding van Uw telefonisch verzoek zou ik U aanraden voor voertaal in het onderwijs te gebruiken:

409.3:37

409.3 staat in de code aangegeven als Sondersprachen, waarbij als voorbeelden worden aangehaald 409.3:2 Sprache der Religion; 409.3:34 Rechtssprache.
U kunt dit begrip natuurlijk ook onder 37:409.3 classeren, waardoor U in rangschikking in de rubriek onderwijs blijft.
In de hoop U hiermede naar genoegen te hebben ingelicht,

Zeer geachte Mevr. Jolles,
Gaat U hierover accoord?
[K.Adam]



87
A'dam
Afrika-Instituut Leiden
No.: A - 3588

Geachte Heer Adam,

Mag ik beginnen met U mijn excuses aan te bieden, omdat ik Uw brief van 11-7-53 tot nu toe onbeantwoord liet!
Het was mij geheel onbekend.
Met de opmerking die Uw Medewerker aangaf van het begrip Voertaal (37:409.3), kan ik mij Uw mijns inziens niet geheel verenigen. Nl. i. heeft het begrip voertaal met de eigenlijke taal Wetenschap (4) weinig of niets te maken.
Ik zou daarom gaarne tot nader orde mijn eigen code Uw tot willen bestemmen, en aan de Heer Verhoef vragen, welke veranderingen tot dato

The letter from The Dutch Institute for Registration and Filing (*Het Nederlands Instituut voor Documentatie en Registratuur – NIDER*) to Mr Lucien Adam of the African Studies Centre, with note to Ms Jolles.

Ms Jolles's response to Mr Adam.

7

Gatekeeper, gateway, gate-opener? 75 years of ASCL collection development

Speaker: Gerard C. van de Bruinhorst
Information specialist ASCL Library



Sometime in the early 1980s, I had to write a *werkstuk* in primary six about the Second World War. The place to be was the public library, but unfortunately the topic was considered as an 'adults only' subject and therefore not accessible for primary school pupils. The librarian was willing to guide me (literally upstairs) to the adult section, sitting next to me during the time I needed to copy the relevant sections from several books. Taking home these titles was absolutely forbidden.

Gatekeeper-gateway

At the end of the past millennium, in 1999, the International Library Federation IFLA prepared a statement on libraries and intellectual freedom in which they reflected on the changing role of libraries. They acknowledged that libraries no longer have the monopoly on reliable knowledge, nor do they have the authority to select what information people should see or should not see. Instead of a gatekeeper, IFLA visualised a publicly funded library as an institution serving as a gateway to knowledge, thought and culture and 'facilitating access to expressions of knowledge and intellectual

activity. To this end, libraries shall acquire, preserve and make available the widest variety of materials, reflecting the plurality and diversity of society.' [24]

In the scenario of gateway, libraries do no longer necessarily own all the materials. Now the library pays for access (similar to a toll gate on the highway) to information in different formats such as databases, intelligence, dissertations, and peer-reviewed articles, serving patrons with this 'wide variety of materials.' This, according to some, rather passive role is further undermined by the seemingly endless information on the World Wide Web, accessible without any brokerage of libraries.

Gate-opener

Today, almost a quarter of a century later, in a reflection on their website, the IFLA pictures a much more active role as gate-opener, in which the library is a place where people may 'develop the skills [...] to use and interact with information.'[25] A basic assumption underlying this vision is 'to recognise that there is often no one right answer, but degrees of accuracy and reliability [...]'. So we are still at the gate, but now providing maps to navigate the information overload and hopefully without the patronising attitude from the past.

Both from a personal and a professional perspective I can do nothing else than wholeheartedly approve this concept of gate-opener. In this way, the library could contribute to the ASCL's mission to 'promote a better understanding of and insight into historical, current and future developments in Africa.'[26]

Confront the biases

However, and here the question mark in the title comes in, information and knowledge are not passive things, which automatically enter the mind of our visitors when we open the gate. Knowledge is controlled in subtle ways. At all stages, from defining a research topic through data collection and publishing, biases creep in. And even after that, collection development is not something neutral; a vision corroborated by colleagues in African Studies libraries. Kevin Wilson, collection development librarian at LSE, in 2022 wrote:

24 IFLA statement on libraries and intellectual freedom, https://repository.ifla.org/bitstream/123456789/1424/1/ifla-statement-on-libraries-and-intellectual-freedom-en.pdf

25 https://blogs.ifla.org/faife/2019/07/17/from-gatekeeper-to-gateway-to-gate-opener-the-changing-role-of-libraries-and-how-we-talk-about-it/

26 https://www.ascleiden.nl/content/about-ascl

> ‘We cannot take library collections – how they are developed, described and discovered – at face value. We need to confront the biases that exist within those collections and, often, ourselves.’[27]

Colin Darch, senior information specialist, Cape Town, wrote in 2004:

> ‘Librarians have a responsibility to recognise that their practice cannot be value-free, and that their collections are biased by the choices made by writers, by publishers, and by themselves. Their duty, especially in Africa, may simply be to ensure that African voices are not drowned out in their collections.’

So that begs the question: How good are we in our relatively new role as gate-opener?

Based on a collection assessment performed by Jan-Maarten van Westen (2016), the ASCL Library owns 75% of all French and English-language academic sources which are quoted in current research, and it gives access through national interlibrary loan to 90%. This might be perceived as adequate, but most likely this is not an outcome of good policy, but rather a result of budget and methodology of the assessment. The obvious biases here are the language choices (French and English) and the material (secondary, academic publications). So let us now consider four different information materials relevant for the study of African societies and evaluate our gate-opening role here.

Important for whom?

Ali bin Hemed al Buhriy (1889-1957), a famous East African religious scholar and poet, was perceived as an expert in his field.[28] Until recently we only had a small collection of his translated poetry and one book of his enormous legal oeuvre, also in English translation (Al-Buhriy, 1959). Apart from the fact that he wrote in a non-European language (Swahili) and partly in a non-European script (Arabic), the religious subjects were of little interest to European libraries. When his first book in Swahili was published (instead of Arabic), a

27 Kevin Wilson, https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/lsereviewofbooks/2022/03/04/we-cannot-take-library-collections-at-face-value-we-need-to-confront-the-biases-that-exist-within-those-collections-and-often-ourselves/

28 See Joseph Schachts comments on him: [Shaykh Ali was] ‘the most learned Shafi’i scholar I have met’ and ‘quite the most learned shari’a lawyer in Tanganyika’ (Nimtz, 1980, p. 23 and Anderson, 1954, p. 137).

German scholar wrote in his review that *'...der Traktat in wissenschaftlicher und religiöser Beziehung nichts Neues bringt'* ('in scientific and religious respects the tract offers nothing new') (Dammann, 1936). The title was never included in the ASCL Library collection.

Practical considerations

Another important but underrepresented source in the ASCL Library is African newspapers. As Hartmut Bergenthum (2014) describes, the collection and preservation of this material in an online world faces a lot of problems. Limitations in budget, irregularities in logistics, issues of preservation, microfilming and the necessity to cooperate with other European collections to create a critical mass all make newspaper collecting a tricky thing.

Like newspapers, no one disputes the importance of educational materials for African Studies. And like newspapers, the systematic collection of those materials remains a challenge for libraries. As far as my knowledge goes, only the Georg Eckert Institute in Germany claims to develop a good collection in this field, although the number of African textbooks is significantly lower than that of Western counterparts. Here, libraries face specific problems in the book chain, e.g. direct delivery from publishers to schools, bypassing commercial circuits, and the progressive digitisation of the materials.

'Literature' or 'romantic fiction'?

A final example is fiction. In this field the ASCL may boast of a fairly good selection of novels, poetry and drama from the African continent. As in the earlier examples, here African languages are, justifiably or not, underrepresented. However, even when we look at productions in colonial languages, it becomes clear that the collection is biased towards western audiences. An example is the Ghanaian writer Asare Konadu. Heinemann African Writers Series published three of his novels and they are available in our collection. However, under his pen name Kwabena Asare Bediako, Konadu was known all over West Africa for writing a completely different genre, with titles such as *Don't leave me Mercey* and *A husband for Esi Ellua* (Newell, 2000).

The social life of books

So there are biases in collection development, and often we are aware of this fact without being able to successfully confront it. When writers don't

feel free to write about a particular subject, their book will not find its way into our collection. If your manuscript is not accepted by a publisher, it is unlikely we will become aware of it. Colin Darch's quote in the beginning is important because it gives us an insight in book selection biases as part of a much more complex, dynamic process. At each stage, from the initial conception of ideas to production of texts in whatever form, and finally book production, dissemination and reception, decisions are made and biases can creep in. And that brings me to the greatest flaw in the metaphor of the gate as the essential function of a library: it presents information as unconnected, neutral, value-free and disembodied.

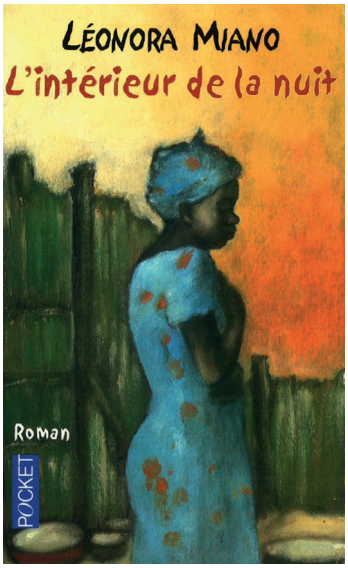
In order to confront these biases in collection development we have to look at texts, data, and knowledge from a more dynamic and social perspective. We might look at the ways how anthropologists, historians and philologists treat texts. Arjun Appadurai's seminal work *The social life of things: commodities in cultural perspective* (1986) and the subsequent academic research based on his ideas might be a good starting point for collection development. For example, sometimes a (religious) book is reprinted in identical form with just one addition: 'This book is a gift and may not be sold'. Or with a supplementary text: 'Please pray for our deceased mother so and so.' These additions might be a justification for collecting both copies. The materiality of '(...) books as artefacts with aesthetic value and individual histories that need to be grounded in a more general "history of the book"' and as objects that 'have histories of movement inscribed on them through space and time' (Jeppie, 2008) will lead our collections in a different direction.

Multiple versions

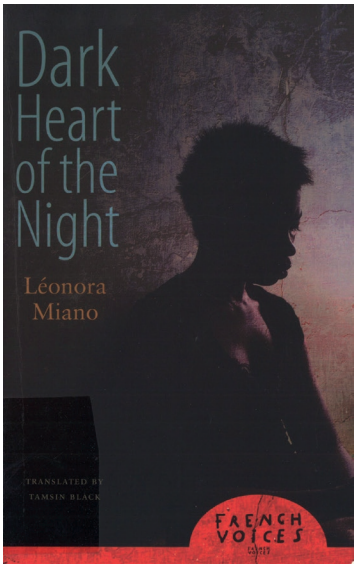
By way of conclusion I will give two examples of collection items, of which the inclusion in the collection has been inspired by the attempt to go beyond a static view of information and texts. They show the dynamics of knowledge production, and provide material traces of these processes. First, the novel *l'Intérieur de la nuit*, written by the Cameroonian writer Léonora Miano in 2010. This book, of course, deserved a place in our collection. A few years later the book was translated into English with the title *Dark heart of the night*. The writer had serious problems not only with the title (which echoes the 'heart of darkness' literature of orientalists) but especially with Terese Svoboda's foreword. Miano wrote her profound disagreement on literary platform *the complete review*,[29] and in the next editions the foreword was

29 https://www.complete-review.com/reviews/frafrica/mianol.htm

removed. From the perspective of books as having a 'social life', both editions need to be collected.



Book cover *L'intérieur de la nuit* by Léonora Miano.



Book cover *Dark heart of the night* by Léonora Miano in English translation.

Kanga or tanga?

Finally a more tragic example. In the rape trial of former president Jacob Zuma, a kanga, a rectangular cotton piece of cloth that is used as a wrap all over Africa, played a major role. Zuma admitted he had had sex with the claimant, Fezekile Ntsukela Kuzwayo (1974-2016). He testified in defence of his behaviour that Kuzwayo wanted to have sexual intercourse with him because she was wearing a knee-length skirt and later that evening only a kanga. The erotic connotations ascribed to the kanga might have found their way into the first version of the verdict, written by the white male Willem van der Merwe (2006): throughout the document - which was posted on several socials immediately after the trial - the word kanga is spelled as 'tanga'. In the official version published later by the Southern African Legal Information Institute, the word was spelled correctly. This suggests that the judge wasn't aware of the many roles of the kanga as communicative tool and social marker. Only the first version of the verdict ended up in the ASCL collection and for a good reason. By collecting these different manifestations of documents instead of just the final 'true' edition, libraries may stimulate

new questions and act as true gate-openers doing justice to the rich social contexts of African texts.

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AFRICA THESIS AWARD
Winner 2021
Tamia Botes
Where have the midwives gone?
Everyday Histories of Voetvroue in Johannesburg
€500






Welkom
KOFFIE
LUNCH
THEE


ASCL 75th
Anniversa
Celebratio

8

Five encounters with photographs in the ASCL Hofstra collection

Speaker: Andrea Stultiens
Visual artist and artistic researcher, affiliated with the Royal Academy of Art and Minerva Art Academy



30

30 This picture consists of four iterations of one photographic exposure: a 9x12 negative, a lanternslide, a captioned print mounted on board, and its appearance in Gijswijt-Hofstra (2014,



Among the ever-evolving collection of the ASCL Library is a set of negatives produced by anthropologist Sjoerd Hofstra (1898-1983) in Eastern Sierra Leone between 1934 and 1936. I present here, in words, five chronologically ordered encounters with the views captured on these negatives in between two pictures that were recently produced by me.[31] The encounters I describe mention 'generally distributed ways of doing and making' (Rancière, 2004, p. 13) that inform the individual exposures and are all too often taken for granted. I am interested in these pictures as a researcher using an artistic practice as research method while informing another set of photographs produced in Sierra Leone in 1934. Paul Julien (The Netherlands, 1901-2001) spent four weeks in the country collecting physical anthropological data. His photographic legacy plus a wealth of documentation is now in the collection of the *Nederlands Fotomuseum in Rotterdam (NFM).*[32]

Julien's brief visit to Sierra Leone resulted in more or less the same number of photographs as Hofstra's much longer stay, which is symptomatic for their respective relationship with photography.[33] Julien was aware of Hofstra's presence, but there is no evidence of the two men actually meeting either in Sierra Leone, or later in the Netherlands.[34]

p. 216). The book will be referred to further as 'The Mende'.

31 For more on the photograph as encounter see Azoulay, A. (2010).

32 Paul Julien's research primarily concerned the distribution of blood types. He was well known in the Netherlands at the time for his radio lectures. His fame would grow throughout the 1940s and '50s with the publication of four books of which three were bestsellers. He also toured the country with illustrated lectures. The stories told in these different modes of presentation and mediation, or announcements thereof, included selected photographs. I have been working with this legacy since 2011 in a project with the working title 'Reframing PJU', after the three-letter code that identifies the collection within the wider archival holdings of the NFM. See work-in-progress website pju.bridginghumanities.com for more information about the project. An exhibition in the NFM with accompanying publication is forthcoming.

33 Julien was an avid producer of high-quality photographs. He understood the technology and made sure to have the best quality tools and materials at his disposal. For Hofstra, based on remarks in the letters published in 'The Mende', the production of photographs appears to have been a rather interruptive but necessary evil, first and foremost useful to provide the addressee of the letters with a view of the environment and people he described and lived in and with, and a commodity, exchange, gift in his dealings with the people photographed.

34 A sheet with notes among the documents in the PJU collection in the NFM has Hofstra's name jotted down in the margin. There is a lot more to say about the differences in worldview and character between Hofstra and Julien and how these manifested themselves in their

Freetown, March 2020, an encounter with photographs in 'The Mende'

A fieldwork trip with the approximately 230 photographs resulting from Paul Julien's Sierra Leone journey generated finally, after years on the shelves of my bookcase, the urgency to read 'The Mende'. Among the pictures printed in the book are a mugshot showing us what Sjoerd Hofstra looked like, and postcards collected in Sierra Leone. Most of them are fieldwork photographs produced by Hofstra. Each picture is accompanied by a caption that attaches names and dates to places, faces and the moments in which a light sensitive surface was exposed to more or less sufficient amounts of daylight. What the pictures in the book share is that they all have been cropped in such a way that their existence as a material object is obscured. Their edges are generated by the placement in the book, rather than their material form. There is, therefore, no way of telling what camera was used to produce them, or how time and human handling imprinted themselves onto the image objects.

Leiden, September 2020, an encounter with negatives and prints

It was a moment between strict COVID-19 lockdowns when ASCL librarian Jos Damen placed a plastic bag filled with envelopes on the table between us. I instinctively knew that this had to be 'the Hofstra collection' that had been mentioned to me by an editor a couple of months earlier. Part of the negatives and contact prints that largely made up the collection had been categorised in envelopes by Hofstra's daughter. I recognised the pictures from their appearance in 'The Mende'. From the digitisation of this collection I learned that Hofstra, just like Julien, brought several cameras to Sierra Leone and produced negatives on sheets (sized 9x12cm) as well as on roll film (sized 6x6 or 6x9 cm). It looks like he was intentional in his choice of camera. Events that could be of ethnographic significance, such as visits to chiefs and work on rice fields, have been documented using two cameras. Portraits of people who directly worked with Hofstra were often only produced on roll films. The difference between Hofstra's relatively long-term and thick engagement and Julien's hit-and-run-visits to communities in Sierra Leone disappear in the photographs they produced.[35] The masks that appear on the photographs were presented for

anthropological methods and their respective production and use of photographs than this text can accommodate.

35 The textual contexts added over time to these photographs aid the obscuring of this difference. E.g. when Julien in his stories speaks of (or lies about) the 'months' spent in the Sierra

that very purpose, rather than as part of ritual and tradition, as Julien liked his Dutch audience to believe. This became clear only after piecing together events in both collections, Hofstra's and Julien's, and triangulating them with available textual documents. Their action radius was remarkably small, the number of events limited.

There is more to these pictures than names and dates. They testified to an entanglement of practices and events in which the presence of the camera plays a crucial role (Azoulay 2010, p. 12).

Amsterdam July 2021, pictures caught between two glass plates

I am not quite sure when I first saw a picture based on one of the lantern slides made from a negative produced by Sjoerd Hofstra. What I do remember of this encounter is that the pictures were unclear, fuzzy, while not necessarily of low, 'poor' resolution (Steyerl, 2009). In any case, over time it became clear that these images were reproductions of objects that had not been handed over to the ASCL but were with Hofstra's daughter. These objects were consistently called 'glass negatives' in the communication between us, while, as I suspected, they turned out to be lantern slides. These are positive images. That is, what is dark in the depicted reality is, as opposed to 'negatives', also dark in the picture. The picture is carried by transparent film material placed between two thin plates of glass sized 8.3x8.3cm. These objects were made to 'project knowledge' with lectures.[36] There are two thousand of such slides in Paul Julien's legacy. Hofstra's daughter has a box with about fifty of them. The encounter with these objects helped to understand what led to the fuzzy images. The glass plates had been placed on a white surface. The available light projected a shadow of the film between the glass plates on the white surface. Both picture and shadow had been recorded. I used a lightbox when, once again, digitising them. The same object led to a different picture.[37]

Leonean jungle. Paul Julien, *Kampvuren Langs de Evenaar*, first page of chapter 1 in all editions published between 1940 and 1993.

36 'Projecting Knowledge' is the name of a research group at Utrecht University. As a post-doctoral researcher within this group Dr Nico de Klerk investigated Paul Julien's use of lantern slides. https://projectingknowledge.sites.uu.nl/, last accessed 10-02-2022.

37 The fuzzy and unclear pictures described were once available on the Sjoerd Hofstra Wikicommons page, filled by Jos Damen. These files have since been replaced by digitisations made by me.

May 2022, prints and captions

While looking up the online presence of a Bundu girl portrait produced by Paul Julien in the online environment of the NFM, I encountered a picture from Sjoerd Hofstra's legacy that I instantly recognised. It turned out to be a reproduction of one of four 'Hofstra prints' in the collection that was mounted on board and captioned 'Girls after the initiation of the female secret society (Bundu) where they were educated'.[38] The same scene can be encountered in 'The Mende'. There it is captioned 'Boys returning from their initiation in the Poro, Panguma 1936' (p. 224). From the encounter with the collection of negatives I knew that this was one of four exposures of an event, and that the photograph was made from the top of the stairs leading to the entrance of the guesthouse accommodating Hofstra. Perhaps the boys made a detour on their way returning from their initiation. Or could they, like the Bundu girl in the photograph by Paul Julien I had been looking for,[39] simply have dressed up for the occasion of being seen and photographed by the visiting anthropologist?

Lamellar views

The pictures accompanying these words expand the potential encounters with the photographs produced by Sjoerd Hofstra. They respond to, and intervene in, the general distribution of these pictures mentioned in the previous encounters. They are attempts to unlearn simply seeing *through* photographs despite and alongside all the ambivalences they present us with due to temporal and/or geographical distance. They are also invitations to think with them within the post-colonial conditions as well as decolonial ambitions that provide urgency to the discourse in African Studies.

38 My translation from Dutch. The photograph can, with its material context including the handwritten caption cropped off, be found on the website of the Nederlands Fotomuseum with this shortened URL: https://ap.lc/MDhTf (last accessed April 10 2023).

39 This photograph appears in all of the editions of Paul Julien's first book *Kampvuren Langs de Evenaar*, first published in 1940 and can be found on the website of the Nederlands Fotomuseum with this shortened URL: https://ap.lc/Ccybe (last accessed April 10 2023).



40

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40 This picture consists of a photograph produced by Sjoerd Hofstra in 1936 of a Falui mask with caretakers in the garden of the guesthouse accommodating him, and a Falui and Bundu mask with caretakers posing for my camera July 2022, in Gbaiima, one of the villages in which Paul Julien produced a set of photographs in 1936.

9

Where Have the Midwives Gone? Everyday Histories of *Voetvroue* in Johannesburg

Speaker: Tamia Botes
Winner Africa Thesis Award 2021[41]



Good afternoon everyone,

My name is Tamia Botes. It is such an honour to present my research in this space, especially considering the role the African Studies Centre has played in my research and now, book. Firstly, a very special thanks to everyone that made it possible for me to be here: thank you to Leiden University and the African Studies Centre. A special thanks to Trudi, for your assistance, encouragement and support in getting me here. This is the first time I have been to the Netherlands and your country and city are absolutely beautiful. I feel so lucky and so honoured to be accepting the 2021 Africa Thesis Award. This is an absolutely mind-blowing experience for me. Moreover, I am especially thankful that the amazing stories and histories of *Voetvroue* in my beloved Eldorado Park get to be read and heard by people globally. Even though they are not able to be here today, a special thank you to my family, mom, dad, sister, brother and my Mimi and my grandfather, without whom I would not be able to proudly stand here and accept this award.

41 Tamia Botes has an MA in Anthropology, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, where she is currently a PhD candidate.

Disappeared from the South African public archive

Today I present to you my MA thesis, 'Where have the midwives gone? Everyday histories of Voetvroue in Johannesburg', supervised by the amazing Zimitri Erasmus, my co-thinker.

To give you a brief background, my MA thesis detailed just that: the lives, experiences and everyday histories of eleven *Voetvroue*: Aunty Zee, Mimi, Aunty Faeeza, Aunty Lorrel, Ma, Ouma Koekie, Ouma Yvette, Aunty Ivy, Mrs Basson, Aunty Rose, and Aunty Lola, who all live in and around Eldorado Park, a township in the South West of Johannesburg that under the apartheid Group Areas Act was previously designated a coloured zone. In my MA thesis, I ask: 'Where have the midwives gone?'. This is prompted by Harriet Deacon's argument that the black autonomous midwife disappears from the South African public archive from 1865 onwards. Harriet Deacon (1998) identifies a broad shift in power relations between medical men and pre-existing black autonomous midwives in the 19th-century Cape Frontier. These relations were underpinned by growing racialism at legal and institutionalised levels, and effectively squeezed black women out of the practice of midwifery - hence their apparent disappearance from public archives from 1865 onwards. However, these black autonomous midwives have not disappeared. These women have been part of a living archive, continuing their practices in the margins of power. They are essential to networks of care in Eldorado Park. The Voetvrou escapes the discourses of medical anthropology and indigenous knowledge systems. She is pruned from academic discourse and left truncated from history.

I would like to read an excerpt from my thesis that I think draws out the themes of this thesis really well:

> 'The blocks of flats in Eldorado Park rise in monotonous similarity from patches of green, soggy land that separate them from the stand-alone houses. Rows of trash border the identical buildings. Their main entrances are indistinguishable. **They are a trace of apartheid's racialised 'sub-economic' housing in which residents are left to create some measure of functionality.** The drainage system is held together by an old Clover milk bottle, fashioned into a pipe that is crudely attached with wire. **Each block of flats carves a trail of its own, much like the people who live in it.** With feet sunken into one such sandy trail I follow the pathway to Aunt Rose's ground floor unit of a three-story building. Like the main entrances, each unit is fitted with an identical front door. *"Sien jy die deur met die kruis op? Daai's my*

huis"[42]. Behind the front door adorned with the Christian symbol of the cross is the home of Aunt Rose. She sat perched on a red velvet couch, a common item of furniture in working class households. I think to myself, *"Jinne, wie het die rusbanke gemaak? Hulle't mos klom geld uit Coloured families tydens die 70s and 80s verdien because I have never been to a Coloured household who did not own a set"*[43]. Just by looking at them, I feel my spine contorting to find some element of comfort on that couch, much like I did on others as a child.'

This excerpt grounds the core themes of this thesis. Namely, the idea of Colouredness, dispossession, dislocation, relocation, apartheid geographies, and creolisation.

Pneumonic plague

Our story geographically starts in Kliptown. Situated 25 kms from the centre of Johannesburg, it emerged in the late 19th century from the detritus of colonial attempts at racial segregation in this rapidly growing and early industrial gold-mining city. In 1904, the pneumonic plague struck locations in present day Pageview, Johannesburg[44], heightening fear of contagion spread, which was very much underpinned by growing racialisation. Modelled on late Victorian social and sanitary engineering, the response to this outbreak comes in the form of 'slum clearance' policy. Consequently, these locations were condemned as insanitary, their more than 3,000 inhabitants were forcibly removed to Klipspruit farm, put in tents in racially segregated camps, and former locations burnt down.

Not more than 60 years later, Malcolm Lupton details the housing crisis that the city faced, especially for people designated 'Coloured'. In turn, provisions for Coloured housing in Johannesburg assumed top priority at a local state level and a working-class suburb was designed, built and managed as a Coloured zone under the Group Areas Act. The development of Eldorado Park commenced in 1963. So, when Kliptown came under the management of the Community Development Board, their tenure was known for periodic shack and slum clearances, leaving residents with no option but to move to Eldorado Park. And thus, families were forced into cubicle-like flats and

42 Translates to: 'Do you see the door with the Cross on it? That's my house.'

43 Translates to: 'Jinne, who made these couches? They made a lot of money off Coloured families during the 70s and 80s because I have never been to a Coloured household who did not own a set.'

44 Pageview, popularly known as 'Fietas', is located just west of central Johannesburg, South Africa.

subeconomic houses, enclosed by apartheid's cartographic rules in this said 'Coloured zone'.

This was my initial point of departure for a long time: understanding how Colouredness is (re)invented, (re)shaped and (re)imagined in its expressions over time by using assumed tangible markers of such, like practices of care of *Voetvroue*. But upon actually entering the field, the picture looked very different from what I had assumed or conceptualised.

Glass Clover milk bottle

I go into great ethnographic detail in my thesis, specifically about *'huis-hospitale'* set up by *Voetvroue:* emergency home-deliveries, a system of gifting, placental rituals, and post-natal rituals where *Voetvroue* detail the different processes and phases of birth and delivery. It begins at delivery, which for some women occurred in their own constructed *'huis-hospitale'* in their homes, or at the homes of others, where *Voetvroue* were whisked away at early hours of the morning for emergency deliveries. Both were done at little to no cost. The thesis then details the events after birth, like the expulsion and significance of the afterbirth, placental and post-natal rituals.

But for the sake of time, I will now give an example I use towards the very end to encapsulate the point I am trying to make. During labour, the placenta or afterbirth is to be expelled. Most *Voetvroue* detailed the scene of how an old rounded, glass Clover milk bottle was used for the mother to blow into. In my interview, Aunty Lorrel gestured the size of the Clover bottle with her hands and explained how mothers were to blow into it to help them push. Aunty Lola also expressed how her first instinct in aiding the expulsion of the afterbirth was to give the mother an old Clover bottle to blow into. They noted that this was done because it was the only thing they had on hand and because the mother lacked strength to push after delivery, so relying on the Clover bottle assisted in delivering the afterbirth. This very crude, almost leftover item played such an essential role in birthing.

The Clover bottle as a means to expel the afterbirth paints a beautiful picture of my main argument: what once was an already consumed product, seen by others as little more than waste, in a particular moment and location is re-given value that eventually trickled down time and became a vital object in complex postnatal processes shared by *Voetvroue*. It serves as a manifestation of invention and reengineering. The used Clover bottle was born out of leftover-ness and waste but was remade and repurposed as a 'something else',

much like the people in Eldorado Park. What was understood as a leftover space for leftover people housed beautiful common spaces of care, where women drawn together and produced by violent processes of modernity and colonialism, as demonstrated historically in medical practice, emanate a bricolage of 'unknown elsewheres', lines, knots and bundles of different histories to form this idea of 'something else', or what I call a '*mengelmoes*'. This is incredibly significant in my own thinking, because what I at least saw was the overlapping of processes of absorption, partnering, domination, dissolution and cultural borrowing among social formations marked by changing power relations and by changing historical conditions, creating what Zimitri Erasmus (2017, p. 3) calls meshwork of 'multiple, mostly unknown elsewheres': historic, geographic, religious, cultural and epistemic elsewheres and NOT homogenous notions of Colouredness.

The ethnographic data that emerged could not fit within a homogenous understanding of 'Colouredness'. It actively pushed against that. Rather, it formed its own ambiguous, unstable picture of 'something else'. In this way, the very dynamic histories and experiences of *Voetvroue* have unsettled my inner eyes or my dominant ways of knowing and seeing. By using creolisation as a conceptual tool alongside the everyday histories of *Voetvroue*, it allowed me to step off the watchtower of race categories, I came to understand this 'something else' as a '*mengelmoes*' of the legacy and effects of classification and politics. This thesis emphasises understanding life not by race categories but *because of* and *despite* race categories.

I appreciate that you have all taken the time to engage with it and to listen to me today. Thank you.

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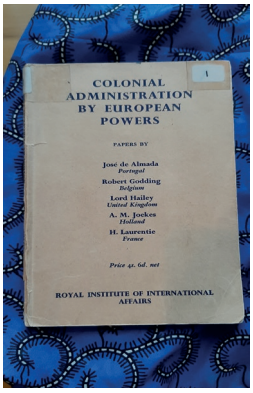
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25 special items from the ASCL Library collection

1947 | Colonial administration by European powers: a series of papers read at King's College, London 14 November to 12 December 1946



This is the first item of the ASCL Library collection, published in 1947, the same year as the founding of the ASCL. This booklet contains a series of lectures read in 1946 by 'authoritative' representatives of France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Portugal and the United Kingdom, on the evolution of colonial policy of their respective countries. The Foreword states that the principle of self-determination was already an unexpected consequence of World War I. But now, just after World War II, the 'concept of progress towards self-government' accelerated a movement for 'interracial adjustments'. 'In this fluid post-war epoch the major colonial powers of Western Europe are being called upon to adjust and re-define their relations with overseas dependencies.' The

almost 100,000 books that would be acquired after this first item can perhaps be seen as a contribution to this redefinition of relations, in the sense that the collection has developed into a major source of knowledge on the people of Africa and their agency.

Europe; lectures; colonialism

1952 | Africa in ebullition: a handbook of freedom for Nigerian nationalists

Dedicated to the 'silent millions of mother Africa', Adegoke Adelabu's book has an introduction by Nigeria's first president Nnamdi Azikiwe. Since then the title has been continuously republished. The 2008 edition is advertised as 'an ode to liberty, a guide to nationalism, a handbook of freedom, a grammar of politics, a revolutionary manifesto, an *encyclopedia Nigeriana*, the voice of the people, an indictment of colonialism, an invitation to youths, a call to arms, a sacrament of patriotism, a dissection of our souls....' In the first chapter 'In quest for freedom' the author remembers: 'In January 1931, as a young striping of 16, I entered the Ibadan Government College. I met the white man. His too easy assumption that England was the hub of the Universe, that the European prospective was the only correct vantage point to survey life, that we less fortunate species of homo sapiens were created mainly to exhort, applaud and pay homage to the mighty empire on which the sun never sets, exasperated and infuriated me.' Apart from the colonial languages English and French, the book appeared in Arabic, Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo and Efik.

Nigeria; political manifesto

1955 | Trois écrivains noirs

This book is the first item in the literary collection of the ASCL Library, recognisable by its shelf number: Lit. 1. The volume contains three French-language novels: *Ville cruelle* by Eza Boto, pseudonym of Mongo Beti, *Coeur d'Aryenne* by Jean Malonga, and *Nini, mulâtresse du Sénégal* by Abdoulaye Sadji. *Présence Africaine* was a magazine, and later publishing house, founded in Paris in the late 1940s by Senegalese-born intellectual Alioune Diop. It played an important role in the publishing of African writers and intellectuals. The volume marks the start of the ASCL Library literature collection, which now comprises over 13,000 books.

Cameroon; Congo; Senegal; literature

1960 | The sociology and culture of Africa. Its nature and scope

Kofi Abrefa Busia, Prime Minister of Ghana from 1969 to 1972, was Professor in Leiden from 1960 to 1962. As leader of the opposition against Kwame Nkrumah, he fled Ghana in 1959. In 1960, Busia became a Professor of Sociology and Culture of Africa at Leiden University, with a dual appointment at the African Studies Centre and the International Institute of Social Studies in The Hague. From 1962 until 1969, Busia was a Fellow of St Antony's College, Oxford. In this Inaugural Address in Leiden, Busia addresses the nature and scope of sociology and culture of Africa. He quotes Kipling ('East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet') – and rebukes: 'Sociological studies have shown that there is no support for this.' At the end of the lecture, Busia thanks Van Lier and Idenburg (resp. president and director of the African Studies Centre): 'It was on your initiative that approval was given for the establishment of this Chair, and for my appointment to it as its first incumbent.'

Ghana; sociology; inaugural lecture

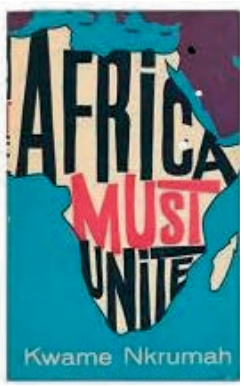
1961 | Le Congo, terre d'avenir, est-il menacé ?



1957: Patrice Lumumba (1925-1961), one of the leading figures of the nationalist movement in Belgian Congo, was part of a growing class of '*evolués*': educated urban Africans working in white-collar jobs, who began to demand greater equality in the 1950s. The associations formed by these '*evolués*' later laid the foundations for the Congolese nationalist movement. Lumumba wrote this book during his imprisonment in 1956, for charges of embezzlement, and sent the manuscript to the publisher in 1957. While the book takes a relatively mild stance on the relationship between the Belgians and the Congolese, this point of view rapidly changed in the following years when Lumumba founded his nationalist party, the *Mouvement National Congolais* (MNC), and as articulated in his famous independence speech. The book was published after Lumumba's death, in 1961. This copy includes a small booklet, entitled *À propos d'un livre posthume de Patrice Lumumba*, by Jules Chomé and Maryse Perin, providing some context to the posthumous publication. It also includes a 1961 newspaper clipping from *The Guardian*, in which Conor Cruise O'Brien, former chief United Nations representative in Katanga, asks the interesting question if Lumumba, if still alive, would have agreed to the publication of his, by then much altered, views.

Congo; political manifesto

1963 | Africa must unite



In this book, Kwame Nkrumah presents the case for his dream. krumah (1909-1972), Ghana's most important independence leader and first head of State, was a strong advocate for Pan-Africanism, a united Africa under one federal government. Nkrumah arranged the publication to coincide with a meeting of the heads of independent African states in Addis Ababa on establishing an all-African governmental organisation. In 1963, when the book was first published, critics said that Kwame Nkrumah was pursuing 'a policy of the impossible' (p. 170). But, in the words of Nkrumah: 'to suggest that the time is not yet ripe for considering a political union of Africa is to evade facts and ignore realities in Africa today[45].' Nkrumah concludes this book: 'Here is a challenge which destiny has thrown out to the leaders of Africa. It is for us to grasp what is a golden opportunity to prove that the genius of the African people can surmount the separatist tendencies in sovereign nationhood by coming together speedily, for the sake of Africa's greater glory and infinite well-being, into a Union of African States.' (p. 221-222). The book is one of many speeches and writings of African independence leaders in the ASCL Library collection.

Ghana; political manifesto

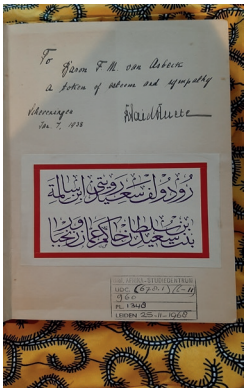
1966 | La noire de…

First feature film in the ASCL collection by 'the father of African cinema', the 'voice of the voiceless', Ousmane Sembène. It is about the exploitation of a young black woman, who travels from her native country Senegal to Antibes, with the French family who has employed her as a nanny. She is looking forward to coming to France, of which she has an idealised image, but once there, she realises that she has to do the work of a housemaid. She is kept busy all day in the family's apartment as a modern slave, loses all sense of dignity and identity and sees no other way out than suicide. The film is based on Sembène's short story with the same title, published in *Voltaïque* (*Présence africaine*, 1962). In all of his later films, Sembène would deal with social and political problems in post-colonial Senegal, tackling themes such as racism, neo-colonialism, social inequality, and the position of women.

Senegal; France; labour migration; neo-colonialism; feature film

45 From Kwame Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom: A Statement of African Ideology (*London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1961), pp. xi-xiv.

1968 | Said bin Sultan (1791-1856), ruler of Oman and Zanzibar. His place in the history of Arabia and East Africa



This book from 1929 found its way into the library of the African Studies Centre in 1968. After twenty years of collecting in Leiden, it was only the 1348th book in the collection of the library! It was a gift from ASCL Board Member Professor Baron Frederik Mari van Asbeck, to whom the book was given by the author, Rudolph Said-Ruete, 30 years before, in his home in Scheveningen. The book is about the history of the Sultan's family, rulers of Oman and Zanzibar. His mother, Sayyida Salama bint Said aka Emily Ruete, was a friend of Leiden Professor Snouck Hurgronje. She wrote her memoirs, *An Arabian Princess Between Two Worlds*, and donated her library to the *Oostersch Instituut*, later the *Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten (NINO)*. Said-Ruete's dedication text, his signature and his ex libris make this copy of the book a rare specimen – and create a special link to Leiden.

Zanzibar; history

1968 | Histoire de ma vie

Fadhma Aïth Mansour Amrouche's *Histoire de ma vie* is the earliest autobiography of a woman in the ASCL Library. Born out of wedlock in a Berber village in Algeria in 1882, Fadhma was the third child of her young mother, who already had two sons from her deceased husband. But her mother's motto is *Tichert-iou khir t'mira guergazen !* (The tattoo on my chin is better than a man's beard!), and when Fadhma is three or four, her mother takes her to a French orphanage to protect her illegitimate daughter from the harsh treatment of the villagers. There, Fadhma goes to school and learns to read and write. In *Histoire de ma vie*, written in 1946 and 1962, Fadhma Amrouche brings to life the Algeria of more than a century ago. She also writes about her life in Tunis, where she and her husband, as Christians, went into exile and where they were granted French nationality in 1913. After losing three adult sons in 1939 and 1940, she started singing and writing Berber poetry. She dedicates *Histoire de ma vie* to her son Jean Amrouche, known as 'the Berber poet': *'Pour lui j'ai écrit cette histoire, afin qu'il sache ce que ma mère et moi avons souffert et peiné pour qu'il ait Jean Amrouche, le poète berbère.'* Fadhma Amrouche died in France in 1967, having felt, as she says in her autobiography, *'l'éternelle exilée'*– an exile all her life.

Algeria; autobiography

1970 | Eritrea. A physical feature map



This is a small map of Eritrea (70 / 50 cm). The map is not exactly in mint condition: there are many folds, traces of adhesive tape, some browning and tears. One corner is severely damaged. Scale is 1: 1,5M. This map is precious because of its goal; it was used as a political instrument, with the name of the editorial organisation printed in large font in the left corner: Eritrean Liberation Front. The name of the organisation has also been printed a few thousand times, in light blue colours, all over the map, in the territories of Sudan, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. The map was printed in Beirut (Lebanon) at the height of the Ethiopian-Eritrean War, around 1970. The map collection of the African Studies Centre may be small but holds some extraordinary maps.
Eritrea; map

1977 | History of Botswana from the earliest times to 1966: a resource pack for teachers

The small but steadily growing ASCL collection of educational materials from Africa shows the shift away from colonial objectives and interests towards curricula benefiting African societies. Apart from a more learner-centred approach and competence-based learning outcomes, the 2018 history textbook focuses much more attention on local and regional African history, compared to the 1966 teacher's guide.
Botswana; textbook secondary school

1980 | The patriot: Celebrating being Zimbabwean

In 1980 Zimbabwe was the last country to gain independence from European colonisers. The newspaper *The Patriot* takes a very clear, uncritical nationalist view of events before and after the declaration of independence and shows itself to be a staunch supporter of the ZANU-PF regime and of Mugabe, who was in power from 1980 to 2017. A lucid illustration of how journalists view Zimbabwean society is seen through the weekly book section. It offers razor-sharp, devastating reviews of novels written by white and black authors (often living in the diaspora) which have been well received by the Western press. In contrast, the Zimbabwean reviewers expose these best-selling books as examples of a false nostalgia and the authors as traitors yearning for a former

Rhodesia and lamenting the loss of their wealth through the introduction of the Land Reform Programme. They accuse the writers of wanting to change history, for example, the role of Mugabe in the Gukurahundi massacres in Matabeleland in the 1980s.

Zimbabwe; newspaper

1981 | Elsa Joubert's The long journey of Poppie Nongena: significance, synopsis, reviews

Besides novels, short stories, plays and poetry, the ASCL Library also collects documents on literature. An example is this booklet from 1981 about *The Long Journey of Poppie Nongena*. Elsa Joubert's book was published in Afrikaans in 1978 under the title *Die swerfjare van Poppie Nongena* and in English in 1980. The book made Poppie Nongena's ordeal as a black woman and mother under the apartheid regime palpable for a large white audience. Joubert claimed in the book that it was a true story, but that the names had been changed. Should *The Long Journey of Poppie Nongena* be regarded as a novel or as a collaborative autobiography? Could Joubert claim full authorship? Could she, as a white woman, speak for a black woman? Questions like these are not addressed in this booklet, which tells something about Joubert's process of realisation what blacks in South Africa were going through, and further contains a summary and reviews.

South Africa; literary history

Archive : Sjoerd Hofstra Collection



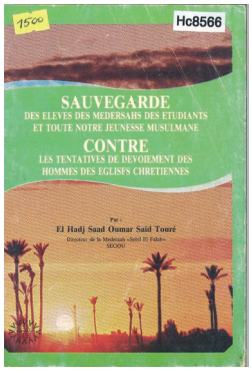
The ASCL library collection also comprises a small but steadily growing archival section. One of these collections is the Sjoerd Hofstra Collection. Sjoerd Hofstra (1898-1983) was a Dutch anthropologist who was appointed Professor of African Anthropology at the University of Leiden in 1947. Between 1934 and 1936 Hofstra did research among the Mende in Sierra Leone. Though Hofstra never published a book on the Mende during his life, he wrote a few scholarly journal articles on the subject, and his letters home were later crystallised into the book *Among the Mende in Sierra Leone*. The archive contains handwritten notes, mostly in English, about a variety of subjects, amongst which the social organisation of the Mende, their law system, hunting customs, healing rites and burial customs, Mende proverbs and Mende grammar. It also contains interviews with local people. In addition, there is some statistical demographic material, a series of the Sierra Leone Royal Gazette and a few (school) books in Mende language. The photo collection shows the special relationship between

Hofstra and the Mende people. Most photographs have been digitised by the ASCL Library and made available online via Wikimedia Commons.
Sierra Leone; archive

1988 | A discussion of the rules of the Shariah pertaining to the sighting of the Hilaal

In many Muslim societies the determining of the beginning of the new lunar months has been made more complex by local debates and emotional upheaval. Based on Islamic jurisprudence it is not the actual birth of the Astronomical New Moon which marks the start of the Islamic month, but rather the visibility of the new crescent. This lunar crescent visibility depends on a number of factors, such as the location of the observer, sky conditions, and the moon's distance from the earth. These variables usually make it impossible to see the new moon within 24 hours after the Astronomical New Moon, although occasionally sightings between twelve and fifteen hours have been reported. Discussions on this topic have increased since the era of African independence and as a result of liberalisation politics in the 1990s. This booklet is an early example of the South African debate. For a more historical description of the phenomenon Vahed Goolam's 2014 article "Moon sightings and the quest for Muslim solidarities in twentieth century Natal" is a good source.
South Africa; Islamic internal polemics

1993 | Sauvegarde des élèves des medersahs des étudiants en toute notre jeunesse musulmane contre les tentatives de dévoiement des hommes des églises chrétiennes



Written by the Malinese director of the Ségou-based Islamic educational centre *Sabil el-Falah al Islamiat* and printed in Morocco, this book finally reached Leiden via an Islamic bookshop in Ouagadougou where it was picked up by ASCL colleagues during an acquisition trip. It warns against Christian attempts to convert Muslim students into their religion. The author informs pupils by citing Christian sources and providing arguments to counter the conversion efforts of missionaries. An important work used by the author is Maurice Bucaille's *La bible, le Coran et la science* supporting the infallibility of the Qur'an deduced from scientific facts. *Sauvegarde des élèves* is a fine example of the globalising networks in which local African religious polemics developed in the 1980s and 1990s.
Mali; interreligious polemics

Ca. 1999 | I - 304 rêves ; II - Les tremblements de toutes les parties du corps et leurs significations ; III - Les facteurs d'identification ou repérage des caractères

Both Christianity and Islam have a long history of dream interpretation which is reflected in an extensive written record, of which this booklet by Ahmed Tidiane N'diaye is an example. Numerous edifying leaflets and books educate the reader how to interpret (alphabetically listed) phenomena, objects and people appearing in dreams. The available print material by African authors on this subject is remarkably similar in both religions. The reality of spiritual warfare, possession, sorcery and witchcraft are known by Christians and Muslims alike.

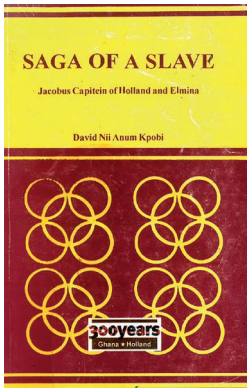
Guinea; religious dream explanation

2000 | Africa in the world: a history of extraversion

In this influential article in *African Affairs* (vol. 99, no. 395), Jean-François Bayart sets apart the extraversion paradigm, in which Africans are seen as active agents in the dependency-independency relationships of their societies, this in contrast with the till then dominant dependency paradigm. The article is part of the centenary issue of *African Affairs: the journal of the Royal African Society*, edited by Jean-François Bayart and Stephen Ellis. This article is still listed among the most cited journal articles in *African Affairs*. The ASCL Library collection holds many print journals, which from the 2000s onwards have become increasingly available online.

Africa; political science; journal

2001 | Saga of a slave. Jacobus Capitein of Holland and Elmina



This book by David Nii Anum Kpobi holds a shameful story, a stain on the relationship between Leiden and Africa. Slavery, abuse of the Bible, hypocrisy – it has it all. There is a logo on the cover of this book: *300 years Ghana * Holland*. The story in short: a small boy is born around 1717 in Ghana. He is abducted as a child, brought to Elmina and given by Captain Steenhart to the merchant Jacob van Gogh. Two years later, in 1728, he is shipped to the Netherlands, via Middelburg to The Hague. Baptised under the name of Jacobus Capitein, he goes to school and catechism classes, and is registered as a student of theology at Leiden University in 1737. He writes a dissertation in 1743 about slavery not being contrary to Christian freedom: *Dissertatio*

politico-theologica de servitute, libertati christianae non contraria. Capitein stresses examples of spiritual freedom, such as those of Paul (Hebrews 12: 20) and Peter (Acts 15: 10). Capitein's dissertation was successful and the Dutch translation had four printings in one year. Capitein toured the country and two of his sermons (in Muiderberg in May 1742 and in Ouderkerk in June 1742) were also published. His fame can for a large part be explained by the fact that he was a black man and a former slave who was advocating slavery. He will live on as one of the first Africans to defend a dissertation at a European university, but most of all as the first person to translate the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments (omitting the Fourth) into the local Mfantse language.

Ghana-Netherlands; slavery

2003 | African Studies Abstracts Online, number 1

In 2003 *ASA Online* succeeded the printed abstracts journal of the African Studies Centre Leiden, published since 1968, first as *Documentatieblad*, then as *African Studies Abstracts* (1994-2002). It provided a quarterly overview of journal articles and edited works on Africa in the field of the social sciences and the humanities available in the ASCL Library. ASAO no. 60 (2017) was the last issue.

Africa; African Studies bibliography

2005 | Zahrah the Windseeker

This book by Nnedi Okorafor-Mbachu is a mythic fantasy novel for the adolescent age bracket. The Nigerian-American author incorporates Nigerian myths and folklore, as the narrative follows the thirteen-year-old girl-protagonist on a quest in an otherworldly jungle. The book was the winner of the 2008 Wole Soyinka Prize for Literature in Africa.

Nigeria; fantasy genre

2007 | La commune de Ngouoni dans le Haut-Ogooué : origines et évolution

This book by Solange Oligui, published by Éditions Raponda-Walker in Libreville, Gabon, is an example of the many monographs in the collection about local history. The book deals with the history of the village of Ngouoni in South-East Gabon, from the 18th century onwards. The first part starts with the different waves of migration that led to the foundation of the village, then describes the social-political organisation of the village and its agrarian economy. The second part examines the history of Ngouoni from

the colonial period to independence. The association '*Tsoumou*' is engaged in the development of Ngouoni, and the author explains that the book has been written at the request of this association, in order to prevent the younger generations to be cut off from their past. The author was born in Ngouoni and studied history at the University Omar Bongo in Libreville. In the conclusion, she stresses the importance of oral traditions as a source for the study of the pre-colonial period. The book is illustrated with old photographs of village chiefs and other notable individuals.

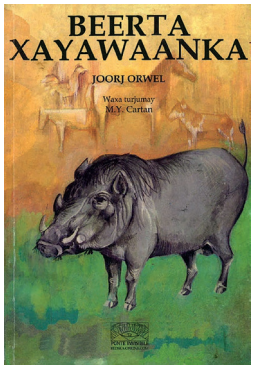
Gabon; local history

2009 | The traditional man and the modern woman

This is a booklet from Ghana concerning marriage. It aims to instruct the reader on how to apply Christian principles for a happy marriage and to encourage singles to contemplate the institution of marriage. This guide has been written by the Reverend Moses Kofi Amponsah, who is both a minister and a marriage counsellor.

Ghana; marriage counselling

2011 | Beerta xayawaanka [= Animal farm]



This translation by Maxammed Yuusuf Cartan of the famous book *Animal farm* by George Orwell was published in Hargeysa and is a nice example of a book purchased during one of the acquisition trips undertaken by the ASCL Library in the last two decades. The ASCL visited the 12th Hargeysa International Bookfair from 17-25 July 2019 in Somaliland and as a result, ASCL and partner Leiden University libraries have added 500 titles in the fields of history, social sciences, politics, religion and fiction. The books bought in Somaliland (14% in Arabic, 12% in English and almost 75% in Somali) are a valuable addition to the libraries' research and education resources. The ASCL Library also compiled a web dossier on Somali literature, added Somali book data to Wikidata.org and helped to organise a Somali Day in Leiden in June 2021.

Somalia; world literature; translation

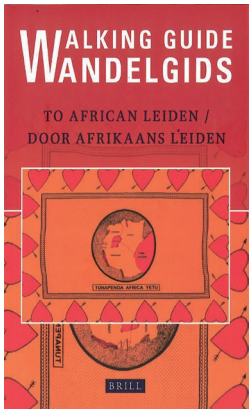
2016 | Les deux visages d'une femme bamiléké

Filmmaker Rosine Mbakam was born in 1980 in a traditional Bamiléké household in Cameroon. She left her country when she was twenty-seven.

This film is an account of her journey back home, together with her European husband and their son, after having lived in Europe for seven years. The film shows her reunion with her mother and is structured around places where the filmmaker lived when she was a young girl. Now a mother herself, she sees her mother and aunts from a different perspective, and the daughter asks questions about things she used to take for granted. Mbakam's mother was sixty-eight at the time the film was made. She grew up in a time of national liberation struggles and experienced the atrocities of the French repression. She got married at eighteen to a man her parents had chosen for her. The film focuses on the daily life of the women, showing them doing chores in the village of the ancestors, as well as on the compound of the family house in Yaoundé, where Rosine Mbakam grew up and where her mother still lives. While the women are preparing meals, they talk freely about their lives. In beautiful images, filmed very close to the women and their surroundings, Rosine Mbakam gives life to voices hidden in the silence and sheds light on the faces of the women of her community.

Cameroon; women; generations; documentary film

2017 | Walking guide to African Leiden = Wandelgids door Afrikaans Leiden



This walking guide, compiled and edited by Edith de Roos and Jos Damen of the ASCL Library, offers an overview of all the - sometimes hidden - links between Leiden and Africa. In many museums, socio-cultural organisations, restaurants and shops, people can discover bits of Africa, one will find African poetry on murals and street names reminding of the Boer Wars in South Africa. And of course, at Leiden University, home of the ASCL, Africa can be studied through many disciplines. The cover shows a so-called '*kanga*', a piece of cloth worn in Eastern Africa, from the collection of the Leiden-based Textile Research Centre (TRC). The booklet also contains several interviews with people who were born in Africa and came to live in Leiden for different reasons: as a refugee, because of love, or because one of their parents migrated to the Netherlands. Like Houssin Bezzai, son of a so-called *'gastarbeider'* (labour migrant) from Morocco, who became a professional football player and who now (some time after publication of this booklet) has been appointed 'programme manager racism and discrimination' at the Royal Dutch Football Association (KNVB).

Africa-Netherlands; local history in diaspora

2019 | My first time

This book by Kenyan media personality and women's rights advocate Janet Mbugua is about menstruation. Menstruation is not a topic easily discussed in many places in the world, and certainly not when it comes to one's own experiences. Yet, talking about their own experiences is precisely what Kenyan women - and some men - do in this book. They share their personal stories in order to fight ignorance, taboo and shame, and to normalise the conversation. The book advocates for correct and timely information about menstruation and for access to period products and sanitation for all girls and women - at home, at school and in the workplace.

Kenya; personal narratives; women's health education

2020 | Twirinde Koronavirusi



Mpano wants to go to school but is stopped by his mother. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, school is now through radio and television. This booklet in Kinyarwanda by Oliviette Nyiraminani focuses on how to avoid picking up the Coronavirus: regularly wash your hands with soap, do not shake hands, but keep a distance from other people, and wear a face mask! The booklet was acquired during the ASCL Library's trip to Rwanda in 2021. A list of children's books on COVID-19 in our collection is included in the 2021 Library Highlight on the topic.

Rwanda; civic health education

2021 | The Oxford Handbook of the African Sahel (2021)

In this Oxford handbook, edited by Leonardo Alfonso Villalón, scholars based in Africa, Europe and the United States explore communalities as well as diversity and variation in the Sahelian region. Focusing on six countries - Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad - they address topics such as the Sahel as a region, challenges of climate change and of governing and development, intellectual and religious landscapes, social organisation and conditions, mobility and migration. Handbooks such as these can be borrowed from the ASCL Library and are often also digitally available via the Leiden University library catalogue.

Sahel; African studies; collective work



How We Published This Book Sustainably

The African Studies Centre Leiden strives to produce and disseminate a wide range of Africa-related knowledge that will inform, inspire, and motivate readers of all generations. The production of knowledge, however, can have unintentional damaging and irreversible side effects on the environment. Unnecessary use of harmful materials, polluting transportation methods, and the use of toxic substances in printing techniques are just a few examples of how hard copy books can have a negative impact on the environment.

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If you have any further suggestions on how to make this book more sustainable, please let us know!

African Studies Centre Leiden



The African Studies Centre Leiden celebrated its 75th anniversary at Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden on 8 September 2022. It was a festive day with colleagues, students, alumni, and societal partners. This ASCL Occasional Publication presents the keynote speeches of the day, giving insight into the Centre's rich past and present research, education, library and societal activities. In addition, it is illustrated with many pictures of the day and showcases the ASCL Library's special items from the collection that were exhibited.

Occasional Publication 48

africanstudies centre leiden

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