

INTERNATIONAL AFRICAN INSTITUTE

LUGARD LECTURE 2013

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Introductory Remarks to the 2013 Lugard Lecture 'Youth, Waithood, and Protest Movements in Africa' given by Alcinda Honwana¹

Peter Geschiere²

Welcome and many thanks to all of you for coming to attend this lecture at such an early hour.

It is a great honour for me to welcome all of you on behalf of the International African Institute to the Lord Lugard Lecture – by now an old tradition of our Institute.

This might be a good occasion to emphasize, first of all and once more, that over the last decades we have had lengthy debates on the title of this lecture: is it right to retain the name of Lord Lugard, the founder of our Institute but also an icon of colonialism?

This certainly does not fit with our continuous struggle to overcome this colonial heritage and constantly renew the Institute.

On the other hand, one does not overcome a heritage by denying it. So, again and again, the outcome of our debates was that it seemed best retain the title - after all, it is part of our heritage; so probably best to face this - but to be particularly diligent that we use the occasion to open up new perspectives in a constantly changing world.

This is one of the reasons (there are many more) why I am so happy to introduce here Professor Alcinda Honwana for this year's Lugard lecture.

I have to mention gender: of course it is wonderful to have a woman present the Lord Lugard lecture (on this point the old man would probably have agreed).

But the main reason why it is such a pleasure to introduce her is of course the way Alcinda, during her career, has opened up new and urgent themes: notably the ever more desperate struggle of youth (in Africa as elsewhere) to obtain their own place in the rapidly changing circumstances of our globalizing world.

And we will all agree that this is a particularly urgent theme in the present-day setting.

¹ This lecture was first presented at the Fifth European Conference on African Studies, Lisbon, 28 June 2013.

² Presented in his capacity as member of the Council of the International African Institute.

Alcinda herself is very much part of this globalizing world. Born and raised in Mozambique, she continued her studies in Paris and in London (where she did also her PhD at SOAS). After this she taught in Cape Town; worked for the SSRC in New York and Dakar; for the UN in New York; and for the Open University in the UK. She held also the Prince Claus Chair at the Institute for Social Studies in The Hague.

Her work bears all the marks of this global experience. Youth has been a central theme in it:

- First of all her work on healing of war trauma's in Mozambique - with special attention the plight of children, which led to her 2006 book on child soldiers.
- Then her pioneering collection from 2005 together with Filip De Boeck *Makers and Breakers: Children and Youth in Postcolonial Africa*.
- Subsequently she broadened this through comparative work in four African countries (Mozambique, Senegal, Kenya and Tunisia).

This large-scale project resulted recently in no less than two books:

- *The Time of Youth: Work Social Change and Politics in Africa* (published in August 2012 by Kumarian Press in the USA).
- and *Youth and Revolution in Tunisia* (just published by Zed Books in the UK, and being launched during this conference, this afternoon).

The main message of all this work is cogently condensed in her title for this morning's talk: 'Youth, Waithood, and Protest Movements in Africa'.