



Africa

Expanding horizon Nairobi is
a vibrant high-tech hub—and a
place of violent unrest

Photograph by Dominic Nahr for TIME

WORLD

The world's next great
power is rising — but hundreds of millions
are still being left behind
By Alex Perry/Nairobi

Rising



BONIFACE MWANGI'S FIRST CAMERA was an old Japanese film model, bought with \$220 borrowed from a friend. He'd been selling books at his mother's roadside stall in Nairobi since he was 15. Then one day in 2003 he came across a biography of Kenyan photographer Mohamed Amin, whose pictures of the 1984 Ethiopian famine, the book implied, led to Band Aid, Live Aid and a new era of global humanitarianism. "That book opened a new world for me," says Mwangi. "Here was another high school dropout who went on to conquer the world using his camera." Mwangi set out to do the same. Within months his photographs were being published in Kenya, and within a year he had won a national award for Best New Photographer. His inches-close pictures of the tribal bloodletting that followed a disputed 2007 general-election result in Kenya earned him a slew of awards and a grant from the New York City-based Magnum Foundation.

For many, the story of the street hawker who became a world-class photographer seemed to epitomize the notion of an emerging Africa: a giant continent awakening from poverty and disaster, now bursting with hope and opportunity.

Then Mwangi quit. He was haunted by the idea that his success was built on his country's turmoil. He wouldn't, *couldn't* go on photographing the politicians he heard promise Kenyans a new dawn, only to rob them, ignore them and then, come an election, allow violence to break out. Whatever the cost to his career, the price his country was paying for that kind of execrable leadership—which led to more than 1,000 murders during the 2007–08 election crisis, along with the theft of billions of dollars from the state—was far greater. "We didn't vote for these guys for them to screw us," he says.

So in 2011, Mwangi formed a group of street artists, with whom he began staging guerrilla art attacks across Nairobi. Aerosol stencils of vultures began to appear on sidewalks and road crossings. Then more-elaborate murals appeared—of vultures urinating and wiping their backsides on the Kenyan flag. One February night, Mwangi's group painted a 40-ft. tableau on a downtown wall, depicting a smirking, suited vulture sitting next to a list of what the artists saw as Kenyan politicians' crimes since independence. "MPs—screwing Kenyans since 1963," read the caption. "Africa is rising," says Mwangi, now 29. "But there's also a lot of anger. There's trouble ahead."

As Africa marks half a century since it began to free itself from colonialism, its future lies in the hands of hundreds of mil-

lions of young Africans who, like Mwangi, must choose between Africa rising and Africa uprising. It is not, as the cynics have it, that Africa will never move beyond dictators and disasters, that it cannot and will not develop. Africa's progress is real, dramatic and, by now, well established. The International Monetary Fund says that since 2003, GDP across sub-Saharan Africa's 48 countries has risen an average of 5% to 7% per year. In the past decade, six of the 10 fastest-growing countries in the world were African, and this year five African countries will outgrow China and 21 will beat India. The result of all this growth? Africa is in the midst of a historic transition, and during the next few decades hundreds of millions of Africans will likely be lifted out of poverty, just as hundreds of millions of Asians were in the past few decades. Bob Geldof's evolution from Live Aid organizer to, this February, the founder of a \$200 million Africa-focused private-equity fund is emblematic of the transformation. "This could be the African century," he says.

Old Habits

BUT IF AFRO-PESSIMISM IS OUTDATED, undiluted Afro-optimism is premature. Historically the continent labored under predatory inequality and clownish tyranny. President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaïre (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) would charter a Concorde airplane for European shopping trips while his people starved. Today, while Africa's economies are modernizing, its rulers too often are still not. "With a very few notable exceptions, our leaders are not part of accountable governments," says Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, chairman of the international mediation body and rights watchdog the Elders. "It's still, If they perform abominably, so what?" The continent's leaders are, by one important measure, *less* accountable than they were in the past. Since it was set up in 2007 by a Sudanese telecom billionaire, the Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance has recorded a striking divergence: material improvement along with political deterioration. This year, for the third time, Mo Ibrahim's foundation declined to award its \$5 million prize for African leaders who leave office peacefully and democratically. "We are not completely out of the past and into the future," says Ibrahim.

More than anyone else, it will be young Africans who shape that future. The Arab Spring showed what can happen when corrupt regimes that oversee strong overall growth fail to share the gains or greater political freedom with a connected and well-educated youth. All those ingredients

exist in potentially even more explosive proportions in Africa. The average African is 19, while the average Middle Easterner is in his or her 20s. Thanks to foreign aid, hundreds of millions of Africans are better educated than ever—and they expect more-rewarding jobs. And by 2016, there will be over a billion cell phones in use on the continent, according to industry analyst Informa Telecoms & Media, giving nearly every African access to that most essential tool of 21st century rebellion. It is a recipe for, simultaneously, entrepreneurialism and revolution.

Boomtown

AS KENYA'S CAPITAL AND EAST AFRICA'S business hub, Nairobi encapsulates Africa's transformation. Steel-and-glass skyscrapers dominate colonial bungalows. From vendors at traffic lights selling iPad chargers to millions of neatly suited commuters, signs of change are everywhere. Average incomes have close to doubled in a decade, and if the economy continues to expand 5% annually as expected, a nation of mud huts will become a middle-income country by 2016.

Africa owes its takeoff to a variety of accelerators, nearly all of them external and occurring in the past 10 years: billions of dollars in aid, especially to fight HIV/AIDS and malaria; tens of billions of dollars in foreign-debt cancellations; a concurrent interest in Africa's natural resources, led by China; and the rapid spread of mobile phones, from a few million in 2000 to more than 750 million today. Business increasingly dominates foreign interest in Africa. Investment first outpaced aid in 2006 and now doubles it.

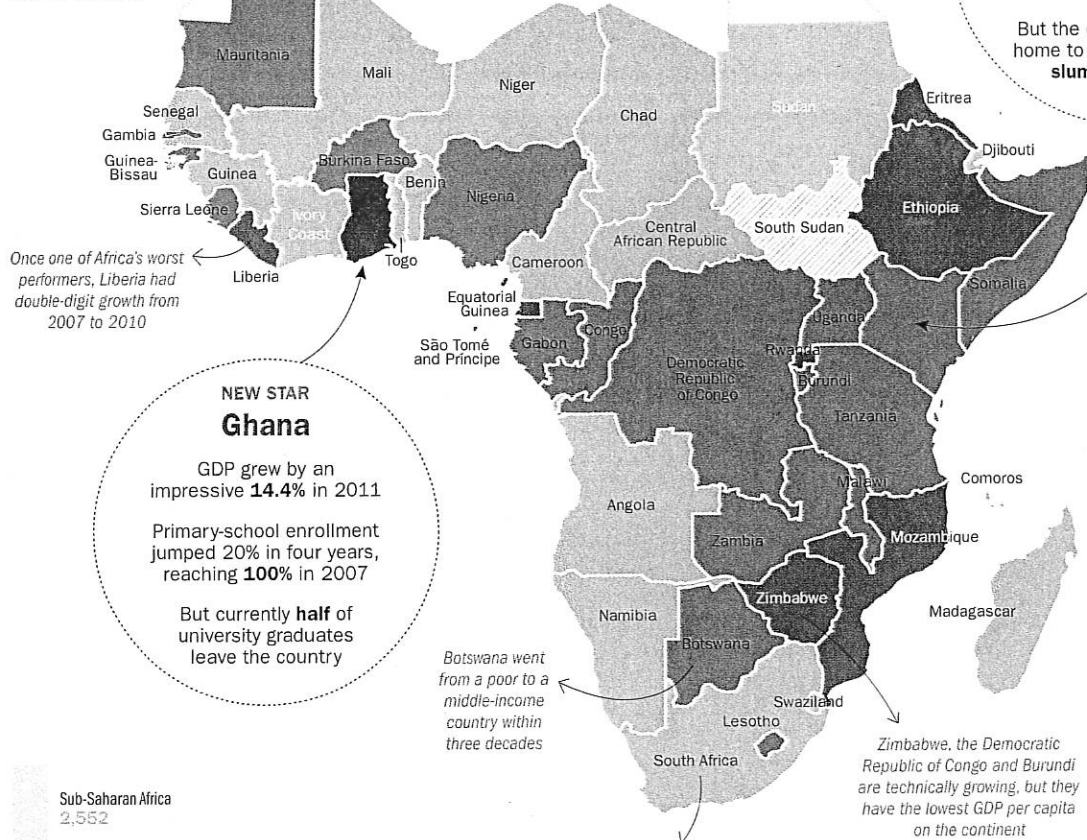
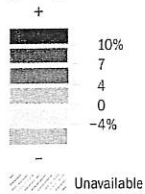
While these phenomena combine in a tsunami of change at a continental level, their local impact can be uneven, and Nairobi is a prime example. Pass through the city center at noon and you'll find daily protests by striking doctors, teachers and university lecturers, all demanding increases in what are, in some cases, risible wages. Return at night and downtown is deserted save for a small army of private security guards protecting steel-shuttered businesses against thieves who journey in from outlying squatter camps. A short minibus, or *matatu*, ride takes you to the giant clapboard slum of Kibera, home to 250,000, where most evidence of either development or the state—streetlights, schools, paved roads, businesses—ends abruptly at the township's edge.

Sipping a latte at a coffee shop in one of Nairobi's new malls, Dennis Karema, 28, is one of hundreds of young Nairobi technology entrepreneurs whose advances in mobile banking and data plotting have

Growing Pains

Sub-Saharan Africa has the second fastest growing regional economy in the world, after Asia. But huge challenges remain, even in countries that are experiencing boom times

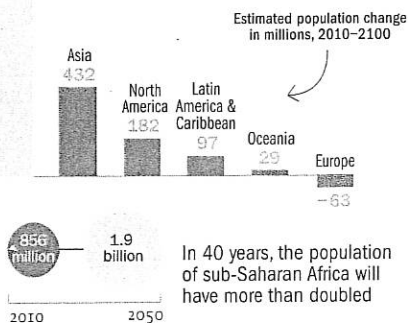
Real GDP growth, 2011



Sub-Saharan Africa
2,552

CONTINENTAL SHIFT

Africa's population is about to soar

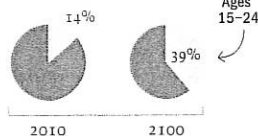


The future is young

18.6
Average age in sub-Saharan Africa, 2010

108 million
Increase in number of African schoolchildren in the next decade

By 2100, more than a third of the world's young people will live in sub-Saharan Africa



But prospects may be poor

By 2050, **21%** of the world's labor force will be in sub-Saharan Africa. It's 10% now



Yet only **39.5%** of youths are enrolled in secondary school now

And adult literacy is as low as **36%** in some parts of the continent



TIME Graphic by Claire Manibog. Sources: World Bank; U.N. Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division; AfricanEconomicOutlook.org; CIA World Factbook; Mo Ibrahim Foundation

earned the city the nickname Silicon Savannah and attracted global investor interest. In January, his 13-month-old start-up, Usalama, will unveil a technology that Karema claims cuts ATM and mobile money fraud by 90% and which Karema will market globally. "This is the time for Africa to change the world," he declares.

But Karema readily admits to being one of the lucky few. In his home village of Murang'a, in the Mount Kenya foothills north of Nairobi, there is almost no outlet for a young man with ambition. "Most of my friends survive by picking up occasional manual work," he says. "Some are brilliant, but without opportunity they lose hope. You find them drunk, sleeping by the side of the road." Worse, the government makes little effort to improve their prospects. So every weekend, Karema returns to Murang'a to teach basic computer skills like typing, e-mailing and Googling.

The wasted lives of Murang'a's young men reflect a pattern: across Africa, governments are failing to convert growth into jobs. According to an August report by analysts McKinsey & Co., 275 million out of a total African workforce of 382 million are either unemployed or in informal day-hire work. By 2020 a youth surge propelled by the world's highest birthrates, which will raise Africa's population from 1 billion in 2009 to 2 billion in 2050, will add a further 122 million Africans of working age. That would be a boon if they had work. But McKinsey calculates that in the same period, Africa will create just 54 million to 72 million more jobs. "If current trends continue, it's going to take Africa until 2066 before employment levels reach those of East Asia," says David Fine, one of the report's authors. "The next part [of Africa's development] is jobs," agrees Geldof. "What will it take to fill that void?"

McKinsey argues that the answer lies less in Africa's traditional extractive industries—which tend to be capital-intensive—and more in sectors such as tourism and retail, which employ more labor. But what happens if, as McKinsey predicts, the void cannot be filled? South Africa provides an example of a government's paying the price for failing to share the gains of growth. Since the end of apartheid rule in 1994, South Africa, the continent's biggest economy, has expanded by up to 5% a year. But 18 years in power has changed the African National Congress (ANC) from the party of Nelson Mandela's righteous revolution into just another rapacious developing-world elite. Unemployment runs anywhere from 25% to 40%, state-run education can be among the worst in the world, and inequality—

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—BOB GELDOF, LIVE AID ORGANIZER AND INVESTOR

stretched wider by a fabulously wealthy ANC-connected cabal—has increased.

The ANC is reaping the reward for this sorry record. In mid-August, 3,000 miners at platinum producer Lonmin's Marikana mine in northern South Africa walked off the job, demanding a tripling of basic pay, from about \$500 per month. On Aug. 16, after days of violence in which 10 people died, police shot dead 34 miners. The killings evoked the brutality of apartheid. Meanwhile, the militant antibusiness, antigovernment strikes that erupted at other mines, then in other industries, continue today. These have exposed as nothing more than a hollow fraud the claims by the ANC's ruling alliance that it represents the poor. With such a disconnect between government and people, Tutu says, the potential for upheaval in South Africa is "very great ... When the big eruption happens," he says, "it's going to be very, very disturbing."

Just as worrying is another type of unrest emerging in East and West Africa. Marginalization divides rich from poor, but it also aggravates existing tribal, racial and religious fault lines. A series of religious insurgencies is taking place below the Sahara. From the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean, young Muslims are taking up arms against governments they see as Westernized, corrupt and shutting them out of economic opportunity.

A Continent of Entrepreneurs

AMID SUCH INSTABILITY, IT CAN BE HARD to imagine progress. Perhaps that's why Africa's successes can sound almost like fantasy. Take Ecobank, a global retail bank with assets of \$18.5 billion, deposits of \$13.1 billion and 23,500 employees in 32 countries—all managed from the small nation of Togo. Or the Ethiopian Commodity Exchange: a generation after a famine killed a million people, Ethiopia's first yuppies are food traders at Africa's first agricultural-commodities exchange.

Non-Africans can find it hard to

grasp the coexistence of such great promise with such great problems. The \$130 billion-a-year aid industry retains a singular focus on crisis. Western bankers, meanwhile, seem to see only Africa's prospects. But sub-Saharan Africa, with its 48 countries and 3,000 languages, is inevitably a place of adversity *and* opportunity. Geldof suggests the former might even lead to the latter. Where does Africa get its spirit of enterprise? he asks. "If you're constantly scratching for a living, you're an entrepreneur."

The world's emerging economic powerhouses, with their own experience of major transition, find it easier to digest Africa's simultaneous potential and pitfalls. China has taken the lead. Two-way trade with Africa—often in infrastructure-for-resource swaps that have given the continent an infrastructure makeover that runs from roads and railways to airports and dams—hit \$166 billion in 2011. (The U.S., long Africa's biggest trading partner, recorded \$126 billion.) Also in pursuit of Africa's oil and gas, coal, timber, minerals and farmland are India, Brazil, Malaysia, Turkey and the Gulf states. "There is a new Great Game being played out in Africa," says Geldof. "Yet much of the West ignores this geostrategic giant."

That will inevitably change. Mozambique's offshore Rovuma-1 block has bigger natural gas reserves than all of Libya, while initial estimates are that Somalia has as much oil as Kuwait. The continent has 60% of the world's unused arable land. As Geldof says, "In the end, we all have to go to Africa. They have what we need." And it is in that second scramble for Africa that the continent's best hopes lie, because if the first scramble for Africa—as historians dubbed the period from the 1870s to 1900—was a European imperialist carve-up, the second should leave Africa as the big winner. The more needed Africa is, the less needy—and the more powerful—it can be. With the right governments, "we have the capacity to do wonderfully well," Tutu says.

So tantalizing is the new hope across Africa, it infects even the most skeptical. Asked to imagine the future, Mwangi predicts one day returning to photography to capture a very different Kenya. "There are tough days ahead," he says. "There will be violence. But eventually you'll see an evolution. We'll be a new country, stable and with a government with standards. We'll be reborn. Out of the old will come the new." With a bit of luck, that's a story he'll be shooting across all of Africa. ■