Long perceived as a stagnant world region with low population densities, Sub-saharan Africa (SSA) has become the world’s most demographically dynamic region. The UN projects that SSA’s population will grow from 1.2 billion in 2015 to over 2.5 billion by 2050. Nigeria, with 417 million people, will displace the USA in 2050 as the world’s third most populous nation-state. Besides demography, Nigeria’s aspiration for regional hegemony rests upon consumer demand generated by enormous urban middle and working classes, abundant natural and energy resources, creative communication, media and film industries, and the vision of Africa’s most innovative and transformative industrial investor--- Aliko Dangote. Evaluating Nigeria requires us to evaluate Dangote’s visionary strategy and key alliances.

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Paul M. Lubeck retired recently as Interim Director of the African Studies Program and Senior Research Professor at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). While teaching political sociology and political economy at UC Santa Cruz, he founded both the Everett Program and the Intensive Major in Global Information and Social Enterprise Studies. A recognized expert the political economy of Nigeria, he has been an invited commentator with the BBC, PBS Newshour, Al-Jazeera, and the New York Times. Lubeck’s introduction to poverty eradication began as a grass-roots organizer of rural credit cooperatives on Niger-Nigeria border. Lubeck’s first book, Islam and Urban Labor in Northern Nigeria, was awarded the Herskovits Prize in 1987. His second book, The African Bourgeoisie analyzed many of the issues discussed in this lecture. In addition, Lubeck has published extensively on Muslim globalization processes, ICT for development (ICT4D), Islamist movements, and regional economic development in Malaysia and Mexico.