

POT CALLING THE KETTLE BLACK



Who Says the White Are
Not Corrupt—Even More
Corrupt Than the Black?

DR. CHRISTIAN ADETUNJI

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Published in Rwanda, 27th December, 2025

by: **CMAT Family Therapy Services Ltd**

ISBN: 978-99977-0-644-7

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Preface

I am no activist—

only a quiet watcher of the world's long theatre.

At sixty years, I sit with my thoughts

and an old accounting principle,

Yes,

*The principle of double-entry accounting holds that every debit must be matched by an equal and corresponding credit. Debits and credits must always balance. When one side is recorded and the other is concealed, **the account is false**.* What Africa gives—its gold, its oil, its trembling veins—

does not dissolve into the wind;

it lands softly in foreign vaults,

like a stolen whisper finding a new owner.

And what Africa receives—

the guns, the grief, the restless smoke—

also has a sender,

a signature,

a silent intention.

So, I ask the ancient question: *why?*

Time has schooled me well—

I now know the difference

between the **facts laid on the table**

and the **reasons buried beneath it.**

For behind every decree, every doctrine, every design
pressed upon this continent,

lies a motive carved in quiet rooms,

far from the sun that warms our children.

At the 1884–1885 Berlin Conference, Africa was
scrambled for and partitioned without African consent,
turning peoples, lands, and resources into negotiable
assets.

Africa—

still treated as a toddler in the marketplace of nations,

led by the hand of those

whose smiles are wide,

yet whose fingers are cunning.

And I, the observer,

simply watch the balance sheet of history—

debits and credits drifting across oceans—
and wonder when the books
will finally be reconciled
with truth.

Introduction

For centuries, Western societies have presented themselves as models of transparency and exemplary governance. They claim moral authority and social order. Simultaneously, people often depict African nations and Black communities as corrupt and chaotic. They are portrayed as morally weak. This contrast is not accidental. It is a stereotype that has been carefully constructed. But a critical question remains. What if this claimed moral superiority is an illusion?

Pot Calling the Kettle Black confronts this question directly. The book exposes the myth of Western innocence. It reveals deeper and more sophisticated forms of corruption. These forms are embedded within White-dominated systems of power. Corruption appears in many spaces. It appears in political manipulation. It appears in media propaganda. It appears in financial exploitation and global power abuse. Respected institutions often conceal these practices. They are protected by polished language and controlled

narratives. Using historical evidence and contemporary analysis, Dr Christian Adetunji presents an uncomfortable truth. Corruption is not racial. It has no colour. Yet the world has been taught to associate it with Blackness.

This book challenges dominant narratives. It provokes reflection and critical thinking. It empowers Africans and the global Black community. It encourages the reclaiming of dignity through understanding. It exposes how global hypocrisy shapes politics, economics, justice, and human identity today.

Backgrounder

European colonial expansion into Africa was not a neutral encounter between cultures, nor was it a benevolent civic mission. It was a project sustained by force. Colonial rule depended on armies, policing systems, prisons, and imposed legal frameworks designed to entrench dominance and suppress resistance. The very reliance on these coercive mechanisms reveals a lack of moral legitimacy. When authority requires violence to maintain itself, it signals the absence of ethical justification. In moral philosophy, this logic reflects the *argumentum ad baculum*, or the fallacy of force, where power replaces moral right as the basis of authority.

The acquisition of African land, labour, cultural artefacts, and natural resources followed the same pattern. These were not obtained through consent or justice but through coercion. Colonial actors therefore functioned less as lawful administrators and more as agents of dispossession. They imposed systems unilaterally and extracted value through domination. Classical moral

philosophy and Judeo-Christian ethics both recognise that theft creates an obligation towards restitution. Biblical ethics go further by insisting that restitution must exceed mere return; it must include additional compensation that acknowledges both material loss and moral injury (Exodus 22:1–4). Within this framework, restitution is not punitive but reparative, aimed at restoring dignity, balance, and justice.

Colonial powers, however, largely exempted themselves from these moral standards. Instead, they practiced what could be described as selective historical amnesia. Colonial violence, forced labour, cultural destruction, and economic extraction were minimised or forgotten. This forgetting extended beyond conquest into the prolonged exploitation of African mineral and human resources during and after formal colonial rule. At the same time, comparatively minor transgressions by marginalised African youths—often shaped by the poverty produced by these same historical processes—were magnified, criminalised, and moralised. Large-scale imperial

extraction and environmental devastation were normalised, and the consequences of colonial injustice were blamed on its victims.

This imbalance reveals a profound ethical paradox. Moral scrutiny was consistently directed outward, while self-examination remained absent. Biblical wisdom captures this failure through the question, “How can one see the speck in another’s eye while ignoring the log in one’s own?” (Matthew 7:3–5). Power insulated itself from accountability while subjecting the powerless to heightened judgement. This failure of moral reflexivity lies at the heart of the colonial ethical contradiction.

The enduring challenge of the colonial legacy is therefore not only historical but ethical. It raises fundamental questions about impunity, moral consistency, and the conditions under which justice can be meaningfully pursued. Genuine reconciliation cannot rely on symbolic gestures or selective remembrance. It requires honest historical reckoning, restitution proportional to harm,

and the humility to apply to oneself the same moral standards imposed on others.

Cultural looting must be understood within this ethical framework. It is deeply rooted in colonialism and racism, and its consequences extend beyond material loss to include psychological, communal, and intergenerational harm (Warren (2025)). Across Africa and Europe, renewed attention to restitution reflects a broader reckoning with historical injustice and contemporary accountability. African governments, scholars, and civil society organisations have increasingly demanded the return of cultural artefacts removed during colonial military campaigns, along with calls for the repatriation of financial assets lost through corruption and illicit financial flows.

Despite their frequent appearance in public discourse, distinct historical, legal, and ethical frameworks govern these demands. Cultural artefact restitution and financial asset recovery address different forms of harm and require separate analytical treatment. Situating

restitution debates within Africa–Europe relations therefore demands a clear distinction between these two pathways.

One of the most prominent cultural restitution cases involves the Benin Bronzes, a collection of bronze and ivory sculptures looted during the British punitive expedition against the Benin Kingdom in 1897. Thousands of these objects were removed and dispersed across museums and private collections in Europe and North America. Nigeria has demanded their return for decades, arguing that they represent illegally acquired cultural heritage and enduring symbols of colonial violence and dispossession. In June 2025, the Netherlands returned 119 Benin Bronzes to Nigeria, marking the largest single restitution directly linked to the 1897 expedition (Associated Press, 2025). Despite this development, most Benin artefacts remain outside Nigeria, and ownership disputes continue.

Another historically significant case concerns Ethiopian royal and sacred objects seized during the British military

campaign against Maqdala in 1868. Following the defeat and death of Emperor Tewodros II, manuscripts, regalia, and personal effects entered British institutional collections, including the Royal Collection associated with Windsor Castle. In 1965, Queen Elizabeth II returned the crown and seal of Emperor Tewodros II to Emperor Haile Selassie during a state visit to Ethiopia. While this act is recognised as one of the earliest, high-profile restitutions of African royal regalia, the majority of Maqdala-related objects remain outside Ethiopia, prompting continued calls for their return.

Financial asset recovery presents a different set of challenges. It concerns funds illicitly transferred abroad during the post-independence period, often by political elites. These efforts rely on criminal law, anti-money-laundering regimes, and international legal cooperation rather than heritage ethics. A widely cited example is the embezzlement of Nigerian state funds during the regime of General Sani Abacha. Swiss authorities froze significant assets in the early 2000s, leading to phased repatriations.

By the middle of the 2000s, Nigeria had gotten back hundreds of millions of U.S. dollars. The World Bank then kept an eye on later returns to make sure they were used for development and were open (World Bank, 2017). Despite these efforts, only a fraction of the stolen wealth has been recovered, underscoring the structural difficulty of cross-border asset recovery (Balashov et al., 2023; Brun & Sotiropoulou, 2024; Wibowo, 2023).

The political sensitivity surrounding restitution and asset recovery was highlighted during the 2016 UK-hosted Global Anti-Corruption Summit, when British Prime Minister David Cameron referred to Nigeria and Afghanistan as “fantastically corrupt”. Although the remark caused diplomatic unease, Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari declined to demand an apology, stating instead that what mattered was the return of stolen assets rather than symbolic contrition (Al Jazeera, 2016; New Arab, 2016). This response reflected a broader African position that material restitution and accountability outweigh rhetorical regret.

While cultural artefact restitution and financial asset recovery are frequently discussed together, they address fundamentally different harms. Through museums, legislation, and cultural agreements, cultural restitution focusses on identity, memory, and redress for colonial violence. Financial asset recovery targets economic damage and governance failures through courts, treaties, and financial regulation. Conflating the two risks obscures their distinct objectives and weakens effective redress.

Taken together, restitution efforts across Africa and Europe reflect an evolving understanding of historical responsibility and contemporary accountability. Cultural artefact restitution aims to rectify symbolic and material losses inflicted by colonial conquest, whereas financial asset recovery targets the economic ramifications of corruption and illicit financial flows. Treating these as related but distinct pathways allows for clearer scholarship, stronger policy responses, and more

profound engagement with the long-term legacy of colonialism and postcolonial governance.

At the core of both debates lies a fundamental ethical principle: no one owns what they did not legitimately acquire. Current possession does not confer rightful ownership when acquisition was rooted in coercion or injustice. This principle challenges institutional assumptions and reframes the role of museums and collecting bodies. Rather than acting solely as legal custodians, such institutions are increasingly called upon to function as ethical stewards who prioritise cultural rights, historical truths, and restorative justice over institutional claims to ownership (Fincham, 2023; Warren, 2025).

CHAPTER ONE

The Birth of a Lie: How the West Manufactured the Myth of African Corruption

Global discourse has framed corruption as a uniquely African condition for centuries. It has often been described as a moral defect embedded in Black societies. Comparative scholarship in political economy, African studies, and postcolonial theory challenges this framing. These studies indicate that the image of African corruption did not arise from neutral measurement or objective comparison. Instead, it was historically produced within projects of empire, racial hierarchy, and global governance (Mudimbe, 1988; Rodney, 1972; Said, 1978). In this literature, corruption functions not only as a description of abuse but also as a political language. It becomes a tool for ranking societies, justifying

intervention, and turning dominance into moral obligation (Doty, 1996; Foucault, 1972).

To understand corruption as a racialised accusation, it is necessary to return to the ideological foundations of Western expansionism. Colonial domination relied on more than military force. It also depended on narratives that justified conquest. Africa had to be presented as administratively incompetent, morally suspect, and historically unfinished. Through this framing, conquest could be described as governance, and extraction could be reframed as improvement (Mudimbe, 1988; Rodney, 1972). What later appeared as “common sense” about African disorder was, in fact, part of the intellectual scaffolding of empire. These ideas were produced and circulated through travel writing, missionary accounts, colonial bureaucracies, and Western knowledge institutions (Pratt, 1992; Said, 1978).

European powers did not encounter Africa as neutral observers. Critical histories of colonialism reveal that narrative strategies, which portrayed African societies as

disordered and incapable, preceded domination. This framing transformed conquest into a supposed remedy for dysfunction (Rodney, 1972). Postcolonial scholarship further demonstrates that Africa was constructed in Western thought as a space of lack and deficiency. It was defined in opposition to Europe's self-image of rationality, order, and progress (Mudimbe, 1988). Within this ideological structure, corruption became less an empirical conclusion and more an assumption already in place. It functioned as a label that made external supervision appear reasonable and necessary.

Travel and exploration writing played a central role in this process. These texts were not neutral records of observation. Scholarship on imperial representation shows that travel narratives often operated as political genres. They organised distant people into moral categories that served metropolitan audiences and expansionist ambitions (Pratt, 1992). What mattered was not simply what travellers claimed to observe but how

their descriptions helped construct a framework in which intervention could be justified as a civilisational necessity. Colonial administrations eventually institutionalised this logic. Education systems, missionary organisations, and bureaucratic governance reinforce a durable interpretive habit. African political life was consistently read as dysfunction, while European power was interpreted as administration and order (Mamdani, 1996; Mudimbe, 1988). Such an interpretation did not imply that abuses were absent in African societies. No society is free from wrongdoing. However, the moral vocabulary used to interpret political conduct was unevenly applied. Judgement followed race and power rather than consistent ethical standards.

Missionaries occupied an ambivalent position within this structure. While they often provided education and social services, they also carried the epistemic authority of empire. Missionary discourse frequently reproduces civilised hierarchies in its moral assessments (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991). Indigenous institutions were often

described as spiritually defective and socially inferior. Ethical truth was located in Western Christian norms, while African moral systems were dismissed as superstition or immorality. This framing carried political consequences. If African spiritual and legal systems could be labelled corrupt, then replacing them with foreign authority could be presented as a moral rescue.

The psychological and cultural effects of this moral domination have been widely theorised. Fanon argues that colonial rule operates not only through laws and weapons but also through narratives that produce inferiority (Fanon, 1952/2008; 1961/2004). These narratives degrade native institutions while elevating colonial norms as the only credible standard for civilisation. Within this framework, colonial discourse does not merely describe the colonised. It reshapes what they can believe about themselves, including what forms of governance they consider legitimate.

Anthropological and historical research further demonstrates how social practices were reclassified

through foreign moral and legal categories. Practices understood locally as negotiation, reciprocity, or obligation were often redescribed as bribery or clientelism (Olivier de Sardan, 1999). These reclassifications were not neutral. They reflected power relations that allowed the dominant group to define moral meaning. As a result, similar practices were interpreted as "culture" when performed by the powerful and "corruption" when performed by the marginalised. Western knowledge institutions reinforced these narratives. Postcolonial scholarship elucidates how early European intellectual paradigms generated assertions regarding Africa's alleged absence of history, rationality, or political sophistication (Mudimbe, 1988; Said, 1978). These ideas circulated through education systems, policy frameworks, and popular media. Over time, they shaped how administrators, scholars, and the public interpreted African governance. The struggle was therefore not only over territory but also over interpretive authority. It

involved determining who could define order, legitimacy, and progress.

For this reason, many scholars describe empire as a form of epistemic domination. The concept of the “coloniality of power” captures how racial classification and Eurocentric knowledge became embedded in global hierarchies (Quijano, 2000). Within such systems, corruption functions structurally. It positions certain states as perpetually deficient and in need of correction, supervision, or reform.

By the early twentieth century, Western political discourse had consolidated a powerful assumption. African societies were portrayed as inherently prone to disorder and therefore in need of external management. Studies of colonial governance show how administrative systems defined “custom”, “tribe”, and “authority” in ways that served imperial control (Mamdani, 1996). Governance was not assessed by a universal standard. Instead, it was narrated through a hierarchy in which

Europe appeared as the rational guardian and Africa as the child requiring direction.

This framing produced a striking paradox. Practices that clearly meet modern definitions of corruption—such as coercive labour systems, fraudulent treaties, monopolistic concessions, and violent appropriations—were normalised under imperial rule. It was described as commerce, development, or civilisation (Rodney, 1972). The label of corruption did not correspond to the scale of harm. This perspective aligned with the racialised position of the actor within the global order.

After independence, formal colonial rule became harder to justify, but hierarchy persisted through other means. Scholarship shows how finance, governance doctrine, media representation, and international conditionality continued to reproduce unequal relations. The language of “good governance” emerged as a dominant development framework. African states were often positioned as permanent reform subjects, even as the meaning of governance shifted according to donor

priorities (Doornbos, 2001). Accountability itself was not the problem. The problem lay in asymmetric scrutiny, where some states authored rules while others were placed under probation.

Political economy research further highlights contradictions within global policy regimes. Neoliberal reforms often depended on strong state enforcement, despite promoting market freedom. People frequently narrated these tensions as African failures, rather than as structural inconsistencies in the global system (Harrison, 2019). Media narratives amplified this imbalance. African dysfunction was foregrounded, while external drivers such as debt regimes, commodity dependence, and transnational financial networks were rendered less visible (Ferguson, 2006). In this way, “African corruption” became a stable global story.

The moral and psychological consequences of sustained stigma are significant. Fanon’s work remains central to understanding this damage. He shows how repeated narratives of deficiency weaken confidence in local

institutions and erode belief in self-governance (Fanon, 1952/2008; 1961/2004). When corruption is treated as Africa's essence rather than a global phenomenon, it becomes a mechanism of shame. This shame is internalised for some and strategically deployed for others.

Contemporary research on corruption in Africa cautions against simplistic moral explanations. Sociological studies show that corruption operates within complex social systems. It is often publicly condemned while privately normalised, and it does not correlate neatly with regime types (Olivier de Sardan, 1999). These findings do not excuse wrongdoing. They demonstrate that corruption is not a uniquely African pathology but a political and social phenomenon requiring careful analysis rather than mythmaking.

Across this body of scholarship, a consistent conclusion emerges. The myth of uniquely African corruption has served strategic purposes. It has legitimised intervention, weakened African bargaining power, protected external

economic interests, and sustained Western claims to moral authority (Doty, 1996; Quijano, 2000; Rodney, 1972). Corruption exists everywhere. What is exceptional is its insistence that it defines Africa as a civilisational trait. This insistence is best understood not as evidence, but as ideology.

In conclusion, the narrative of African corruption did not arise naturally. Research in political economy, postcolonial theory, African studies, and the sociology of corruption shows that it was produced through imperial ideology, missionary moralism, epistemic domination, and uneven global governance frameworks (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991; Doornbos, 2001; Fanon, 1952/2008; Mudimbe, 1988; Rodney, 1972). Recognising this construction affirms the reality of corruption everywhere. Rather, it exposes a racialised hierarchy that assigns moral failure to the colonised while granting complexity and necessity to the powerful.

CHAPTER TWO

Corruption by Another Name: How Western Corruption Looks Clean, Polished, and Respectable

Global discussions about corruption are usually biased. Research in comparative governance and political economy demonstrates that narratives shape the interpretation of corruption. Those in control of political power, economic resources, and media institutions shape these narratives (Johnston, 2005; Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, 2016). When corruption occurs in African contexts, it is commonly described as evidence of disorder. It is framed as incompetence or moral failure. When similar or even more extensive corruption occurs in Western societies, it is described differently. It is often labelled as system failure, corporate misconduct, ethical lapse, or an isolated incident (Whyte, 2015). The actions

may be similar in practice. The interpretation, however, is radically different.

This chapter explores the widespread perception of corruption in Western political and economic systems as clean and respectable. It also examines why it is often considered legitimate. At the same time, African corruption is portrayed as crude, chaotic, and culturally inherent. The difference does not lie in the substance of corruption itself. It lies in the institutional, legal, and narrative mechanisms that shield powerful actors from moral scrutiny.

Political economy scholarship shows that corruption in Western societies is often embedded within legal systems. It is also embedded within corporate governance frameworks and regulatory institutions (Johnston, 2005). Corruption usually takes forms other than direct bribery. It is often concealed through technical language. It is hidden behind formal procedures and legal compliance structures. Practices such as corporate lobbying, offshore tax avoidance, regulatory

capture, illicit arms transfers, and financial manipulation are widely documented in studies of global capitalism and governance (Whyte, 2015; Zucman, 2015).

Boardrooms typically host these practices, not the streets. Parliaments, financial institutions, and policy networks host these practices. Scholars argue that institutional prestige acts as a protective barrier. When socially respected individuals carry out misconduct, it appears less threatening. Contracts, consultants, and legal expertise reduce its visibility. As a result, the conduct loses its moral urgency and visual stigma (Sutherland, 1949/1983). In this sense, power makes corruption harder to see.

Research on financial secrecy supports this view. Western corruption rarely produces dramatic images. It appears instead as spreadsheets, shell companies, consultancy agreements, and legal loopholes. This orderly appearance hides extensive social harm. It creates an aesthetic of legitimacy that masks exploitation and inequality (Zucman, 2015).

Lobbying is a clear example of institutionalised influence. Political science research has long questioned its ethical foundations in Western democracies. Lobbying is formally described as civic participation. Empirical studies show a different reality. Lobbying often converts economic power into political influence (Lessig, 2011; Johnston, 2005). Companies in sectors such as energy, pharmaceuticals, defence, and finance invest heavily in shaping laws and regulatory outcomes to their advantage.

Comparative corruption studies highlight a clear linguistic imbalance. When money influences political decisions in African contexts, it is labelled bribery. When similar financial influence operates through lobbying or campaign finance in Western states, it is reframed as advocacy or interest representation (Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, 2016). Their behaviour is often similar. However, the language used to legitimise these actions differs significantly.

Another major domain of Western corruption involves tax havens and financial secrecy. Research in international political economy shows that trillions of dollars are hidden each year through offshore financial systems. Western legal frameworks protect these systems (Zucman, 2015; Cobham & Jansk, 2018). This concealment results in large public revenue losses.

Financial secrecy jurisdictions such as Switzerland, Luxembourg, the Cayman Islands, the British Virgin Islands, and the City of London are central to these networks (Zucman, 2015). Western media often portray African elites who hide assets abroad as morally corrupt. When wealthy individuals or Western corporations engage in similar practices, they label their actions as tax planning or legal optimisation. The difference lies in narrative framing, not in the practice itself.

Criminological research also shows a persistent imbalance in how corporate crime is treated. In Western contexts, corporate corruption is often handled as a regulatory matter. It is rarely treated as a criminal

offence. Corporations may pay fines. Individual executives are rarely prosecuted, even when public harm is severe (Whyte, 2015; Tombs & Whyte, 2013).

In African contexts, corruption is usually personal. Individual officials are named. Their images are public. They are subjected to public shame. This effect reinforces the idea that corruption is a personal moral failure rather than a structural condition. Scholars of white-collar crime argue that this difference contributes to the perception that Western corruption is less dangerous and more respectable (Sutherland, 1949/1983).

Media institutions play a powerful role in shaping these perceptions. Research on media studies reveals that the reporting of African corruption frequently employs sensational language and vivid imagery (Ferguson, 2006). Such reporting reinforces long-standing stereotypes.

Corruption in Western economies is reported differently. It is often downplayed. It may be framed as a technical error. It is sometimes hidden in specialist or financial reporting. The global financial crisis of 2008 illustrates

this pattern. Research reveals that major financial institutions' reckless and fraudulent behaviour caused the crisis. Despite this, it was widely described as a market failure rather than systemic corruption (Whyte, 2015). Although the social harm was immense, very few senior executives faced criminal punishment.

Scholars argue that media framing does more than provide information. It shapes moral judgement. It determines which actions are criminalised. It also determines whose actions are contextualised or excused (Entman, 1993).

Legal complexity further strengthens the illusion of legitimacy. Legal scholarship shows how lawyers, accountants, and compliance officers can transform unethical behaviour into formal lawful activity (Tombs & Whyte, 2013). Jurisdictions praised for strong rule-of-law standards often host major corporate scandals. This instance demonstrates that legality does not necessarily mean ethical integrity.

In many African contexts, corruption is visible and direct. This makes it easier to condemn publicly. In Western contexts, corruption is hidden behind layers of procedure and expertise. This complexity creates the appearance of legitimacy and shields powerful actors from scrutiny (Johnston, 2005).

Historical factors also shape present perceptions. Western states have not been fully held accountable for crimes committed during colonial expansion. These crimes include forced labour, land seizures, cultural destruction, and the transatlantic slave trade (Rodney, 1972; Mamdani, 1996). Scholars argue that this lack of accountability has created moral immunity. Former colonial powers are therefore able to position themselves as global moral authorities.

This historical imbalance continues to influence global governance norms. When Western corruption is exposed, it usually preserves the collective moral image of Western states. African corruption, by contrast, is often treated as confirmation of moral deficiency.

Governance indices often rank Western countries as low-corruption environments. Measurement scholars warn that these indices focus mainly on petty public-sector bribery. They largely ignore corporate crime, financial secrecy, international bribery, and transnational exploitation (Johnston, 2005; Sampson, 2010).

Measuring corruption based on economic damage, victim count, or long-term structural harm significantly increases the visibility of Western corruption. Its scale is often larger. It is simply less visible.

Sociological research on white-collar crime shows that non-violent economic offences cause widespread harm. These harms include unemployment, homelessness, public debt, and psychological stress (Sutherland, 1949/1983; Tombs & Whyte, 2013). Despite this, such crimes carry less stigma than street-level offences.

In many African societies, corruption has identifiable faces. In many Western societies, corruption has corporate logos.

Western governments also perform morality through institutions. These include courts, audits, rule-of-law rhetoric, and anti-corruption agencies. Critical governance research shows that these institutions often act selectively. They discipline marginal actors. They protect political and economic elites (Whyte, 2015).

Historical and political research further documents Western involvement in bribery, election interference, covert operations, and corporate protection abroad. These practices constitute geopolitical corruption. Dominant narratives rarely label them as such (Mamdani, 1996; Ferguson, 2006).

Western corruption is larger and less ethical. It is more carefully packaged. It is legally insulated. It is institutionally protected. It is economically justified. It is diplomatically defended. African corruption is made visible. It is racialised and moralised. Western corruption is normalised and sanitised.

Understanding this asymmetry is essential. It dismantles the illusion that corruption has a colour. It exposes

hypocrisy in global moral judgement. It also prepares the ground for more profound analysis of structural corruption in the chapters that follow.

CHAPTER THREE

The Economics of White Corruption: How the West Legally Steals from Africa

Corruption is often described as an individual moral failure. It is presented as a bribe taken, a contract manipulated, or a public official abusing office. Political-economy scholarship challenges this narrow framing. Research indicates that the forms of corruption that have most shaped Africa's historical and contemporary realities are not individual. They are structural. They are transnational. They are embedded within systems (Johnston, 2005; Whyte, 2015).

In African contexts, corruption is often visible and personal. It is publicly moralised. Yet its deeper origins lie elsewhere. Many of its most damaging forms originate in Western-dominated global economic systems. These forms are usually procedural and legalistic. They are

insulated by institutional authority. They operate quietly through rules, policies, and formal processes rather than through obvious illegality.

This chapter examines how Western states, multinational corporations, and international financial institutions have constructed economic arrangements that enable continuous extraction of African wealth. These arrangements remain formally lawful. They do not rely mainly on crude bribery. Instead, they operate through economic engineering. They function through regulatory asymmetry, policy conditionality, and legal complexity. In this way, exploitation is reframed as governance. Extraction is presented as reform (Rodney, 1972; Przeworski, 2010).

To understand contemporary economic corruption in Africa, colonialism must be examined as more than a historical episode. It must be understood as a deliberate economic project. Economic historians show that European empires organised the large-scale extraction of African land, labour, and resources. They did so through

bureaucratic systems designed for efficiency and durability, not for development (Rodney, 1972; Mamdani, 1996).

Rodney's political-economic analysis described colonialism as a structural transfer of wealth from Africa to Europe. This transfer was achieved through forced labour. It relied on unequal trade. It involved the systematic suppression of African productive capacity (Rodney, 1972). Later development scholarship confirms this analysis. Colonial trade systems locked African economies into dependence on raw-material exports. At the same time, they denied industrialisation and controlled prices (Amin, 1976; Frank, 1967).

These arrangements were not accidental. They were not temporary distortions. They formed the economic foundation of Western industrial growth. Rather than being dismantled after colonial rule, they were formalised. They became embedded within modern systems of global economic governance.

After formal independence, African states entered a global economy shaped by international financial institutions. Western interests dominated these institutions. Scholars of development economics have documented how the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank exert influence. They do so through lending conditions. They use policy surveillance. They impose macroeconomic reform packages (Stiglitz, 2002; Mkandawire, 2010).

Structural adjustment programmes imposed across Africa in the 1980s and 1990s demanded deep changes. Governments were required to cut public spending. State assets were privatised. Currencies were devalued. The trade was liberalised. Empirical research shows that these reforms weakened public services. They undermined domestic industries. They increased poverty and inequality across much of the continent (Stiglitz, 2002; Mkandawire, 2010).

While African populations absorbed these social costs, Western corporations gained access to new markets and

resources. Resistance to these policies was often dismissed. It was labelled corruption or incompetence. Meanwhile, the architects of the reforms retained technocratic authority. In this way, institutional legitimacy normalises economic harm.

Political-economy research further shows that multinational corporations often wield economic power greater than that of African states. This is especially true in extractive sectors such as mining and oil (Ferguson, 2006). Corporate practices that would be criminal if performed by African officials are treated differently when carried out by Western firms. These practices encompass bribery, transfer pricing, regulatory evasion, and environmental falsification. Corporations often reframe these practices as business strategies rather than crimes when they engage in them (Whyte, 2015).

Africa represents an important portion of global mineral wealth. This includes oil, gold, cobalt, uranium, and rare earth elements. Despite this, fiscal studies consistently show that African states receive only a small portion of

the value generated. The contract structures favour foreign firms. Pricing mechanisms are externally controlled. Tax arrangements are designed to minimise local revenues (UNECA, 2015).

Criminological research shows that this system rarely results in criminal punishment for corporate wrongdoing. Instead, cases are handled through settlements and fines. Regulatory negotiations replace prosecution. Elite immunity is preserved. Social and environmental harm is externalised to local communities (Tombs & Whyte, 2013).

One of the most empirically documented forms of economic corruption affecting Africa involves illicit financial flows. United Nations agencies and economists show that tens of billions of dollars leave Africa each year. These flows occur through trade misinvoicing. They involve profit shifting, tax evasion, and banking secrecy. Often, these outflows exceed the value of foreign aid received by African countries (UNECA, 2015; Cobham & Janský, 2018).

Trade misinvoicing allows multinational firms to manipulate prices. Export values are understated. Import prices are overstated. Taxable income is reduced in African jurisdictions. Profits are transferred to financial centres in Europe and North America. These practices deprive African governments of revenue. These practices result in the loss of funds required for healthcare, education, and infrastructure. Western financial systems absorb and protect the proceeds (Zucman, 2015).

The asymmetry is clear. African officials who hide assets abroad are publicly condemned. Western financial systems that enable asset concealment face little moral criticism. They are rarely held legally accountable.

Critical development studies also challenge common narratives around foreign aid. Research shows that aid often exists alongside much larger outflows of wealth from Africa. These outflows occur through illicit finance and unequal trade arrangements (Moyo, 2009; Ferguson, 2006).

Many non-governmental organisations provide genuine humanitarian assistance. At the same time, scholars document cases where aid structures reinforce narratives of African incapacity. These narratives help justify continued external intervention. In this context, corruption extends beyond money. It includes control over meaning, authority, and legitimacy (Ferguson, 2006).

Debt represents another mechanism of structural corruption. Political economists describe how opaque loans bind African states with unfavourable repayment terms. Many of these loans are backed by natural resources. Defaults can result in the legal transfer of strategic assets to external creditors (Harvey, 2003).

Monetary systems further reinforce dependency. Scholars have criticised the CFA franc system for decades. Under this arrangement, several African states surrender monetary sovereignty to the French Treasury. Policy autonomy is restricted. Stability is offered as justification (Pigeaud & Sylla, 2018).

At the global level, the dominance of the U.S. dollar creates additional vulnerability. Control over trade, sanctions, and capital flows is concentrated. African economies operating within this system bear disproportionate costs. Western financial institutions benefit from this imbalance (Prasad, 2014).

Media framing reinforces these structures. Media studies research indicates that Western media often portray African economic distress as internal failure. Structural causes rooted in colonial extraction, unequal trade, and corporate exploitation are marginalised (Entman, 1993; Ferguson, 2006). Corruption is framed as cultural. It is presented as moral weakness rather than economic design.

This framing protects Western interests. It hides the global architecture that enables extraction. Responsibility is shifted onto African societies.

Western corruption in Africa is not accidental. It is not marginal. It is structural. It is institutionalised. It is transnational. It is highly profitable. It operates through

development discourse, trade regimes, financial systems, corporate contracts, and legal authority. African corruption dominates headlines. Western corruption shapes history.

The West has refined a system of legal extraction. It exploits politeness. It governs corruptly. At the same time, it attributes the consequences to African failure. Recognising this economic reality is essential. It dismantles the illusion that corruption has a colour.

CHAPTER FOUR

Bloodless Crimes: Western Media and the Art of Image Laundering

No institution has shaped global perceptions of corruption more than Western media. Newspapers, broadcast journalism, documentaries, academic publishing, cinema, and digital platforms all play a role. Together, they construct a moral landscape. In this landscape, Western societies appear orderly, rational, and accountable. Africa, by contrast, is repeatedly portrayed as chaotic, corrupt, violent, and incapable of self-governance. Media scholarship shows that this imbalance is not accidental. It reflects deep structures of representation, power, and narrative control within global communication systems (Hall, 1997; Entman, 1993).

Media does not simply report events. It produces meaning. Media institutions decide what is visible and

what is hidden. They decide what is scandalous and what is technical. They determine what is criminal and what is administrative. Through these choices, media shapes moral judgement. Western wrongdoing is softened through careful language and contextual framing. African failures are amplified, moralised, and racialised (Ferguson, 2006; Bunce, Franks, & Paterson, 2017). In this way, Western media constructs a global hierarchy of credibility.

Modern journalism developed alongside European imperial expansion. Media historians show that Western journalism emerged within political economies closely linked to state power, commercial interests, and imperial ideology (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). During the colonial period, newspapers and travel writing regularly portrayed African societies as barbaric, tribal, violent, and incapable of self-rule. These representations justified conquest. Colonial domination was presented as civilisation rather than exploitation (Said, 1978; Mudimbe, 1988).

Colonial violence was described as order. Extraction was described as development. Domination was framed as a moral duty. Media therefore did not function as a neutral observer. It functioned as ideological infrastructure. It normalised imperialism and undermined African agency (Fanon, 1963; Rodney, 1972).

Research on media framing shows a consistent pattern. Corruption involving African actors is usually presented with dramatic imagery and emotive language. Moral condemnation is direct and visible. This reinforces perceptions of permanent dysfunction (Entman, 1993). By contrast, corruption involving Western corporations or institutions is often framed as technical failure, regulatory oversight, or ethical lapse. It is rarely framed as criminal behaviour (Whyte, 2015).

Criminological research explains this difference. In Western contexts, elite wrongdoing is often depersonalised. It is bureaucratised. This reduces public outrage and moral stigma (Tombs & Whyte, 2013). The difference does not lie in the level of harm. It lies in

narrative treatment. African corruption is personalised and moralised. Western corruption is abstracted and sanitised.

Political communication scholars identify a persistent use of euphemistic language in Western media. Practices labelled bribery or theft in African contexts are renamed when Western actors engage in them. They are lobbying, campaign finance, tax optimisation, regulatory arbitrage, or market correction (Johnston, 2005; Lessig, 2011). This linguistic shift protects institutional legitimacy. Morally questionable conduct is transformed into administrative procedure. Language does not merely describe corruption. It determines whether corruption is recognised at all (Entman, 1993; Whyte, 2015).

Visual media reinforces these moral hierarchies. Images of poverty, violence, and disorder disproportionately depict African settings, according to media studies. Western settings are associated with professionalism, order, and authority (Hall, 1997). Film and documentary scholarship show that Western productions often centre

Western characters as moral agents. Africans appear as victims, villains, or background figures (Shohat & Stam, 1994). Despite acknowledging Western responsibility, Western protagonists still maintain narrative control.

For centuries, blackness has been symbolically associated with evil. Whiteness has been associated with purity, innocence, and divinity. In religious art, mediaeval theology, colonial literature, and later film and television, demons, criminals, and moral degenerates were portrayed as dark or African-looking. Angels, saviours, and heroes were portrayed as white. This imagery was not accidental. It functioned as ideological conditioning. By visually associating darkness with evil, Western societies trained generations to view Black bodies as morally suspect before any action occurred.

Modern media did not abandon this symbolism. It refined it. In films, news coverage, and entertainment, Black men are still disproportionately cast as threats, aggressors, or villains. Even when stereotypes are subtle, cues remain. Dark lighting, harsh accents, criminal

histories, and moral ambiguity are assigned to Black characters. White characters are granted complexity, redemption, and humanity. Evil becomes racialised. Blackness becomes visual shorthand.

This phenomenon explains why racial discrimination did not end with the abolition of slavery or the passage of civil rights laws. Narratives outlive laws. When a society has spent centuries teaching itself that Blackness equals danger, those assumptions persist. They appear in policing. They appear in immigration. They appear in employment, healthcare, and daily social interaction. Such discrimination is not simple prejudice. It is a civilisational myth that continues to shape perception.

Challenging this form of corruption requires more than representation. It requires narrative reversal. It requires exposing the historical construction of these symbols. It requires reclaiming Black humanity in full. It requires rejecting the moral lie that associates skin colour with virtue or vice. Until this myth is dismantled,

discrimination will continue. It will reproduce itself quietly, respectably, and persistently.

Communication research identifies four mechanisms through which Western media shapes global perception. These mechanisms are agenda-setting, framing, priming, and gatekeeping (Entman, 1993). Western wire agencies dominate global news production. Agencies such as Reuters, Associated Press, and Agence France-Presse shape what the world sees. African realities are often narrated through foreign priorities. Historical context is stripped away. Crisis imagery dominates (Bunce et al., 2017). Control over narrative becomes control over legitimacy.

Digital media has not removed these biases. It has automated them. Research on algorithmic inequality shows that search engines and social media systems reproduce racial and geopolitical hierarchies (Noble, 2018; Couldry & Mejias, 2019). Negative representations of marginalised groups are amplified. Dominant narratives are prioritised. Colonial stereotypes now

circulate at digital speed. Such behaviour occurs under the appearance of technological neutrality.

Western media does not merely describe corruption. It assigns ownership of corruption. Africa appears corrupt because Western institutions control Africa's image. The West appears moral because it controls the language of morality. Media becomes the brush. Africa becomes the canvas. Power becomes the hand that paints.

Understanding corruption therefore requires more than legal or economic analysis. It requires examining narrative authority itself. The next chapter turns inward. It examines corruption embedded within Western institutions. Secrecy, respectability, language, and global influence protect these systems.

CHAPTER FIVE

Institutional Corruption in the West: Clean Buildings, Dirty Hands

Popular representations of corruption often centre on crude, visible transactions: a bribe exchanged in cash or a public official abusing office openly. Global media has long associated such imagery with Africa and parts of Asia. Comparative institutional research, however, demonstrates that some of the most consequential forms of corruption operate within Western institutions that publicly project legality, professionalism, and ethical authority (Johnston, 2005; Whyte, 2015).

This chapter examines corruption not as an individual moral failure but as an institutionalised abuse of power embedded within Western policing, courts, immigration systems, healthcare structures, political institutions, religious organisations, and universities. In contrast to the Global South, where corruption often takes the form

of cultural pathologies, Western corruption finds its roots in rules, discretion, and organisational protection. It is formal, procedural, and it is normalised by law (Tombs & Whyte, 2013).

Policing and the Institutionalisation of Abuse

Systemic racial disparity and structural protections against misconduct characterise policing in many Western democracies, as demonstrated by sociological and legal research. In the United States, mass incarceration and racialised policing have been extensively documented, with Black communities subjected to disproportionate surveillance, arrests, and violence (Alexander, 2010; Vitale, 2017). Comparative European research reveals comparable racialised outcomes in the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands (Sklansky, 2008).

Legal scholarship identifies police union contracts and doctrines such as qualified immunity as central mechanisms insulating officers from accountability.

These legal structures restrict investigations, mandate destruction of disciplinary records, delay interrogations, and facilitate reinstatement of officers dismissed for repeated abuse (Schwartz, 2017). When legal systems systematically protect perpetrators, corruption becomes institutional rather than incidental.

Courts and the Commodification of Justice

While Western legal systems emphasise neutrality and the rule of law, critical legal scholarship reveals that economic inequality profoundly shapes justice outcomes. Wealthy defendants retain elite legal teams capable of overwhelming prosecutors, delaying proceedings, and negotiating favourable settlements, while poorer defendants face overburdened public defence systems and coercive plea bargaining (Sutherland, 1983; Coffee, 2007).

Corporate crime demonstrates this asymmetry. Criminological research shows that corporate wrongdoing is routinely resolved through settlements that avoid trials, suppress evidence, and reframe harm as

a regulatory violation rather than criminal conduct (Tombs & Whyte, 2013). Mandatory arbitration further privatises justice, removing disputes from public courts and insulating corporations from transparency and precedent (Gilles, 2016).

Immigration Systems and Discretionary Power

Migration scholarship demonstrates that Western immigration regimes operate less through consistent rule application than through discretionary power shaped by race, nationality, and geopolitical interest (De Genova, 2010). Asylum seekers from Africa and the Middle East face higher rejection rates and harsher scrutiny than applicants from Europe under similar conditions (Bosworth, 2014).

The privatisation of detention deepens this corruption. Political sociologists show that private detention corporations profit from confinement while lobbying for stricter immigration policies, transforming human restriction into revenue streams (Golash-Boza, 2015).

Here, legality functions not as justice but as economic protection.

Healthcare: Profit, Power, and Preventable Harm

Medical sociology documents extensive corruption within Western healthcare systems, particularly in pharmaceutical industries. Well-established practices include the suppression of adverse drug data, manipulation of clinical trials, and physician inducement (Angell, 2004; Light, 2010).

The opioid crisis exemplifies institutional corruption: profit-driven deception led to mass mortality while corporate accountability remained limited. Public-health scholars argue that when systematic harm produces death at scale without criminal liability, corruption transcends regulation failure and becomes institutional (Light, 2010).

Politics, Money, and Democratic Illusion

Political science research consistently demonstrates that money exerts decisive influence in Western democracies. Campaign finance studies indicate that financial

resources strongly predict electoral success, while lobbying converts economic power into political outcomes (Lessig, 2011; Johnston, 2005).

The revolving door between regulators and industry further institutionalises corruption by blurring the boundaries between public services and private profits. Legal architecture and political traditions domestically legitimise practices condemned as corrupt abroad.

Universities and the Corruption of Knowledge

Higher-education research reveals that Western universities are not immune to systemic corruption. Grant-driven bias, corporate influence on research agendas, data fabrication, and elite admissions manipulation undermine claims of meritocratic integrity (Bourdieu, 1988; Fanelli, 2009).

Knowledge production itself becomes corrupted when institutional prestige shields misconduct and market logic governs intellectual output (Mirowski, 2011).

Why Western Institutional Corruption Remains Invisible

Scholars identify recurring mechanisms that protect Western corruption:

- Legal camouflage through complex statutes
- Scholars also identify media framing that minimises domestic wrongdoing.
- The system imposes moral hierarchies based on race.
- Diplomatic and economic dominance
- Epistemic authority over definitions of corruption

The cumulative effect is normalisation. Western corruption is institutionalised; African corruption is criminalised.

Conclusion

Western institutions are as corrupt as those elsewhere. They are more effective at concealing corruption, legalising abuse, and enforcing wrongdoing in routine operations. African corruption is visible because it is broadcast. Western corruption is invisible because it is protected.

This chapter dismantles the illusion of Western moral superiority and prepares the ground for the next inquiry: corruption within moral authority itself.

CHAPTER SIX

Corruption in Religion and Morality: The Holy Mask of Western Hypocrisy

Religion has long functioned as a powerful instrument for defining morality. It establishes boundaries between righteousness and sin. It also defines belonging and exclusion. In Western history, Christianity functioned as more than a belief system. It operated as a political technology. It was closely tied to conquest, colonisation, enslavement, and cultural domination. Theological authority repeatedly legitimised violence, extraction, and hierarchy, as scholars of religion and empire demonstrate. These actions were justified through the language of salvation and moral duty (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991; Fanon, 1963; Mudimbe, 1988).

In the contemporary era, many of the same Western societies now present themselves as global moral

authorities. They judge African religious practices. They critique African leadership. They frame African societies as ethically deficient. The narrative is contradicted by historical and empirical evidence. Western religious institutions have engaged in long-term sexual, financial, political, and ideological corruption. Often, the scale of this corruption surpasses that of Africa. This chapter examines how Western religious corruption has shaped global moral narratives while concealing its deep ethical failures.

Western Christianity played a central role in legitimising slavery and colonial domination. Religious historians document how biblical interpretation was selectively manipulated. Africans were portrayed as inferior. They were described as cursed. They were framed as divinely destined for servitude (Goldenberg, 2003; Kidd, 2006). The so-called Curse of Ham doctrine functioned as racial theology. Scripture was transformed into ideological justification for centuries of enslavement and empire.

The problem was not a theological misunderstanding. It was theological corruption. Religious texts were deliberately distorted to sanctify exploitation. Churches not only tolerated these systems, but also contributed to millions of deaths under them. These systems were actively defended by the churches. Yet the same societies later positioned themselves as moral authorities in global affairs (Said, 1978).

Missionary activity in Africa was diverse. However, scholarship shows that missionary institutions often worked in close partnership with colonial administrations. They provided moral legitimacy for land seizures, forced labour, and cultural destruction (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1997). Indigenous African spiritual systems were dismissed as demonic or primitive. This dismissal was not based on serious theological engagement. It was based on ethnocentric judgement. Anthropological research demonstrates that many African societies possessed complex ethical systems. These systems emphasise communal responsibility,

social justice, moral restraint, and spiritual accountability (Mbiti, 1990; Gyekye, 1997). Their dismantling weakened moral economies that had regulated conduct long before colonial intrusion. The contradiction was structural. Missionaries preached moral purity while facilitating political domination and cultural erasure.

Few events reveal Western religious corruption than the global clerical sexual abuse crisis. Independent investigations in the United States, Ireland, Germany, Australia, and France document decades of abuse involving children. These investigations also reveal systematic institutional concealment (John Jay College, 2004; Sauvé, 2021).

The French Independent Commission estimated that more than 300,000 children were abused over several decades. Other studies have documented similar patterns. Sociologists argue that these abuses were not isolated moral failures. They were organisational crimes. They were sustained by secrecy, hierarchical protection, and the prioritisation of institutional reputation over

human life (Garland, 2001; Fassin, 2013). Despite the scale of harm, public discourse often frames these revelations as crises rather than as evidence of systemic criminality. Language again functions as moral insulation. Western religious institutions also control vast financial resources. These include land holdings, investment portfolios, educational institutions, and global charities. Governance scholars document repeated patterns of opaque accounting, misappropriation of funds, offshore secrecy, and abuse of charitable exemptions (Cooley & Ron, 2002; Levi, 2010).

The Vatican Bank and numerous evangelical megachurches have faced investigations for financial misconduct. Yet such cases are often reframed as administrative problems. They are rarely treated as moral corruption. Institutions that define morality thus frequently escape moral judgement.

Western societies often present themselves as ethically advanced. Sociological evidence reveals deep contradictions. These societies experience high levels of

sexual violence, family breakdown, mass incarceration, substance abuse, and mental-health crises (Garland, 2001). These outcomes are individualised or medicalised. They are rarely framed as moral failures.

Colonial residential school systems in Canada and Australia expose this hypocrisy clearly. These schools were operated by churches. Historical inquiries document forced child removal, abuse, starvation, and cultural destruction. These acts were justified as moral uplift. Accountability was delayed for generations. Institutional authority protected perpetrators and silenced victims.

Western moral frameworks are exported globally. They travel through education systems, governance reforms, aid conditionality, and religious expansion. This process creates a moral hierarchy. Western institutions define righteousness. African societies are placed in a defensive position. When Western institutions fail, narratives of repentance and reform dominate. When African institutions fail, narratives of cultural deficiency prevail.

Moral corruption becomes invisible when those who define morality control the narrative.

Before colonial disruption, many African societies maintained strong ethical systems. These systems emphasise communal obligation, restorative justice, respect for elders, and spiritual accountability (Wiredu, 1996; Gyekye, 1997). These traditions were not inferior. They were interrupted. Colonialism dismantled indigenous moral frameworks and later blamed Africans for the resulting disorder.

Western religious institutions have therefore engaged in sustained corruption. This corruption has been sexual, financial, political, and ideological. At the same time, these institutions have retained global moral authority. Historical dominance, media power, and narrative control maintain this authority, not ethical consistency.

Africa has been judged by moral standards that Western institutions have repeatedly violated. Exposing this hypocrisy is essential. Dismantling Western moral

pretence is essential. It is also necessary to restore dignity to African moral traditions.

CHAPTER SEVEN

When the West Calls Africa Corrupt: Who Really Benefits?

Enduring narratives do not survive by accident. They persist because they serve interests—political, economic, and psychological. The repeated global portrayal of Africa as chronically corrupt is not merely descriptive; it operates as a *governing discourse*—a language that shapes what is thinkable, whose authority is trusted, and which policies appear legitimate (Foucault, 1972; Doty, 1996). In this sense, the 'corruption' label is not just an accusation; it is a strategic frame that structures global perception and international bargaining power.

Moral authority as political capital

To name another society “corrupt” is to place oneself on higher moral ground. Postcolonial and critical international relations scholarship has long shown that such naming practices create hierarchies: the accuser

becomes the judge, and the judged must defend their legitimacy (Said, 1978; Doty, 1996). In contemporary global governance, this moral positioning becomes political capital. It legitimises external lectures on governance, conditional aid, election judgements, and selective diplomatic pressure while making African states appear permanently suspicious and perpetually in need of supervision (Ferguson, 2006; Mamdani, 2012).

Corporate advantage is achieved through the process of delegitimisation.

The corruption label also has material consequences. A government framed as corrupt is treated as less credible and less capable, weakening its negotiating position in resource contracts, regulatory enforcement, and fiscal bargaining. Political economy research demonstrates that extraction is sustained not only by coercion but by *structural asymmetries*—legal expertise, pricing power, access to finance, and influence over policy environments (Rodney, 1972; Ferguson, 2006). When exploitative outcomes are normalised as "African mismanagement,"

the reputational burden shifts away from multinational corporate strategy and towards African governance, conveniently protecting external actors from scrutiny (Ferguson, 2006; Mamdani, 2012).

Selective outrage and diplomatic leverage significantly contribute.

Corruption allegations are usually distributed unevenly across the international system. Critical scholarship on global governance and legitimacy emphasises that moral narratives often function as instruments of relational power: they are intensified when strategic pressure is desired and softened when cooperation is useful (Minatti, 2024). In practice, this means that “anti-corruption” can operate less as a consistent principle and more as an adaptable diplomatic tool—invoked to discipline those who deviate and overlooked when deviation is geopolitically tolerable (Minatti, 2024; Doty, 1996).

The Aid Industry and the Political Economy of Failure

Development studies further show that institutional systems can become dependent on crisis narratives. Post-development scholarship argues that “development” historically produced the “Third World” as a category of deficiency—an object to be managed by external expertise, funding, and policy prescriptions (Escobar, 1995). Complementing this, work on the *social construction of failure* shows how “failure talk” can become self-reinforcing in development policy—locking entire regions into reputations of dysfunction that justify continued intervention and continued expert authority (Venugopal, 2018). Even when individuals act in good faith, the system can still benefit from a persistent story of African incapacity (Escobar, 1995; Venugopal, 2018).

Media incentives and the market for crisis

Global media structures shape what becomes “common sense” about Africa. Research on international news production shows that foreign news about Africa is disproportionately filtered through a small number of

global agencies and correspondents, with structural incentives favouring crisis-heavy frames (Bunce, Franks, & Paterson, 2016; Bunce, 2014). These frames are not only ideological but also commercial, as conflict and scandal spread more quickly than gradual reform. When “Africa equals corruption” becomes a routinised storyline, it reduces complexity to spectacle—profitable for attention markets, costly for African legitimacy (Bunce et al., 2016; Bunce, 2014).

Immigration Control and Narrative Justification

Narratives of dysfunction also serve border politics. Scholarship in migration and postcolonial critique shows how “problem” regions are constructed as sources of threat and disorder, enabling restrictive migration regimes to appear like neutral governance rather than moral choice (Said, 1978; Mamdani, 2012). When Africa is imagined as inherently unstable and corrupt, harsh immigration controls can be justified as rational administrative necessity instead of geopolitical inequality (Mamdani, 2012).

Preserving racial hierarchies and moral innocence

The deeper function of the corruption narrative is psychological as well as political. Classic scholarship on race and modernity demonstrates how hierarchies persist when moral disorder is projected outward and virtue is assumed at the centre (Du Bois, 1903; Said, 1978). In this structure, Africa becomes a mirror that absorbs blame—allowing Western societies to retain the self-image of ethical superiority even when confronted with their own systemic failures (Foucault, 1972; Du Bois, 1903).

Financial Secrecy and the Profits of Hidden Wealth

Perhaps the strongest evidence of who benefits lies in global finance. Empirical research on offshore wealth and tax havens shows that financial secrecy jurisdictions—many linked to major Western financial centres—facilitate hidden wealth on a massive scale (Zucman, 2015). Studies of *kleptocracy's* wealth management further show how global professional networks—lawyers, accountants, bankers, and property markets—

enable the storage and laundering of illicit or suspect funds (Sharman, 2017). In summary, while moral language condemns corruption, financial language frequently welcomes its proceeds (Zucman, 2015; Sharman, 2017).

Psychological Impact and the Erosion of African Confidence

Narrative domination also produces internal effects. Anti-colonial theory has long argued that psychological subjugation can outlast formal rule: once a people doubt themselves, external control becomes easier and cheaper (Nkrumah, 1965). A sustained global story of African corruption can undermine political trust, weaken institutional confidence, and make external validation appear more authoritative than local capacity (Nkrumah, 1965; Escobar, 1995).

Brain Drain and Human Capital Extraction

Reputational damage has demographic consequences, too. Research on skilled migration shows how persistent “push” factors combine with global recruitment

structures to move trained professionals from poorer regions to richer ones, transferring human capital and productivity gains to receiving economies (Docquier & Rapoport, 2012). When Africa is globally imagined as unfixable, departure becomes rational—yet the receiving economies benefit from precisely the expertise the continent financed and trained (Docquier & Rapoport, 2012).

Conclusion

The corruption label does not simply describe Africa; it disciplines Africa. It generates moral authority for external actors, weakens African bargaining power, sustains media and development economies structured around failure narratives, enables restrictive border politics, protects racialised hierarchies of credibility, and—most concretely—coexists with financial systems that profit from hidden wealth (Bunce et al., 2016; Escobar, 1995; Sharman, 2017; Zucman, 2015). If the central question is “Who benefits when Africa is called corrupt?”, the answer is not abstract: the benefits accrue

to those who control global narratives, institutions, and financial architecture. Africa pays the cost of being defined.

CHAPTER EIGHT

African Corruption: The Real Story Beyond Western Narratives

Few terms have been applied to Africa with such persistence—and such selectivity—as *corruption*. Global discourse has framed Africa as uniquely prone to graft, incompetence, and moral failure for decades. Media, policy, and development institutions have widely circulated this portrayal, often internalising it as fact. Yet comparative governance research demonstrates that corruption, as applied to Africa, is less an objective diagnosis than a historically constructed and politically instrumentalised narrative (Andersson & Heywood, 2009; Chabal & Daloz, 1999).

This chapter examines African corruption without racial distortion, historical amnesia, or geopolitical manipulation. It neither denies governance failures nor romanticises African leadership. Rather, it situates corruption within its historical, structural, and global

context. Corruption exists in Africa—but not in the way dominant Western narratives have taught the world to imagine it.

Corruption Did Not Originate in African Political Culture

Contrary to popular belief, corruption is not an intrinsic feature of African political culture. Pre-colonial African societies operated governance systems grounded in communal accountability, moral sanction, and institutional restraint. Historical and anthropological scholarship documents how authority among societies such as the Ashanti, Yoruba, Igbo, Buganda, Kongo, and Wolof was constrained by councils, kinship obligations, spiritual legitimacy, and social reciprocity (Chabal & Daloz, 1999; Iliffe, 2007).

All human societies experienced abuse of power, yet they neither normalised nor systemically rewarded it. Large-scale political corruption, as understood in its modern bureaucratic and monetary form, expanded significantly during European colonial penetration, when governance was reorganised around extraction, monetisation of

authority, and coercive administration (Rodney, 1972; Mamdani, 1996).

Colonial Rule and the institutionalisation of Corruption

Colonial rule fundamentally transformed African political systems. Authority was centralised; taxation was enforced through violence; and economic extraction was facilitated through coercion and inducement. Colonial administrations routinely rewarded African intermediaries for enforcing exploitative systems, thereby embedding corruption within governance structures rather than eliminating it (Mamdani, 1996).

Indirect rule, in particular, produced what Mamdani describes as decentralised *despotism*, in which local authorities were empowered to extract compliance while remaining unaccountable to the populations they governed. Thus, corruption became structurally incentivised, not culturally inherited.

From Colonial State to Post-Colonial Government

Independence did not dismantle these systems; it transferred control of them. Postcolonial African states

inherited arbitrary borders, authoritarian administrative machinery, militarised security institutions, and economies designed for extraction rather than domestic development (Rodney, 1972; Ferguson, 2006). These were not neutral structures. They were governance systems already saturated with corruption-enabling incentives.

When African elites assumed leadership, corruption persisted, not because of cultural predispositions but because the inherited state rewarded rent-seeking behaviour while penalising structural reform. Assigning moral blame to Africans for corruption embedded in colonial institutions obscures historical responsibility.

Poverty, Institutional Weakness, and Survival Corruption
Empirical governance research consistently shows that corruption proliferates where poverty is severe and institutions are weak. Colonial extraction and post-colonial dependency left many African states fiscally constrained and administratively fragile. In such contexts, corruption often functions as a survival strategy rather

than ideological criminality (Rodney, 1972; Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, 2016).

Petty corruption—informal payments to police, civil servants, or service providers—emerges where salaries are inadequate and systems are inefficient. This phenomenon is structural, not cultural, and diminishes as institutions strengthen.

External Actors and Grand Corruption

A substantial proportion of large-scale corruption in Africa involves external corporate actors. Research by international organisations and watchdog groups demonstrates that multinational corporations frequently engage in bribery, contract manipulation, transfer pricing, and tax evasion in African jurisdictions (OECD, 2014; Global Witness, 2018; UNCTAD, 2015).

Corporate initiators often escape sustained reputational or legal consequences, despite the public vilification of African officials. Corruption is thus narrated as an African pathology rather than a global enterprise.

African Leadership: Complexity, Not Uniform Failure

Africa's leadership record is mixed, with both corruption and virtue. Historical and political scholarship documents leaders who governed with relative integrity and developmental vision alongside those who abused power. Figures such as Julius Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah, Nelson Mandela, Thomas Sankara, and Seretse Khama are frequently cited in comparative political studies as examples of principled leadership under difficult structural conditions (Iliffe, 2007; Meredith, 2005).

Such cases challenge the notion of inherent incapacity in Africa.

The Inflation of African Corruption Through Perception Indices

Global corruption rankings rely heavily on perception-based measures. Scholars have shown that indices such as Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index disproportionately reflect elite and Western perceptions, prioritise petty public-sector bribery, and

largely exclude corporate, financial, and transnational corruption (Andersson & Heywood, 2009).

As a result, African corruption appears exaggerated, while structurally larger forms of corruption in the Global North remain under-measured.

Petty Versus Structural Corruption

African corruption is often visible and interpersonal. Western corruption is frequently structural, legalised, and embedded in financial systems—offshore banking, lobbying, regulatory capture, and corporate secrecy (Zucman, 2015; Sharman, 2017). One is criminalised; the other normalised.

Petty corruption inconveniences citizens. Structural corruption reshapes economies.

Cultural Misinterpretation and Moral Mislabelling

African practices of reciprocity and gift-giving are frequently misclassified as bribery when evaluated through Western legal frameworks. Anthropological research cautions against interpreting relational governance through individualised moral lenses, noting

that such misreadings convert social norms into moral indictments (Chabal & Daloz, 1999).

African Anti-Corruption Efforts and Narrative Silence

Contrary to prevalent narratives, African nations have enacted substantial anti-corruption reforms, encompassing judicial enhancement, digital governance, procurement transparency, and institutional oversight. Comparative governance studies highlight measurable progress in countries such as Botswana, Rwanda, Ghana, and Senegal (World Bank, 2020).

These developments receive limited international attention because they complicate entrenched narratives of dysfunction.

Conclusion

African corruption is real—but it is not inherent, genetic, or uniquely African. It is historically produced, structurally sustained, frequently externally enabled, and selectively amplified. Dominant Western narratives require Africa to appear corrupt to preserve global hierarchies of authority and innocence.

Accuracy restores dignity. Context restores agency. Africa does not need denial; it needs truth.

CHAPTER NINE

The Psychology of Superiority: Why Some Whites Believe They Are More Moral

Corruption is not only a political or economic phenomenon; it is also psychological. Over several centuries, dominant Western societies developed belief systems in which European identity and Whiteness became associated with morality, rationality, order, and legitimacy, while African Blackness was framed as disorderly, irrational, and morally deficient. This worldview did not arise organically. It was produced through historical power, cultural narratives, institutional reinforcements, and psychological normalisation (Fanon, 1967; Said, 1978).

This chapter examines the psychological foundations of Western moral superiority—how it was constructed, why it persists, and how it continues to shape global judgements about corruption. The aim is not to indict individuals but to expose the mental frameworks that

normalise unequal moral evaluations and global hierarchy.

Superiority as a Learnt Psychological Construct

No human group is born believing itself superior. Social psychology demonstrates that group superiority is learnt through socialisation—education, religion, media, family narratives, and institutional culture (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In Western societies, historical narratives consistently linked Europe with rationality, discipline, and moral rectitude, whereas Africa was depicted as disordered, emotional, and morally dubious (Said, 1978). Frantz Fanon's analysis of colonial psychology demonstrated how colonial systems generate what he termed a *"psycho-affective imbalance," in which the coloniser internalises superiority and the colonised internalises inferiority* (Fanon, 1967). Crucially, Fanon argued that this dynamic persists beyond the end of formal colonial rule, embedded in cultural memory and institutional practice.

The Myth of the “Moral West”

Western societies built a strong image of themselves as the world's protectors of democracy, human rights, and moral government. Historical scholarship shows, however, that this moral identity coexisted with slavery, colonial violence, racial segregation, and economic exploitation (Du Bois, 1998; Rodney, 1972).

Psychologists refer to this contradiction as cognitive dissonance, which is the discomfort that arises when evidence contradicts one's self-concept (Festinger, 1957). To preserve moral identity, contradictory facts must be minimised, rationalised, or reframed. Western moral superiority therefore functions less as an empirical claim than as a psychological defence mechanism.

Education and Epistemic Conditioning

Formal education has played a decisive role in shaping moral perception. Western curricula historically emphasised European achievements while marginalising African civilisations, knowledge systems, and contributions to global development (Mudimbe, 1988).

This selective memory constructs Western moral and intellectual dominance as natural rather than historically contingent.

Critical theorists describe this process as *epistemic violence*—the systematic silencing or delegitimisation of alternative knowledge systems (Spivak, 1988). When African achievement is erased, Western moral superiority appears self-evident.

Religion and Spiritual Hierarchy

Christian theology, particularly during imperial expansion, reinforced racial hierarchy by framing European values as universal morality while depicting African spiritual systems as pagan or immoral. Religious historians document how biblical interpretations were selectively deployed to legitimise enslavement, colonial rule, and cultural erasure (Jennings, 2010).

Although overt racial theology has declined, its psychological residue persists. Contemporary missionary and humanitarian discourse often unconsciously

reproduces saviour assumptions, reinforcing moral hierarchy through the language of compassion.

Media, Implicit Bias, and Moral Association

Social psychology demonstrates that repeated exposure to stereotypes produces *implicit bias*—automatic associations that shape judgement even among individuals who consciously reject racism (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). Western media disproportionately portrays White actors as leaders and moral agents, while Black actors are frequently framed as criminals, victims, or corrupt officials (Dijk, 1993).

Over time, whiteness becomes associated with competence and integrity, while Blackness becomes associated with disorder. These associations operate below conscious awareness, shaping global moral perception.

The Psychological Utility of Superiority

Superiority serves identifiable psychological functions. It legitimises global dominance by reframing control as stewardship; shields societies from historical guilt; and

stabilises identity by externalising moral failures (Bandura, 1999). Acknowledging systemic Western wrongdoing would require collective moral reckoning; superiority renders such reckoning unnecessary.

Moral Disengagement and Semantic Shielding

Albert Bandura identified *moral disengagement* as a cognitive process through which individuals and societies justify harmful behaviour without self-condemnation (Bandura, 1999). Language plays a central role. Colonial brutality becomes “civilising missions”, slavery becomes “trade”, resource extraction becomes “development”, and corporate bribery becomes “lobbying”.

Semantic reframing preserves moral self-image while enabling harm.

Internalisation and the Superiority–Inferiority Loop

Colonial domination produced a dual psychology: superiority for the coloniser and internalised inferiority for the colonised (Fanon, 1967). In postcolonial contexts, this appears in excessive reliance on Western validation,

dismissal of indigenous knowledge, and harsher self-criticism than criticism of external exploitation.

Psychological liberation, Fanon argued, is a prerequisite to political and economic emancipation.

Whiteness as a Moral Position

Critical race scholarship emphasises that Whiteness functions not merely as an identity but as a structural position—conferring assumed objectivity, authority, and moral credibility (DiAngelo, 2018). When corruption occurs in Western contexts, it is framed as deviation; when it occurs in African contexts, it is framed as confirmation of inherent failure.

Corruption discourse, therefore, is filtered through identity before evidence.

Conclusion

Belief in Western moral superiority is not a universal truth but a historically constructed psychological framework sustained through education, religion, media, epistemic control, and moral disengagement. It benefits

global power by legitimising dominance while externalising moral failures.

Understanding this psychology is essential to dismantling narrative domination and restoring African dignity. The next chapter examines how these narratives are internalised, rejected, and transformed within African societies themselves.

CHAPTER TEN

Color, Control, and the Politics of Naming

Words are never neutral. Labels, categories, and descriptors do more than describe reality. They actively shape it. In global politics, the power to name is closely tied to the power to control. Critical discourse scholars show that language functions as a technology of power. It shapes perception. It legitimises hierarchy. It makes inequality appear natural and inevitable (Foucault, 1972; Bourdieu, 1991).

Throughout modern history, Western institutions have used language strategically. They have named, ranked, diminished, and regulated African peoples, African states, and African realities. This chapter examines the political and psychological power of naming. It shows how terms such as '*developing*', '*corrupt*', '*unstable*', '*primitive*', '*Third World*', 'tribal', and '*failed state*' did not emerge as neutral descriptions. They functioned as tools

of domination. Naming, in this sense, is not description. It is governance.

Colonial domination extended beyond land and labour. It entered the realm of meaning itself. European empires imposed names on African territories. They renamed ethnic identities, religions, languages, and political systems. Indigenous classifications were displaced. African societies were reorganised through foreign conceptual frameworks (Mudimbe, 1988).

Terms such as '*Sub-Saharan Africa*' divided the continent artificially. The label '*tribe*' framed African nations as primitive, fragmented, and incapable of modern governance. Anthropological research shows that '*tribe*' was rarely applied to European societies with similar kinship or ethnic structures. This selective usage reveals its racialised function (Mamdani, 2001).

African religious systems were also renamed. They were described as pagan, fetishistic, or animist. These labels delegitimised them within global moral discourse. At the same time, Western Christianity was presented as

normative and superior (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991). Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o argued that colonial domination begins with the destruction of memory through language. Naming determines whose knowledge counts. It also determines whose humanity is diminished (Ngũgĩ, 1986).

Western institutions later developed vocabularies that ranked nations along a civilisational ladder. The distinction between *developed* and *developing* positioned Western societies as complete. Africa was framed as permanently unfinished. This framing ignored historical exploitation and structural constraint (Escobar, 1995).

Cold War categories reinforced this hierarchy. Terms such as '*First World*' and '*Third World*' began as geopolitical labels. They evolved into racialised hierarchies. Whiteness became associated with advancement. Blackness became associated with stagnation. Development scholars show that these labels justified intervention, conditional aid, and external governance.

They did not promote genuine transformation (Sachs, 1992).

The concept of the *failed state* illustrates selective naming clearly. It is applied frequently to African countries. It is rarely applied to Western states with histories of civil war, genocide, institutional collapse, or systemic corruption. Naming thus protects Western states. It disciplines African ones (Hill, 2005).

Corruption discourse has also been racially coded. Critical race and media scholarship shows that Western narratives created an implicit association between Blackness and corruption. Whiteness became linked to civility and order (Dijk, 1993).

Phrases such as '*endemic African corruption*' present corruption as cultural and inherent. Similar behaviour in Western contexts is described differently. It becomes *regulatory failure, ethical lapse, or financial irregularity*. The difference is not empirical. It is ideological. Language reinforces racialised moral judgement (Andersson & Heywood, 2009).

Naming is also used to discipline political leadership. African leaders who pursue economic nationalism or strategic autonomy are often labelled strongmen, dictators, or corrupt rulers. This occurs even when they are elected. Western leaders who display similar traits are described as nationalists, hardliners, or realists (Adetula, 2023).

This asymmetry reveals naming as political punishment. Alignment with Western interests softens labels. Resistance intensifies them.

The language of international aid also reproduces hierarchy. Terms such as '*capacity building*', '*institutional strengthening*', and '*good governance training*' imply African deficiency and Western competence. Africans are framed as learners. Western actors are framed as instructors.

Postcolonial political economists argue that this soft-power language sustains neocolonial control. Direct rule is replaced with institutional and linguistic domination (Nkrumah, 1965; Escobar, 1995).

One of the most damaging effects of negative naming is internalisation. Africans increasingly describe their societies using inherited colonial language. Statements such as “We are naturally corrupt” or “Nothing works in Africa” reflect absorbed external judgement.

Fanon described this process as the colonised mind. It is a psychological enclosure produced through repeated devaluation (Fanon, 1967). Once internalised, naming becomes self-policing. External enforcement is no longer required.

Western media also misnames African conflicts. Conflicts are often labelled as tribal wars or ancient ethnic hatred. Structural causes are erased. These causes include colonial borders, resource extraction, Cold War intervention, arms trafficking, and corporate competition. Western conflicts are framed differently. They are described as civil wars, revolutions, or nationalist struggles (Keen, 2008).

This linguistic simplification portrays Africans as irrational and ahistorical. It shields external actors from responsibility.

Positive descriptors are rarely applied to African states. Terms such as 'innovative', 'rising', or 'resilient' are uncommon. Instead, Africa is framed through a language of despair. It is described as poverty-stricken, war-torn, corrupt, or backward.

Discourse analysis shows that such naming shapes investment decisions. It influences diplomatic engagement. It affects institutional legitimacy (Bourdieu, 1991). Negative naming persists because it sustains power.

Reclaiming naming authority is therefore an act of liberation. African intellectual traditions offer alternative vocabularies. Pan-Africanism, African Renaissance thought, Ubuntu philosophy, and Afrofuturism emphasise agency, dignity, and historical continuity (Mbembe, 2001).

Self-naming restores voice. It reframes possibility. It challenges global hierarchy.

The politics of naming remains one of the most subtle forms of domination. By controlling language about Africa, Western institutions shape global perception and internal self-understanding.

Breaking free from linguistic domination is essential. It is necessary for reclaiming dignity. It is required to resist exploitation. It is vital for redefining Africa's place in the world. Those who name, claim. Those who define, dominate. Those who frame, rule.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Hidden Cost of Western Corruption: Bloodless Crimes with Bloody Consequences

Corruption is often imagined as stolen money, secret bribes, or officials enriching themselves while citizens suffer. Political economy and criminological research challenge this image. Scholars show that some of the most destructive forms of corruption leave no immediate evidence. They spill no visible blood. These forms operate legally. They function through institutions. They extend across borders. Over time, they produce widespread devastation while remaining largely invisible (Whyte, 2015; Rothe & Friedrichs, 2015).

This chapter examines the human cost of Western corruption beyond statistics and headlines. These costs include political destabilisation. They include economic collapse, resource theft, mass displacement, environmental destruction, and long-term psychological

harm. Unlike localised corruption in African states, Western corruption often operates on a scale capable of reshaping entire regions. Often, it determines the fate of nations.

Western corruption rarely appears criminal in the conventional sense. It is embedded in policy. It is insulated by institutions. It is justified through technocratic language. It is sanitised by media narratives. It is protected by diplomatic power (Friedrichs, 2010). When a Western corporation bribes an official in Africa, the African individual becomes the visible symbol of corruption. The corporate source disappears behind legal abstraction.

Critical criminologists describe this phenomenon as crimes of the powerful. These are harmful acts that evade criminalisation because they are committed by actors who influence law enforcement and public narratives (Whyte, 2015). Responsibility becomes diffuse. Accountability fades. The consequences, however, remain real and severe.

Historical research documents extensive Western involvement in political destabilisation across Africa. These interventions occurred throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. They often targeted leaders who resisted external control over resources, trade, or geopolitical alignment (Westad, 2005; Prashad, 2007).

The removal of leaders such as Patrice Lumumba, Kwame Nkrumah, and Thomas Sankara has been analysed by historians as part of the Cold War and post-colonial power struggles. Historians (Gibbs, 1991; Mazrui, 2007) argue that these events were not merely instances of domestic governance failure. Political scientists argue that when foreign interests undermine democratic processes, the result is political corruption. This corruption is external but decisive (Robinson, 2014).

African populations bore the consequences. These consequences included civil war, authoritarian rule, refugee crises, and economic collapse. The architects of intervention did not carry these costs.

Another destructive form of corruption occurs through resource extraction. Multinational corporations benefit from opaque contracts. They use underpricing, trade misinvoicing, profit shifting, and tax avoidance (Fitzgerald, 2019). These practices are often legal in form. They are unjust in effect.

United Nations–affiliated research estimates that Africa loses tens of billions of dollars each year through illicit financial flows. These losses exceed the value of foreign aid received (UNECA, 2020). Political economists describe this process as structural corruption. Wealth is transferred from African societies to Western economies through legal but unfair mechanisms (Mkandawire, 2015).

Economic sanctions are often presented as moral tools. They are described as mechanisms for promoting democracy or accountability. Empirical research shows a different reality. Sanctions disproportionately harm civilian populations rather than political elites (Peksen, 2011; Allen, 2008).

In African states, sanctions have increased inflation. They have restricted access to medicine. They have reduced employment. They have deepened humanitarian crises. Scholars describe the practice of knowingly harming populations to pressure governments as institutionalised coercion, not ethical governance (Gordon, 2011).

Western states also dominate the global arms trade. They supply weapons to conflict zones across Africa. Research from international peace institutes shows that arms produced in Europe and North America have fuelled wars, insurgencies, and mass displacement (SIPRI, 2023). The commercialization of violence shifts responsibility. Profit is internalised. Human costs are externalised. When conflicts escalate, blame is placed on local actors. Supplier accountability remains obscured. Scholars classify these dynamics as state–corporate crime. Governments and corporations cooperate to produce harm (Rothe & Friedrichs, 2015).

International financial institutions dominated by Western states have also produced harm. They shaped African

economies through lending conditions and macroeconomic surveillance. Structural adjustment policies imposed during the 1980s and 1990s reduced public spending on health, education, and social protection (Stiglitz, 2002).

Economists show that these policies often deepened poverty and dependency. They failed to produce sustainable growth (Mkandawire & Soludo, 1999). Corruption operates through governance rather than bribery when policies imposed without democratic participation produce predictable harm.

Medical exploitation represents another form of systemic corruption. Historical investigations document unethical pharmaceutical practices in Africa. These include exploitative clinical trials, inflated drug pricing, and delayed access to life-saving medicine. These practices were especially visible during the HIV/AIDS crisis (Petryna, 2009).

Public health scholars argue that corruption occurs when profit is prioritised over human life. This is true even in

the absence of illegality. Preventable deaths caused by restricted access to medicine represent systemic moral failure (Farmer, 2004).

Environmental harm further exposes Western corruption. Africa contributes a small share of global greenhouse gas emissions. Yet it bears a disproportionate share of climate impacts. Environmental researchers describe this imbalance as climate injustice (Roberts & Parks, 2007).

Western states have resisted meaningful compensation. They continue to protect industrial interests. When we shift environmental costs onto poorer regions, corruption operates through global governance, not individual wrongdoing.

Western financial institutions also protect stolen wealth. Offshore banking systems, secrecy jurisdictions, and real estate markets facilitate capital flight. These systems obstruct repatriation efforts (Zucman, 2015).

Criminological research shows that financial secrecy is deliberate. It is a legal strategy. Institutions that receive

and protect stolen assets avoid moral scrutiny. African leaders absorb public blame for corruption, while enabling systems remain untouched (Sharman, 2017).

Corruption also operates at a cultural and psychological level. Media representation, educational systems, and moral frameworks exported from Western societies shape African identity and global perception (Fanon, 1967; Mbembe, 2001).

Psychological harm is less visible than financial loss. It is no less damaging. Internalised inferiority reinforces dependency and limits possibilities. Corruption, in this sense, extends beyond money. It reaches its meaning.

Western corruption persists largely without punishment. Perpetrators are powerful. Victims are distant. Legal systems protect corporations. Narrative control disperses blame. Critical scholars emphasise that power determines what is known as corruption (Whyte, 2015).

If corruption is measured by impact rather than image, the comparison changes. Measured by lives lost, wealth extracted, nations destabilised, and futures destroyed,

Western corruption is far more destructive than most African corruption (Rothe & Friedrichs, 2015). Local corruption may delay development. Global corruption produces wars, displacement, environmental collapse, and generational poverty.

Western corruption is systemically organised. It is legalised. It is normalised. African corruption is magnified. Western corruption is obscured. One is loudly condemned. The other operates quietly behind institutions and authority.

Identifying the true cost of Western corruption is essential. It is necessary to reclaim narrative power. It is required for fair negotiation within global systems. It is vital for demanding accountability where it has long been denied.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Reclaiming the African Narrative: Breaking the Chains of Global Hypocrisy

The most enduring struggle confronting Africa today is not only economic or political. It is also not primarily technological. It is narrative. Outsiders have told Africa's story for centuries. It has been filtered through colonial ideologies. It has been edited by Western media. It has been interpreted by foreign scholars. It has been framed by global institutions whose interests rarely align with African realities. The result has been a dominant global image of Africa. This image presents the continent as defined by poverty, corruption, war, disease, and incompetence (Mudimbe, 1988; Ferguson, 2006).

This perception is not accidental. It is not neutral. It is historically produced. It is institutionally reinforced. It is strategically deployed. As long as Africa does not control its narrative, it remains exposed. It remains vulnerable to moral judgement. It remains open to political

manipulation, economic domination, and psychological weakening. This chapter examines how Africa can reclaim its voice. It explores how global hypocrisy can be confronted. It shows how Western narratives of superiority can be dismantled. It also outlines how Africa can rebuild its self-image with dignity, agency, and historical truth.

In global politics, narrative functions as power. It determines who is trusted and who is doubted. It shapes who attracts investment and who receives sanctions. It defines who is positioned as a teacher and who is treated as a perpetual student. Scholars of discourse and global governance show that Western states exercise power not only through military or economic means. They also exercise power through control over meaning, norms, and legitimacy (Said, 1978; Barnett & Duvall, 2005).

Africa is repeatedly placed at the bottom of this symbolic hierarchy. This position is not the result of objective measurement. It persists because African degradation reinforces Western moral authority. Edward Said

described this imbalance as representation. It is the ability of one culture to define another while remaining protected from reciprocal scrutiny (Said, 1978). Reclaiming narrative sovereignty is therefore a political act. It is not a cultural luxury.

Narrative reclamation begins with historical recovery. Before colonial disruption, African societies produced complex cultures. They developed governance systems. They sustained intellectual traditions. Empires such as Kush, Axum, Mali, and Songhai maintained global trade networks and administrative institutions. Centres of learning, such as Timbuktu, served as hubs of law, philosophy, and science (Diagne, 2019; Ki-Zerbo, 1997). Colonial education systems systematically erased this history. This erasure was deliberate. Acknowledging African achievement would have undermined racial hierarchy. Historical amnesia was therefore a strategy, not an oversight. Reclaiming historical memory is not romanticism. It is a requirement for restoring dignity, confidence, and epistemic justice (Mudimbe, 1988).

Western media economies continue to depend on African crisis imagery. Conflict, poverty, and failure are marketable. African success is not. Media scholarship reveals that narratives of dysfunction disproportionately frame Africa. Innovation, institutional reform, and cultural vitality receive far less attention (Bunce, Franks, & Paterson, 2017).

Challenging this imbalance requires deliberate investment in African-owned cultural infrastructure. This includes film, journalism, publishing, digital platforms, and historical archives. Chinua Achebe's observation remains relevant. Until the lions have their historians, the history of the hunt will glorify the hunter. Cultural production is not simply artistic expression. It is political economy.

One of the most enduring effects of colonialism is psychological dependence. African success is often evaluated through Western approval. Rankings, accreditations, donor endorsements, and foreign

validation become measures of worth. This dependency reinforces the belief that value originates outside Africa. Frantz Fanon cautioned that the desire to gain acceptance from former colonisers poses the greatest threat to post-colonial societies (Fanon, 1963). Political psychology confirms this insight. Constant external evaluation weakens internal confidence. It erodes collective agency (Bandura, 1997). Narrative liberation therefore requires confidence in African standards of excellence, judgement, and legitimacy.

African education systems continue to reproduce Eurocentric frameworks. These frameworks perpetuate historical erasure and cultural alienation. As a result, generations are trained to admire Western institutions while distrusting African knowledge systems.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o argued that decolonisation begins in the mind. Education is its primary battleground (Ngũgĩ, 1986). Decolonising education requires integrating African history, philosophy, science, governance

traditions, and indigenous knowledge into formal curricula. Knowledge sovereignty is narrative sovereignty. Africa must also challenge the framing of corruption as an exclusively African condition. Comparative corruption research shows that corruption operates globally. It flows through corporate networks, financial secrecy systems, arms trading, extractive contracts, and illicit capital flows. The Global North hosts many of these systems (Johnston, 2005; Zucman, 2015).

Reframing corruption within this global architecture acknowledges African governance failures. It restores analytical balance. The narrative must shift. It must move from “Africa is corrupt” to “corruption is global but unevenly labelled and enforced.”

Narrative reclamation must be matched by institutional credibility. African states must strengthen judicial systems. They must improve transparency. They must digitise governance processes. They must protect whistleblowers and modernise public administration.

Strong institutions reduce vulnerability to internal abuse and external manipulation (Adetula, 2023).

Institutional reform must not be performed for Western approval. It must serve African citizens. Justice, sovereignty, and dignity are the goal. External validation is not governance.

No African country can reclaim its narrative alone. Fragmentation weakens voice and bargaining power. Pan-African solidarity strengthens collective negotiation. It supports shared cultural defences. It enables coordinated economic strategy. It also resists destabilisation.

Kwame Nkrumah warned that Africa's greatest vulnerability lay in division. He argued that unity was both a political and psychological necessity (Nkrumah, 1965). Narrative power, like political power, grows through unity.

Knowledge production remains uneven. Global knowledge about Africa is still largely produced in Western universities and institutions. This knowledge

reflects external priorities. It reflects funding incentives and racialised assumptions.

Reclaiming narrative authority requires strengthening African research institutions. It requires developing African journals, archives, and theoretical frameworks grounded in African epistemologies. Africa must shift from being an object of study to a producer of knowledge (Mbembe, 2001).

Digital technology offers new possibilities. Social media, streaming platforms, online publishing, and digital journalism allow African voices to reach global audiences directly. Traditional narrative gatekeepers can be bypassed.

Narrative power is no longer fully monopolised. It must still be intentionally claimed. Digital sovereignty is now a strategic necessity.

Cultural reclamation is inseparable from narrative liberation. Colonial education and missionary frameworks weakened African languages, spirituality, and philosophical systems. Restoring indigenous

languages, artistic expression, and spiritual traditions reasserts African identity as a source of authority rather than shame. Culture is not symbolic. It is political power (Cabral, 1973).

Reclaiming narrative authority also requires ethical African leadership. Western narratives gain strength when African leaders betray public trust. Transparent governance and accountability weaken external moral posturing. They also rebuild internal confidence.

Leadership itself is a narrative intervention.

The African diaspora plays a crucial role. Africans abroad occupy influential positions in academia, media, policy, and global institutions. Their voices shape how Africa is understood internationally.

When mobilised responsibly, the diaspora can challenge misrepresentation. It can articulate African realities with authority. It must resist being framed as evidence of African failure. It must instead serve as a demonstration of African capacity.

Africa cannot depend on Western validation to define its worth. It cannot rely on Western morality, Western institutions, or Western narratives. Narrative is not cosmetic. It is destiny. The continent that tells its story shapes its future.

Africa must reclaim its history. It must reclaim its identity. It must reclaim its intellectual sovereignty and moral authority. The pen must return to African hands. It must not be surrendered again.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Way Forward: How Africa Can Rebuild Strength and Resist Global Hypocrisy

Africa stands at a critical moment in history. For centuries, global powers benefited from Africa's weakness. They misrepresented the continent. They destabilised it. They exploited its resources. They lectured its people. Despite these sustained pressures, Africa has endured. It remains one of the world's most resource-rich regions. It is youthful, culturally resilient, and socially adaptive (UNECA, 2021).

The central question facing Africa today is no longer what the continent lacks. The real question is how Africa can reclaim internal strength. It is how unity can be consolidated. It is how global hypocrisy can be resisted. This chapter outlines strategic pathways for rebuilding, repositioning, and rising. These pathways span economic, political, cultural, psychological, and global dimensions. They are grounded in empirical research. They affirm a

simple truth: Africa's future is shaped by African agency, not by Western perception or colonial history.

Africa's greatest resource is not minerals or land. The greatest resource of Africa is the psychological orientation of its people. Centuries of colonial domination, missionary paternalism, and racialised global narratives produced internalised doubts. These doubts continue to weaken collective confidence (Fanon, 1963; Mudimbe, 1988). Rebuilding African strength must therefore begin with psychological restoration.

African achievements must be normalised in public consciousness. Kenya's mobile banking system demonstrates financial innovation. Rwanda's public-sector reforms show institutional capacity. Ethiopia's aviation industry reflects industrial competence. Botswana's governance record illustrates institutional discipline. Nigeria's creative economy shows global cultural influence. Africa's expanding research output contradicts narratives of incapacity (World Bank, 2020;

AfDB, 2022). These successes are not exceptions. They reveal existing and growing capacity.

Education plays a decisive role in restoring confidence. African-centred curriculum strengthens identity and agency. Teaching African civilisations' governance traditions, ethical philosophies, and resistance movements restores coherence. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) argued that decolonisation begins in the mind. Education is its primary terrain. Confidence grows from historical self-knowledge, not external approval.

Weak institutions expose African states to corruption and foreign interference. They facilitate capital flight and political destabilisation. Institutional strength is therefore essential for both protection and development.

Comparative governance research shows that judicial independence strengthens public trust and accountability (North, Wallis, & Weingast, 2009). Digital procurement systems reduce bribery and contract manipulation. When properly funded and politically protected, independent anti-corruption agencies deter

abuse (OECD, 2018). Strong revenue authorities are equally vital. Africa loses tens of billions of dollars each year through illicit financial flows and tax evasion (UNECA, 2020). When institutions function well, corruption is harder to conceal and external interference becomes less effective.

Africa's poverty amid abundance results from structural extraction. It is not caused by scarcity. The continent exports raw materials and imported finished goods. This reinforces dependency within global value chains.

Rebuilding strength requires renegotiating extractive contracts. It requires transparency in concession agreements. It demands domestic value addition. Botswana's diamond governance demonstrates that fair resource management is possible when institutions are strong and negotiations are firm (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012).

Ending illicit financial flows is equally important. Research indicates that Africa loses more wealth through capital flight, profit shifting, and trade misinvoicing than

through conventional public-sector corruption (Zucman, 2015; Ndikumana & Boyce, 2018). Retaining this wealth would dramatically alter development outcomes.

Fragmentation remains one of Africa's greatest vulnerabilities. No single African country can confront global power asymmetries alone. Unity multiplies strength.

Pan-African cooperation enhances bargaining power. It improves security coordination. It strengthens narrative authority. A stronger African Union, a fully operational African Continental Free Trade Area, and coordinated regional security mechanisms reduce reliance on external actors (AfDB, 2021). Kwame Nkrumah (1965) warned that division would remain Africa's greatest weakness. Unity is not symbolic. It is strategic infrastructure.

Africa's future depends on leadership quality. Ethical, competent, and accountable leadership weakens external narratives of dysfunction. It strengthens internal legitimacy.

Transparent elections, constitutional limits on power, professional civil services, and politically neutral security forces protect sovereignty. These are not Western impositions. They are governance safeguards. Comparative political research confirms that leadership credibility strengthens institutional resilience and international leverage (Rotberg, 2015). Leadership failure sustains global hypocrisy. Leadership excellence exposes it.

Africa's youthful population creates opportunity for technological transformation. Investment in digital infrastructure, science education, and innovation ecosystems is now essential (UNESCO, 2021). Participation in artificial intelligence governance is also critical.

Digital sovereignty matters. Dependence on foreign platforms, servers, and data regimes creates new vulnerabilities. Scholars warn that digital dependency risks reproducing colonial hierarchies in technological

form (Couldry & Mejias, 2019). Africa must build its local digital capacity to avoid technological recolonisation.

Economic independence requires financial control. Dependence on foreign currencies and external financing weakens policy autonomy. Regional monetary cooperation and African-owned financial institutions strengthen resilience.

Food sovereignty and industrial capacity reduce exposure to external shocks. Development economists show that countries controlling production and monetary systems achieve greater stability and growth (Chang, 2002).

Colonialism weakened African identity. It delegitimised indigenous cultures, languages, and spiritual systems. Reclaiming these foundations strengthens social cohesion and ethical confidence.

Anthropological research confirms that societies grounded in shared cultural frameworks exhibit stronger moral regulation and institutional trust (Cabral, 1973).

Culture is not peripheral. It is a deep source of power.

Africa must reshape global relationships. Engagement should be based on confidence, not dependency. Partnerships with the Global South offer alternatives. All partnerships must be negotiated on the grounds of equality, transparency, and mutual benefit.

Africa possesses leverage. Its minerals, markets, population, and strategic location matter. That leverage must be exercised deliberately. It must not be surrendered through unequal agreements.

Africa's resurgence ultimately depends on mental liberation. Rejecting inferiority is essential. Fear-based governance must be dismantled. Unity must be cultivated. Internalised stereotypes must be confronted. Fanon (1963) argued that political and economic liberation could not endure without psychological decolonisation. Transformation begins in the mind. It later appears in institutions and markets.

Africa must rise with purpose. It must not rise in reaction to Western judgement. Its future will not be written in foreign capitals. It will be written in African cities,

classrooms, markets, and communities by people who refuse imposed limits.

Africa must reclaim identity. They must reject hypocrisy. It must assert equality. It must shape its destiny. When this choice is made collectively and confidently, the global balance of power begins to shift.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Africa and the World: Negotiating Power in a Hypocritical Global System

Africa does not exist in isolation. In trade, diplomacy, finance, security, culture, and technology, the continent interacts continuously with the global system. Unequal power relations, selective morality, and historical privilege shape this system. Africa must understand how this system works. It must learn how to engage with it without being absorbed or weakened by it.

Earlier chapters exposed Western hypocrisy, corruption, and dominance. This chapter focuses on strategy. It asks how Africa can secure fair treatment in a world not designed for its success. The central argument is simple. Africa must move from reactive engagement to proactive negotiation. Engagement must be assertive, united, informed, tactical, and unapologetically self-interested. History is clear. No nation has risen through politeness alone. Power responds to strategy.

In global politics, moral language often hides strategic interest. People frequently use concepts like democracy promotion, humanitarian intervention, development assistance, counterterrorism, sanctions, and global security as tools of influence. They are not always expressions of goodwill.

Political realism offers clarity. Hans Morgenthau argued that power and national interest, not moral sentiment, govern international relations. Contemporary scholarship confirms this. States prioritise security, economic advantage, and geopolitical leverage over ethical consistency (Morgenthau, 1948; Mearsheimer, 2018).

Africa must therefore abandon the illusion of moral hierarchy in global affairs. No power is inherently benevolent. Alliances are conditional. Commitments shift as interests change. Effective diplomacy requires realism. Sentiment is insufficient.

Perception shapes power. A nation's image affects negotiations, investment flows, and diplomatic

outcomes. Africa must therefore take control of how it is seen.

Strategic public diplomacy is essential. This includes African-owned global media platforms. It includes coordinated continental messaging. It requires professional diplomatic communication units, diaspora advocacy networks, and policy-orientated think tanks. Comparative studies indicate that countries such as China, Israel, and Gulf states invest heavily in narrative control. Influence begins with image (Cull, 2019).

Africa cannot Outsource its Reputation.

Western powers do not operate as a single entity. Each pursues specific interests. Africa's negotiating strength increases when these interests are clearly understood.

France seeks geopolitical influence and security access in Francophone Africa.

The United States prioritises counterterrorism, military partnerships, and strategic competition with China.

The European Union focuses on energy security, migration control, and access to raw materials.

The United Kingdom seeks new trade arrangements after Brexit. Germany prioritises industrial supply chains and energy diversification. Africa must convert these interests into concrete benefits. These include fairer contracts, technology transfer, infrastructure investment, visa access, and balanced security cooperation. Negotiation must be based on knowledge. Deference weakens outcomes (Brown & Harman, 2013).

China is often presented as Africa's alternative to Western dominance. This framing is misleading. **China is not neutral.** It is not altruistic. **It is a strategic actor pursuing its economic and geopolitical goals.**

Research shows that African countries benefit most from Chinese engagement when negotiations are firm, transparent, and institutionally grounded (Brautigam, 2020). Africa must insist on technology transfers, local labour participation, environmental safeguards, and sustainable debt structures.

Replacing Western dependency with Chinese dependency would not represent progress. It would represent strategic failure.

Global power is shifting. The world is becoming multipolar. The rise of Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America expands Africa's negotiating space.

Engagement with India, Brazil, Türkiye, Gulf states, Southeast Asia, and Latin America reduces Western dominance. It increases Africa's leverage. Scholars note that multipolarity benefits weaker actors only when they act cohesively and strategically (Acharya, 2018).

Multipolarity creates opportunity. Strategy determines whether that opportunity is used.

Africa has the youngest population in the world. By mid-century, one in four people globally will be African. This reality represents enormous geopolitical capital.

Human capital research shows that education, skills development, and innovation convert population growth into economic and political strength (World Bank, 2019).

A skilled African population attracts manufacturing, investment, and diplomatic attention.

Africa must negotiate with its demographic future. It must not be simply managed.

The African Continental Free Trade Area represents one of Africa's strongest strategic tools. A unified market increases internal trade. It supports industrialisation. It reduces import dependence. It strengthens bargaining power.

Economic modelling shows that AfCFTA could lift millions out of poverty. It could significantly increase intra-African trade if supported by infrastructure, regulatory harmonisation, digital payments, and enterprise protection (UNECA, 2021). A continent that trades with itself commands greater external respect.

Economic development requires security. Reliance on foreign military actors weakens sovereignty and negotiation power.

Regional security cooperation strengthens autonomy. Information sharing, joint training, and indigenous

defence capacity matter. African security scholars argue that external militarisation often worsens instability rather than resolves it (Williams, 2018).

Security dependency weakens sovereignty. Security autonomy strengthens negotiation power.

Africa relies heavily on Western consultants, data systems, and policy frameworks. This reliance limits strategic autonomy.

Intellectual sovereignty is essential. Africa needs strong research institutions, well-funded universities, policy laboratories, and indigenous knowledge integration. Knowledge production is not an academic luxury. It is strategic infrastructure (Mkandawire, 2011).

As Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o argued, no society is free if it cannot think for itself (Ngũgĩ, 1986).

Short-term electoral politics often disrupt long-term development. Research shows that countries with sustained national planning frameworks achieve greater resilience and continuity (Rodrik, 2011).

Africa must prioritise generational developmental strategies. Infrastructure, industrialisation, agriculture, and social investments require long horizons. Elections should renew leadership. They should not reset national vision.

Foreign NGOs sometimes provide valuable services. Overreliance on them weakens state capacity and policy sovereignty. NGOs reflect donor priorities. They are not neutral.

Development scholars warn that excessive NGO dominance fragments governance and weakens accountability (Ferguson, 1994). African states must regulate NGO activity while strengthening domestic institutions and civil society.

Africa remains under-represented in global decision-making bodies. These institutions shape trade, finance, climate policy, and security. Participation without influence sustains inequality.

Africa must demand institutional reform. This includes greater voting power, fairer rules, and permanent

representation. Structural inclusion is not charity. It is justice.

Africa's cultural influence is global. Music, film, fashion, cuisine, spirituality, and art travel across borders. Cultural diplomacy reaches places formal diplomacy cannot.

When coordinated strategically, culture becomes leverage. Soft power is not symbolic. It is instrumental.

The African diaspora is a strategic asset. It sends billions in remittances. It holds influential positions worldwide.

Structured engagement through diaspora bonds, investment vehicles, and policy inclusion transforms presence into power (Adepoju, 2008).

Africa's rise will not be gifted. It must be negotiated. Effective negotiation requires unity, knowledge, confidence, patience, and strategic boldness. In global politics, respect is not requested. It is asserted.

The world will not automatically make space for Africa. Africa must claim it.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Africa's Future: Building on Strength, Dignity, and Strategic Independence

Africa's future is not a mystery to be guessed at. It is a project to be deliberately built. The continent stands at a historic threshold. It is shaped by a painful past. It is constrained by a complex present. Yet it is endowed with extraordinary potential. After centuries of exploitation, misrepresentation, and narrative domination, Africa faces a defining choice. It can remain trapped in externally imposed frameworks. Or it can rise on its terms through clarity, unity, courage, and strategic intelligence. This chapter presents a forward-looking framework for Africa's renewal. It identifies Africa's strengths. It confronts its vulnerabilities. It outlines how the continent can claim a respected and influential position in global affairs. Innovation, governance, identity, collective action, and continental confidence form the pillars of this

vision. Africa is not a passive subject awaiting rescue. It is a power preparing to stand.

For decades, Africa has been described mainly through trauma. Colonial exploitation, corruption, dependency, instability, and underdevelopment dominate the narrative. These histories are real. They cannot be denied. Yet defining Africa only by its scars hides its enduring strengths.

Research on contemporary development reveals that structural opportunities, rather than inherited deficits, shape Africa's future. These include a rapidly growing and youthful population, abundant natural resources, expanding urban markets, cultural resilience, and strategic geopolitical positioning (World Bank, 2020). Africa is not a continent of permanent crisis. It is a continent of possibility. The future of the world is closely linked to Africa's future.

Africa's technological transformation has already begun. Youth-led entrepreneurship, digital finance, mobile technology, renewable energy, and early artificial

intelligence applications are reshaping economies. Mobile banking, digital public services, and platform-based businesses show Africa's capacity to leapfrog traditional development paths (Aker & Mbiti, 2010).

To secure this momentum, Africa must pursue technological sovereignty. This requires investments in digital infrastructure, data centres, cybersecurity systems, and regulatory frameworks. Dependence on external digital ecosystems risks creating new forms of domination. Ali Mazrui warned that technological dependence can become a modern instrument of control (Mazrui, 1990).

Investment in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education is equally critical. Africa's competitiveness will depend on engineers, researchers, and innovators who shape global change rather than consume it. Smart cities, green energy, sustainable agriculture, and innovation hubs must become continental priorities.

Effective governance is not a Western inheritance. It is an African necessity. Indigenous traditions valued accountability, consensus, and communal responsibility. Political legitimacy depends on trust. Trust grows through transparency, fairness, and effective service delivery (Hyden, 2006).

Public offices must be treated as trusts, not privileges. The judicial system must be independent, professional, digitised, and protected from political interference. Governance research consistently shows that institutional credibility, not imported models, sustains long-term stability (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012).

Security institutions must also serve citizens rather than political interests. Without security, economic growth, social stability, and sovereign decision-making remain fragile.

Africa provides much of what the modern world needs. It supplies critical minerals, agricultural goods, energy resources, and strategic raw materials. Yet the continent

remains disproportionately poor because it does not control value chains.

Political economy research shows that raw-material export dependence creates vulnerability. Industrialisation and value addition create resilience (UNECA, 2019). Industrial policy, local content rules, and regional manufacturing systems are therefore strategic necessities, not ideological preferences.

The global transition to renewable energy, electric vehicles, and digital technologies depends heavily on African minerals. If managed strategically, this dependence can become bargaining power rather than exploitation.

Pan-Africanism is not emotional idealism. It is geopolitical strategy. Fragmentation weakens Africa's voice and increases exposure to manipulation. Unity strengthens negotiation capacity, economic resilience, and diplomatic influence.

The African Continental Free Trade Area represents a major step toward integration. Economic modelling

shows that increased intra-African trade supports industrialisation and reduces dependence on unstable external markets (UNECA, 2021). Kwame Nkrumah warned that Africa's division would remain its greatest weakness (Nkrumah, 1965). History has repeatedly confirmed this.

The deepest legacy of colonialism is psychological. Africa cannot rise while seeking Western approval or accepting narratives of inferiority. Mental liberation requires reclaiming African history, affirming African achievement, and rejecting myths of Western moral or intellectual superiority.

Frantz Fanon argued that liberation begins in the mind. Without psychological sovereignty, political and economic sovereignty remain incomplete (Fanon, 1963). Confidence is not arrogance. It is the foundation of agency.

Africa's renewal must also include moral reconstruction. Indigenous ethical systems emphasise dignity, honesty, communal responsibility, and spiritual accountability.

These values are essential for sustainable leadership and social cohesion.

Research shows that development without ethical grounding produces inequality, instability, and fragmentation (Sen, 1999). Religion, whether indigenous or imported, must empower rather than exploit. It must unite rather than divide. Families and communities remain the moral infrastructure of nations.

The African diaspora is a powerful extension of continental influence. With remittances exceeding ninety-five billion dollars annually and strong representation in global institutions, academia, media, and commerce, the diaspora holds immense potential (World Bank, 2022).

Structured engagement through citizenship pathways, investment platforms, and policy inclusion can transform diaspora presence into coordinated continental strength. Africa's youth is not a burden. It is the continent's greatest strategic asset. By mid-century, Africa will be the youngest region in the world. Whether the demographic

trend becomes a dividend or a crisis depends on education reform, innovation ecosystems, leadership inclusion, and opportunity creation.

Human capital development remains the strongest predictor of long-term national success (UNDP, 2020).

Africa also offers the world a moral contribution. The continent has endured profound injustice, yet it continues to offer humanistic philosophy, resilience, creativity, and ethical depth. African traditions of communal dignity, relational humanity, and moral accountability challenge extractive global systems.

Africa's leadership potential does not lie in domination. It lies in moral clarity. Development grounded in dignity, justice, and humanity is not optional. It is necessary.

Africa's future will not appear by chance. It must be consciously chosen and deliberately built. The continent has the capacity to become an economic force, cultural leader, technological innovator, diplomatic actor, and moral reference point.

This future requires clear choices. Unity must replace fragmentation. Dignity must replace dependence. Courage must replace fear. Innovation must replace complacency. Self-definition must replace imposed narratives.

The world has long underestimated Africa. The responsibility now lies with Africa to redefine itself. In doing so, Africa also reshapes global power.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The Final Rebuke: Why the West Cannot Judge Africa

Judgement is never neutral. It establishes hierarchy. It assigns moral authority. It places one voice above another. For centuries, Western nations have assumed the role of moral judges over Africa. They have audited African governance. They have graded African democracy. They have diagnosed African corruption. They have prescribed African development.

Judgement, however, is legitimate only when it is grounded in integrity.

A person guilty of the same offence cannot sit as a judge. A beneficiary of exploitation cannot claim neutrality. A system built on injustice cannot lecture its victims on ethics.

This chapter presents Africa's rebuke. It is not spoken in anger. It is spoken in clarity. The West lacks the moral

standing and historical consistency required to judge Africa. The problem is especially evident after slavery. It remains evident after colonialism. It is undeniable after decades of political destabilisation, economic extraction, and narrative manipulation. The purpose of this chapter is not retaliation. It is truth. Only truth allows Africa to reclaim dignity and disengage from inherited shame.

Western discourse regularly condemns Africa for corruption, poverty, instability, and governance failure. Historical and political scholarship presents an alternative narrative. Western powers actively contributed to producing these conditions. Colonial rule, Cold War interventions, economic restructuring, and post-colonial political manipulation shaped African realities (Mamdani, 2001; Rodney, 1972).

No ethical system allows a guilty party to judge the consequences of its actions. Moral judgement requires distance from the harm. The West has none.

Western wealth did not emerge from moral exceptionalism. It was accumulated through slavery,

colonial conquests, forced labour, resource extraction, and unequal trade. Political-economic historians show that the transatlantic slave trade and colonial economic systems transferred African wealth into Europe while systematically underdeveloping African societies (Rodney, 1972; Inikori, 2002).

This history matters. Wealth derived from injustice cannot justify moral superiority. A structure built on exploitation cannot claim ethical authority over the people it exploits.

Many of Africa's most visible corruption scandals involve Western corporations. Investigative records show repeated cases of bribery, tax evasion, and contract manipulation by multinational firms operating in Africa (Global Witness, 2018; OECD, 2014).

African officials are publicly prosecuted and shamed. Western corporations are often fined quietly. They are protected by legal settlements and regulatory complexity. This imbalance exposes the incoherence of

Western judgement. It is contradictory to condemn corruption while benefiting from it structurally.

Illicit African wealth usually leaves Africa. It is stored, invested, and protected in Western banks, property markets, shell companies, and secrecy jurisdictions. Economic research demonstrates that global financial secrecy is not accidental. It is deliberately engineered and concentrated largely in Western financial centres (Zucman, 2015).

The West cannot condemn African corruption while hosting and protecting its proceeds.

Western governments frequently criticise Africa's instability. They rarely acknowledge their role in producing it. Historical studies confirm Western involvement in coups, regime change, proxy wars, and electoral interference across Africa. Leaders who resisted Western interests were removed or undermined. Compliant regimes were supported regardless of governance quality (Prashad, 2007).

Instability did not arise naturally. It was produced. It was financed. It was managed. An arsonist cannot condemn a burning house.

Western corruption is often legalised. It is embedded in lobbying systems, corporate law, offshore finance, and regulatory loopholes. Comparative governance research reveals that Western political economies normalise practices criminalised in the Global South under different names (Whyte, 2015).

Ethics is not the issue. It is power. Moral judgement without equal standards is not justice. It is dominance.

Western media institutions shape global perception. They amplify African failure. They reframe Western dysfunction as technical error or institutional stress. Media research shows that African crises are racialised and generalised, while Western crises are individualised and contextualised (Bunce, Franks, & Paterson, 2017).

Narrative control creates influence. It does not create innocence. Managing perception does not confer moral legitimacy.

Western history celebrates its resistance movements. African struggles are often dismissed as disorder or terrorism. Leaders once condemned, such as Nelson Mandela, were later rehabilitated when geopolitical interests changed.

Selective judgement is not moral reasoning. It is ideological convenience.

Western states have not fully confronted the legacies of slavery, colonialism, genocide, and cultural destruction. Apologies have been rare. Reparations have been minimal. The restitution of stolen artefacts has been slow and partial (UNESCO, 2021).

Judgement without accountability is hollow. Moral authority cannot exist without repair.

True moral judgement requires humility. It requires consistency. It requires accountability. Western systems continue to benefit from historical and contemporary inequality while presenting themselves as neutral arbiters.

No one can lecture others while still grappling with unresolved violence. Moral authority is earned through accountability. It is not asserted through power.

Africa must therefore remove the Western judge. Externally imposed moral hierarchies must be rejected. Development models, political grading, governance assessments, and ethical rankings must be grounded in African realities, values, and aspirations.

Africa's accountability is to its people. It is to its conscience. It is about its future. It is not owed to former colonisers or modern power brokers.

Africa no longer needs permission to exist with dignity. The era of inherited judgement must end. Africa must judge itself honestly. It must govern itself responsibly. It must define progress on its terms.

The West cannot judge Africa. The West should not judge Africa based on its history. These systems cannot be used to judge Africa. These contradictions remain unresolved.

The verdict is not hatred.

It is clarity.

Africa steps out of the courtroom of colonial judgement.
It steps into the space of equal humanity. It stands
sovereign, self-aware, and unapologetic.

Moral authority is reclaimed.

The narrative is reversed.

Africa holds the final say.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

When Language Removes Humanity: Dehumanisation, Power, and African Identity

Colonial domination depended on more than physical force. It was sustained through language. Long before the whip or the rifle was used, words had already reshaped how Africans were perceived. Africans were spoken of as problems to be managed rather than people to be respected.

One of the most enduring expressions of this linguistic violence survives in institutional memory and collective trauma: “**Apes, obey!**” Whether preserved exactly or echoed in modified forms across time and place, its meaning was clear. It was dehumanisation in the service of control. Such an expression was not a casual insult. It was an ideological weapon.

Language did not merely accompany colonialism. It prepared the ground for it. By stripping Africans of humanity in speech, colonial systems made domination appear necessary. Obedience appeared logical. Violence appeared administrative rather than moral.

We were punished for speaking Yoruba in school because it was called a vernacular. English, a foreign language, was declared superior. Yet Yoruba is our first language; English is not. This reversal was not accidental. A foreign superiority complex was imposed, and we accepted the inferiority it required. The same logic governs our cultural behaviours today. Our weddings are considered incomplete without suits and gowns, foreign symbols of dignity, even though no white society validates marriage or worship by wearing Yoruba agbada. We conduct traditional, court, and church weddings, yet rank the foreign above the indigenous. African Christians often become more Catholic than the Pope, just as African Muslims appear more Islamic than Saudi Arabia. In learning their languages obsessively, we have neglected

our own—and in doing so, we have mistaken imitation for civilisation.

European colonial ideology depended on rigid racial hierarchy. That hierarchy required constant reinforcement. Africans had to be constructed as less than fully human for exploitation to proceed without moral contradiction. This logic appeared in what scholars describe as simianization. Black people were repeatedly compared to apes in pseudo-scientific theory, popular culture, propaganda, and colonial administration (Fredrickson, 2002; Jackson & Weidman, 2004).

These representations were not mistakes. They were tools of power. By reducing Africans to animal imagery, colonial authority transformed brutality into governance. Oppression became order. Language stopped describing reality and began producing it.

To name a people as animals was to remove them from the moral community. Once excluded, obedience could be demanded without reciprocity. Punishment could be

imposed without guilt. Violence no longer required ethical justification.

Frantz Fanon showed that dehumanisation attacks both bodies and minds. It restructures how colonised people are seen. It also reshapes how they see themselves (Fanon, 1963). Language therefore functioned as a technology of domination.

Colonial militaries and paramilitary institutions became central sites of linguistic conditioning. Military discipline always demands obedience. Colonial discipline demanded submission without dignity. Dehumanising language made such submission possible by dissolving moral resistance and weakening emotional identification. Research on violence shows that dehumanisation reduces empathy. It enables harm while minimising psychological conflict (Haslam, 2006; Luft, 2023). Commands such as “Apes, obey!” functioned as identity scripts, not simple orders. They taught that thinking was dangerous. Dignity was irrelevant. Survival required submission.

Over time, these scripts moved beyond parade grounds. They entered schools, churches, workplaces, and bureaucracies. Colonial language became institutional routine. Humiliation became governance. Personhood disappeared from daily interaction.

From the perspective of Yoruba moral philosophy, such language represents a grave ethical violation. Yoruba thought puts *ìwà*—moral character, integrity, and existential worth—at the centre of personhood. The proverb *Ìwà l'ẹwà* (“character is beauty”) affirms that human value comes from moral being, not power or coercion (Owoseni, 2016).

Closely connected is the concept of *Ọmọlúàbí*. It describes a person with honour, self-restraint, courage, moral autonomy, and social responsibility. In this worldview, dignity and agency define personhood. Colonial dehumanisation directly attacked this foundation. It replaced agency with fear and dignity with shame.

African philosophers demonstrate that linguistic violence destabilises not only individuals but entire moral systems. Communal accountability weakens. Social order erodes (Fabiya, 2021). Therefore, dehumanisation was more than psychological harm. It was moral sabotage.

Formal colonial rule has ended. Colonial language has not. Explicit slurs have often been replaced with coded terms such as *unprofessional*, *aggressive*, *primitive*, or *not articulate*. These words appear neutral. They continue to reproduce racial hierarchies of credibility and worth.

Raciolinguistic research shows that such evaluations systematically disadvantage racialised speakers in institutions governed by Eurocentric norms (Rosa & Flores, 2017; Cushing, 2023). Code-switching often becomes necessary for Africans and other Black populations to gain legitimacy.

Psychological studies demonstrate that this demand results in persistent stress. It leads to identity suppression and constant self-monitoring (Johnson et al.,

2021). The command has changed form. Its function remains the same. Conform. Remain acceptable. Suppress difference.

There is deep irony in this history. The societies that perfected dehumanisation now claim global authority over civility and human rights. Systems that disciplined Africans through shame now lecture them on order and restraint. This contradiction reflects the moral logic captured in the phrase, "the pot calls the kettle black."

Western institutions condemn violence, disorder, and corruption in Africa. They ignore the linguistic and psychological violence that helped produce these conditions. Historical reckoning is not resentment. It is moral clarity. Institutions cannot claim neutrality while profiting from hierarchies built on dehumanisation.

Restoration begins with language. Reclaiming dignity requires restoring ìwà in people, institutions, and systems. This means honest historical education. It means examining institutional speech critically. It means

resisting any order that demands obedience at the cost of humanity.

Africans were never apes. They were and remain moral agents, thinkers, builders, and bearers of civilisation. What the colonial language attempted to erase must now be spoken back into existence. Language once used to remove humanity must be reclaimed to restore it.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

How African Artefacts and Wealth

Were Transferred to Europe:

Looting, Law, and the Architecture of Cultural Theft

The presence of African cultural treasures and African wealth in European institutions is not accidental, mysterious, or benign. It is the direct outcome of conquest, coercion, colonial administration, and economic violence. African objects did not arrive in Europe through curiosity or fair exchange. They were transferred through systems designed to extract, dominate, and erase African societies. These systems were deliberately organised and sustained over time.

This chapter examines the main mechanisms by which African artefacts and material wealth were removed from the continent and institutionalised in Europe. It also

examines the narratives used to justify their continued possession. Understanding this history is essential. It is not an exercise in grievance. It is a matter of historical accuracy, moral accountability, and global justice.

Violent military looting was one of the most direct pathways through which African artefacts entered European museums. Armed invasion served as a method of acquisition. The 1897 British invasion of the Kingdom of Benin remains the most documented example. British forces destroyed Benin City, killed court officials, exiled the Oba, and looted more than 4,000 bronze sculptures, plaques, and ritual objects.

These objects were later dispersed across major Western institutions, including the British Museum, the Pitt Rivers Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and numerous German ethnological museums. This was not accidental damage during war. It was systematic extraction. Dan Hicks (2020) demonstrates that the looting of Benin was central to imperial punishment and financial recovery. Stolen artefacts were sold to offset the

cost of the invasion. Cultural destruction and economic exploitation operated together. Military violence functioned as a procurement strategy.

Beyond battlefield looting, colonial administrations institutionalised plundering through bureaucracy. Colonial officers seized sacred objects as war trophies, labelled them diplomatic gifts, retained them as personal souvenirs, or declared them state property. These acts were documented, normalised, and treated as routine administrative procedures. Colonial governance did not protect African heritage. It reorganised for European possession.

In the Congo Free State, agents of King Leopold II supervised the mass transfer of ivory, art, and cultural objects to Belgium alongside rubber and mineral extraction. Adam Hochschild (1998) shows that cultural removal accompanied economic plunder. Symbolic erasure and material theft occurred together.

Christian missionaries also played a significant role in cultural confiscation. Masks, sculptures, regalia, and

ritual objects were seized, labelled pagan, and removed in the name of spiritual reform. These objects were shipped to Europe and reclassified as ethnographic specimens or fine art. Annie Coombes (1994) shows that missionary seizure was both theological and political. By stripping African societies of sacred material culture, missionaries weakened indigenous belief systems while supplying European institutions that later defined African identity through Western curation. Cultural theft was moralised as salvation.

Many African artefacts entered Europe through transactions that were later described as purchases. These exchanges occurred under colonial occupation, military threat, and economic deprivation. African rulers were often compelled to exchange priceless objects for weapons, alcohol, or trivial sums. Such transactions cannot be considered voluntary. Agreements made under duress lack legitimacy. What occurred was not trade but extraction disguised as consent. Colonial markets functioned as instruments of compulsion.

The transatlantic slave trade constituted one of the largest transfers of wealth in human history. Enslaved Africans were stripped of jewellery, gold, sacred items, and cultural identities before and during forced transportation. These objects, along with stolen labour, were converted into European capital. Marcus Rediker (2007) documents how European ships, ports, banks, and insurance markets profited from this system. Cultural dispossession was not incidental to slavery. It was foundational to the reduction of human beings into commodities.

European institutions now offer several justifications for retaining African artefacts. Museums claim custodianship in the name of world heritage and argue that African objects are safer in Europe. Preservation, however, does not legitimise theft. Custody obtained through violence confers no moral authority. Institutions also argue that African museums lack the capacity to care for returned objects. Sarr and Savoy (2018) expose the paternalism of this claim, noting that European museums themselves

originated in modest and improvised spaces. Capacity is technical. Legitimacy is moral.

Some states argue that acquisitions were legal at the time, citing colonial law as justification. Laws imposed through conquest and racial exclusion cannot confer ethical legitimacy. Legality under oppression is not justice. Other institutions claim that African artworks have become part of European national heritage. This argument confuses prolonged possession with rightful ownership. Time does not cleanse theft. Claims that restitution is legally complex obscure a simple fact: these objects belonged to African societies prior to invasion. Complexity reflects administrative reluctance, not moral ambiguity.

Western accusations of African corruption collapse under historical scrutiny. Slavery forcibly displaced over twelve million Africans and generated enormous wealth for Europe and the Americas (Rediker, 2007). Colonialism extended this extraction through land seizures, mineral exploitation, forced labour, and cultural theft. African

economies were restructured to serve external interests (Rodney, 1972). These were not governance systems. There were organised corruption networks backed by the state.

Recently, Western institutions have begun returning African artefacts. Germany's restitution of Benin bronzes and France's return of royal objects signal an important truth. Restitution is not generosity. It is recognition of illegitimacy. One does not return what one rightfully owns.

Beyond artefacts, vast African wealth remains embedded in Western financial systems. Swiss banks, British tax havens, Luxembourg accounts, and U.S. shell companies continue to host African capital. Zucman (2015) and UNECA (2020) document how illicit financial flows drain African economies while enriching Western financial centres. The problem is not African corruption. It is Western facilitation.

When a system steals from a people, safeguards stolen wealth, displays stolen culture as trophies, profits from

possession, and condemns the dispossessed as corrupt, the issue is no longer governance. It is hypocrisy. A Yoruba proverb captures this truth clearly: **the real thief is the one who hides stolen goods in his house, not the one who steals from the roof.**

African artefacts and wealth did not arrive in Europe by accident or good will. They arrived through violence, coercion, and systematic exploitation. Until this reality is fully acknowledged and materially addressed, Western claims to moral authority over Africa remain historically indefensible.

Caution: Africa's fixation on historical looting risks obscuring a more uncomfortable truth: theft may not belong only to the past. While attention remains fixed on colonial-era plunder, wealth and value continue to be extracted through contemporary mechanisms—unequal trade rules, legalised capital flights, intellectual property regimes, resource concessions, and elite collaboration. Concentrating outrage on yesterday's crimes alone may lead Africa to overlook the current repackaging and

perpetuation of the same dispossession. **The cage has changed; the cat may be the same.** A word is enough for the wise.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Giving a Dog a Bad Name:

Western Framing of

Contemporary African Leadership

In international relations, power is not exercised only through material tools such as economic sanctions, military force, or diplomatic pressure. Power is also exercised through discourse. Political language shapes how leaders and states are perceived. It legitimises certain policy responses and renders others' actions acceptable or unthinkable. Critical scholarship shows that naming, framing, and categorising are not neutral acts. They function as mechanisms through which power is normalised and hierarchies are sustained (Foucault, 1972; Doty, 1996).

African leadership has been especially vulnerable to this form of discursive domination within Western political and analytical discourse. Comparative studies in African

political economy and governance reveal a disproportionate framing of African leaders through moralised and pathologised labels. Authoritarian, strongman, dictator, rogue, or junta are among these labels. They are often applied during moments of policy divergence, domestic unrest, or geopolitical realignment (Chabal & Daloz, 1999; Cheeseman, 2018; Adetula, 2023). These terms function less as analytical categories and more as instruments of narrative control. They shape international legitimacy before any substantive institutional comparison occurs.

Authoritarianism as a Default Frame: Rwanda and the Logic of Suspicion

Scholarly analyses of Western interpretations of African governance reveal a persistent tendency to view political authority in Africa through a default lens of authoritarianism. This tendency often operates regardless of historical context or developmental trajectory (Chabal & Daloz, 1999; Cheeseman, 2018). Rwanda provides a clear illustration of this pattern.

Academic research on post-genocide governance in Rwanda acknowledges measurable achievements. These include improvements in state capacity, public service delivery, administrative discipline, and institutional coherence following the 1994 genocide (Reyntjens, 2013; Booth & Golooba-Mutebi, 2012). Governance scholarship thoroughly documents these outcomes.

Simultaneously, Western assessments consistently highlight political constraints and restricted opposition space. These features are treated as defining characteristics rather than contextual elements. The asymmetry does not lie in identifying restrictions. Such restrictions exist across political systems. The asymmetry lies in interpretation. Comparative political theory shows that similar limitations in Western or allied states are often framed as security imperatives, constitutional peculiarities, or transitional measures. In African contexts, however, they are personalised and moralised as evidence of illegitimate rule (Levitsky & Way, 2010). African leadership is thus assessed less through

institutional comparison and more through normative suspicion. Governance analysis collapses into judgements of character.

It *'suits my belle well well'* when it appears that the President of Rwanda practises deliberate, selective listening. Rather than respond to every criticism, he prioritises matters that are objective, constructive, and beneficial to the people. In doing so, he amplifies citizens' real needs while ignoring critics' distractions that do not advance national interest. In other words, he hears what anybody says, but he listens to his people. This phenomenon pains the critics.

Resistance, Rhetoric, and the Reversal of the Frame: Burkina Faso.

Recent scholarship identifies a growing pattern of discursive resistance among African leaders. In this pattern, leaders openly contest Western moral authority and challenge the power to define legitimacy. Shabbir and Khan (2025) analyse the anti-imperialist rhetoric of

Burkina Faso's President Ibrahim Traoré through a neocolonial theoretical lens.

Their analysis interprets Traoré's speeches as a critique of Western dominance. Traoré exercises this dominance through financial conditions and military assistance, not through direct rule. The rhetoric does not reject governance itself. It challenges the structures through which governance is externally controlled.

Drawing on the intellectual traditions of Kwame Nkrumah, Andre Gunder Frank, and Walter Rodney, the study situates Traoré within a Pan-African lineage of resistance. This lineage includes Thomas Sankara. It emphasises Traoré's rejection of institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. These institutions are framed as instruments of global control. The authors argue that Traoré's discourse represents more than political dissent. It represents a broader call for Africa's decolonisation, both economic and ideological. This intervention adds to current discussions

about how the West affects countries like Burkina Faso and Nigeria (Shabbir & Khan, 2025).

This case directly challenges the logic of discursive domination outlined in this chapter. Where Western discourse seeks to name African leaders into illegitimacy, Traoré's rhetoric attempts to invert the naming process itself. His speeches expose what he presents as the coercive foundations of concepts such as aid, effective governance, and international partnership. In this sense, his rhetoric is not merely political messaging. It is an attempt to reclaim narrative sovereignty.

Protest, Disorder, and the Moralisation of Leadership in Africa

Political sociology research indicates that the interpretation of protest and civil unrest varies according to geography and power relations. Western democracies typically analyse mass protest as a response to inequality, social movements, or policy disagreements. In African states, similar protests are more often framed as

evidence of leadership failure or authoritarian instinct (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015; de Waal, 2015).

This differential framing shifts responsibility away from global structural pressures. These pressures include austerity regimes, debt conditions, neoliberal reform programs, and post-pandemic economic shocks. Instead, blame is concentrated on individual African leaders. Political contestation is recast as democratic fragility rather than as a predictable outcome of economic strain within a globalised political economy (Mkandawire, 2015; Adesina, 2020). Discourse replaces analysis. Leadership becomes the problem rather than the system.

Nigeria, Securitisation, and the Politics of Exception

Critical security studies demonstrate how the language of repression functions as a discursive shortcut. Terms such as “crackdown,” “treason,” and “security threat” legitimise exceptional interpretations of governance (Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998). In African contexts, protest policing and emergency measures are more easily securitised. Governance challenges are transformed into

moral indictments rather than debated as contested policy choices.

Comparative scholarship reveals that Western democracies often discuss similar state practices as civil liberties dilemmas or constitutional tensions. In African settings, the same practices are framed as confirmation of authoritarian disposition (Mamdani, 2012; Brown, 2011). The divergence does not lie in empirical conduct. It lies in discursive framing. Framing determines whether an action is interpreted as contested governance or illegitimate power.

South Africa and the Failure Narrative

South Africa occupies a distinctive symbolic position in Western political imagination. It was once celebrated as the moral triumph of liberal democracy over racial oppression. Contemporary academic discourse, however, identifies a growing tendency to recast South Africa through a narrative of decline, corruption, and betrayed promise (Habib, 2013; Southall, 2016).

While governance challenges are real, scholars caution that Western framings often detach these problems from their structural roots. These roots include apartheid's economic legacy, global capital flows, and elite accommodation within a neoliberal order (Bond, 2014; Adetula, 2023). This abstraction reinforces a broader trope of African incapacity. Failure is localised and moralised rather than situated within global systems of inequality and extraction. (Rodney, 2018).

Naming as an Exercise of Power

Across these cases, scholarship converges on a central insight. Naming precedes judgement. Judgement precedes action. Labels do not merely describe political reality. They organise it. They determine which responses appear reasonable, which actors are trusted, and which voices are dismissed (Foucault, 1972; Doty, 1996).

To label an African leader a dictator narrows diplomatic possibilities. Framing a region as unstable normalises the need for exceptional intervention. The proverb "give a

dog a wicked name and hang it” captures this dynamic with unsettling accuracy. Once African leadership is discursively fixed within Western moral vocabulary, punitive measures require little justification.

Nevertheless, the case of Ibrahim Traoré shows that this power to name is increasingly contested. Contemporary African leaders are challenging the ideological foundations of Western authority itself. *Pot Calling the Kettle Black* therefore does not reject scrutiny of African governance. It interrogates why African authority is judged through moral absolutism, while Western power is interpreted through pragmatism, complexity, and necessity.

Rational Reflection

African leaders must first summon the courage to confront themselves before lecturing the world about colonialism or modern recolonisation. One cannot speak of liberation while governing states without basic security, reliable electricity, stable internet, or functional hospitals—systems so broken that even their families

must flee abroad for care. Such behaviour is not resistance; it is performance. The biblical indictment is unavoidable: *“Let him who is without sin cast the first stone”* (John 8:7). Moral authority is not claimed by shouting; it is earned by clean hands. Equity is clear on this point: *he who comes into it must come with clean hands*. Africa has always known this truth—*only clean hands can wash another*. Anything else is ritual hypocrisy. This duplicity was laid bare when U.S. President Donald Trump accused the Nigerian state of looking away while terrorists slaughtered Christians. Officials rushed to deny the charge, hastily manufacturing defences and boarding planes to Washington. The spectacle was almost comical. What they failed—or pretended not—to understand is that the United States does not rely on rumours. It sits at the nerve centre of global digital surveillance and information flow. Nearly all communication channels used daily in Nigeria and across Africa—Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube, X, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Reddit, Pinterest, and Signal—are owned or controlled by

U.S.-based corporations. Africa speaks through foreign pipes, while its secrets are harvested elsewhere.

Therefore, the United States may have monitored the unholy romance between certain officials and terrorist networks. Beyond surveillance, there exists evident evidence. The countless videos shared on YouTube—often by the perpetrators themselves—are not edited propaganda or foreign rhetoric. They are firsthand digital confessions. They are raw and unfiltered. Denial, in this context, is not innocence; it is insult.

Africa's digital sovereignty is pitiful by comparison. A few regional platforms—Vula Mobile, Ayoba, Mocality—exist on the margins, dwarfed by the global infrastructure controlled elsewhere. Power speaks through ownership, not slogans.

So before African leaders mount platforms to “free Africa”, they should first audit their own loyalties. The very systems they publicly denounce safely house their stolen wealth, foreign accounts, overseas properties, and investments.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Winds Blow, the Chicken's 'Nyash'

Is Exposed: A Comparative

Assessment of Western

Governance Ideals and Practice

Western political discourse presents its conception of Beneficial governance is often presented as universal, objective, and normatively superior. It is treated as a neutral standard. Yet this conception is culturally biased and unevenly applied. Contemporary political science literature identifies a dominant Western governance template. This template is grounded in liberal democracy, a market-orientated political economy, and adherence to a rules-based international order (Held, 2006; Galston, 2025).

African states are frequently evaluated against these ideals. Western states, however, usually avoid the same

scrutiny when they depart from them. Comparative governance scholarship increasingly argues that this imbalance is structural rather than accidental. It reflects unequal authority over how norms are interpreted, applied, and enforced (Faude, 2025). When governance is examined comparatively, the gap between ideal and practice becomes visible. The wind exposes what was carefully covered.

Liberal Democracy as the Normative Ideal

In contemporary scholarship, liberal democracy is defined as a political system that combines electoral competition with constitutional limits on power. It also includes civil liberties and institutional checks and balances (Dahl, 1971; Galston, 2025). Elections alone are not considered sufficient. Democratic legitimacy is expected to be reinforced by the rule of law, independent courts, free media, and genuine political pluralism (Nyyssönen, 2021).

This model is derived largely from Western historical experience. It is frequently treated as a universal

benchmark against which all political systems are measured. Recent governance theory, however, challenges this assumption. Gwakwara (2025) argues that liberal democracy, as operationalised in global governance discourse, functions as a culturally specific framework that is presented as universal. In doing so, it marginalises alternative political traditions and post-colonial state trajectories.

This critique aligns with earlier Africanist scholarship. That literature demonstrates that Western democracies themselves routinely diverge from liberal democratic ideals. They tolerate executive overreach. They invoke emergency powers. They expand surveillance regimes. They restrict protest. They sustain structural distortions of political representation. Yet these deviations rarely trigger fundamental questions about democratic legitimacy (Przeworski, 2010; Kaina, 2022).

Such departures are typically explained away. They are framed as institutional complexity. They are justified as constitutional tradition. They are defended as responses

to security threats. By contrast, similar deviations in African states are interpreted differently. They are read through a moral lens rather than a contextual one. Political stability concerns, historical trauma, post-conflict reconstruction, and developmental constraints are often excluded from legitimacy assessments.

As Adetula (2023) observes, African governance is judged less on comparable institutional performance and more on conformity to an externally defined liberal script. The result is not equal evaluation. It is an asymmetric interpretation. Power determines whose deviations are excused and whose are condemned.

The title of this section is "Market Governance and the Myth of Limited State Intervention."

Western governance ideals also assume a market-orientated state. This state privileges private enterprise. It limits direct intervention. It integrates fully into global capitalism. Classical and contemporary economic governance literature often presents the state as a

regulator rather than a driver of development (Friedman, 1962; World Bank, 1997).

Within this framework, interventionist policies are framed as inefficiencies. They are treated as threats to economic freedom. Yet political economy research shows a different reality. Western states have never consistently adhered to this model. Strategic state intervention has been central to their economic success.

Subsidies, industrial policy, public ownership, and crisis bailouts have played decisive roles in economic stability and national competitiveness in advanced economies (Przeworski, 2010). These practices are rarely described as authoritarian or anti-market. Instead, they are legitimised as pragmatism or national interest.

African states pursuing similar developmental strategies are judged differently. Strong state coordination is reframed as authoritarianism. Long-term planning is interpreted as political control. Selective intervention is presented as evidence of governance failure rather than developmental necessity.

Gwakwara (2025) situates this double standard within a broader critique of governance universalism. Western economic norms are often transplanted into African contexts without regard for historical sequencing, colonial disruption, or global inequality. Adetula (2023) similarly identifies this process as a mechanism of discipline rather than understanding. African political economies are managed through norms they did not design, and they must not explain deviations.

The concept of a Rules-Based International Order and its Selective Compliance is crucial to understanding Western governance ideals.

A third pillar of Western governance ideals is alignment with a rules-based international order. This order emphasises multilateralism, international law, and collective security. Political theory has long presented it as neutral and universally binding (Held, 2006).

Recent scholarship presents an alternative perspective. Research on global governance shows increasing patterns of selective compliance, institutional strain, and

asymmetrical enforcement (Faude, 2025). Powerful states retain disproportionate influence over how global rules are interpreted. They also control when rules are suspended or reconfigured during crises.

Faude (2025) demonstrates that dominant states combine norm enforcement with norm exemption. Western states frame their departures from international rules as exceptional, stable, or necessary. When non-Western states exercise similar autonomy, their actions are framed as destabilising or illegitimate.

This discrepancy reinforces a hierarchical global order. Sovereignty becomes conditional rather than equal. Legitimacy flows unevenly across the international system. Rules apply differently depending on power position.

The Exposed Symmetry

Taken together, contemporary governance theory reveals a consistent pattern. Western states do not fully practice the governance ideals they universalised. Yet their deviations are normalised through interpretation,

context, and institutional authority (Przeworski, 2010; Faude, 2025). African states are judged against the same ideals without access to the same interpretive flexibility. Governance evaluation therefore becomes less about objective standards. It becomes a function of positional power. The proverb anchoring this section captures the reality clearly. When the wind blows, contradictions are revealed. What distinguishes power is not the absence of exposure. It is the capacity to explain exposure away.

As Pot Calling the Kettle Black argues, Western governance ideals function less as neutral benchmarks and more as disciplinary instruments. They are elastic for the powerful. They are rigid for the judged.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Conclusion: Setting the House in Order

Pot Calling the Kettle Black has not been written to trade insults or reverse prejudice. It has been written to restore truth. Hypocrisy collapses when exposed. Moral authority evaporates when it is built on denial, theft, and selective judgement. This book demonstrates how those who claim to uphold standards have repeatedly violated them when judging Africa.

To the Western world, this book offers no apology and no hostility—only a mirror. You cannot lecture Africa on corruption while hosting stolen wealth. You cannot preach human rights while benefiting from systems built on slavery, colonial violence, and economic extraction. You cannot condemn African disorder while exporting weapons, manipulating economies, and controlling

narratives. Moral authority is not inherited. It is earned through accountability, humility, and repair.

Colonialism was not the work of a few individuals. It was an organisational system created by European governments. These governments made laws, sent armies, and built economic systems that exploited Africa and caused widespread harm (Boahen, 1987; Cooper, 2005; Hochschild, 1998; Iliffe, 2007; Pakenham, 2015; Rodney, 1972). African states never acted this way toward Europe. There is no record of African countries invading Europe or setting up systems to exploit it.

European exploitation was carried out through official state structures. This is very different from crimes committed by individual Africans abroad. Individual actions cannot be compared to state-organised colonial systems, even though corruption is corruption. Any honest historical account must acknowledge these differences. It should suggest moral inequality where the contexts differ. Understanding the historical causes of Africa's underdevelopment is necessary to avoid

misrepresentation and to place responsibility where it truly belongs.

Until historical truth is fully acknowledged and material justice pursued, judgement remains hollow.

To African political leaders, the message is direct. Western hypocrisy does not excuse African failure. Exploitation from outside is real, but betrayal from within is devastating. Leaders weaken Africa's moral position and strengthen external domination when they steal public wealth, suppress accountability, or trade national dignity for personal survival. You cannot denounce foreign interference while selling your people's future quietly at night. Ensure that everything is in order. Govern with integrity. Protect institutions. Serve, not rule. Africa will only silence external judgement when it governs itself responsibly

To African religious leaders, a harder truth must be spoken. The elevation of foreign religions above African sanctity of life has done deep harm. Faith was imported

with chains and later maintained with fear. When African spirituality, ethics, and communal values were dismissed as inferior, moral confusion followed. Religion must restore dignity, not erase identity. Any faith that excuses exploitation, silences injustice, or dehumanises Africans is not holy. God cannot be used to justify self-hatred or obedience to oppression. Moral leadership begins with truth, not dogma.

This book speaks with urgency to African youth, whose lives are being shattered by broken systems, corrupted examples, and stolen hope. You are not failed people. You are victims of failed leadership, distorted history, and global hypocrisy. Do not inherit despair. Do not normalise corruption. Do not glorify violence or shortcuts. Your anger is justified, but your future must be built, not burnt. Africa's renewal will not come from imitation or resentment. It will come with clarity, discipline, creativity, and courage.

Finally, to those who speak from both sides of their lips—inside and outside Africa—who condemn injustice

publicly while enabling it privately, who preach reform while profiting from disorder, who sell Africa's tomorrow for comfort today—history is watching. Silence will not protect you. Complexity will not hide you. The wind is blowing. What was covered is exposed.

Pot Calling the Kettle Black closes with a simple truth:

Africa does not need permission to reclaim dignity.

The West does not own morality.

Power without integrity has no voice.

The future of Africa will not be negotiated in hypocrisy.

It will be built in truth.

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APPENDIX A

The True Thief: Western Complicity in the Largest
Corruption Enterprise in History

Epigraph: Yoruba Moral Philosophy

“Èni gbé’pò l’ájá kì í ẹ̀e olè; bi i ẹ̀ni tí ó gba a lowo e.”

He who removes oil from the roof is not the thief;

The true thief is the one who receives and keeps the
stolen goods.

This Yoruba proverb captures a moral logic largely absent from dominant Western discourses on corruption. For centuries, Europe and North America have constructed Africa as the epicentre of global corruption while systematically ignoring the historical and institutional locations where Africa’s stolen wealth has been received, stored, monetised, and displayed. If corruption includes not only the act of theft but also the knowing reception and protection of stolen goods, then Western states and institutions occupy a central—yet rarely acknowledged—position in the global corruption economy.

This appendix documents, using verifiable scholarly evidence, how Africa's material, cultural, and human wealth was violently extracted; how Western institutions benefited from that extraction; how those benefits were defended; and why recent restitution efforts constitute tacit acknowledgements of historical wrongdoing.

Stolen Wealth Does Not Transport Itself

Africa's gold, copper, diamonds, ivory, bronzes, manuscripts, ritual objects, and regalia did not migrate to Europe through neutral exchange or accidental circulation. Historical scholarship demonstrates that these materials were removed through warfare, colonial invasion, forced extraction, coercive trade arrangements, missionary confiscation, and corporate exploitation (Rodney, 1972; Coombes, 1994; Hicks, 2020). Once removed, they were transported via imperial military and commercial networks, auctioned in European markets, catalogued by museums, and incorporated into Western cultural and financial institutions.

In this case, corruption is not a metaphor. It is materially traceable in museum inventories, shipping records, colonial archives, and financial ledgers (Hicks, 2020).

The Benin Bronzes: State-Sponsored Theft as Cultural Policy

The 1897 British Punitive Expedition against the Kingdom of Benin constitutes one of the clearest examples of organised, state-sanctioned cultural theft. British troops destroyed the city, the royal palace, and more than 4,000 bronze and ivory works, which were then sent to Europe and North America to help pay for the invasion (Hicks, 2020).

Peer-reviewed museum anthropology confirms that these objects were not acquired through trade or diplomacy but seized as war trophies and sold through imperial markets (Hicks, 2020). Their presence today in institutions such as the British Museum, the Pitt Rivers Museum, and German ethnological collections represents not African corruption but imperial appropriation institutionalised as heritage.

The Congo Free State: Corporate Corruption at the Civilisational Scale

Between 1885 and 1908, King Leopold II ruled the Congo Free State as a private commercial enterprise, enforcing forced labour regimes that resulted in millions of deaths. Scholarly historical analysis documents how rubber, ivory, and mineral extraction were accompanied by systematic violence, cultural destruction, and large-scale looting of material objects sent directly to Belgium (Hochschild, 1998).

Western corporate participation and financial markets sustained this system, making it one of the most profitable and brutal corruption networks in modern history. No African political system has ever matched its size, organisation, or lethality (Hochschild, 1998).

Missionaries and moralised cultural theft.

Missionary activity across Africa frequently involved the confiscation of cultural and religious objects under the guise of moral reform. Masks, shrines, drums, staff, and initiation artefacts were removed and transported to

Europe, where they entered museums and church collections (Coombes, 1994).

Arthistorical scholarship demonstrates that this process constituted moralised theft, in which religious authority was used to legitimise cultural appropriation while denying African societies epistemic and spiritual legitimacy (Coombes, 1994).

Western Financial Institutions as Vaults of African Loot

If Africa were the primary beneficiary of corruption, its wealth would reside on the continent. Instead, peer-reviewed economic research demonstrates that illicit African wealth is overwhelmingly stored in Western financial jurisdictions, including Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Luxembourg, and offshore tax havens linked to Western legal systems (Zucman, 2015).

United Nations–commissioned research estimates that Africa loses tens of billions of dollars annually through illicit financial flows facilitated by Western banks, secrecy laws, and shell corporations (UNECA, 2020). In this framework, corruption cannot exist without the

institutions that receive, conceal, and safeguard stolen capital.

The Transatlantic Slave Trade: An Example of Organised Corruption

The transatlantic slave trade represents the largest forced transfer of human beings in recorded history. Approximately 12.5 million Africans were forcibly transported, generating enormous wealth that underpinned the development of European ports, American finance, and plantation economies (Rediker, 2007).

The result was not commerce but organised crime conducted with state backing, legal frameworks, insurance markets, and financial institutions. A continent robbed of its people cannot be credibly labelled corrupt; it was systematically exploited (Rediker, 2007).

Colonialism as Corruption with Flags

Colonial rule institutionalised corruption through land confiscation, forced labour, resource extraction, and racialised governance. Europe's industrial development

was materially dependent on African gold, diamonds, oil, copper, and agricultural labour (Rodney, 1972).

Political economy scholarship confirms that colonial extraction dwarfs all contemporary forms of corruption attributed to African states (Rodney, 1972; Coombes, 1994).

Western Defences Against Restitution

Western institutions have advanced several recurring arguments to resist restitution, including claims of superior preservation capacity, legal acquisition under colonial law, and universal heritage ownership. Official museum and governmental statements document these arguments, and restitution scholarship critically analyses them (Sarr & Savoy, 2018; Hicks, 2020).

However, colonial legality does not establish moral or juridical legitimacy. Laws created to facilitate dispossession cannot retrospectively justify it.

Restitution is evidence.

The recent wave of returns by European states—Germany, France, the Netherlands, and others—signals

more than a gesture of goodwill; it reflects mounting scholarly, legal, and public pressure to confront the violent origins of museum collections formed under colonial rule. Restitution does not take place without the presence of wrongdoing. As Sarr and Savoy (2018) argue, the very act of return constitutes an institutional acknowledgement that acquisition was neither neutral nor legitimate but embedded in conquest, coercion, and asymmetrical power. Hicks (2020) further demonstrates that these collections are inseparable from systems of organised violence, extraction, and racial hierarchy. In this sense, restitution is not charity—it is belated recognition of historical theft.

Yet restitution remains incomplete when it is stripped of moral accountability. Partial returns, defensive language, or legalistic reasons that deny wrongdoing take away the moral meaning of repatriation. Defending the theft rather than offering a humble and deliberate apology perpetuates the same logic of domination that enabled the original dispossession. Even more troubling is the

continuation of extraction “with style”—through financial conduits, cultural gatekeeping, and symbolic concessions that leave structural inequalities intact. Returning fragments while maintaining systems that syphon value from Africa does not resolve injustice; it merely refines it.

A more coherent moral framework is articulated in the biblical ethics of restitution, which insist that justice requires more than returning the principal. In Exodus 22:1–4 and exemplified in Zacchaeus’s confession (Luke 19:8), restitution involves repayment with addition—an acknowledgement that harm creates loss beyond the stolen object itself. The moral burden rests on the offender, not the victim. To accuse Africa of corruption while refusing to fully reckon with the spoils of colonial plunder is a profound inversion of justice. Genuine restitution therefore demands not only return, but also repentance, repair, and the cleansing of institutions that continue to benefit from inherited theft.

Conclusion: Reclaiming the Moral Vocabulary

The Yoruba ethical framework applied here does not deny African participation in corruption. It relocates responsibility. The bribe-taker is culpable; the bribe-giver and the system that protects the proceeds are architects. Africa's corruption narrative collapses under historical scrutiny.

Africa's wealth did not hide itself in Europe. It was looted, transported, catalogued, monetised, and defended. The true thief is not the dispossessed but the beneficiary.

APPENDIX B

Catalogue of Stolen African Artefacts by Country

This appendix catalogues some of the best-documented cases of African cultural artefacts being removed through colonial violence, military expeditions, or coercive administration. We outline the historical circumstances of removal, the categories of objects taken, and their current locations for each case, providing references to verifiable scholarly sources.

Nigeria — The Benin Bronzes

The Benin Bronzes were looted in 1897 during the British Punitive Expedition against the Kingdom of Benin. British forces destroyed the royal palace and seized more than 4,000 bronze, brass, and ivory objects, which were subsequently sold, distributed, and institutionalised across Europe and North America (Hicks, 2020).

Objects include:

The objects include ivory masks, bronze plaques, royal statues, ancestral heads, and ceremonial regalia.

Current locations include:

British Museum, Pitt Rivers Museum, Ethnological Museums in Berlin, Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), and university collections in Cambridge and Oxford. (Hicks, 2020).

Ethiopia — Maqdala (Magdala) Treasures, 1868

In 1868, British forces under Sir Robert Napier attacked Maqdala, the fortress of Emperor Tewodros II. Following the emperor's death, British troops looted vast quantities of sacred and royal objects, which were transported to Britain and incorporated into national collections (Pankhurst, 1999).

Objects include:

The collection includes the crown of Emperor Tewodros II, gold chalices, illuminated manuscripts, and royal ceremonial items.

Current locations include:

British Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, British Library, National Army Museum (Pankhurst, 1999).

Egypt — The Rosetta Stone

The Rosetta Stone was seized by the British in 1801 following the defeat of French forces in Egypt and transferred to Britain under the Treaty of Alexandria. It has remained in the British Museum since 1802 and has become emblematic of debates over imperial acquisition and restitution (Reid, 2002).

Object:

The Rosetta Stone is central to the decipherment of Egyptian hieroglyphics.

Current location:

British Museum (Reid, 2002)

Ghana — Asante (Ashanti) Royal Regalia

During the Anglo-Asante Wars of the nineteenth century (1874, 1896, and 1900), British forces looted royal regalia from the Asante Kingdom. These objects symbolised political authority and spiritual legitimacy, and they were removed as trophies of imperial conquest (McCaskie, 1995).

Objects include:

These objects include gold ornaments associated with the Golden Stool, state swords, gold masks, and royal jewellery.

Current locations include:

British Museum; Wallace Collection (London); National Museums Scotland; Birmingham Museum. (McCaskie, 1995)

Democratic Republic of Congo — Kuba and Luba Royal Artefacts

Under the Congo Free State, ruled personally by King Leopold II of Belgium, extensive looting accompanied forced labour and violent extraction. Royal and sacred objects from the Kuba and Luba kingdoms were removed and transferred to Belgium and other European collections (Hochschild, 1998).

Objects include:

Sacred masks, royal stools, carved wooden sculptures, and warrior regalia.

Current locations include:

Royal Museum for Central Africa (Tervuren); European private and institutional collections. (Hochschild, 1998)

South Africa—San Rock Art and Zulu Royal Objects.

Colonial collectors, missionaries, and ethnographers removed fragments of San rock art and Zulu royal and ceremonial objects during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These removals were justified as scientific preservation but resulted in cultural dispossession (Deacon, 1997).

Objects include:

These objects include rock art panels, ceremonial weapons, and ritual objects.

Current locations include:

Current locations include the British Museum and the Berlin Ethnological Museum (Deacon, 1997).

Cameroon—Bamiléké Thrones and Masks.

During German colonial rule in Cameroon, military officers and administrators seized royal thrones, masks, and regalia from Bamiléké chiefdoms. These objects were

transported to Germany and France and became central to European ethnographic collections (Boutrais, 2002).

Objects include:

Royal thrones, carved masks, ceremonial stools.

Current locations include:

Berlin Ethnological Museum; Musée du Quai Branly (Paris) (Boutrais, 2002)

Tanzania—Ngoni and Gogo Sacred Objects.

German colonial officers and missionaries confiscated sacred and ritual objects from Ngoni and Gogo communities during military campaigns and administrative consolidation. These removals were embedded within broader strategies of political domination (Iliffe, 1979).

Objects include:

The objects in question include sacred ritual items, ceremonial weapons, and religious objects.

Current locations include:

Hamburg Museum; German private collections. (Iliffe, 1979)

Senegal— Royal Objects of the Wolof Kingdoms

French colonial administrators removed royal and ceremonial objects from Wolof polities as symbols of conquered authority. These objects were incorporated into French national collections and ethnographic museums (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 2001).

Objects include:

These objects include royal insignia, ceremonial objects, and court regalia.

Current locations include:

French national museums. (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 2001)

Mali — Manuscripts and Islamic Scholarly Works

Scholars and administrators removed thousands of Islamic manuscripts from Timbuktu and other centres of learning during and after French colonisation. These texts, central to West African intellectual history, were transferred to European libraries and archives (Hunwick, 2003).

Objects include:

Qur'anic manuscripts, legal texts, and scientific and historical treatises.

Current locations include:

Bibliothèque nationale de France; various European archival collections (Hunwick, 2003)

Appendix C

Selective Morality and the Politics of Naming Africa

This appendix presents documented examples of how some Western political leaders describe Africa in moral terms while benefiting from global systems that protect their advantage. These examples are not criminal accusations. They are used to show double standards in global judgement. The focus is on patterns of behaviour and language.

In May 2016, David Cameron was overheard speaking at a pre-event for the UK-hosted Anti-Corruption Summit. Referring to Nigeria and Afghanistan, he said, “Nigeria and Afghanistan are possibly two of the most fantastically corrupt countries in the world.” A live microphone captured the remark during a reception at Buckingham Palace. Cameron presented himself as a global leader in the fight against corruption at that time. The statement caused strong diplomatic reactions, especially from Nigeria. Cameron later clarified the misinterpretation of

his comment and emphasised Nigeria's collaboration in anti-corruption initiatives.

Later the same year, the Panama Papers revealed Cameron's financial connection to Blairmore Holdings. This was an offshore investment fund created by his father. Cameron sold his shares only after public disclosure. He stated that the arrangement was legal and properly taxed (Obermayer & Obermaier, 2016). No crime was established. Still, the contrast is important. Corruption was named openly when it concerned Africa. Offshore finance was treated as legal and private when it involved a Western leader. This contrast reflects unequal moral standards.

A similar pattern appears in the case of Donald Trump. During his presidency, Trump made widely reported remarks that framed several African and Caribbean countries as undesirable within U.S. immigration discussions. We do not reproduce the specific wording here. Diplomats, scholars, and civil society organisations criticised the remarks. They were considered reinforcing

racial and moral hierarchies in global politics. At the same time, Trump openly stated during the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign that he reduced his tax payments by using legal gaps in the American tax system. He dismissed criticism by saying this behaviour made him "smart" (CNBC, 2016; *The New York Times*, 2016). In this case, the use of policy loopholes was framed as intelligence rather than misconduct.

These individual cases align with broader research findings. Studies indicate that tax avoidance and offshore finance cause greater revenue loss in developing countries than in wealthy ones. This loss weakens public services and increases inequality (Cobham & Janský, 2018). Despite this evidence, global anti-corruption debates often focus on African leaders and institutions. Legal financial systems, which facilitate large-scale extraction from poorer regions, receive less attention.

The key issue is not that Western leaders break the law more often. The issue is that the law often protects their advantage. The law allows them to speak with moral

authority while benefiting from unequal systems. Africa is then judged more harshly under the same global order. This appendix supports the main argument of this book. Corruption is not judged equally across the world. Illegal acts are condemned at the margins. Legalised extraction is normalised at the centre. Africa is not uniquely corrupt. It is uniquely blamed.

APPENDIX D

Western Corporate Corruption in Africa: A Historical and Contemporary Catalogue

This appendix catalogues well-documented cases of Western corporate involvement in bribery, resource theft, labour exploitation, environmental harm, and political manipulation in Africa. Each entry identifies the corporation, location(s), nature of misconduct, outcomes where applicable, and verifiable sources.

1. Royal Dutch Shell — Nigeria

Misconduct: Bribery of Nigerian officials connected to the OPL 245 oil block.

Scale/Outcome: Approximately USD \$1.3 billion paid; extensive litigation and investigations in multiple jurisdictions. (Gillies, 2010; Global Witness, 2018)

2. Glencore — DRC, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire

Misconduct: Systematic bribery to secure mining and commodity contracts.

Outcome: U.S. Department of Justice penalties exceeding USD \$1.1 billion (2022). (U.S. DOJ, 2022)

3. Halliburton / KBR — Nigeria

Misconduct: Approximately USD \$180 million in bribes to obtain LNG contracts.

Outcome: Combined penalties exceeding USD \$579 million. (U.S. SEC, 2009)

4. Siemens — Nigeria, Ghana, Angola

Misconduct: Global bribery scheme; African payments among the largest tranches.

Outcome: Global penalties of approximately USD \$1.6 billion. (Transparency International, 2011)

5. Total (France) — Angola

Misconduct: Bribery to secure oil concessions.

Outcome: Investigated in France; findings reported by investigative journalism and cited in academic corruption studies. (Le Monde Investigations, 2012)

6. Unilever — Congo (Colonial Era)

Misconduct: Forced labour regimes, land expropriation, and violent extraction under colonial concession systems.

Evidence Base: Historical scholarship on colonial corporate exploitation (Hochschild, 1998).

7. ENI / AGIP — Nigeria

Misconduct: Implicated in the OPL 245 bribery scheme alongside Shell.

Evidence Base: Court filings and NGO investigations. (Global Witness, 2018)

8. Lonmin — South Africa

Misconduct: Tax avoidance, illicit financial flows, and governance failures linked to the Marikana context.

Outcome: Documented by the Marikana Commission of Inquiry. (Marikana Commission, 2015)

9. De Beers — Botswana, South Africa

Misconduct: Market monopolisation, underpricing, and collusion during the apartheid era.

Evidence Base: Political economy histories of Southern Africa (Meredith, 2008).

10. Vodafone — Ghana

Misconduct: Transfer pricing and tax avoidance through offshore structures.

Evidence Base: Civil society investigations cited in tax justice research (ActionAid, 2016).

11. Firestone — Liberia

Misconduct: Exploitative land concessions and labour practices.

Evidence Base: Investigative scholarship and legal reporting (Mitchell, 2014).

12. Anglo American — Southern Africa

Misconduct: resource extraction, environmental degradation, and labour exploitation.

Evidence Base: Critical political economy analyses of mining capital (Bond, 2006).

13. Chevron — Nigeria

Misconduct: Environmental harm and alleged complicity in violent repression linked to oil operations.

Evidence Base: Human rights investigations (Amnesty International, 2009).

14. Barclays — Multiple African States

Misconduct: Facilitation of illicit financial flows and aggressive tax practices.

Evidence Base: Political economy analyses of offshore finance (Zucman, 2015).

15. Nestlé — Côte d'Ivoire

Misconduct: Child labour in cocoa supply chains.

Evidence Base: Independent labour audits and ILO-linked assessments (Fair Labour Association, 2012).

APPENDIX E

Giving Africa a Bad Name: A Long History of Western Discursive Violence

Across centuries, Western voices have spoken about Africa with striking consistency. Long before modern African states existed—long before independence, constitutions, elections, or contemporary governance debates—Africans were described as corrupt, inferior, immature, incapable, and unfit for self-rule. These descriptions were not casual insults or isolated prejudices. They formed a durable ideological system that justified conquest, exploitation, enslavement, and domination, while simultaneously absolving the West of responsibility for the violence and corruption it imposed on the continent.

Africa was not merely conquered by force; it was conquered by language. Words prepared the ground for invasion, softened the conscience of empire, and normalised the plunder that followed. To describe a people as childlike is to legitimise guardianship. To

describe them as corrupt is to excuse theft. To describe them as incapable is to deny them voice.

From philosophy to empire, Africa was positioned outside history. Influential Western thinkers portrayed the continent as stagnant, irrational, and morally deficient—an empty space awaiting order. These ideas were not confined to books. They shaped how policy was written, how law was enforced, and how violence was justified. When conquest arrived, it came already armed with moral permission.

Colonial administration translated prejudice into bureaucracy. Official correspondence and policy documents routinely depicted Africans as dishonest, impulsive, corruptible, and incapable of managing resources. Colonial rule was presented not as domination but as necessity. Forced labour, land seizure, punitive taxation, and violent repression were rationalised as tools of discipline for a supposedly inferior population. What was theft became administration. What was violence became order.

This discursive pattern did not end with the colonial era. Western political leaders across generations continued to describe African nations as corrupt, chaotic, and hopeless. African leaders were dismissed as irresponsible or untrustworthy, while structural factors—colonial legacies, external extraction, global financial manipulation—were rendered invisible. Governance failures in the West were debated as institutional challenges; in Africa, they were framed as proof of civilisational deficiency.

Western media reinforced this imbalance. Africa was repeatedly portrayed as a single, failing entity—a continent defined by disorder, corruption, and crisis. Individual events were generalised into cultural judgements. Political instability was detached from historical context. Corruption was described as African by nature rather than global in structure. Meanwhile, the Western systems that absorbed illicit wealth, protected exploitative contracts, and profited from African resources escaped similar moral scrutiny.

International institutions further entrenched this narrative. Africa was treated as a permanent pupil—subject to supervision, conditionality, and discipline. External control was reframed as assistance. Intervention was framed as responsibility. Extraction was reframed as partnership. In this moral universe, Africa was always the problem, never the beneficiary of a rigged system.

The result is a profound inversion of accountability. The visible actor is condemned; the invisible beneficiary is excused. The accused is the dispossessed; the judge is the receiver. Africa is shamed, while those who profited from its labour, land, minerals, and cultural treasures retain moral authority.

A Yoruba proverb captures this injustice with unsettling clarity:

He who steals from the roof is not the true thief; the true thief is the one who receives and keeps the stolen goods.

African wealth did not migrate to Europe and North America on its own. Gold, diamonds, oil, artefacts, manuscripts, and even human beings were taken,

transported, insured, traded, catalogued, displayed, banked, and monetised. To knowingly receive and profit from stolen property is corruption under every moral and legal system.

This appendix does not deny the existence of corruption in Africa. It challenges the dishonesty of a narrative that isolates corruption as an African trait while protecting the global systems that reward it. The language of corruption has been racialised, weaponised, and selectively applied. It has disciplined African agency while absolving Western power.

To call Africa corrupt without confronting this history is not analysis—it is continuation.

Transition to the Core Argument

This appendix exists to make one truth unavoidable: the language used to describe Africa today did not arise from evidence alone, but from inheritance. Long before contemporary African leaders, institutions, or economies took shape, Africa had already been assigned a moral identity in the Western imagination—corrupt, inferior,

and unfit. That identity has been recycled across centuries to justify conquest, extraction, interference, and judgement, while shielding Western systems that profited from Africa's dispossession. *Pot Calling the Kettle Black* builds on this foundation to argue that global narratives about corruption are not merely biased; they are structurally dishonest. They condemn the visible while protecting the beneficiary, and they accuse the dispossessed while excusing the receiver.

Closing Reflection: Reclaiming the Story

Every empire leaves behind more than roads, railways, and borders. It leaves a story—one repeated so often that it begins to sound like truth. For Africa, that story has been corruption, incompetence, failure, and dependence. This book has not attempted to deny Africa's challenges. Instead, it has asked a more dangerous question: *Who named those challenges, and who benefited from the naming?*

The appendices you have just read are not footnotes to history; they are mirrors. They show how Africa was

described before it could speak back, judged before it could govern itself, and condemned for conditions it did not create alone. They expose a long pattern in which Western power did not merely extract Africa's resources—it shaped the language through which that extraction was later justified.

Narratives are not innocent. They discipline imagination. They determine who is blamed, who is excused, and who is trusted to define reality. For centuries, Africa has been forced to answer questions framed by others, defend itself against accusations it did not invent, and measure itself against standards that were never applied equally. This is not a failure of governance alone; it is a failure of storytelling.

To reclaim the African narrative is not to romanticise the continent or absolve wrongdoing. It is to insist on honesty. It is to name corruption where it actually operates—in the systems that receive stolen wealth, protect illicit flows, and profit from imbalance while pointing fingers elsewhere. It is to reject the lie that

Africa's problems are uniquely African and to recognise them as part of a global architecture of power.

Reclamation begins with refusal: refusal to internalise inherited contempt, refusal to accept moral lectures from beneficiaries of extraction, and refusal to let complexity be flattened into caricature. It continues with courage—the courage to tell African stories in African voices, to centre African histories, and to interpret African realities without seeking external permission.

This book does not claim to be the final word. It is an interruption. A challenge to inherited thinking. A call to Africans and non-Africans alike to ask better questions, demand fairer standards, and recognise that corruption is not a colour, a continent, or a culture—it is a system.

The kettle has long accused the pot.

The wind has now blown.

What remains is a choice: to continue repeating a convenient lie or to confront an uncomfortable truth and begin again—this time with clarity, dignity, and ownership of the story.

Africa does not need to borrow a narrative.

Africa needs to reclaim the one that was taken.

About the book



Pot Calling the Kettle Black boldly dismantles the long-standing myth of Western moral superiority, revealing how corruption is racialised, sanitised, and hidden behind polished institutions, legal language, and media narratives. Through historical evidence and sharp analysis, Dr. Christian Adetunji exposes how Africa is branded corrupt, while far more systemic and destructive forms of corruption thrive unnoticed in global power centres. Provocative and unapologetic, the book calls for Africa to reclaim its voice, dignity, and narrative in a world built on selective morality and global hypocrisy.

About the author



Dr. Christian Matthew Adetunji is a scholar, marriage and family therapist, and public intellectual whose work interrogates power, morality, and global inequality through rigorous historical and psychological analysis. Writing with clarity and moral courage, he challenges dominant narratives and amplifies African perspectives with depth, conviction, and intellectual independence.

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ISBN: 978-99977-0-644-7

