

Colonization and Modern Slavery in Contemporary Africa in Kehinde Andrews's *The New Age of Empire*

Omar Mohamed ZIBO, (Professeur Permanent)

Laboratoire Sciences de l'Ingénieur, Management et Innovation Pédagogique (SIMIP)
 ESTEM-Casablanca, Maroc

Ibrahim YEKINI, (Enseignant-chercheur)

École Doctorale Pluridisciplinaire
Faculté des Lettres, Arts et Sciences Humaines (FLASH)
 Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Abomey-Calavi, Bénin

Adresse de correspondance :	École Supérieure en Ingénierie de l'Information, Télécommunication, Management et Génie Civil (ESTEM) 4-6, Rue Moussa Bnou Nouceir, Boulevard Moulay Youssef, Quartier Gautier Casablanca, Maroc Tél. : +212 (0) 522 260 260
Déclaration de divulgation :	Les auteurs n'ont pas connaissance de quelconque financement qui pourrait affecter l'objectivité de cette étude. Ils assument l'entière responsabilité de tout éventuel plagiat, de l'usage de l'intelligence artificielle dans la rédaction, ainsi que des résultats présentés dans cet article.
Conflit d'intérêts :	Les auteurs ne signalent aucun conflit d'intérêts.
Citer cet article	ZIBO, O. M., & YEKINI, I. (2026). Colonization and Modern Slavery in Contemporary Africa in Kehinde Andrews's <i>The New Age of Empire</i> . <i>International Journal of Accounting, Finance, Auditing, Management and Economics</i> , 7(4), 752–764. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19870096
Licence	Cet article est publié en open Access sous licence CC BY-NC-ND

Received: 21/04/2025

Accepted: 25/04/2026

International Journal of Accounting, Finance, Auditing, Management and Economics - IJAFAME

ISSN: 2658-8455

Volume 7, Issue 04 (2026)

Colonization and Modern Slavery in Contemporary Africa in Kehinde Andrews's The New Age of Empire

Abstract:

This paper investigates the persistence of colonial logics and contemporary forms of domination in Africa, drawing on Kehinde Andrews' *The New Age of Empire* (2021) as a central analytical framework. It addresses the following research question: to what extent do colonial structures continue to shape current economic, political, and epistemic dynamics that constrain African autonomy? The main objective is to examine the structural continuity between historical colonial systems and present-day mechanisms of dependency within the global neoliberal order. Methodologically, the study adopts a critical and integrative literature review, combining postcolonial theory, Pan-African thought, and decolonial approaches. It engages with key scholars such as Fanon, Rodney, Achebe, Mbembe, Klein, and Andrews to build a comparative conceptual framework linking historical colonial exploitation to contemporary global structures of power. The theoretical findings indicate that although formal colonial rule has ended, its underlying logic persists through international institutions, unequal trade relations, and financial systems that reproduce dependency. The analysis highlights significant convergences between postcolonial and Pan-African perspectives in their critique of structural inequality and global power asymmetries. However, divergences emerge regarding the strategies of transformation, particularly between reform-oriented and radical decolonial approaches. The study also identifies important theoretical limitations. Existing literature often treats colonial history and contemporary neoliberalism as separate phenomena, thereby underestimating their structural continuity. In addition, African-centered epistemologies remain insufficiently integrated into dominant analytical frameworks, limiting a fuller understanding of global power relations. In conclusion, this paper argues for the need to develop an integrated theoretical approach that reconnects colonial history with contemporary global dynamics. Such a perspective is essential for a more coherent understanding of Africa's current condition and for strengthening African epistemic autonomy within global academic discourse.

Keywords: Colonization, modern slavery, Africa, imperialism, economic dependency

JEL Classification: F54, O55, N47, B27

Type of paper: Theoretical research

Résumé:

Cet article analyse la persistance des logiques coloniales et des formes contemporaines de domination en Afrique, en s'appuyant sur l'ouvrage de Kehinde Andrews, *The New Age of Empire* (2021), comme cadre analytique principal. Il répond à la question de recherche suivante : dans quelle mesure les structures héritées du colonialisme continuent-elles de façonner les dynamiques économiques, politiques et épistémiques actuelles qui limitent l'autonomie africaine ? L'objectif est d'examiner la continuité structurelle entre les systèmes coloniaux historiques et les mécanismes contemporains de dépendance dans le contexte du néolibéralisme global. Sur le plan méthodologique, cette étude adopte une revue critique et intégrative de la littérature théorique, mobilisant les approches du postcolonialisme, du panafricanisme et des études décoloniales. Elle s'appuie sur les travaux de référence de Fanon, Rodney, Achebe, Mbembe, Klein et Andrews afin de construire un cadre conceptuel comparatif reliant l'exploitation coloniale historique aux structures contemporaines de pouvoir. Les résultats théoriques montrent que, malgré la disparition de la domination coloniale formelle, ses logiques fondamentales persistent à travers les institutions internationales, les relations commerciales inégales et les systèmes financiers qui reproduisent les rapports de dépendance. L'analyse met en évidence des convergences importantes entre les approches postcoloniales et panafricaines dans leur critique des inégalités structurelles et des rapports de pouvoir globaux. Toutefois, des divergences apparaissent quant aux stratégies de transformation, notamment entre des approches réformistes et des perspectives décoloniales plus radicales. L'étude met également en lumière certaines limites théoriques. Une grande partie de la littérature tend à dissocier le colonialisme historique des dynamiques néolibérales contemporaines, ce qui conduit à sous-estimer leur continuité structurelle. Par ailleurs, les épistémologies centrées sur l'Afrique restent encore insuffisamment intégrées dans les cadres d'analyse dominants. En conclusion, cet article souligne la nécessité d'élaborer un cadre théorique intégré reliant l'histoire coloniale aux dynamiques globales contemporaines. Une telle approche permet non seulement de mieux comprendre la condition africaine actuelle, mais aussi de renforcer l'autonomie épistémique africaine dans le champ académique international.

Mots-clés : Colonisation, esclavage moderne, Afrique, impérialisme, dépendance économique

Classification JEL : F54, O55, N47, B27

Type de papier : Recherche théorique

1. Introduction

The chains that once clanked through Africa's forests and coasts have grown quieter—but they have not broken; rather, they have changed form. Today, they operate through diplomacy, trade agreements, and global economic structures. What was once imposed by force is now often enforced through financial systems and institutional mechanisms. The effects of this transformation are not superficial. Although the visible structures of domination have evolved, their underlying logic persists, shaping contemporary African realities.

For a long time, Africa's suffering has been explained and theorized, often without sufficient consideration of African perspectives. This study does not simply revisit the past; it seeks to interrogate the present. Colonisation did not end; it evolved into new forms such as neo-colonialism, economic dependency, and cultural marginalization, frequently presented under the guise of development and democracy. This is not merely a rhetorical claim, but a lived experience. Therefore, the central problem guiding this study is the following: why does Africa, more than half a century after political independence, continue to experience forms of dependency that resemble modern slavery within the global system?

The purpose of this paper is to examine the contemporary forms of subjugation affecting Africa, using Kehinde Andrews's *The New Age of Empire* (2021) as a critical analytical framework. By tracing the ideological, economic, and epistemic roots of these dynamics, this study argues that meaningful liberation cannot be achieved through the simple adoption of Western models. Rather, it requires a re-engagement with African intellectual and historical foundations. In this regard, the paper advances the argument that Revolutionary Traditionalist Pan-Africanism, grounded in African realities, offers a relevant framework for addressing current challenges.

The significance of this study lies in its analytical and political relevance. It challenges the tendency to reduce Africa to a passive subject within Western discourse and emphasizes the importance of African agency in defining its own trajectories. The literature on colonialism and its legacies is extensive; however, certain contributions remain particularly influential. Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) demonstrates that colonialism extends beyond material exploitation to affect psychological and cultural structures. Walter Rodney, in *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972), provides a detailed analysis of the economic mechanisms through which Africa's underdevelopment was historically produced. Similarly, Chinua Achebe, in *Things Fall Apart* (1958), highlights the cultural and social disruptions caused by colonial intrusion, emphasizing the importance of narrative in reclaiming African perspectives.

Building on these foundations, Kehinde Andrews (2021) argues that contemporary global systems—particularly in trade, finance, and governance—represent a continuation of colonial structures in new forms. According to Andrews, institutions such as the IMF, the World Bank, and the United Nations often reproduce asymmetrical power relations, reinforcing dependency within African states.

Other scholars have also contributed to this critical perspective. Naomi Klein (2007), in *The Shock Doctrine*, examines how neoliberal policies are frequently imposed through crises, particularly in the Global South. Arundhati Roy (2004), in *The Ordinary Person's Guide to Empire*, critiques the ideological foundations of global power and exposes the contradictions embedded in the discourse of democracy and development. In addition, scholars such as Giovanni Arrighi, Achille Mbembe, and Robert Young emphasize that Africa's contemporary challenges cannot be fully understood without situating them within broader global systems of power.

Methodologically, this study adopts a qualitative approach based on literary and discourse analysis, applied through a decolonial lens. It engages with both primary and secondary sources drawn from Pan-African thought, postcolonial theory, and global critical scholarship. The

objective is not only to interpret *The New Age of Empire* as a text but also to situate it within a broader intellectual framework addressing the persistence of imperial structures.

This paper does not claim strict neutrality. Instead, it adopts a critical and reflexive position, recognizing that knowledge production is embedded within power relations. It seeks to contribute to ongoing debates by foregrounding African perspectives and emphasizing the importance of epistemic autonomy.

Ultimately, this study does not aim to provide definitive answers but to encourage critical reflection. Understanding Africa's current condition requires connecting colonial history with contemporary global dynamics. Such an approach allows for a more comprehensive analysis and opens the way for rethinking pathways toward genuine autonomy. As Chinua Achebe (1984) reminds us, the ability to tell one's own story remains central to recovering self-determination. This work is written in that spirit.

2. The Historical Foundations of colonial Domination

The intricate and painful history of Africa's entanglement with European colonialism is rooted deeply in its very foundations, which are often obscured by the passing of time and the dominant narratives constructed by Western academia. Kehinde Andrews, in his landmark work *The New Age of Empire* (2021), helps to illuminate these origins. He urges us to reconsider not only the economic and social impacts of colonialism but its intellectual justifications as well. The historical foundations of imperial order, Andrews argues, lie in the very pillars that shaped the wealth and political dominance of the Western world; pillars that were built on the backs of enslaved Africans and the violent subjugation of their lands and peoples.

Well, in analysing these foundations, we must start by turning our attention to the Kingdom of Dahomey in West Africa, a notable example that Andrews highlights in his critique of African complicity in the transatlantic slave trade. As Andrews notes, "The historical record is somewhat cloudy as to the emergence of the Kingdom of Dahomey in West Africa. It conquered part of what is now Nigeria in the early eighteenth century, either to end the slave trade in the region or to gain access to the slave markets on the coast" (Andrews, 2021, p. 100). This statement, which anchors much of the broader critique of the African involvement in the slave trade, compels us to engage with both the moral complexities and political necessities that characterized the dynamics between African kingdoms and European slave traders. To put it in a nutshell, Andrews' critique is not simply a historical recounting; it is a call to action, urging us to reclaim history and to recognise the continuity of imperial order in the modern world. The task is clear: to dismantle the systems that have perpetuated Africa's subjugation for centuries.

3. Modern Slavery in the Neoliberal Order

Despite the echoes of independence celebrations that once filled the streets of Accra, Kinshasa, and Nairobi, Africa did not fully emerge from the shadow of historical domination. The flags changed, the languages shifted, and administrative uniforms were replaced by suits; however, the structural dynamics of domination persisted. The old chains—those visible symbols of colonial coercion—were gradually replaced by more sophisticated instruments of finance, trade, and development assistance. As Kehinde Andrews argues in *The New Age of Empire* (2021), the contemporary global system effectively reproduces colonial logics under the framework of neoliberal governance, thereby sustaining patterns of dependency and structural inequality (Andrews, 2021, p. 56). Via this argument, Andrews identifies dynamics that are often obscured within institutional discourse and policy narratives. This is not merely a theoretical claim. It reflects observable socio-economic conditions affecting millions of individuals whose labour sustains extractive industries, whose educational infrastructures remain under-resourced, and whose territories are integrated into global markets under unequal

terms. One is therefore led to observe that, despite formal political independence, many African states continue to operate under constraints that reproduce historical forms of external domination.

That is why, in her doctoral dissertation titled *The Recolonization of African Economies: Neoliberalism and Contemporary Labour Exploitation*, Aisha Mbatha (2020) establishes a systematic link between structural adjustment policies imposed by international financial institutions and the emergence of new forms of labour exploitation. Her empirical analysis covers cases in Mozambique, Kenya, and Zambia, demonstrating how multinational corporations, supported by asymmetries in legal and financial power, extract value from both natural and human resources under conditions of limited accountability. By way of example, she examines the privatization of Zambia's copper industry, formerly a symbol of post-independence sovereignty, which was transferred to foreign firms through opaque contractual arrangements (Mbatha, 2020, p. 134). In these contexts, labour conditions deteriorated significantly, with workers exposed to insecurity, lack of protection, and precarious employment structures that recall earlier extractive systems, albeit in a transformed economic setting.

In the same vein, Didier Amadou's doctoral research (2021), *Neoliberalism and the Politics of Dispossession in West Africa*, analyses land governance in the Sahel region, where development interventions led by international organizations and non-governmental actors are frequently associated with large-scale displacement. As Amadou explains, rural populations are often relocated to facilitate agribusiness and infrastructure projects, while their historical and cultural ties to land are reframed as obstacles to modernization. In his formulation, "we are witnessing the replacement of slave masters with development consultants" (Amadou, 2021). This observation highlights a shift in the modalities of domination rather than its disappearance, suggesting continuity in the structural logic of dispossession.

Despite these documented realities, global awareness remains limited. The forms of violence described are rarely visible in mainstream media, often appearing instead in statistical reports, trade data, and technical development discourse. However, as Andrews notes, "Capitalism was never colourblind—it was born in the belly of the slave ship and matured on the sugar plantation" (Andrews, 2021, p. 22). Within this analytical framework, neoliberalism can be understood as a contemporary configuration of historical capitalist structures, continuing to extract value from African labour, resources, and institutional fragilities.

What emerges, then, is a multidimensional configuration of dependency that is simultaneously economic, epistemological, and social. The neoliberal order is particularly effective because it operates through indirect mechanisms—legal frameworks, international agreements, policy instruments, and knowledge systems—rather than through direct coercion. It is therefore more resilient precisely because it is less visible. However, as Wole Soyinka cautions, "The man dies in all who keep silent in the face of tyranny" (Soyinka, 2002, p. 105). Soyinka's assertion, in this context, extends beyond metaphorical meaning; it highlights the broader ethical implications of silence in the face of structural injustice.

That is why Andrews insists that meaningful transformation cannot emerge solely from externally driven reforms or incremental policy adjustments within existing global structures. Instead, it requires deeper epistemic and structural reconfigurations of power, knowledge, and economic relations. In this perspective, decolonial rupture is not presented as a rhetorical position, but as an analytical necessity for understanding and addressing the persistence of global inequalities.

4. Kehinde Andrews and the Critique of Imperial Modernity

Despite the rhetoric of equality and global unity, imperial modernity can be understood as a racialised project. It often rearticulates itself through the language of liberalism, yet remains structurally embedded in historically constructed racial hierarchies. Scholars within postcolonial and decolonial traditions have consistently argued that race is not a peripheral feature of the global system but one of its central organizing principles. In this regard, Kehinde Andrews (2021) reinforces this perspective by asserting that racism functions not only as a binding force within the system but as one of its constitutive elements.

Through this formulation, it becomes evident that racism should not be interpreted as a secondary dysfunction; rather, it operates as a foundational component of global structures of power. In this sense, imperialism is not merely supported by racial hierarchies but is structurally constituted through them. Consequently, any rigorous analysis of the modern world—its economic power, political organization, and global order—must account for the historical and ongoing exploitation of Black and colonized populations. Andrews' contribution, therefore, is best understood not in isolation, but as part of a broader critical tradition that seeks to expose the structural continuity between colonial domination and contemporary global inequalities.

So as to better illustrate Andrews' critique, it is useful to consider complementary scholarly contributions from Michael F. D. C. Dondelinger and Tshepo Madlingozi, who analyse global governance through a decolonial perspective. In his article, Dondelinger (2020) argues that development discourse continues to reproduce hierarchical relations inherited from colonial structures. He notes that "the postcolonial state remains entangled in a global web of standards and expectations that are anything but neutral" (Dondelinger, 2020, p. 63). Within this framework, development cannot be understood as a rupture from colonialism, but rather as its reformulated extension.

As an illustration, the structural adjustment programs of the 1980s and 1990s—particularly those promoted by international financial institutions such as the IMF—significantly weakened African public sectors under the justification of economic discipline. In many contexts, these reforms resulted in reduced access to education and healthcare, as well as the decline of local industries. Rather than representing a process of modernization, these transformations can be interpreted as forms of economic restructuring that reinforced dependency. In the same vein, Madlingozi (2015) argues that contemporary legal and economic systems in postcolonial contexts remain "only nominally postcolonial". His analysis demonstrates how international governance structures continue to limit African state sovereignty, often positioning these states within asymmetrical relations of power.

In this context, Andrews' critique gains further analytical relevance. Modernity itself can thus be interpreted as a racialised construct, functioning less as a universal project of emancipation than as a mechanism of regulation and control. Andrews (2021) emphasizes that the African experience of colonial rule should occupy a central position in global historiography rather than being treated as peripheral. Furthermore, he highlights that Enlightenment figures such as Locke and Kant, often celebrated for their philosophical contributions, were historically embedded within systems that depended on slavery and colonial exploitation. This perspective challenges dominant narratives that present modernity as inherently progressive or universal.

When reflecting upon these arguments, it becomes difficult to ignore the extent to which the foundations of the modern global order are linked to colonial violence and exploitation. The principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity, often associated with Western modernity, were historically articulated alongside practices of domination and exclusion. To examine these intellectual traditions without acknowledging their material and historical conditions risks reproducing a partial and distorted narrative. In this regard, Andrews (2021) provides a critical framework for understanding how African labour, resources, and experiences have been central to the development of the contemporary global system. Andrews argues that these issues are

far from abstract, pointing out that the world's inequalities are deeply rooted in the very knowledge systems upon which modern societies are built. He writes:

- The arrogance of its thinkers was only possible due to the violence of the first version of Western empire. The 'great thinkers' found themselves on top of the world as a result and theorized about their apparent supremacy. One of their purposes was to provide the justification for the genocide, slavery and colonialism that were utterly indispensable to Western progress. Enlightenment was pivotal in the shift into the new age of empire: it provided the universalist, supposedly rational and scientific framework of knowledge that maintained colonial logic. (Andrews, 2021, 27)

In the above quotation, Andrews' critique reveals how the intellectual legacy of the Enlightenment cannot be separated from the violent systems of domination that underpinned European expansion. The framework of reason and progress, heralded as universal during this period, was not merely a product of intellectual inquiry but was directly tied to the systemic exploitation and dehumanization of colonized peoples, particularly in Africa. Enlightenment, in Andrews' analysis, was not the beginning of an age of liberation but the ideological foundation for an empire that thrived on racial and economic inequality.

5. The Continuities Between Colonial and Contemporary Violence

Indeed, the legacy of forced labour persists in modern economic structures. Historical analyses of colonial economies show that African labour was systematically organized to serve extractive systems, often under coercive conditions and unequal terms of exchange. In this regard, Rodney (1972) demonstrates how colonial economies were structured to prioritize external accumulation over internal development. In this context, Andrews (2021) further notes that during colonial times Africans were compelled to cultivate specific crops for colonial authorities and to accept externally determined prices. Today, similar dynamics can be observed in global trade arrangements that continue to disadvantage African producers, often requiring them to operate under unfavourable conditions within international markets. These arrangements, frequently framed in the language of "free trade" and "development," may be interpreted as contemporary extensions of earlier extractive systems, where labour and resources were mobilized primarily for external benefit rather than internal development.

In the same vein, UNCTAD (2022) shows that many African economies remain structurally oriented toward the export of primary commodities, with limited diversification into higher value-added sectors. This structural pattern suggests a continuity rather than a rupture with colonial economic models. As a result, African economies often occupy peripheral positions within the global system, contributing raw materials while capturing only a limited share of the value generated.

Indeed, the economic systems established during colonial rule have not disappeared; rather, they have evolved into more complex forms of financial and institutional control. These systems continue to influence patterns of production, trade, and development across the continent. As highlighted in recent analyses, Debt Justice (2025) emphasizes that many countries in the Global South remain dependent on commodity exports, reflecting long-standing structural constraints rooted in colonial economic organization. This indicates that, instead of achieving full industrial transformation, a number of African economies continue to rely heavily on the export of natural resources such as oil, minerals, and agricultural products.

6. Pan-African Resistance and Liberation Frameworks

This part of our article seeks to explore the frameworks of Pan-African resistance, a vital and dynamic force in the ongoing struggle for genuine African sovereignty. It argues that these

frameworks must not only oppose the remnants of empire but also provide a foundation for the radical reconstruction of global systems. As Voltaire (2006) suggests, "It is dangerous to be right when the government is wrong," and this observation applies to intellectual and political resistance against neocolonial systems that continue to constrain Africa. This idea resonates with broader forms of resistance to systems of oppression and neocolonial domination. When powerful entities, such as governments or corporations, maintain structures of control, speaking out against them can entail significant risk. However, such resistance remains essential for fostering meaningful change and confronting injustice.

Pan-Africanism, a movement that is both political and cultural in nature, seeks to restore African emancipation by grounding governance and development in indigenous values and by recognising the inherent strengths within African traditions. It represents a perspective that critically acknowledges the limitations of past ideological systems, particularly capitalism and communism, which have often proven inadequate in addressing Africa's specific realities, thereby contributing to persistent patterns of exploitation and dependency (Adi, 2007; UNESCO, 1981). In its truest form, Pan-Africanism is not merely a political stance; it is an awakening of a collective spirit, a movement that transcends geographical boundaries and unites African peoples, both on the continent and across the diaspora. At its core, it strives to build a unity founded not on the superficial ideals imposed by colonial powers but on the deep bonds of shared heritage and common struggle. Scholars like Hakim Adi (2007) have often pointed out that Pan-Africanism is not merely a nostalgia for a pre-colonial past but a forward-looking movement that critically examines both the failures of past global ideologies and the fractured state of African identity under colonialism. This is what makes Pan-Africanism so relevant today.

In this, Africa's strength lies in its ability to rebuild, not from foreign blueprints, but from the very foundation of its own cultural and intellectual heritage. The preservation and celebration of African identity are not just acts of defiance against centuries of exploitation they are the means by which Africa can reassert its rightful place in the world. Kehinde Andrews, with piercing clarity, reflects on the profound shifts that occurred after the Second World War and their direct impact on the Pan-African movement. He writes:

- Worse still, both World Wars were truly global and the natives who had fought in their millions for the mother countries were restless. They demanded freedom and had the experience of armed warfare to achieve it. The fifth Pan-African Congress, which brought together leaders of resistance movements across Africa and the diaspora took place in Manchester in 1945. For the first time in the movement's forty-five year history the delegates from Africa, the Caribbean and the Americas proclaimed their demands for the full independence of Africa from European rule (Andrews, 2021, p. 136).

Andrews makes a critical point here. The shift after the Second World War marked a decisive rupture with the imperialist systems of the past. It is almost as if the great empires, once so seemingly invincible, had overreached themselves, stretching their resources thin and losing sight of the very foundation that had once held their power: the labour and subjugation of colonised peoples. The wars had not only stripped Europe of its material wealth, but they had also given the colonised a new kind of weapon: the knowledge of their own strength. Thus, it is easy to see how Andrews' reflections illuminate not just the history of the Pan-African movement but the continuing struggle for true independence

Despite the conceptual coherence of Pan-Africanism, with its historical grounding and normative ambitions, some scholars adopt a more critical stance. They argue that this vision may appear overly ambitious in light of persistent structural challenges across the continent, including both historical legacies and internal governance constraints. As Ali Mazrui (1995) observes, the idealism of Pan-Africanism can, at times, overlook internal dynamics such as corruption, ineffective leadership, and political instability, which may undermine its practical

implementation. While these critiques are not without empirical and analytical relevance, they often engage only partially with the broader structural and historical conditions shaping these challenges. In this light, critiques of the limitations of Pan-Africanism require careful reconsideration. The issue does not lie in the alleged over-ambition of the vision itself; rather, it resides in the structural conditions that systematically constrain the realization of continental unity. As African scholars committed to the project of emancipation, it is important to emphasize that the appropriate response is not to abandon this vision, but to renew and strengthen it with greater analytical rigor and strategic urgency. This entails integrating historical insights with contemporary realities, while reinforcing intellectual, economic, and cultural capacities. Such an approach may provide the necessary foundation for articulating a trajectory that is not only oriented toward political independence, but also toward sustainable dignity and self-determination. Achebe, in his timeless wisdom, often reminded us that colonialism did not simply steal land it unstitched the very fabric of African moral, social, and political life. In *the Trouble with Nigeria* (1984), he asserted that “the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership.” But he did not stop there he traced that failure to an inheritance of colonial structures that rewarded obedience to empire over loyalty to one's own nation (Achebe 1984). Thus, to critique Pan-Africanism without acknowledging the structural sabotage behind African political instability is to view a wounded bird and blame it for failing to fly. The continued plunder of Africa's resources, the meddling in her electoral processes, and the pressuring of her leaders through debt diplomacy; these are not relics of the past. They are the quiet but brutal weapons of a war that never really ended. And so, while Pan-Africanism may carry the weight of romanticism, it also carries the urgency of truth. It remains one of the few frameworks that dares to dream of unity not as a Western charity, but as an African necessity. If unity seems elusive today, it is not because Africans have failed. It is because the noose of empire has merely changed form, now stitched into the fine print of foreign policy and development aid.

As African scholars, we do not romanticise Pan-Africanism. We recognise its challenges, its unresolved debates, and its occasional silences. However, we also acknowledge its enduring significance—the intellectual and political audacity to envision an Africa in which dignity is non-negotiable and sovereignty is substantive rather than merely symbolic. And if this vision has, at times, faltered, then it may not be the vision itself that is inherently flawed, but rather the structural conditions that have persistently constrained its realization. Indeed, we maintain that Pan-Africanism, particularly in its revolutionary traditionalist orientation, offers a more grounded and enduring analytical framework. It is a perspective that suggests that, before external models are adopted, there is a need to critically reconnect with indigenous epistemologies and historical experiences. It reminds us that African societies developed complex systems of governance long before colonial intervention. It further demonstrates that the principles of unity, justice, and solidarity are not external impositions, but are deeply rooted in African historical and cultural traditions. As John Stuart Mill (1998) once stated, “The worth of a state, in the long run, is the worth of the individuals composing it” (Mill, 1998, p. 107). That is to say, a government must reflect its people, their aspirations, and their dignity. But how can this be achieved when justice is absent, and when the scars of empire continue to shape the realities of our nations? In this light, justice must be understood as having two dimensions. The first is reparation—a necessary reckoning with the past. The abuses of colonialism, the betrayals of neo-colonialism, and the continued exploitation of African resources are not wounds that time alone can heal. They require acknowledgment, restitution, and accountability. We cannot simply forgive and forget. As Kehinde Andrews (2021) argues, the system of racial capitalism continues to constrain Africa's development. The second face of justice is future-facing. If Africa is to move beyond the reach of empire, it must build legal systems that are not imported wholesale from Europe, but are born of African soil. John Locke (1988) argues that justice

constitutes a foundational principle of society, while Thomas Hobbes (1996) warns that the absence of justice leads to social disorder and instability. Both theoretical perspectives remain relevant in this discussion; however, they require contextualization within African socio-political realities. In this regard, externally derived models of justice may prove insufficiently adapted to local conditions, as normative frameworks developed in different historical and cultural contexts do not always correspond to African lived experiences. Consequently, using such systems without careful adaptation may lead to problems in understanding and in practice. This section of our, lifts the veil and has further revealed how the promise of democracy so often sold as the final cure for colonial wounds has become, for many Africans, yet another betrayal. Democracy, in its Western design, was not a gift to Africa. It was a condition, imposed and enforced through loans, policies, and subtle forms of coercion. As Andrews (2021) rightly insists, the colonial project did not end with political independence; it simply changed form. What we are witnessing today is not the birth of liberated nations, but the continuation of a system that keeps Africa economically dependent and politically fragmented. It is within this context that we argue for a revolutionary traditionalist Pan-Africanism not as nostalgia, but as a strategy. Where democracy in its imported form has failed, Pan-Africanism offers a home-grown alternative rooted in unity, justice, and African sovereignty. It provides not merely a critique of the colonial present, but a roadmap toward self-determination. Most crucially, it insists that justice (both retrospective and forward-looking) must be the foundation of any meaningful liberation.

7. Empirical Evidence on the Economic Effects of Colonialism and Modern Dependency

A growing number of empirical studies in development economics show that the economic effects of colonialism and slavery are still visible in today's Africa. Indeed, Acemoglu et al. (2001) show that regions that experienced strong colonial exploitation often have lower levels of industrial development, less diversified economies, and higher income inequality. In the same line, Nunn (2008) demonstrates that historical institutions continue to influence current economic performance, especially in terms of GDP growth and productivity. In the same vein, Frankema and Van Waijenburg (2012) show that colonial economic systems contributed to the persistence of informal employment in many African countries. As a result, a large part of the workforce remains outside formal protection systems, with limited access to stable jobs and social security.

As an illustration, Mkandawire (2010) shows that structural adjustment programmes introduced in the 1980s often reduced public spending in key sectors such as education, health, and infrastructure. Consequently, these policies had mixed or negative effects on employment creation and long-term economic development. Similarly, UNCTAD (2022) reports that many African economies still depend heavily on the export of raw materials, with limited participation in higher-value industrial production. This situation continues to position many countries in a dependent role within the global economic system.

Therefore, the empirical literature generally converges on the idea that colonial and postcolonial economic structures continue to shape Africa's development path. However, it also reveals some differences in interpretation, particularly regarding the relative impact of historical factors and current governance choices. In this context, it becomes clear that a more integrated approach is needed to better understand the continuity between colonial history and present-day global economic systems.

8. Conclusion

The analytical engagement with *The New Age of Empire* alongside the lived realities of the

African continent reveals a central and enduring observation: colonisation has not disappeared; rather, it has undergone structural transformation. It has reconfigured itself through contemporary mechanisms embedded in governance systems, educational frameworks, economic structures, and identity formation, often mediated by global finance, international law, and soft-power diplomacy. In this rearticulated context, the figure of domination is no longer the imperial soldier but the technocrat. Nonetheless, the outcome remains fundamentally unchanged—forms of subjugation now presented as partnership, and patterns of exploitation reframed within the discourse of cooperation.

Kehinde Andrews's critique, grounded in historical awareness and articulated with urgency, does not merely invite interpretation; it compels critical confrontation and structural dismantling. His work transcends the boundaries of conventional academic reflection and operates as a warning signal that resonates across multiple African contexts. As an illustration, the persistence of structural inequalities in regions such as the Sahel (Rodney, 1972), the extractive dynamics within the Congo's mining sectors, and the regulatory influence of international financial institutions demonstrate the continuity of imperial logics. In actual fact, these dynamics extend into the everyday experiences of African youth (Diouf, 2003), many of whom perceive limited prospects within their own societies. Thus, the issue extends beyond economic or political dimensions; it fundamentally concerns dignity and the question of whether Africa will remain an object of discourse or emerge as an active subject of its own narrative.

The proposed response, as Andrews suggests, does not reside in replicating Western institutional models nor in seeking validation within a global system historically structured around exclusion. Rather, it necessitates the articulation of a transformative and contextually grounded vision—one that is culturally, politically, and spiritually rooted in African realities. This perspective aligns with what may be conceptualized as Revolutionary Traditionalist Pan-Africanism, an ideological framework that simultaneously acknowledges ancestral heritage and advances demands for contemporary justice while projecting a redefined future. In this sense, it constitutes both a politics of resistance and a framework for reimagination, drawing from indigenous epistemologies while engaging critically with modern global structures.

Consequently, a process of reorientation becomes necessary—one that begins internally. Governance structures must reflect African value systems; judicial frameworks must resonate with lived African experiences; and educational institutions must prioritize African knowledge systems. Similarly, cultural expressions, including language, art, and political discourse, must move beyond justificatory positions regarding African identity. This process is central to what Andrews identifies as epistemic liberation. Indeed, the continued reliance on external linguistic and historical frameworks in education contributes to forms of alienation, thereby reinforcing what may be described as the colonisation of the mind—arguably one of the most enduring and insidious dimensions of imperial influence.

Moreover, the demand for reparative justice must be articulated with increased clarity and persistence. Such a demand does not constitute an appeal for benevolence but rather a call for historical accountability. The economic foundations of major European powers were significantly constructed through the extraction of African resources and labour. Therefore, advocating global equality without addressing these historical imbalances remains ethically untenable. Within this context, Pan-Africanism emerges not as a retrospective ideal linked solely to figures such as Nkrumah, Sankara, and Lumumba, but as a dynamic and evolving framework capable of redefining Africa's position within the global system.

As a result, it becomes evident that the future of Africa, as argued by Nkrumah (1965), will not be determined within international policy arenas such as Geneva or Washington (Mbeki, 1998), but rather within African institutions and communities themselves. Educational spaces, legislative bodies, grassroots movements, and the collective agency of African youth constitute

the primary sites of transformation. This perspective reflects the foundational principle within Andrews's work—a commitment not to an abstract idealism, but to a grounded belief in the possibility of an Africa liberated from enduring imperial constraints. Such an Africa would not merely adapt to global dynamics but actively participate in shaping them.

To conclude, this article has sought to engage critically with Kehinde Andrews's *The New Age of Empire*, positioning it not only as an analytical critique of contemporary global structures but also as a call to action. This call resonates across diverse African contexts, challenging the assumption that political independence equates to genuine freedom. It encourages a reimagining of Africa beyond historical limitations, grounded in the strength of its own intellectual and cultural vision. Within this framework, revolutionary Pan-Africanism does not suggest dependency but asserts autonomy—it affirms that Africa does not require external salvation but rather recognition, respect, and leadership. In this regard, the well-known assertion—"Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter" (Achebe, as cited in Okpewho, 1992)—remains particularly relevant. It underscores the imperative for Africa not only to reclaim its historical narrative but also to assert authorship over its future trajectory.

References:

- (1). Acemoglu, D., Johnson, S., & Robinson, J. A. (2001). The colonial origins of comparative development: An empirical investigation. *American Economic Review*, 91(5), 1369–1401.
- (2). Achebe, C. (1958). *Things fall apart*. Heinemann.
- (3). Achebe, C. (1984). *The trouble with Nigeria*. Heinemann.
- (4). Achebe, C. (1990). *Hopes and impediments: Selected essays 1965–1987*. Anchor Books.
- (5). Adi, H. (2007). *Pan-Africanism: A history*. Zed Books.
- (6). Amadou, D. (2021). *Neoliberalism and the politics of dispossession in West Africa: A postcolonial critique* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Ghana).
- (7). Amnesty International. (2016). *This is what we die for: Human rights abuses in the Democratic Republic of the Congo power the global trade in cobalt*. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr62/3183/2016/en/>
- (8). Andrews, K. (2021). *The new age of empire: How racism and colonialism still rule the world*. Bold Type Books.
- (9). Arrighi, G. (2002). *The politics of hunger and the world economy*. Monthly Review Press.
- (10). Debt Justice. (2022). *Colonialism and debt*. <https://debtjustice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Colonialism-and-Debt-briefing.pdf>
- (11). Diouf, M. (2003). Engaging postcolonial cultures: African youth and public space. *African Studies Review*, 46(2), 1–12.
- (12). Dondelinger, M. F. D. C. (2020). The global governance of development: Beyond the colonial legacy. *Global Society*, 34(1), 59–77.
- (13). Du Bois, W. E. B. (1994). *The souls of Black folk*. Dover Publications.
- (14). Fanon, F. (1963). *The wretched of the earth*. Grove Press.
- (15). Ferguson, T. (1999). *Globalization and the politics of empire: From world war to structural adjustment*. Harvard University Press.
- (16). Frankema, E., & Van Waijenburg, M. (2012). Structural impediments to African growth? New evidence from real wages in British Africa, 1880–1965. *The Journal of Economic History*, 72(4), 895–926.
- (17). Hobbes, T. (1996). *Leviathan* (R. Tuck, Ed.). Cambridge University Press.

- (18). Klein, N. (2007). *The shock doctrine: The rise of disaster capitalism*. Picador.
- (19). Locke, J. (1988). *Two treatises of government* (P. Laslett, Ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- (20). Madlingozi, T. (2015). Social justice in a time of neo-apartheid constitutionalism: Critiquing the anti-black economy of recognition, redistribution and representation. *Stellenbosch Law Review*, 26(3), 123–147.
- (21). Mazrui, A. A. (1995). *The African condition: A political diagnosis*. Heinemann Educational Books.
- (22). Mbatha, A. (2020). *The recolonization of African economies: Neoliberalism and contemporary labour exploitation* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Cape Town).
- (23). Mbembe, A. (2019). *Necropolitics*. Duke University Press.
- (24). Merriam-Webster. (2025). *Exploitation*. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/exploitation>
- (25). Mignolo, W. D. (2011). *The darker side of Western modernity: Global futures, decolonial options*. Duke University Press.
- (26). Mill, J. S. (1998). *On liberty and other essays* (J. Gray, Ed.). Oxford University Press.
- (27). Mkandawire, T. (2010). From maladjusted states to democratic developmental states in Africa. In O. Edigheji (Ed.), *Constructing a democratic developmental state in South Africa: Potentials and challenges* (pp. 59–81). HSRC Press.
- (28). Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o. (1986). *Decolonising the mind: The politics of language in African literature*. James Currey.
- (29). Nkrumah, K. (1963). *Africa must unite*. Panaf Books.
- (30). Nunn, N. (2008). The long-term effects of Africa's slave trades. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 123(1), 139–176.
- (31). Nyerere, J. K. (1966). *Freedom and unity: A selection from writings and speeches*. Oxford University Press.
- (32). Okpewho, I. (1992). *African oral literature: Backgrounds, character, and continuity*. Indiana University Press.
- (33). Oxford English Dictionary. (2025). *Colonialism*. Oxford University Press.
- (34). Rodney, W. (1972). *How Europe underdeveloped Africa*. Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications.
- (35). Roy, A. (2004). *The ordinary person's guide to empire*. Seven Stories Press.
- (36). Said, E. W. (1979). *Orientalism*. Vintage Books.
- (37). Soyinka, W. (2002). *The man died: Prison notes*. Penguin Classics.
- (38). UNESCO. (1981). *General history of Africa: Volume IV*. UNESCO.
- (39). United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. (2022). *Economic development in Africa report 2022: Rethinking the foundations of export diversification in Africa*. United Nations. <https://unctad.org/publication/economic-development-africa-report-2022>
- (40). Voltaire. (2006). *Philosophical dictionary* (W. F. Fleming, Trans.). Project Gutenberg.
- (41). Young, R. (2001). *Postcolonialism: An historical introduction*. Blackwell.