



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Business elites and the political economy of philanthropy in West and Central Africa*

Corentin Cohen¹  and Jean-Pierre Bat²

¹Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Oxford, Manor Road Building, Manor Road, Oxford OX1 3UQ, UK and ²Centre Jean Mabillon, École Nationale des Chartes, Paris Sciences Lettres, 65 rue de Richelieu, 75002 Paris, France. Currently seconded to the ministry for European and Foreign Affairs of France.

Corresponding author: Corentin Cohen; Email: corentin.cohen@politics.ox.ac.uk

Abstract

This article analyses the philanthropic practices of wealthy businessmen in West and Central Africa and how they are rooted in different political economies. Current debates on African philanthropy focus on horizontal gifting as a form of solidarity. Drawing on observations, interviews and original data on the activities of corporations and foundations, we identify three types of philanthropic practices that support different forms of economic accumulation and social reproduction. They also promote new forms of governance and transnational networks. First, gifts to parties and governments contribute to neo-patrimonial dynamics. Second, in the wake of democratisation processes, some business elites started to use grants and partnerships with civil societies and international organisations to promote the rule of law and constrain prebendalism. A third type of practices comprise venture philanthropy, seed funding and incubators claims to ‘Africanise’ capital flows. It positions finance professionals as intermediaries between the offshore world and the new leaders they support.

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Introduction: african businessmen and the new gospel of prosperity

I believe that the next generation to come after this, generation four, has a unique opportunity to transform the continent. Specifically, they can do two things that previous generations have not done. The first thing they need to do is they need to create prosperity for the continent. The second thing that this generation needs to do is to create our institutions. They need to build these institutions such that we are never held to ransom again by a few individuals like Robert Mugabe. Now, all of this sounds great, but where are we going to get this generation four from?¹

In a few words and a fine-tuned historical narrative, Fred Swaniker recreates the Pantheon of African history. His speech highlights how philanthropists attempt to reshape the figure of the leader of the 21st century. Swaniker is a former McKinsey top executive and the chairman of the African Leadership Academy, a network which aims to train almost 6,000 ‘transformative leaders’ for Africa within 50 years. His speech suggests an analytical effort to move away from the figure of the ‘big man’ to look at the generation of ‘shapers’ and financial elites who position themselves as brokers for access to private investment as well as patrons of a new generation of entrepreneurs. This is important as these elites promise to ‘Africanise’ the theory of philanthropy and to create a new development pathway.

But how does one compare the philanthropic practices of Sudanese British billionaire Mo Ibrahim, who supported unions involved in the Sudanese democratic transition, with those of Tony Elumelu, a former banker, whose Lagos-based foundation offers seed money for fintech companies? Do these practices have anything in common with the distribution of food by Sahelian traders during religious commemorations?

Our approach goes beyond normative debates regarding philanthropy (Bishop & Green 2008; Giridharadas 2018) and aims to foster research on the practices of economic elites who say they professionally engage in philanthropy (as bona fide philanthropists). Over the last 30 years on the African continent, the number of foundations has multiplied and there is a growing interest in the topic. But the practices and strategies we analyse have rarely been taken into consideration. The existing literature on philanthropy in Africa focuses on ‘horizontal’ gifts between individuals, or from individuals to communities. These gifts are described as fostering reciprocity and solidarity networks in collaborative or non-agonistic ways (Fowler 2022). Independently of the impact of gifts, we show that this kind of approach contributes to an exceptionalisation of elites who are often described as altruistic. This depoliticises our understanding of their effects.

Drawing on original data, this article identifies philanthropic practices of businessmen of West and Central Africa that are rooted in political economies that have transformed with the move from neo-patrimonial structures to attempts to create free markets and democratic regimes since the 1990s,

with the later development of offshore finance and foreign direct investment coming from outside the continent. The article contributes to disrupting existing debates on African philanthropy as it analyses these practices empirically. It shows that philanthropy nurtures relations which support economic elites' accumulation of wealth or facilitate the operations of their companies. Existing scholarship has thus ignored that, as elsewhere, economic elites and wealthy individuals use philanthropy to reinforce their power, shape the public sphere and transform political orders. This leads us to put aside the distinction between horizontal and vertical philanthropy that is often used for research on the continent, which posits that vertical gifting is political, strategic and self-interested, and horizontal gifting altruistic. In fact, the role of philanthropic foundations is increasingly to position businessmen in transnational networks that are both vertical and horizontal. Philanthropy creates partnerships with foreign actors that include states, development agencies, banks and private consortiums who want to influence the continent, stabilise investments or extract wealth. In the meantime, these practices are also horizontal as they position philanthropists as supporters, brokers and intermediaries between the foreign actors and network of individuals or communities that can potentially bypass politicians and government.

Approach and method

Studying West and Central African capitalists' philanthropic practices raises methodological and conceptual challenges. As elsewhere, it is very challenging to engage in participant observations of elites (Cousin *et al.* 2018). But there is also a lack of statistical data or peer-reviewed quantitative research on the topic in the region. This can be accounted for by the fact that donations of money, time or goods are not always publicly disclosed. It is also hard to identify donations in contexts where this practice is not legally defined by states (Bado 2022). Gifts may be exaggerated or informally organised along patronage and kinship networks (Obadare & Krawczyk 2022). In addition, taxation indicators which are key in most studies on wealth and inequality are not available in the region. Concepts such as 'wealthy individuals' or HNWIs (high net worth individuals) are often used point to a phenomenon of economic concentration. But levels and thresholds of wealth are contextual. They do not tell us much about how these individuals and groups engage with the rest of society.

A second challenge has to do with the fact that, despite their visibility and place in debates on Africa's development, philanthropic gifts by the African wealthy are in fact a rare occurrence. For instance, between 2010 and 2019 large philanthropic gifts (over US\$1 million) originating from the five African countries with the highest concentration of rich individuals were estimated to amount to only \$100 million per year.² In 2020, the COVID pandemic drew attention to initiatives such as the Private Sector Coalition Against COVID in Nigeria. But Africa-wide research suggests that even if the number of \$1 million donations increased from an average of six per year to 45 during the COVID pandemic, the total amount donated did not exceed \$250 million, of which over \$160 million was concentrated in Nigeria, Kenya and South

Africa.³ One explanation for this discrepancy between relatively little resources allocated and high visibility may be that most existing research on the topic draws on the work of these foundations. The high visibility of such otherwise unrepresentative practices may also be accounted for by the relatively small number of African billionaires (22 in 2021⁴), who become symbols of success.

To go beyond these challenges, some have suggested looking at how elites depend on relationships with the rest of society (Copans 2020). For instance, investigating the charitable industrial complex around nature conservation in the US has given an understanding of how ultra-wealthy people frame relations with poorer social groups and use philanthropic practices to protect what they define as their interests (Farrell 2020). This article follows these approaches. We are not interested in discussing motivations or what these foundations call their ‘impact’ but rather the ‘how’s’: how businessmen give and how the gifts establish relationships with beneficiaries. We propose a socio-historical analysis of philanthropic practices and their political economies in a context in which ‘businesspeople enjoy both “structural power” and “instrumental power”, but the ways in which this power has been exercised to support their emergence has been understudied’ (Behuria 2019: 4). The article uses Tilly’s concept of repertoires of collective action and contention (1986, 2008), and the idea that the tools and forms of actions of different social groups have specific constraints, modalities and effects on different publics (beneficiaries and their societies) which we identify. Tilly, Tarrow and other sociologists and historians have developed this approach to describe and then analyse the transformations of these practices over time, their different scopes and scales (McAdam *et al.* 2001; Tilly & Tarrow 2007). Using this approach we engage with the various meanings of philanthropy that make it a slippery object (Daly 2012), varying between service delivery, charity, investment in companies and people (Gurin & Van Til 1990). We seek to dissect the kind of gifts West and Central African philanthropists give, the tools their foundations use, their relations with those who benefit from their wealth and the political effects of these practices.

To do so, we draw on a variety of sources and data combining observations, interviews and desk research to triangulate information. First, we carried out unique participant observation of the activities and campaigns of two foundations in 2015–2018 that were aiming to set international standards as they engaged in two trials of dictators and kleptocrats. We attended hearings, met with participants and observed them as they interacted with funders. These are important data and cases that we hope will foster academic debate. We also attended events and meetings co-organised or sponsored by various foundations.⁵ The observation of the campaigns and trials revealed that some grants and endowments focused on norm building and were aimed at civil society rather than political parties or entrepreneurs. This seemed like a novel discovery as the literature has until now focused on authoritarian ‘big men’ and gifts associated with neo-patrimonialism. We aimed to highlight this international dimension and the importance of transnational campaigning. As we expanded the research through interviews we came across other patterns of philanthropic practices. We finally conducted more than 80 semi-

direct interviews with businessmen, executives of these foundations and their beneficiaries in order to highlight singularities and commonalities between practices. Most interviews were conducted between 2015 and 2020, with additional interviews in 2021 and 2022 to fine-tune the typology of practices. We draw on network sampling with economic elites we have worked with over the last 15 years and whose philanthropy and political networks we had indirectly observed, mostly in Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Cameroon and Gabon. We also met interlocutors at business forums and think-tank conferences.⁶ With very few exceptions – identified in the footnotes – these interviews were given on condition of anonymity. The philanthropists interviewed (30) were CEOs and executives of medium and large companies with national and regional activities (having more than 50 employees); traders; bankers and financial services providers whose ages range from late 30s to 70s, with an estimated average of 60, and who all conduct gifting. Our interviewees described the economic and political strategies of their companies, how their environment constrained their operations, how they thought their philanthropic practices supported their businesses, and how they thought philanthropists should professionalise their gifting. This helped us to identify the different models, strategies and imaginaries associated with these practices and come up with a precise description of practices. As we classed and interpreted the data gathered, the interviews were triangulated with desk research and media archives that allowed us to trace the development of the companies and foundations. We used the same method to gather information on the relationships these practices create with those who benefit from gifts. We also interviewed politicians, activists, lawyers, whistleblowers and entrepreneurs (50). We asked them about their relationships with donors, how they engage in long-term exchanges, what were their concerns and objectives, and how they decided to use the money they received. We then came up with a detailed typology of philanthropic practices and their effects rather than a typology of social groups or of the philanthropists and business elites themselves. This is because companies and foundations transform over time, as is the case for their political economies over the last 30 years.

Theoretically, the analysis of philanthropic practices contributes to improving our understanding of economic elites and sub-groups of elites. As pointed out by major publications on the topic in the mid-1990s, there is still a dearth of research on economic elites and on the kind of development they produce (Berman & Leys 1993; Ellis & Fauré 1995). This is the case because since the early works on neo-patrimonialism (see Eisenstadt 1973; Médard 1992) there has been an enduring view that elites need to straddle public and private/political and economic positions, and that there is a natural move from political power to the economic sphere that is often seen as independent from it (Daloz 2003). One of the reasons for this is that political elites have historically been reluctant to support the advent of a national bourgeoisie (see Leys 1975 about Kenya), even if there are exceptions to this in countries such as Côte d'Ivoire and the PDCI (Rapley 1994) or Senegal (Boone 1993). Dependency theorists and their opponents have both been discussing the conditions of emergence of capitalist classes (Langdon 1977), and also categorisations of domestic, internal and

indigenous elites. Work regarding elites in Africa thus continues to ignore differences between traditional, political, bureaucratic, military and economic elites, who are sometimes seen as sub-groups of a singular elite, and thought to employ the same strategies. For instance, Mann & Berry (2016: 9), drawing on the works of Bräutigam *et al.* (2002) and Handley (2008), claim that 'value extraction did not require wider economic predictability, and business elites seldom developed a generalised voice or an autonomous identity separate from political elites'. Our findings suggest that in some African states, economic elites are more segmented and autonomous from political elites than they seem.

Our approach leads us to identify three types of philanthropic practices that are rooted in different political economies: (1) politically aligned gifts to parties and governments that contribute to neo-patrimonial dynamics; (2) gifts to 'rule-of-law entrepreneurs' and civil society movements that emerged in the 1990s which set up political norms and standards such as in the field of anti-corruption; (3) venture capital gifts through seed funding and incubators. These practices result in the shaping of differing political economies and international orders. This typology is therefore useful to categorise economic elites' form of engagement with politics, the transformations of this form of engagement and how this supports capital accumulation.

In the wake of debates among researchers on African capitalists, the first type of gift was identified in the literature as attributes of 'big manism'. These philanthropists are mostly traders and industrialists who professionalised their evergetism in the 1990s after they benefited from Structural Adjustment Plans, indigenisation programmes or state incentives. Philanthropic practices cement political relations with ruling political parties and juntas as they put elites' economic capital at the service of politicians and governments, including to deliver services and public goods in their names. But the analytical figure of the big man obscures the emergence of a second type of norm-building gift to 'rule-of-law entrepreneurs' that may be specific to West Africa. Economic elites who engage in this form of philanthropy adopted a new repertoire of action in the early 2000s as they worked with urban middle classes, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and multilateral organisations to promote the rule of law and support the emergence of an independent civil society. These practices contribute to creating an environment in which businesses are protected from arbitrary decisions and prebendalism, both by norms and international scrutiny. Finally, a third type of practice is often called impact or venture philanthropy. It is that of the 'shapers', who work with offshore capital and claim to use financial instruments to Africanise capitalism and develop the continent.

Each section of the article that follows reflects on how philanthropic practices shape relations between segments of societies or transnational networks and how this contributes to the emergence of reimagined communities.

A biased debate on philanthropy in Africa

This first section provides a review of the literature on philanthropy in Africa. Despite a growing interest in philanthropy in Africa, there is a dearth of

research on the topic. For instance, out of the 26 chapters of the *Palgrave Handbook of Global Philanthropy* edited by Wiepking & Handy (2015), not a single one focuses on Sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, the existing management and philanthropy literatures regarding Africa over-emphasise philanthropy as a form of redistribution and horizontal process of solidarity. This literature ignores political and sociological research outside Africa that shows that philanthropic practices are an integral part of elites' reproduction strategies. Focusing on horizontal practices rather than the political scene can be misleading and lead to philanthropic practices being exceptionalised. The section highlights the gap between existing research on Africa and scholarship that has discussed how businessmen's practices aim to influence and shape their environment.

Most of the current discussion on philanthropy has come from actors who are driving the development of an African philanthropy agenda. It has been fuelled by a growing number of reports produced, supported or developed in partnership with foundations, private consultancies and companies engaged in philanthropy. For instance, the Centre on African Philanthropy and Social Investment (CAPSI) think-tank was developed by 'various African philanthropy foundations' in order 'to effectively promote the teaching, research and practice of philanthropy in Africa'⁷ and organise events in partnerships with foundations and business schools,⁸ some of whose members are on the boards of the think-tanks. Some philanthropy experts have also worked for foundations created by wealthy entrepreneurs. For instance, the University of Cambridge's former Centre for Strategic Philanthropy partnered with the Tony Elumelu Foundation and studied it 'as an informative resource for other organisations in the philanthropy sector'.⁹ Overall, this grey literature aims to use case studies to promote philanthropy and what it labels as good practice.

Up until now, experts continue to debate 'the principles of African philanthropy' in a context where philanthropy is considered a new way of organising horizontal solidarity as part of a broader 'value system' and 'to revisit the link between pan-Africanism and African philanthropy' (Moyo & Ramsamy 2014). These works follow the idea that there is a specific form of morality and logic behind these gifts, in line with Peter Eke's thesis of the two publics composed of the state vs. the population which are supposed to be distinct (1975). Scholars have looked at the origins of *Ubuntu* in South Africa (Metz 2007; Sarra & Berman 2017) and *Awqaf* in Egypt (Herrold 2018) as ways to structure new forms of communities. Some have shown that African practices of philanthropy cannot be analysed through the formality/informality tension or by looking at the different motivations of givers, and that these practices need to be put in very diverse social, political and cultural contexts (Mati 2016). In fact, discussing motivations of philanthropists does not help to establish conceptual distinctions (Prince & File 1997). This is why we follow Payton & Moody (2008) who consider (following Kellogs) that philanthropy is eminently political as it is the 'giving of time, money and know-how to advance the common good'.

The literature quoted previously also highlights the growing institutionalisation of African philanthropy through foundations, a Western-centric

model inherited from the European protestant development of banks and from public trusts in the US (Reich *et al.* 2017: 344). This suggests that repertoires of philanthropic practices are in fact global. As is the case with the *zakat* and doctrines of religious charity in the Arab world, gift-giving is more and more professionalised and has become embedded in philanthropic discourses (Ibrahim & Sherif 2008).

But because our understanding of African philanthropy remains shaped by the emphasis on solidarity and links between individuals or individuals and communities, it often ignores discussions regarding power, politics and statehood. Yet, it has been shown that philanthropy was inseparable from the development of 19th-century capitalism in Europe and in the British Empire, as it was an integral part of corporate strategies (Joyce 1980; Shepherd & Toms 2019). Existing scholarship on Africa has not taken into account that philanthropy is part of corporations' and rich individuals' attempts to set international or national security agendas (see Hägel 2021 on security issues and the influence of Sheldon Adelson on Israeli politics and the ascent of Benjamin Netanyahu) or to produce political ideas and contribute to shifting public debates (Skocpol & Hertel-Fernandez 2016). Looking at 200 US philanthropists' and foundations' operations, Goss showed for instance that most try 'to inform, advocate for or against, or reform the implementation of public policy through charitable, advocacy, and/or issue-specific electoral donations', and that 83% of them made electoral contributions (2016: 445–6). This is true of donations of corporations that can promote disinformation, popularise expert voices which promote views favourable to their business or neutralise controversies regarding the impact of their activities (Oreskes & Conway 2010; Farrell 2020). This means that while African philanthropy is mostly discussed as a form of communal solidarity, it can in fact be used to justify wealth accumulation and contribute to reproducing social orders and inequalities (McGoey 2012). Pointing in similar directions, sociologists have shown that philanthropic practices are not a neutral way to redistribute wealth, but that they are part of elites' strategies of reproduction. Swiss-inspired foundations and trust models allow American or Brazilian elite families to justify, secure and transmit wealth and avoid taxes (Sklair & Gilbert 2022). They legitimise economic elites' companies and improve social recognition abroad, as is the case with Russian oligarchs investing in culture and the arts in the UK (Schimpfoss 2018). Gifts can also facilitate the laundering of reputation, as was the case with Belgian-Congolese businessman Sidika Dokolo, who used his art collection to improve the legitimacy of his wife, Isabella Dos Santos, in Europe¹⁰ and conceal the origin of her wealth (Cooley *et al.* 2023). Until now, the implications of this literature have not been discussed in the context of Africa. As both West and Central African states delegate their role to private actors (Hibou 1999) and organise the delivery of goods and services provided by others (Bierschenk & Olivier de Sardan 2014), looking at the political economy of these practices is crucial to our understanding of the transformation of politics and the emergence of new networks of power in the region.

The roots of charity and the benevolence of business

The first type of philanthropic practices is that identified in the literature on neo-patrimonialism which supports patron–client relations between businessmen and political and military elites. Our research suggests that these practices have been fully incorporated into what is called professional philanthropy today. In fact, the first businessmen who set up professional philanthropic foundations in West and Central Africa were traders and industrialists who benefited from the privatisation of public companies and close relationships with governments. This happened in the wake of structural adjustment, privatisations or indigenisation programmes. These businessmen were acting in political economies marked by clientelism and neo-patrimonial structures and they presented their philanthropic practices as a form of charity. But their gifts serve to maintain political relations with the rulers and party-states on which their wealth has initially depended. These elites who have been described as big men become intermediaries for the government and providers of services for their clients and citizens, even when gifts are made in the name of traditional or religious morals.

The trajectories of *grands commerçants* in Mali are a starting point to reflect on this process, and are telling of the connection between the economic and the political elites in countries like Chad, Nigeria and Sudan (Grégoire *et al.* 1993). Mali's *grands commerçants* – mostly traders of subsidised or agricultural goods they do not produce – do engage with two different public arenas (Ekeh 1975; Fowler 2017). On the one hand, they supply facilities and goods for political candidates – and receive economic benefits later when their candidates then facilitate deals and give access to public tenders. On the other hand, these traders undertake horizontal social actions aimed at appearing as 'good Muslims' – paying both *zakat* and *sadaqa* – especially within their own communities or villages which compose a second public. In both cases, the big men made up for the withdrawal of the state after structural adjustments plans, compensating for the lack of basic social services and helping politicians to fulfil their promises. After Mali's democratisation in 1991 following the death of the party-state Union démocratique du peuple malien, *grands commerçants* became key sponsors of parties. Political contenders needed to win their support or be endorsed to secure votes. The trial of Bakary Togola, 'The king of cotton' (one of the main economic resources in Mali), also called 'Mr 1%',¹¹ who was the former head of Mali's biggest agricultural syndicates¹² and a patron of the Southern region of the country, exposed these longstanding relations in place since Presidents Amadou Toumani Touré (2002–2012) and Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta (2013–2020).¹³ But it was only when most successful traders developed their own industrial groups that they professionalised their gifting.

Business and straddling strategies were incorporated into the development of philanthropy and philanthropic foundations. This is the case for instance with the foundations created by Aliko Dangote and Ahmadou Danpullo. Dangote and Danpullo both grew up in families of traders and started as such. They are respectively described as the 'richest man in Africa' and the 'richest man in Francophone Africa'.¹⁴ The Dangote Foundation is a 'private

charitable foundation' created in 1994, which became the largest in Africa. The foundation was cited in many interviews as the benchmark for successful adaptation of philanthropy to the needs of a transforming business group. Dangote's philanthropy started with the distribution of food for religious ceremonies. It expanded to the provision of treatment for polio and malnutrition and access to water in partnership with the state and other foundations. As with American businessmen of the early 20th century, whose 'philanthropic efforts come to reflect the interests and industrial practices that generate wealth' (Horvath & Powell 2020: 83), actions were also concentrated in the regions where these businessmen could build monopolies. Dangote's gifts were connected to places where it operated such as Kano, or the Obajana Cement Plant in Kogi State. When the company announced major investment plans in Northeast Nigeria the foundation did so too.¹⁵ Danpullo's charity actions are mostly localised in Northeast Cameroon, near his properties and cattle.¹⁶

These actions contribute to building an image of legitimacy and morality for these philanthropists' businesses despite their relationships. But it is not always successful. Dangote is sometimes identified as what journalists in Northern Nigeria have called a 'contractor' and embodies a form of continuity and hegemony of traditional pre-colonial Hausa chiefs, state bureaucrats and military rulers. As for Sahelian traders who expected to access public tenders in exchange for support, the term contractor refers to businessmen who benefited from licences and public market tenders because of their connections with the military juntas. In Northern Nigeria, the contractor became a literary figure. One of the first Hausa blockbusters was inspired by the eponymous novel *Turmyɓ Danya* written by Sulaiman Ibrahim Katsina in 1983. It tells of the rise of a contractor, who was given public contracts because of his political relations and corruptive power. In the novel, horizontal practices are seen as incompatible with what can be described as gifts to politicians and governments. Religious clerks progressively turn against the contractor because of his amorality and corruption (Furniss 1995). Interviewees reported that Dangote's competitors often accused him of using his political relations to obtain favourable contracts or to marginalise competitors.¹⁷ Around the same period, 'Alhadji Dan Pullo' also benefited greatly from good relationships with government. He bought flour mills, along with the Cameroon Tea Estates and the Ndawara Highland Tea Estate which were part of the Cameroon Development Corporation partly privatised by Paul Biya in the early 1990s. He became a shareholder in the public company SODECOTON and in the Cameroon Airports company.

Philanthropic actions stabilise these elites' positions in political economies. Investing in relations with ruling parties and redistributing wealth is part of these elites' *modus operandi*.¹⁸ One example is that of gifts and provision of services aimed at helping politicians to secure votes during elections or to rule over specific groups or regions. Dangote is considered a kingmaker in the north of Nigeria.¹⁹ Like many others, he openly supports political parties and candidates running for election. Along with magnates such as Mike Adenuga, he financed the People's Democratic Party when it was created (Agbaje *et al.* 2007: 86). In Nigeria, there are cases in which philanthropic

gifts even go directly to state security institutions.²⁰ In Cameroon, Danpullo became a member of the central committee of the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement's regime (CPDM).²¹ He has regularly made gifts to his party.²² Second, philanthropists directly or indirectly deliver goods and services to their political patron's clients and support NGOs who do so as well (Banks *et al.* 2015). Danpullo's foundation and the associations it supports have worked to prevent tensions between communities in Cameroon and reinforced the role of the party-state of the CPDM. At the beginning of the conflict in Anglophone Cameroon in 2017, Danpullo served as an intermediary for the government. He unsuccessfully tried to strike a deal with Common Law lawyers and syndicates of teachers, and then his company's trucks were targeted and burnt by armed groups.²³ In fact, most businessmen we interviewed report that their gifts primarily aim at firming up relations with and strengthening both their political patrons and the communities they rule over. This helps to protect business operations against sanctions, racketeering and competitors and fosters patron-client relationships. In Nigeria, some ECOWAS officials have also claimed that these relationships play a key role in blocking free trade area projects or single currencies in Africa that could be destructive for business groups.²⁴

Politics from the outside: philanthropy as norm making through civil societies

We are a small organisation but through our agenda-setting convenings and our grantmaking, we see ourselves as building a movement – seeding a movement against illicit financial flows; a movement for mineral 'beneficiation'; a movement for better natural resource governance. Tendai Murisa.²⁵

A second type of philanthropic practices invests in good governance and in the rule of law, particularly against corruption and prebendalism. Recent literature tends to confuse businessmen described as 'big men' and authoritarian presidents (Driscoll 2020), and ends up painting all economic elites as allies of authoritarian kleptocrats oppressing civil societies (see for instance Kalu *et al.* 2018; Dulani & Tengtenga 2020). Our analysis moderates this idea as we show that another type of philanthropic practices contributes to fostering civil society movements and supports norms associated with human rights and the rule of law. These practices are based on a political and economic understanding of liberalism following the West African democratisation and deregulation processes of the 1990s. They are also inspired by George Soros' foundations and its West African branch, the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), which opened in Dakar in 2000. These practices draw on the belief that the rule of law can protect business operations from governments and political economies of corruption. Together with funds from international donors, prizes, grants and programmes create alliances between business elites and educated urban upper and middle classes. These practices support a range of professionals such as journalists and lawyers who work towards strengthening the rule of law and accountability. This class of norm importers is reminiscent of the Latin American lawyers and human rights specialists who fled the dictatorships on

the continent in the late 1980s and returned to their countries to start up or work with newly created foundations (Dezalay & Garth 2002). These gifts fuel the development of networks that are involved in the co-production of new norms, in coordination with multilateral organisations, global NGOs and civil society partners.

The epitome of rule of law philanthropy is the work of Mo Ibrahim and of his foundation. This Anglo-Sudanese magnate and Monaco resident sold his telecom empire in 2005 and created the Mo Ibrahim Foundation in 2006 along with an investment fund. The Ibrahim Index of African Governance ranks countries annually according to developments in the rule of law and seeks to influence both economic and political governance. To do so the foundation partners with multilateral organisations such as the OECD, the Broadband Commission for Digital Development, created by UNESCO, and the International Telecommunication Union. It is also one of the founding organisations of the Paris Peace Forum, launched in 2018, which aims to develop new forms of governance and support multilateralism. The Foundation also partners with civil society initiatives and engages with academic institutions such as the London School of Economics and Political Science. But so far, the literature has ignored that these practices set new political norms.

A case in point is the attempt – unexplored in the literature – to bring to justice the dictators Hissène Habré and Yahya Jammeh, who were in power in Chad between 1982 and 1990 and in The Gambia between 1994 and 2017, respectively. In July 2006, the African Union gave Senegal a mandate to try Hissène Habré for his political crimes, and after Habré was convicted by a court for his coup attempt in N'Djamena in February 2008, a Comité International pour le Jugement Equitable de Hissène Habré, composed of various NGOs such as Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International, launched a campaign to create an ad hoc institution to try Habré. As a result, and after long negotiations, the Extraordinary African Chambers (CAE) were established in 2012 in Senegal under the auspices of the African Union. The Chadian dictator and his secret police, the *Direction de la documentation et de la sécurité* (DDS), were accused of killing more than 40,000 people and using mass sexual violence (Bat et al. 2019).

A close monitoring of the trials for war crimes and crimes against humanity and interviews in N'Djaména and Dakar showed that TrustAfrica had been the invisible actor in this campaign. Based in Dakar, the TrustAfrica foundation was created in 2006 by Ghanaian millionaire Akwasi Aidoo, former Director of the Ford Foundation's Special Initiative for Africa and as of 2024 Vice Chair of the Board of HRW.²⁶ In the name of West African civil society, TrustAfrica supported and organised the daily monitoring of the hearings of the CAE during the Habré trial.²⁷ The monitors were students of the Faculty of Law at the University of Dakar;²⁸ they were the foot soldiers of the *Rencontre Africaine de défense des droits de l'Homme* (RADDHO), a structure that brought together civil society associations involved in the defence of human rights and which was also part of the *Comité International pour le Jugement Equitable de Hissène Habré*. The Habré trial served as an original and relatively well-paid first professional experience for these future lawyers.²⁹ They were

thus able to realise that there is an economic market and future in defending human rights. After Habré's conviction, the coalition launched a campaign for the trial of Gambian dictator Yahya Jammeh and the 'junglers' in 2017. The coalition was now led by the Platform for the Protection of Whistleblowers in Africa (PPLAAF), created in 2017 by a lawyer connected to HRW during Habré's trial. One sponsor of the campaign for the trial of Jammeh and of the PPLAAF was the *Fondation pour l'égalité des chances en Afrique*.

Fondation pour l'égalité des chances en Afrique was created by Mohamed Ould Bouamatou.³⁰ Bouamatou's trajectory shows that rule-of-law philanthropists may have been former big men, aligned with parties and politicians, who adopted new repertoires of action and embraced the democratisation processes to protect their interests. Bouamatou was a teacher, accountant and then trader who made his way to the insurance sector with guarantees from the Mauritanian state in the 1990s. He created a conglomerate as he invested in import/export, and then in concrete fabrics and telecoms. Bouamatou also became a pioneer of the banking world and the CEO of the Bouamatou SA group, whose flagship is *Générale de Banque de Mauritanie*. Bouamatou's first foundation, called Foundation Bouamatou, was created in 1998. It provided hospital and ophthalmological care. Bouamatou was a supporter and one of the main sponsors of the presidential campaign of his cousin, Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz. Abdel Aziz was an army general who acted as President of Mauritania between 2009 and 2019. When Abdel Aziz was elected, a conflict between the two men erupted. Bouamatou reported his businesses and banks became the subject of tax investigations and adjustments. Bouamatou went into exile in Marrakech and then Brussels where he created a second foundation in 2015. As his companies were in jeopardy, Bouamatou now presented himself as a political opponent. He allied with other philanthropists' initiatives to champion the rule of law.

The campaigns supported by Aidoo and Bouamatou's foundations highlight how philanthropic transnational networks composed of African civil society movements, foundations and international NGOs attempt to introduce new norms and shape institutions. The Habré case had initially made it possible to qualify rape – already recognised as a weapon of war – as a crime against humanity. HRW and the coalition had supported the fight of Denis Mukwege, a DRC pastor and doctor who treats women victims of sexual violence and who received the Nobel Prize in 2018. Denis Mukwege also received an award from Bouamatou's new foundation in 2016.

The lawsuit initiated against Jammeh now aimed to link up white-collar crimes, corruption and blood crimes.³¹ At the time it was estimated that Jammeh had embezzled \$975 million from the Gambian central bank, state-run companies, pension funds and from foreign aid. The coalition had already published reports on human rights abuses and corruption in Gambia in partnership with the Solo Sandeng Foundation.³² It then drew on Adama Barrow's accusation of embezzlement of public funds against Jammeh and his government.³³ The actors of the *Fondation pour l'égalité des chances en Afrique* interacted directly with the initiatives of lawyer William Bourdon, President of the Sherpa association. Bourdon was notably involved in the campaign to track assets supposedly stolen by the Bongo, Sassou N'Guesso and Obiang families.

These unprecedented campaigns show that the role of rule-of-law philanthropic practices in political norm production warrants serious investigation. There is evidence of the challenges these initiatives faced, particularly in post-authoritarian contexts. After the Habré trial, the coalition supported by Aidoo and Bouamatou expected that another judicial success in The Gambia would lead to the institutionalisation of the Extraordinary African Chambers model on the continent. This did not happen. The Gambian National Assembly and Gambian government distanced themselves from the PPLAAF and HRW campaigns. They decided to found their own Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission in January 2018. While some of the key evidence of the trial arose from the work of the foundations and NGOs, the Extraordinary African Chambers model remains an experiment with no legacy. The same is true of Mo Ibrahim's limited leverage on the Sudanese democratic transition in 2019. Despite his support for civil society actors and his engagement in meetings such as the International Conference on Sudan organised in May 2021 in Paris, Ibrahim's attempt to foster the growth of civil society as a bulwark against military rulers failed in the country.

Creating shared values and the new shapers of Africa

It has been said that Africa is the last frontier of capitalism. As such, it offers unlimited economic opportunities, not only for investors and entrepreneurs, but also for sustainable economic growth to solve the continent's most pressing social problems. Tony Elumelu.³⁴

A last strand of practices identified as philanthropy consists of investment in individuals or companies through incubators, leadership programmes and venture philanthropy. These practices stand out because they promise to develop the continent by 'Africanising' the financial sector. They reflect the transformation of the political economy of the continent and the advent of a new generation of bankers in the early 1990s in the context of deregulation of foreign exchanges and banking sectors (Moupebele Makadjoka 2021). The philanthropists who carry out these practices are mostly bankers and financial service professionals such as business lawyers, accountants or management consultants who denounce the patronage and corruption at the heart of states. But they tend to view NGOs and civil society as an unproductive or subsidised class. The development of these practices has to do with a shift where 'African elites eventually became deft at exploiting the novel options and diversified geographies of the offshore world and joined the continent's foreign investors, extractive industries and trade partners in this new dispensation' (Soares de Oliveira 2022: 267). We show that these business elites whose money often remains offshore use philanthropy to become 'global shapers'³⁵ who position themselves as brokers between African societies and the financial world. These philanthropic practices explicitly aim at building a new society and institutions as they foster the emergence of a network of entrepreneurs and community leaders who will be channelled private capital. These new 'African talents'³⁶ could thus replace traditional leaders and corrupt politicians.

These practices draw on the Creating Shared Values thesis (CSV) developed in 2007 by Michael Porter, a professor at the Harvard Business School and co-founder of Monitor Group, a management consultancy that later became part of Deloitte.³⁷ The CSV proclaims the advent of a new type of capitalism that brings together individuals, society and business (Dembek *et al.* 2016) and thus challenges the distinction between horizontal and vertical philanthropy found in existing scholarship. Contrary to the idea of Corporate Social Responsibility which proposes to balance the negative externalities of corporate activities, CSV claims that wealth creation should be based on the alignment of corporate interests with those of society. This thesis justifies investments in communities and individuals as part of these corporations' business models. To follow a trend identified by Horvath and Powell in the US (2020) this means there is a shift from philanthropy as an attempt to provide public goods to society, to philanthropy as an attempt to present an alternative to a certain form of statehood and shape a new form of governance.

An examination of Tony Elumelu and Paul Fokam Kammogne's foundations shows the specificity of the political economy of these practices. Paul Fokam founded the *Caisse commune d'épargne et d'investissement* in Yaoundé in 1987, which soon became Afriland First Bank. Although its holding company is based in Switzerland, Afriland First Bank is the second bank in Central Africa. As he observed the failure of the public policies implemented by the Cameroonian State, Fokam conceptualised in his PhD dissertation in 1989 a development model named MC2 (micro-finance community of growth). This model aims to bypass state institutions and connect individuals directly with private investors. In 1992, Fokam created the Appropriate Development for Africa Foundation and set up a network also called MC2. This experimental microfinance community links mutual insurance companies, cooperatives and tontines that are solidarity structures (Meagher 2009; Obadare 2010) but that are in fact direct competitors of banks as they have precise knowledge of borrowers and often lower interest rates. The MC2 model proposed to integrate these solidarity networks with the Foundation's incubator and with Fokam's bank. In parallel with MC2, the Paul Fokam Institute of Excellence, another philanthropic initiative, is organised as a business school giving African students access to MBAs from American and Chinese universities. Philanthropic practices organised around venture capital thus foster synergies between banks and networks of beneficiaries. Tony Elumelu developed a similar strategy nourished by the CSV. He co-acquired the United Bank for Africa (UBA) in 2005 and transformed it into a global banking company using existing debts against equity. After retiring from UBA in 2010, Elumelu set up an investment fund called Heirs Holding. It has a portfolio ranging from healthcare to financial services and oil fields. At the same time, the banker created the Tony Elumelu Foundation, an incubator that claims to recruit 1,000 entrepreneurs a year into its Entrepreneurship Programme. The development of the Fokam and Elumelu foundations occurred at the same time as the creation of myriad similar programmes working on financial inclusion, leadership and education on the continent, such as those of the MasterCard Foundation in Kenya in 2006 (Lefèvre & Langevin 2021).

These programmes aim to create leaders and entrepreneurs who are efficient in using market-driven processes to support and respond to the needs of their ‘communities’, which refers to both their clients and to the segment of society they claim to represent or impact. This is also reflected in philanthropists’ discourses about good leadership: they consider that where politicians have failed, entrepreneurs and those who fund them can act as ‘problem-solvers’ for their communities as they take over the governance of public goods. While most of the literature emphasises the political importance of chiefs and traditional rulers because of their role in taxation and land allocation (Vaughan 2000; Acemoglu *et al.* 2014), these philanthropic networks emphasise entrepreneurs and leaders as problem solvers, in a way that may challenge traditional rulers. They use the idea of multistakeholder processes to make sure the voices of the private sector and of the community leaders and entrepreneurs they support will shape the governance of public goods.

To accomplish their promises, philanthropists position themselves at the heart of financial networks and channel wealth to the continent. Since leaving UBA and opening his foundation, Tony Elumelu has worked as advisor to the USAID Private Capital Group for Africa. Fokam’s Afriland First Bank has had offices in China since 2001, and set up a joint convention with the China Development Bank to finance small and medium enterprises in Cameroon and then loans in Guinea-Conakry. In 2017, Paul Fokam was recruited by the China Development Bank to head the China Africa Development Fund (CADFUND), enabling him to broker investments from the fund’s \$10 billion endowment across the continent. Another dimension of this work has to do with the production of new political ideas and development agendas. Paul Fokam has built since the 1990s a business model that ranges from investment to information and public influence. In 2008 he created VoxAfrica, a francophone and anglophone TV and online media organisation which amplifies Fokam’s pan-Africanist rhetoric regarding the importance of Africanising capitalism. One of his books, *Quelle Afrique à l’horizon 2050? Un espace transformé en îlot de prospérité* (2013) earned him a prize at the Rebranding Africa Forum, one of the platforms that discusses philanthropy and venture capitalism. According to Fokam, Africa needs to resist ‘predators: the United States, France, Germany, China, India... which have military power, knowledge... and who use international cooperation as the first instruments to transform our mind to prevent us from having our own standards, condition our minds... For that they also use the media... NGOs’.³⁸ These practices are therefore not only about the ‘Africanisation’ of capital, but are an intellectual attempt to legitimise these financial networks as tools for building a new political project.

A group of financial sector professionals who define themselves as ‘shapers’ now seek to use philanthropy to create a ‘factory of new elites’. These philanthropists are distinguished in particular by their time at McKinsey in Johannesburg and Lagos and their membership of the Young Global Leaders of the World Economic Forum. Their credo is founded on McKinsey’s *Lions on the Move* report (2010). The former McKinsey consultants created in 2005 a foundation composed of the African Leadership Academy, the African Leadership Network (an alumni and business hub) and the African

Leadership University (a network of private universities that will eventually cover the continent). In campuses of Johannesburg, Mauritius and Kigali, the foundation offers a two-year programme for young people aged 16–20. The school has a compulsory common core built on entrepreneurial leadership, mathematics, African studies and English. Rather than reforming public education systems, the curriculum seeks to train leaders and entrepreneurs who will accomplish the promises of the CSV approach. Leaders and entrepreneurs will learn to ‘serve’ their community with the ‘BUILD’ methodology, oriented towards ‘real-world problems’:

Students are first trained to believe that they have the power to change the world... They then learn to build empathy and understand the community they intend to serve with an entrepreneurial project. Young entrepreneurs then invent a wide range of possible solutions, realizing and testing their ideas while listening to feedback from potential customers and other stakeholders. After a process of iteration and improvement, they deliver significant new entrepreneurial projects and solutions by mobilizing resources and leveraging networks.³⁹

With support from PricewaterhouseCoopers, Legatum and the Rwanda Development Board, the African Leadership Network aims to train 3 million leaders by 2060. It awards prizes and works as an incubator. As has been observed with philanthropic investments in education this contributes to creating new professional communities (Olmedo 2017). Entrepreneurs deemed successful and their companies are then the object of books and case studies published by the Harvard Business School or in publications such as *McKinsey Quarterly*, which increases the reputations and value of the companies.⁴⁰

This positions philanthropists and experts in the African finance and entrepreneurship sectors as service providers and intermediaries for investors who want to work on the continent. The Africa Business Fellowship of the African Leadership Academy is instrumental to this as it pairs an African company with an American company. It has been funded by the *Harvard Business Review* and the *Wall Street Journal*. The academy has received the support of foundations such as Jeff Bezos’s, but also from companies such as Coca-Cola, PricewaterhouseCoopers, McKinsey and Standard Bank, which advertise their support of African entrepreneurs. These experts need to prove that their work generates both growth and symbolic success. For these reasons, they rely on think-tanks, global business schools and academics. Some commission evaluation of their own projects and case studies to establish their legitimacy. This also helps to secure their return on investment.

Conclusion: a new approach for African economic elites

African philanthropy is often portrayed as a series of initiatives aimed at compensating the absence of the welfare state and wealth redistribution in post-independence situations. Most of the existing literature focuses on what it defines as horizontal, non-agonistic philanthropy and gifts from individual

to individual or individual to communities. One consequence of that is that scholarship contributes to exceptionalising philanthropy on the continent and depoliticising our understanding of it. This study of West and Central African business elites' philanthropic practices reveals much more complex dynamics. Horizontal and vertical philanthropy cannot be disentangled, especially as the professionalisation of philanthropy in the 1990s has led to a broadening of the concept that now encompasses a wide range of gifts. These gifts recreate various networks and forms of socialization that have political effects. Yet, this should not hinder efforts to engage in an empirical analysis of these practices. As we have shown, there are important and hitherto undiscussed links between the political economy of corporations, philanthropic practices and the political projects they support. These links are forged when philanthropic practices secure positions in patronage networks and relationships with juntas or political parties; when they aim to support democratisation processes, ongoing since the 1990s, by supporting civil society and building new political norms that constrain prebendalism; or when they invest in companies and leaders to channel and extract capital. These practices support economic accumulation and need to be understood as part of elites' repertoires of action. They are highly political. Business philanthropists aim to shape political orders, influence development and define relationship between market and states.

Methodologically, analysing relationships between donors and recipients has proved fruitful, and future studies could draw on this to move beyond vertical vs horizontal approaches and rather try to analyse elites' transnational networks. Our findings also suggest that the often-used division between vertical and horizontal philanthropy does not capture the diversity of relationships and dynamics in play. This is particularly true for the second and third type of philanthropic practices, which aim to shape new networks and communities in which civil society or business leaders have a key role, either to establish accountability norms, or to govern public goods. These two types of practices are as much vertical as they are horizontal. They aim explicitly to shape a new political order and in some case to bypass politicians and states.

This is why the new social contract between 'shapers' and their beneficiaries deserves attention. While we understand well the neo-patrimonial relationships between political-aligned businessmen and their patrons, less well-understood is venture philanthropy. Maybe these are simply venture capitalists looking for future profits? In this case, the label philanthropy may just be a category to help to 'de risk', to justify potentially lower returns on investment, and that would fit into a different category and line of investment of banks and financial operators alien to the continent? In any case, it will be important to observe how they foster the development of new communities in which entrepreneurs and individual leaders trained to develop their businesses now play the role of traditional elites, bypassing the state to deliver services efficiently. We thus hope that this work will pave the way for more research on the emergence of this new strand of elites and professionals from the banking and financial services sectors. They channel FDI and guarantee access to banking all over the world. The 'shapers' who promise to

Africanise capitalism may be drawing on CSV theory to take over the management of public goods with or without the involvement of the state. However, their relationships with the US or China and their inscription in, for example, the political economies of Rwanda, Mauritius and South Africa suggest that they also partner with crony or authoritarian governments and opaque states.

Finally, this research has theoretical implications for our understanding of African elites and their sub-groups. Recent scholarship has highlighted that the integration of international financial flows in Africa's political economy affects relationships and competition between elites (Hodzi 2020), particularly when they seek to introduce different political models inspired by foreign actors (Alden & Otele 2022). We identify sub-groups of elites with very different views. In fact, political aligners, rule-of-law philanthropists and philanthrocapitalist shapers have contentious relations and different political projects for the continent. They deserve more attention. A revealing case concerns Paul Fokam's Afriland subsidiary in the DRC. It has been accused by Global Witness and the PPLAAF of helping Dan Gertler and Joseph Kabila to set up complex financial structures to evade US sanctions.⁴¹ Consequently, Dan Gertler and Afriland First Bank filed lawsuits against the NGO and the PPLAAF.⁴² As we showed for the three types of philanthropic practice this suggests that in some African states, economic elites may be more segmented and autonomous from political elites than the literature posits. We also showed that different sub-groups of economic elites do not straddle in the same way. This challenges most existing literature on elites in Africa and should be the subject of further research.

Competing interests. Corentin Cohen: The author declares none. Jean-Pierre Bat: The author is currently seconded to the ministry for European and Foreign Affairs of France.

Notes

1. Fred Swaniker, 'The leaders who ruined Africa and the generation who can fix it', TED, 2014, www.ted.com/talks/fred_swaniker_the_leaders_who_ruined_africa_and_the_generation_who_can_fix_it/ (2 December 2023).
2. Siyasanga Hayi-Charters, Maddie Holland, Soa Andrian, and Jan Schwier, 'The landscape of large-scale giving by African philanthropists in 2020', Bridgespan Group, February 2021, <https://www.bridgespan.org/getmedia/faa969a4-d601-49dd-85d3-1453339bb718/large-scale-giving-by-african-philanthropists-update-March-2021.pdf?ext=.pdf> (29 March 2023).
3. Hayi-Charters, Holland, Andrian and Schwier, 'The landscape of large-scale giving by African philanthropists in 2020'.
4. AfrAsia Bank, 'The AfrAsia Bank Africa Wealth Report 2021', April 2021, https://e.issuu.com/embed.html?u=newworldwealth&d=africa_2021 (29 March 2023).
5. Events organised by philanthropic foundations, think tanks and business schools that include ESSEC, the Gordon Institute of Business Science and Wits Business Schools, Cambridge Judge Business School Center for Strategic Philanthropy, Tony Elumelu Foundation, Center on African Philanthropy and Social Investment, Forum économique de Bamako, Groupe d'initiative Afrique Côte d'Ivoire (meetings in Yamoussoukro in 2017 and in Grand Bassam in 2023); international events such as the Paris Peace Forum in 2018; 2019 and 2022 or the summit for the financing of African economies in Paris in 2021.
6. We conducted interviews in Senegal, The Gambia, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Sudan, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo.

7. Funders include TrustAfrica, the Southern Africa Trust, Kenya Community Development Foundation and the African Women Development Fund. See <https://capsi.co.za/about/> (19 November 2024).
8. See for instance <https://afrimag.net/mouvements-sociaux-africains-la-2e-edition-du-baraza-a-johannesburg-du-12-au-14-octobre/> (19 November 2024).
9. <https://www.jbs.cam.ac.uk/2023/csp-debuts-case-study-on-tony-elumelu-foundation/> (19 November 2024).
10. Joan Tilouine and Sonia Rolley, “‘Luanda Leaks’: Sindika Dokolo, l’art brut de la finance offshore”, 20 January 2020, www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2020/01/20/luanda-leaks-sindika-dokolo-l-art-brut-de-la-finance-offshore_6026564_3212.html (20 March 2022).
11. Baba Ahmed, ‘Mali: Comment Bakary Togola, roi du coton incarcéré, est devenu incontournable’, *Jeune Afrique*, 4 October 2019, www.jeuneafrique.com/838178/societe/mali-comment-bakary-togola-roi-du-coton-incarcere-est-devenu-incontournable/ (3 December 2023).
12. He was the head of the *Chambres d’agriculture du Mali* (APCAM) and the *Confédération des sociétés coopératives des producteurs de coton* (C-SCPC).
13. Interviews in Bamako, board members of *Conseil National du Patronat malien* (CNPM), 2018–2021.
14. Danpullo is less famous but he accumulated wealth of more than US\$1 billion through his different businesses. Like Dangote, he started as a trader importing foodstuffs and then developed his own production.
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16. Danpullo’s association, Socio Cultural Organization for Livestock Breeding Agriculture and Trade has provided support for schools and cattling training in the very same regions.
17. Interviews in Lagos and Calabar with executives of food-related industries and journalists, 2017.
18. On Dangote’s conglomerate see Itaman & Wolf (2021).
19. Interviews, Nigerian politicians and researchers, Abuja and Lagos, 2015–2017.
20. See for instance Abdul Samiad Rabiou Initiative, ‘ASR Africa presents award letters worth N10Billion to security agencies as its contributions to National Security’, <https://asrafrica.org/asr-africa-presents-award-letters-worth-10billion-to-security-agencies-as-its-contributions-to-national-security/> (10 December 2022).
21. Member 128, see <https://web.archive.org/web/20230202212741/http://www.rdcpcdm.cm/les-membres-titulaires-du-comite-central/> (19 November 2024).
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23. Interviews with Cameroonian and Nigerian businessmen, politicians and community leaders from South West Cameroon, 2017–2020 in Lagos, Yaoundé, Calabar, Paris and London.
24. Interviews, Lagos and Paris 2017–2019.
25. Alliance for Philanthropy and Social Investment Worldwide, ‘All change at TrustAfrica: Interview with Akwasi Aidoo and Tendai Murisa’, 1 October 2014, <https://web.archive.org/web/20230202212857/https://www.alliancemagazine.org/interview/all-change-at-trustafrica-interview-with-akwasi-aidoo-and-tendai-murisa/> (5 March 2022).
26. Aidoo worked for the Ford Foundation, then became the Director of TrustAfrica which he founded and then joined another philanthropic organisation, Humanity United, in 2014.
27. Interviews with RADDHO executives, trial monitors and members of the *Association des victimes des crimes et répressions politiques au Tchad* in Dakar in 2015–2018.
28. Interviews in N’Djamena, 2015.
29. Interviews in Dakar with RADDHO executives 2015–2017.
30. See www.egalitedeschancesenafrique.org (19 November 2024).
31. Interviews in Dakar, Banjul and Paris with whistleblowers, sponsors and activists of the #GambiaHasDecided movement and with West African bankers 2017–2019.
32. The foundation was named after Ebrima Solo Sandeng, an activist tortured and assassinated by Gambia’s National Intelligence Agency.

33. See Khadija Sharife and Mark Anderson, 'How Yahya Jammeh stole a country', OCCRIP, 27 March 2019, www.occrp.org/en/greatgambiaheist/how-yahya-jammeh-stole-a-country (3 March 2022). The total amount was estimated around \$975 million. Only a small share was later recovered by the US Kleptocracy asset recovery unit.
34. Tony Elumelu, 'Nous devons tous être africapitalistes!', *Le Temps*, 26 July 2022, www.letemps.ch/opinions/devons-africapitalistes (5 January 2023).
35. In 2011 the World Economic Forum has created a 'global shaper community programme'. See <https://web.archive.org/web/20230202213046/https://www.globalshapers.org/> (3 March 2022).
36. Interviews, Cameroonian, Congolese (DRC and Brazzaville) and Gabonese bankers in Kinshasa, Brazzaville, Libreville and Paris, 2017–2022.
37. See Porter & Kramer (2011: 62).
38. See www.youtube.com/watch?v=vXrXbsAQxc (3 March 2022), an edited version of the lecture is available on <https://web.archive.org/save/https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T-HyDaHWF0I> (19 November 2024).
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