

Toothless Lions of Agenda 2063? How the African Union & Derivatives Stabilises Neo-Colonial Rule

A Validation Study of the Imperial Selection Model (2010–2025)

“The lions were never toothless.
They were trained not to bite the hand that built the zoo” [Nsiangani, in *Pan-Africanism Reimagined*, 2010].”

Abstract

This paper revisits and validates the *Imperial Selection Model* (ISM) and *Puppet Syndrome* framework first formulated in Kusimbiko’s 2018 article *Economies of Obedience* [1] and Nsiangani’s earlier psychopolitical work on neo-colonial leadership [2][3]. It uses the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) between 2018 and 2025 as a real-time test of a prior prediction: that perceived high-convergence Dark Tetrad leadership patterns, favoured by imperial powers, would produce a specific sequence of outcomes, including currency (as a proxy for purchasing power) collapse, renewed Bretton Woods dependency, excess mortality from neglect, and the signing of extreme sovereignty-eroding resource agreements. Like many readers at the time, this seemed excessive and overreaching. However, seven years later, those predictions all fall into place.

We then examine the African Union (AU) as an institutional actor within this sequence. The central hypothesis is simple and falsifiable: on the axis that matters most for long-term freedom, the AU does not function as a shield for African sovereignty. It functions as a *continental alibi* for neo-colonial rule, stabilising externally selected leaders and giving them Pan-African legitimacy while they implement imperial priorities.

Methodology

We combine:

- the pre-published ISM and Trait-System Fit Index (TSFI) scores for Félix Tshisekedi (2018) [1][3];
- a set of explicit, ex-ante predictions about macro-economic, public-health, and diplomatic outcomes;
- a simple coding scheme for AU behaviour in moments of sovereignty erosion (protection, neutral performance, or stabilisation);
- and clear falsification criteria.

The 2018 predictions are confirmed with an unusual level of specificity. The AU’s role throughout the DRC crisis is read against this background and is located within a longer genealogy that runs from human zoos to the *évolué* pipeline and today’s high-TSFI technocrats. We conclude that the AU is not “failing” to defend sovereignty. It is performing exactly the function that its funding structure, diplomatic architecture, and psycho-historical design make most likely: a lion that roars in Pan-African colours while guarding a zoo built

elsewhere.

1. Introduction

1.1 From “Pan-Africanism Reimagined” to a real-time test

In 2010, *Pan-Africanism Reimagined* argued that the main continental institutions, including the African Union, did not function as instruments of sovereignty but as mechanisms of containment [2]. They converted radical visions of African unity into declarations, logos, and summits, while leaving the core imperial mechanisms untouched. That argument was framed in the language of political philosophy and institutional analysis.

By 2016–2018, this critique had been translated into a formal psycho-political model. *Economies of Obedience* [1] and *The Dark Tetrad in Colonial Puppet Leadership* [3] proposed that postcolonial decline correlates less with culture or “governance capacity” than with the personality-aligned behaviours of leaders selected and stabilised by external powers. Puppet Syndrome, the Imperial Selection Model (ISM), and the Trait-System Fit Index (TSFI) offered a falsifiable way to talk about “puppet leadership” without falling into metaphor.

Furthermore, the 2018 paper did not remain abstract. It applied the ISM to the DRC’s 2018 presidential race and, using only public information, assigned Félix Tshisekedi a very high TSFI. From that single diagnosis it derived a series of concrete predictions for 2019–2025.

Seven years later, we are in a position that is rare in political psychology. We can compare a published, time-stamped prediction to an entire sequence of events that has already unfolded. The outcome is uncomfortable: the model did not merely get the direction right; it anticipated the leader, the economic dynamics, the diplomatic alignments, and the precise type

of sovereignty-eroding deal that has now been signed.

1.2 The AU / ECOWAS problem: shield or alibi?

This validation creates a new obligation. If puppet leadership can be modeled and forecast so precisely, then the main question for Pan-African politics is no longer simply “Who rules?” but “Which institutions help select, protect, and normalise those rulers?”

This paper focuses on the African Union for three reasons:

1. **Symbolic centrality.** The AU claims to be “the voice of Africa,” especially through Agenda 2063 [18].
2. **Empirical silence.** It has, to date, avoided any serious self-examination on its role in resource deals, foreign basing, and leadership selection.
3. **Strategic importance.** If the AU functions primarily as a stabiliser of high-TSFI regimes, then treating it as the natural vessel of Pan-African unity is not just naïve. It is strategically dangerous.

We test the following hypothesis:

On questions of core sovereignty, the AU behaves less like a protector and more like a *continental alibi* that dresses externally governed states in Pan-African imagery.

We do not claim that the AU does nothing of value. We claim that on the axis of sovereignty versus governability from abroad, it consistently fails to side with the former.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Puppet Syndrome and the Dark Tetrad alignment

Puppet Syndrome was developed to name a recurrent pattern in postcolonial states [1][3]. It describes a psycho-political feedback loop where:

- colonial trauma destroys or hijacks indigenous institutions [4][12];
- elite formation occurs through foreign schools, missions, and scholarships that reward distance from the people;
- external validation becomes the main psychological currency of the leadership class;
- leaders whose behaviour fits this pattern are then promoted, protected, and normalised by global institutions.

The behavioural profile of such leaders matches the *Dark Tetrad* constellation described in the clinical and organisational literature:

- **Narcissism:** grandiosity, image obsession, hunger for admiration;
- **Machiavellianism:** strategic deception, disloyalty, instrumentality;
- **Psychopathy:** lack of empathy, shallow affect, indifference to harm;
- **Sadistic indifference:** tolerance, or even enjoyment, of structural cruelty.

We treat these traits not as clinical labels applied to individual souls, but as **observable patterns in policy and**

communication. A president is not a diagnosis; he is responsible for a series of choices. When these choices consistently align with the Dark Tetrad pattern and favour external interests over the population, we say his politics are “puppet-aligned.”

2.2 The Imperial Selection Model and TSFI

The Imperial Selection Model (ISM) formalises how external powers prefer such leaders and systematically shape their emergence [1][3][5].

The core equation is:

$$P(\text{selection}) \propto \text{TSFI}(L) \times \text{Strategic Obedience Potential}$$

Where:

- $P(\text{selection})$ is the probability that a leader L will be backed by imperial powers;
- TSFI is the *Trait-System Fit Index*, a weighted composite of puppet-aligned behaviours;
- Strategic Obedience Potential measures the leader’s capacity to serve external interests reliably.

TSFI is defined as:

$$\text{TSFI}(L) = w_1N + w_2M + w_3P + w_4S$$

with:

- N = narcissism index (image obsession, foreign validation addiction),
- M = Machiavellianism index (betrayal of allies, secretive deals),
- P = psychopathy index (routine neglect of suffering),
- S = sadism index (structural cruelty, humiliation of dissent),

and weights derived from historical cases [1][3]:

- $w_1=0.28$,
- $w_2=0.32$,
- $w_3=0.21$,
- $w_4=0.19$

Leaders with TSFI above 0.7 are placed in the **High Imperial Suitability Zone**. Historically, this category correlates with:

- higher probability of IMF / World Bank reintegration,
- higher density of foreign bases,
- deeper legislative concessions to corporate and geopolitical interests,
- and higher excess mortality from systemic neglect [1][3][19][20].

2.3 From individuals to institutions: the AU as system-level stabiliser

Puppet Syndrome and ISM were developed to understand individual regimes. However, puppet regimes never act alone. They require:

- diplomatic cover;
- multilateral legitimacy;
- and regional silence when they sign away strategic assets.

The AU is a prime candidate to perform this stabilising role. It:

- certifies elections and transitions through observer missions;
- offers high-visibility continental ceremonies;

- produces a symbolic landscape (maps, flags, themes, slogans) that reassures domestic publics and donors that “Africa is united” [18];
- yet remains structurally dependent on external funding and diplomatic partnerships.

Nsiangani’s 2010 verdict captured this in one sentence:

“The AU is the continental alibi of neo-colonialism: it claims to represent Africa while ensuring Africa remains governable from abroad” [2].

In this paper we treat the AU as a *secondary object* of the ISM. We ask: when a high-TSFI regime pursues imperial priorities, does the AU tend to obstruct, remain neutral, or stabilise those priorities?

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3. Methodology

3.1 Scope and cases

We limit our empirical scope to 2010–2025, focusing on three types of events:

1. **Sovereignty-eroding resource and infrastructure deals**
 - critical minerals, energy, or corridors that require domestic legal changes in favour of external actors.
2. **Foreign basing and security arrangements**
 - the long-term presence of external militaries on African soil.
3. **Externally shaped leadership transitions**
 - controversies where international actors visibly influence who governs.

Within this frame, we treat the **DRC**

sequence (2018–2025) as a primary “natural experiment”, since a full ISM prediction for that case was published in advance [1]. Other AU behaviours provide secondary comparative context but are not coded exhaustively.

3.2 Data sources

We draw on four classes of material:

- **Primary predictive texts**
– Kusimbiko (2018) [1], Nsiangani (2016–2018) [3], and *Pan-Africanism Reimagined* [2].
- **Public macro-data**
– currency exchange trends, IMF and World Bank reports on DRC, basic mortality estimates from WHO / IHME and national statistics [19][20].
- **Official communiqués and resolutions**
– AU statements on elections, “peace and security”, development, and specific member states [18].
- **Secondary analyses and media reports**
– for reconstruction of the 2025 U.S.–DRC Strategic Partnership Agreement and its legal implications.

We do not claim a full database of all AU acts between 2010 and 2025. Our goal is narrower: to test whether any major counter-examples exist that falsify our central claim.

3.3 Coding AU behaviour: protection, performance, stabilisation

In each relevant episode, AU responses are coded along one primary dimension:

1. Protection

- The AU explicitly names and confronts sovereignty

erosion.

- Examples would include: sanctions, suspension threats, or emergency sessions focused on a sovereignty-eroding deal or base agreement.

2. Neutral performance

- The AU issues generic language on peace, development, or stability.
- It may send observers or encourage dialogue, but it does not address the structural issue.

3. Stabilisation

- The AU congratulates, recognises, or visually amplifies the high-TSFI regime in ways that consolidate its position.
- This includes supportive communiqués after contested elections, high-visibility invitations to summits, and silence on major imperial deals.

Our hypothesis is falsified if at least one **clear protection case** can be found where the AU takes concrete risks to defend sovereignty against a major external power in a core strategic field.

3.4 Falsifiability: concrete disproof conditions

We offer three simple falsifiers:

1. Sovereignty defence in resource deals.

If, between 2010 and 2025, the AU publicly named, sanctioned, or threatened to suspend a sitting head of state *primarily* for signing a mining, energy, or infrastructure

pact that rewrote national law for foreign extraction, our thesis must be revised.

2. Sanctions related to foreign bases.

If the AU adopted and enforced a resolution that treated foreign base agreements as a primary breach of continental sovereignty and penalised a member state accordingly, it would contradict our claim.

3. Institutional critique of elite grooming.

If the AU framed French, British, or U.S. training pipelines as strategic threats requiring collective counter-measures, we would need to temper our “alibi” verdict.

These conditions are deliberately narrow. A single robust counter-example is enough to damage the argument.

3.5 Pathologizing versus accountability

A recurrent misunderstanding is that linking political behaviour to Dark Tetrad patterns “pathologises” leaders in a way that excuses them.

We explicitly reject this reading:

- We **do not** claim that any leader is “clinically *disordered*.”
- We score *observable behaviours* that can change at any time.
- If a president reverses course and begins to protect his population, his TSFI score will drop.

Our mortality hypothesis is equally grounded and falsifiable:

A leadership culture that systematically normalises carelessness toward its own population will tend to produce

higher neglect-related excess mortality than one that takes internal suffering seriously.

If a regime that institutionalises such carelessness can be shown not to produce elevated excess deaths from neglect, then our hypothesis is wrong. We are quantifying what many citizens already intuit: **power without empathy kills quietly but consistently.**

4. Results

4.1 The DRC 2019–2025 sequence as a natural experiment

The 2018 Kusimbiko paper [1] assigned Félix Tshisekedi a TSFI of 0.821 (later refined toward 0.95 in annex work [3]), placing him solidly in the High Imperial Suitability Zone. On that basis it expected:

- very high likelihood of Bretton Woods reintegration;
- a threefold devaluation of the Congolese franc within five to six years;
- millions of excess deaths due to systemic neglect, rather than open war;
- a low probability of successful coups or regime change, due to foreign backstopping;
- and the signature of a highly asymmetric, Western-aligned resource and infrastructure deal that would force Congo to adapt its laws and tax regime to foreign demands.

The model made these predictions *before* Tshisekedi had signed any major contract and before the detailed contours of the U.S.–DRC partnership were known.

4.2 Validation of 2018 predictions

The following summary draws on publicly observable trends:

- **IMF / World Bank re-entry.**
DRC re-entered a formal IMF Extended Credit Facility and associated programmes in the early 2020s, with policy conditionalities and renewed debt exposure [19][20]. This matches the model's near-certainty of renewed Bretton Woods entanglement.
- **Currency collapse.**
In the mid-2000s through roughly 2017, the Congolese franc oscillated near or below 1:1000 to the USD, with relatively contained fluctuations.
By contrast, between the 2018 election and December 2025 the currency slid from around 1:1350–1:1600 ranges into a new normality above 1:2600 to the USD, with “good days” around 1:2200–2400 and peaks above 1:2900. This is above twofold devaluation relative to Kabila-era averages.
We note, since today's dollar itself is weaker than in 2005–2016, the *real* loss of purchasing power is even higher. This means the ISM's predicted ×3 erosion of purchasing power should be read as an optimistic floor in African purchasing power. Analysing prices volatility locally in captured countries would reveal a clearer picture of the impact in people's daily life.
- **Excess mortality.**
Independent estimates from WHO and global health institutes for 2020–2024 suggest that the combined effect of COVID-19, ongoing conflict, health-system fragility, and economic neglect produced a multimillion excess-death burden. Even conservative ranges cluster around the 2.1–3.1 million window, which falls inside the 2.5 ± 0.6 million band

suggested in the 2018 annex model. One might argue that conflict contributed massively. However, even after normalising for conflict, the excess deaths do not fall out of the predicted range.

- **Foreign stabilisation of the regime.**
Multiple attempted coups, intensifications of M23 activity, and broader armed resistance have been contained or managed through a mix of domestic repression and external diplomatic and intelligence support, including from Western states. The basic pattern matches the prediction: internal volatility is tolerated as long as the core alignment of the regime remains useful to external interests. It can even appear weaponised to subjugate the population into a binary “submission or war” logic even if alignment never ends the conflicts.
- **Asymmetric resource deal requiring legal self-sabotage.**
The December 2025 U.S.–DRC strategic partnership agreement, as reported, is remarkable in four ways:
 1. It locks Congo into specific corridors and value chains, notably the Lobito route, which sideline alternative regional integration.
 2. It provides privileged positions and first-refusal logics for U.S. actors.
 3. It requires the DRC to amend its mining code and tax laws within a fixed period in order to create a privileged regime for foreign investors.
 4. It structurally marginalises Congolese innovators and capital, externalising most of the benefits, intellectual

property, and tax advantages.

The 2018 model anticipated this *type* of arrangement as a high-probability signature of a high-TSFI regime. The timing (five to six years into the mandate), the legal structure, and the destination of benefits all fall within the predicted pattern.

Taken together, the DRC sequence offers one of the rare cases where a political-psychological model is validated not only qualitatively, but also in its quantitative orders of magnitude.

4.3 AU behaviour across the DRC sequence

We now overlay AU behaviour on this validated trajectory. Three episodes are particularly revealing.

1. 2018–2019 electoral crisis.

- The AU and associated regional bodies recognised the election result and congratulated Tshisekedi as the legitimate president.
- Observer missions and subsequent communiqués did not take up the serious evidence of electoral manipulation and external pressure.
- Coding: **stabilisation**. The AU granted Pan-African legitimacy to a leader whose alignment with the ISM high-TSFI pattern was already visible.

2. 2020–2024 socio-economic and health deterioration.

- During currency collapse, excess mortality, and deepening Bretton Woods dependency, the AU continued to host

Tshisekedi in high-profile summits, often under the Agenda 2063 banner.

- Its language remained generic: peace, development, “Silencing the Guns”, continental integration.
- There was no major AU initiative that framed the DRC’s crisis in terms of structural sovereignty loss, nor any public contestation of IMF conditionalities or leadership neglect.
- Coding: **neutral performance with stabilising effect**. The AU did not cause the crisis, but its symbolic choreography normalised a regime presiding over widespread harm.

3. December 2025 U.S.–DRC Agreement.

- At the time of writing, there is no evidence of an AU emergency session, public condemnation, or sanction targeting the core of the deal: the rewriting of Congolese law in favour of a foreign partner, the sidelining of local capital and innovation, and the forced re-routing of strategic minerals.
- There has been no talk of suspension, and no continental legal instrument has been activated to defend Congo’s legislative autonomy.
- Coding: **stabilisation by silence**. The AU’s non-reaction allows the agreement to be marketed as a normal step in Africa–

US partnership.

Across all three episodes, we find no trace of protective behaviour on the sovereignty axis. The AU did not have to “plot” the outcome; it simply had to behave as usual: certify, gather, network, speak of continental progress, and avoid confrontation with the power that, in practice, selected and shaped the Congolese regime.

4.4 Absence of falsifiers

Within the limited temporal scope of 2010–2025 and focusing on core sovereignty issues, we find:

- no case where the AU sanctioned or suspended a regime primarily for signing a sovereignty-eroding resources deal with a major external power;
- no case where the AU treated foreign basing as a cause for discipline;
- no serious AU initiative that treated elite grooming by former colonial powers as a strategic threat to be contained.

There may be, and likely are, isolated voices and internal debates. However, at the level of official acts and resolutions, the three falsification conditions outlined in Section 3.4 are not met.

In other words, within our defined frame, **no robust counter-example** has been found to contradict the “continental alibi” hypothesis.

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5. Discussion

5.1 “The lions were never toothless...”

The metaphor of “toothless lions” is a common one in African political discourse. It suggests that institutions like the AU roar loudly but lack the ability to bite. This image is incomplete.

The lions were never toothless.

They were trained not to bite the hand that built the zoo.

This is not rhetorical flourish. It is a psychohistorical statement.

- In the early colonial period, Europeans literally placed Africans in *human zoos* in Brussels, Paris, and elsewhere, for public spectacle and scientific racism.
- In the next phase, the *évolué* emerged: an African who spoke perfect French or English, mastered European etiquette, and defended imperial logic from inside the colony.
- Today, the same function is performed by globally trained technocrats, ministers, and heads of state who climb through elite grooming pipelines and then sit in AU summits, speaking of Renaissance while signing away legal and economic sovereignty.

Seen in this light, the AU is not a tragic failure of courage. It is the institutionalisation of the *évolué* function at continental scale. It gathers many of the brightest minds, then rewards those whose behaviour stabilises governability for external powers.

The zoo has changed shape. The bars are no longer iron; they are treaties, debt, corridors, and narratives. The lions wear Ankara suits and speak of Agenda 2063, yet the training remains the same: you may roar loudly inside the enclosure, but you do not bite the hand that feeds, funds, and decorates the space.

5.2 Development as dispossession, culture as infrastructure

The DRC sequence confirms a broader claim developed in earlier work [1][2][6][7]. Under puppet leadership:

- “Development” is measured by GDP, FDI, and “ease of doing business”, while local industries are destroyed and debt dependency deepens.
- Public services are hollowed out in the name of fiscal discipline; excess mortality rises quietly.
- Education systems train youth to think and speak in foreign frameworks, severing memory and moral vocabulary.
- Urban and architectural choices build sterile zones for elites and investors while leaving the majority in symbolic and sanitary abandonment.

The African Union supports this model at discursive level. It celebrates “integration” that often means harmonising laws around investor rights rather than protecting communal land. It praises “peace” that frequently includes the freezing of unjust arrangements.

In contrast, the concept of **psychopolitical sovereignty** advanced in *Pan-Africanism Reimagined* [2] insists that:

- culture is not folklore but strategic infrastructure;
- language, ritual, and spatial logic are not side issues but operating systems;
- leadership must be evaluated not only on technocratic competence but on alignment with the people’s memory and moral horizon.

Under this lens, the AU cannot be the primary vehicle of African liberation, because its design parameters and funding chains are anchored in a different rationality.

5.3 Limits and future work

This paper has limits that are important to state:

- **Temporal and thematic limits.**
We focused on 2010–2025, on specific sovereignty axes, and on one primary case. A full coding of all AU decisions across policy domains would require a dedicated data project.
- **Internal heterogeneity.**
There are undoubtedly individuals within the AU bureaucracy and associated bodies who are aware of these dynamics and try to resist them. Institutional behaviour, however, follows structural incentives more than isolated intentions.
- **Model refinement.**
The ISM and TSFI are powerful but not infallible. The 2018 prediction includes an explicit caveat: if a low-TSFI candidate like Fayulu had won and governed in a way that contradicted the model, that would have exposed weaknesses requiring refinement. The fact that external actors helped ensure that this did not happen is itself a validation of the ISM, but it does not abolish the need for continuous methodological work.

Future research should:

- build a systematic database of AU resolutions and communiqués, coded along the protection/neutral/stabilisation dimension;
- extend the TSFI scoring to a broader set of African leaders, with

transparent rubrics and community oversight;

- deepen the quantitative modelling of resource and labour drift, as initiated in earlier work, to show in monetary terms how development as dispossession operates;
- and design alternative regional architectures that do not replicate the zoo logic under new logos.

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6. Conclusion

This paper had three objectives:

1. To test whether the 2018 *Imperial Selection Model* prediction for the DRC would be confirmed by actual events.
2. To read AU behaviour against that validated trajectory.
3. To clarify the psychohistorical image of “toothless lions” and replace it with a more accurate picture of trained guardians in a zoo.

The findings are stark:

- The ISM’s prediction for the DRC was validated with a level of detail that is rare in political science. It anticipated the leader, the macro-economic deterioration, the mortality range, the foreign backstopping, and the type of sovereignty-eroding deal that has now been signed.
- Across the entire 2019–2025 sequence, the AU did not once act as a shield for Congolese sovereignty. It certified, performed, and stabilised. It did not bite.
- No robust counter-example has

been found in the 2010–2025 period where the AU sanctioned or suspended a regime primarily for signing away core strategic assets to an external power, or for hosting foreign bases in ways that obviously undermined continental autonomy.

We therefore confirm Nsiangani’s early verdict [2]:

The African Union, in its current form, is not a sovereignty instrument. It is a containment and legitimization device that gives puppet regimes a continental costume.

This is not a call for despair. It is a call for clarity. As long as Pan-Africanists treat the AU as the natural horizon of African unity, strategic thinking will remain trapped within the zoo. Real liberation will require:

- new indices rooted in psychopolitical sovereignty rather than GDP;
- new leadership vetting tools that centre empathy and cultural alignment rather than donor fluency;
- and new confederal arrangements that make *biting* possible where it matters: at the hinges of resource control, law, and long-term memory.

The lions were never toothless. The time has come to unlearn the training that keeps their jaws closed around the very bars that hold the continent in place.

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