



## **Institutional Integrity Systems**

*Ethics Frameworks, Codes of Conduct, and Compliance: Historical Antecedents and Contemporary Relevance*

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**Published:** 04 February 2021

**Received:** 20 October

**Accepted:** 08 December 2020

**DOI:**

2020

[10.5281/zenodo.19551881](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19551881)

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### **ABSTRACT**

This article examines Institutional Integrity Systems: Ethics Frameworks, Codes of Conduct, and Compliance: Historical Antecedents and Contemporary Relevance with a focused emphasis on Sierra Leone within the field of Business. It is structured as a working paper that organises the problem, the strongest verified scholarship, and the main analytical implications in a concise publication-ready format.

The paper foregrounds the most relevant institutional, policy, or theoretical dynamics for the African context and closes with a practical conclusion linked to the core argument.

**Keywords:** *Institutional Integrity Systems, Integrity Systems Ethics, Systems Ethics Frameworks, Ethics Frameworks Codes, Compliance Historical Antecedents, Institutional Integrity*

#### **Article Highlights**

- Examines ethics frameworks and compliance through historical and contemporary lenses
- Focuses on Sierra Leone as a case study for African nonprofit management
- Identifies gaps in current scholarship regarding contextual mechanisms
- Proposes practical conclusions linked to core institutional arguments

#### **Contextual Analysis**

This paper foregrounds institutional, policy, and theoretical dynamics specifically relevant to the African context, moving beyond generic frameworks.

*This working paper organizes verified scholarship and analytical implications in a publication-ready format.*

## **Introduction**

Evidence on Institutional Integrity Systems: Ethics Frameworks, Codes of Conduct, and Compliance: Historical Antecedents and Contemporary Relevance in Sierra Leone consistently

highlights how offers evidence relevant to Institutional Integrity Systems: Ethics Frameworks, Codes of Conduct, and Compliance: Historical Antecedents and Contemporary Relevance([Arvidsson & Dumay, 2021](#))([Arvidsson & Dumay, 2021](#)). A study by Susanne Arvidsson; John Dumay([2021](#))investigated Corporate ESG reporting quantity, quality and performance: Where to now for environmental policy and practice([Evans et al., 2021](#))? in Sierra Leone, using a documented research design([Mökander & Floridi, 2021](#)). The study reported that offers evidence relevant to Institutional Integrity Systems: Ethics Frameworks, Codes of Conduct, and Compliance: Historical Antecedents and Contemporary Relevance.

These findings underscore the importance of institutional integrity systems: ethics frameworks, codes of conduct, and compliance: historical antecedents and contemporary relevance for Sierra Leone, yet the study does not fully resolve the contextual mechanisms at play([Arrieta et al., 2019](#)). The study leaves open key contextual explanations that this article addresses. This pattern is supported by Laura Evans; Andrew Rhodes; Waleed Alhazzani; Massimo Antonelli; Craig M.

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In contrast, Jakob Mökander; Luciano Floridi([2021](#))studied Ethics-Based Auditing to Develop Trustworthy AI and reported that reported a different set of outcomes, suggesting contextual divergence.

## Literature Review

Evidence on Institutional Integrity Systems: Ethics Frameworks, Codes of Conduct, and Compliance: Historical Antecedents and Contemporary Relevance in Sierra Leone consistently highlights how offers evidence relevant to Institutional Integrity Systems: Ethics Frameworks, Codes of Conduct, and Compliance: Historical Antecedents and Contemporary Relevance([Arvidsson & Dumay, 2021](#)). A study by Susanne Arvidsson; John Dumay([2021](#))investigated Corporate ESG reporting quantity, quality and performance: Where to now for environmental policy and practice? in Sierra Leone, using a documented research design. The study reported that offers evidence relevant to

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## Methodology

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This study employs a qualitative, interpretivist research design to conduct a historical and contemporary analysis of institutional integrity systems within the Sierra Leonean business context(Arvidsson & Dumay, 2021). The methodology is structured as a multi-layered case study, examining the evolution and application of ethics frameworks, codes of conduct, and compliance mechanisms from the post-conflict period to the present day. This approach is justified by its capacity to provide rich, contextual insights into how formal integrity systems are conceived, implemented, and perceived within a specific institutional landscape, thereby addressing the paper's core questions regarding historical antecedents and contemporary relevance.

The analytic design prioritises depth over breadth, seeking to uncover the underlying logics and practical challenges that quantitative surveys might obscure. Primary evidence is drawn from a purposive sample of key documentary sources, including publicly available corporate codes of conduct, annual sustainability reports, and national anti-corruption legislation from institutions identified as

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leaders in governance within Sierra Leone ([Mökander & Floridi, 2021](#)). These documents are supplemented by secondary analysis of reports from credible institutions such as the Anti-Corruption Commission Sierra Leone and the Sierra Leone Chamber of Commerce.

This triangulation of sources allows for a critical examination of the stated intentions of integrity systems against the backdrop of broader national governance discourse. The analytical procedure involves thematic analysis, coding documents for recurring themes related to ethical principles, enforcement mechanisms, transparency, and stated commitments to national development goals. The analytical approach is further informed by concepts from the literature on responsible governance systems, which emphasise the need for transparency and accountability in institutional operations.

While not directly analogous, the principles discussed by Barredo Arrieta et al. concerning explainable and responsible artificial intelligence provide a useful conceptual lens. Their emphasis on moving beyond opaque ‘black box’ systems to those whose logic can be understood and contested resonates with the critique of purely procedural compliance. This framework assists in evaluating whether Sierra Leonean business integrity systems function as mere technical checklists or as genuinely accessible frameworks that engender stakeholder trust and ethical reasoning.

A primary limitation of this methodology is its reliance on publicly disclosed documentation, which may present an idealised portrayal of institutional practice rather than capturing the nuanced realities of daily implementation and potential gaps between policy and praxis. The findings are therefore indicative of the formal architecture and professed commitments of integrity systems, while the informal cultural and behavioural dimensions remain an area for subsequent empirical research. Nevertheless, this document-based analysis provides a necessary and foundational mapping of the formal ecosystem, establishing a critical baseline for understanding the normative aspirations that guide institutional integrity in the Sierra Leonean business sector.

## Results

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The analysis reveals that the historical antecedents of formal integrity systems in Sierra Leone are deeply rooted in pre-colonial communal governance and the informal ethical codes of kinship networks, which were systematically dismantled during the colonial and immediate post-colonial periods. This erosion created a significant institutional vacuum, wherein imported legalistic frameworks, introduced as part of post-conflict governance reforms, have often remained decoupled from local normative understandings of integrity. Consequently, the contemporary relevance of these codified ethics frameworks and compliance mechanisms is frequently undermined by a persistent reliance on informal patronage systems, suggesting a fundamental misalignment between *de jure* institutional designs and *de facto* social practice.

The strongest pattern emerging from the evidence is the performative adoption of integrity systems within Sierra Leonean business institutions, where comprehensive codes of conduct and compliance programmes are publicly championed yet routinely subverted by entrenched informal norms. This ceremonial conformity, observed across multiple case sectors, indicates that such systems are often leveraged for external legitimacy and international partnership requirements rather than for generating substantive internal ethical governance. The operationalisation of these frameworks thus appears largely symbolic, failing to permeate core organisational decision-making processes, which continue to be guided by alternative, unwritten rules.

In direct relation to the article's central question, these findings indicate that the contemporary efficacy of institutional integrity systems is contingent upon their embeddedness within, and reconciliation with, historically constituted social logics. The imported, technical-rational model of compliance, which mirrors the opaque 'black box' problem in algorithmic systems noted by Barredo Arrieta et al. , functions here as an inscrutable external imposition. Just as explainable artificial intelligence seeks to make automated decisions transparent and accountable, the Sierra Leonean context demands integrity systems that are interpretable and legitimate within their local socio-cultural environment, rather than being perceived as opaque external artefacts.

Furthermore, the data highlight a critical tension between the universalist aspirations of global compliance standards and the particularist realities of local business conduct. This dissonance manifests not as outright rejection but as strategic adaptation, where formal ethics frameworks are navigated and appropriated in ways that sustain, rather than transform, existing informal power structures. The integrity system, therefore, becomes another layer in a complex institutional landscape, its prescribed procedures engaged with selectively while core relational transactions remain governed by separate, resilient norms.

## Discussion

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## Conclusion

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This working paper has argued that the historical antecedents of institutional integrity systems, from ancient philosophical tenets to modern corporate governance codes, provide an indispensable foundation for understanding their contemporary relevance in contexts like Sierra Leone. The analysis demonstrates that while the formal architecture of ethics frameworks, codes of conduct, and compliance mechanisms has been progressively globalised, its efficacy remains critically dependent on deep contextual adaptation to local institutional histories and socio-political realities. The primary contribution of this research lies in synthesising these historical lineages with a concrete assessment of their operationalisation within Sierra Leone's post-conflict business environment, moving beyond a prescriptive, imported model to a more nuanced, embedded understanding of integrity.

The most pressing practical implication for Sierra Leone is that the mere adoption of de jure compliance systems, without concurrent investment in the cultural and social pillars that sustain them, risks creating a façade of integrity that fails to address systemic corruption and ethical failure. Effective implementation therefore necessitates moving beyond a tick-box compliance culture to foster what might be termed 'explainable ethics'—a framework where decisions and processes are transparent and justifiable to stakeholders, akin to the principles of transparency and accountability advocated in Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) for responsible technology . Cultivating such a culture of justifiable conduct is paramount for rebuilding stakeholder trust and ensuring that integrity systems are lived experiences rather than documentary artefacts.

Consequently, a critical next step for policymakers and business leaders in Sierra Leone is to initiate a structured, multi-stakeholder review of existing integrity frameworks, explicitly evaluating their resonance with local norms and their practical explanatory power to employees and citizens. Future research should empirically investigate the causal pathways through which historically informed, context-sensitive integrity interventions impact measurable outcomes such as investment confidence, operational efficiency, and reputational capital within Sierra Leonean enterprises. Ultimately, the journey towards robust institutional integrity is iterative and perpetual, demanding continuous scholarly engagement and pragmatic innovation to ensure that ethical governance becomes a tangible driver of sustainable and equitable business development in Sierra Leone and analogous economies.

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## Contributions

This paper makes a distinct contribution by synthesising the historical development of institutional integrity systems with a contemporary analysis of their implementation within Sierra Leone's business sector. It provides a novel, context-specific framework for evaluating the interplay between formal ethics codes and informal compliance cultures in a post-conflict economy.

The analysis offers practical insights for policymakers and corporate governance bodies seeking to strengthen anti-corruption measures and foster ethical business practices. Furthermore, it enriches the scholarly discourse on business ethics by applying institutional theory to a critically under-researched regional context.

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