

## **Call for Book Chapters**

# **African Virtue Ethics Traditions for Business and Management**

### **ABSTRACT**

Africa is made up of many countries and nations, each of them multicultural and home to philosophies and perspectives on life that have sustained and enriched communities over the centuries – constituting a wealth of knowledge and wisdom that unfortunately remains largely unwritten. According to Metz (2013), “sub-Saharan perspectives on how to live are characteristically virtue-centred, and, furthermore, are both different from the most influential Western virtue-ethical philosophies and no less worthy of consideration”. The same author published a related article in *Phronimon*, expressing similar ideas. Notwithstanding, little has been done to document traditional African ideas of the way to live a flourishing life. Apart from Kinoti (2010)’s book on African ethics which focuses almost exclusively on Kenya, it is not easy to find narratives telling what African conceptions of virtue and a virtuous life are. Thus, this edited book explores a not-very-well-known space in the field of ethics – the virtue ethics traditions of African peoples. The call for chapters invites authors writing from different African communities to research and reflect on the indigenous wisdoms of African peoples and put them in writing. The resulting publication will form a unique and valuable resource for recording these traditions as well as for sharing them with the rest of the world.

### **Detailed description (Expanded Abstract):**

Africa is made up of many countries and nations, each of them multicultural and home to philosophies and perspectives on life that have sustained and enriched communities over the centuries – constituting a wealth of knowledge and wisdom that unfortunately remains largely unwritten. However, this fact cannot be taken as an indication of non-existence (Omotosho, 2014). Philosophies and conceptions of African moral expressions in virtue and virtuous life were passed from generation to generation through various modes like myths, legends, fables, proverbs, art works and sculptures and so on. Though the early African philosophers do not claim the fame of Plato, Aristotle and the like, their teachings and philosophies were preserved before the advent of lithography in Africa, with the spotlight often being more on their wisdom content than on the persons who authored them. A publication on African ethics by Gyekye (2011) clarifies that “African societies are organized and functioning human communities that ... evolved ethical systems, ethical values, principles, and rules which are intended to guide social and moral behavior”.

Furthermore, according to Metz (2013), “sub-Saharan perspectives on how to live are characteristically virtue-centered, and, furthermore, are both different from the most influential Western virtue-ethical philosophies and no less worthy of consideration”. The same author published a related article expressing a similar position in *Phronimon* (Metz, 2012). Notwithstanding, little has been done to document traditional African ideas of the way to live

a flourishing life. Apart from Kinoti (2010)'s book on African ethics which focuses almost exclusively on Kenya, it is not easy to find narratives telling what African conceptions of virtue and a virtuous life are. Yet, such knowledge can yield important insights for determining the best way to manage people and resources when doing business in Africa, particularly with regard to managing businesses responsibly and sustainably.

Virtue-centered philosophy in African communities can be found in traditional religious practices, art, customs and traditions, poetry, stories, and song, rituals and festivals, and wisdom sayings. Most African traditional communities live a communal life which is predicated on moral principles or obligations. The moral principles became the binding force for the members of the community and the livewire for peaceful existence. In order not to be ostracized, one has to abide by such virtues like honesty, fairness, justice, generosity, hard work and many more. Persons that are known for specific virtuous living are sometimes bestowed with chieftaincy or royal titles that epitome the virtue the title-holder represents. In support of this claim that African ethics is essentially virtue ethics, Gyekye (2011) concluded that while African humanitarian ethics originates from social morality or morality of common good or moral ideals; at the center of African ethics is the character of the individual which should conform to some basic moral norms and ideals. He also stated that the African ethical values are centered on the ethics of common good and not of rights as is sometimes observed in the western world (Gyekye, 2011)).

While a variety of present-day media can give the observer some idea of the ethical and moral values of any society, a truer and deeper understanding of its ethical values and their roots is the valuable lens through which one can appreciate its ideals, ways of thinking and worldviews in a way that provides a better grasp of how members of that society lived and lives. This edited book thus explores a not-very-well-known space in the field of ethics – the virtue ethics traditions of African peoples. This call for chapters invites authors from different African communities to research and reflect on the indigenous wisdoms of African peoples and put them in writing. The work they do will help bridge the gap in knowledge about the virtue, ethics and traditions of Africans while correcting any misconceptions held about them. It will also provide a basis for establishing sustainable practices in business and management in Africa and ideas on how to achieve this.

Besides theory development, contributors will also include local illustrative cases for additional value and an enriched content. The resulting publication will form a unique and valuable resource for recording these traditions as well as for sharing them with the rest of the world.

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS; CHAPTER STRUCTURE AND LENGTH**

The list of chapters below is purely provisional. Since the book is a multi-contributor work and the authors will be based on a selection of the best proposals when the call for chapters is published, the table of contents currently included is speculative. The actual geographical home, content and title of each chapter will necessarily incorporate the input from the

contributing authors and a chapter may cover more than one country. The book may be broken up into two volumes if the editor and the publisher (*the book proposal is currently under discussion with the prospective publisher*) believe that the amount of material justifies doing this.

#### Introductory Chapter

#### Part 1: Central Africa

Chapter 1: The Congo and Traditional Virtuous Management

Chapter 2: Ethics Indigenous to Commerce in Central African Republic

Chapter 3: Prudence in Business and other Virtues: Sao Tome and Principe

#### Part 2: Eastern Africa

Chapter 4: Virtue Ethics: A Native Ugandan Outlook

Chapter 5: Kenyan Business Ethics as Learnt from Past Wisdoms

Chapter 6: Managing Business Ethically in Traditional Mozambique

#### Part 3: Northern Africa

Chapter 7: Algeria – Berber Wisdom for Businessmen and Augustine of Hippo

Chapter 8: Almohadan Virtue – Trading in Morocco

Chapter 9: The Virtues in Egyptian Folklore and Poetry

#### Part 4: Southern Africa

Chapter 10: The Historical Approach of the Batswana to Money

Chapter 11: The South African Guide to Virtue in Business

Chapter 12: Indigenous Morality and Commerce in Swaziland

#### Part 5: Western Africa

Chapter 13: Nigeria's Traditional Virtue Ethics

Chapter 14: Managing Ethics in Ancient Ghanaian Industries

Chapter 15: Shaping Values in Business in Ivory Coast – Voices from Times Gone By

#### Part 6: The Diaspora

Chapter 16: Brazilians and their Historical Understandings of Morality in Business

Chapter 17: Trinidad and Tobago's Indigenous Ethics for the Marketplace

Chapter 18: Virtues and the Traditional African American Manager

#### Conclusion

Each chapter will be about 4000 words (*including footnotes/endnotes and references and estimating figures at 500 words and tables at 300 words*). The introduction and the conclusion will be about 3000 words each.

Proposed book length: between 45,000 to 70,000 words

The **unifying structure** will be as follows:

- a) Introduction
- b) Context setting for the geographical area covered
- c) Virtue ethics in the geographical area covered
- d) Applications to business and management in the past
- e) Case of a local business, illustrating applicability to business and management today
- f) Final reflections and conclusion
- g) Summary of the chapter

## THE PLAN

Schedule for publication of the book:

- Call for chapters: October 2, 2018
- Book chapter proposals received: **December 8, 2018**
- Notification of accepted chapter proposals: January 9, 2019
- Receipt of full book chapters for peer review: **March 11, 2019**
- Review book chapters and revision feedback: May 31, 2019
- Receipt by editors of final draft of book chapters: **June 26, 2019**
- Book delivered to the publisher July 29, 2019

Authors of selected proposals will be **invited** to submit full chapters for publication in this book tentatively titled *African Virtue Ethics Traditions for Business and Management*. Authors of accepted full chapters will be **required** to participate in the review process (two chapters each).

Please submit your chapter proposal as a Microsoft Word document attached to an email to [kogunyemi@lbs.edu.ng](mailto:kogunyemi@lbs.edu.ng) no later than December 8, 2018. We would appreciate a one page proposal giving your proposed chapter title; identifying the geographical area in Africa that you intend to write about; and outlining the broad scope of your proposed chapter content (*preferably not exceeding 500 words*). Please include, as a separate file, a brief biography covering your current institutional affiliation and position, a listing of your relevant publications and educational background, and any other pertinent information on your qualifications for contributing to this manuscript (*preferably not exceeding 250 words*).

Send proposals and inquiries to

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## References

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- Metz, T (2012) Ethics in Africa and in Aristotle: Some Points of Contrast. *Phronimon* 13(2)
- Metz, T (2013) The Virtues of African Ethics. In S. Van Hooft (ed.) *The Handbook of Virtue Ethics* (pp. 276-284). Acumen Publishing
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