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**Business Ethics in the Fight against Corruption in Central Africa: Towards the
Defense of the Culture of Integrity and Respect for Human Dignity**

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The summary of this dissertation contains three items: the motivations and aim of the study, the five chapters that constitute the body of the work, and the important results of research. It will be followed by six annexed theses.

1. The problems, motivations and purpose of the study

In the beginning of this third millennium, the name 'Central Africa' immediately evokes problems of systemic corruption, structural violences, decentralised civil wars, dysfunctioning of the public institutions and the problem of poverty. When we carefully observe the countries in this region, extending from the Atlantic Ocean to the Indian Ocean, and located on both sides of the Equator, this image is being confirmed. This painted image could be referred to as a pessimistic view upon Africa: Afro-pessimism. Still, it tries to sincerely refer to the tragedy experienced by the populations of Angola, Burundi, Congo and Rwanda. It can introduce to new social actors in Africa, such as Non-Governmental Organisations and the United Nations missions of peace keeping. Moreover, this picture could justify illegal and external interventions, and the new programs of the International financial institutions concerning good governance and the poverty reduction. In the field of social sciences, this part of the African continent also attracts the holders of new theories for the conflict resolution and prevention.

How can we establish an important, lasting change in Central Africa? How should we proceed to definitively stop the massive violations of human rights, and to establish cultures of integrity and, consequently, of respect for human dignity? Is it possible to stimulate commercial enterprises, and all the key agents in the international commercial transactions in Central Africa, to effectively participate in promoting justice and excellence in Africa? Are they willing to respect moral and civil values? All of these questions result from the evaluation of the above-mentioned problems and of the solutions opted for by African decision-makers and the large international development agencies. These questions suggest even more the thematic orientation of this dissertation: promoting integrity and excellence. Actually, these reflections focus mainly on moral integrity in business, in society and in the international commercial transactions in Central Africa.

When we started this study in 2003, it seemed that the dominant literature about corruption and integrity mainly concerned the developing countries and the former socialist and communist countries. The experts of the large international institutions seemed to worry about corruption in the public administration of these countries, which was part of the explanation for their economic poverty. However, not the past or the different dimensions of corruption had to be considered, and certainly not the other distasteful political and economic crimes. This explains the strengthening of the political and financial support for the *integrity projects*, including the reform of the public administration and the privatisation of state companies. Nevertheless, some studies do not accept such an approach of corruption and economic development. According to these studies, the social phenomenon of corruption does not only affect the above-mentioned countries, but also the rich countries. It could never be reduced to public corruption, because it affects all the social organisations. Nowadays, public as well as private organisations worldwide are concerned with the problems regarding moral integrity. In fact, the moral crisis can be felt in the concrete functioning of several sociocultural, political and economic institutions in the 21st century. That explains the plurality of the approaches of corruption and of the tools to fight against it by means of prevention, criminalisation and penalisation.

The essential purpose of this dissertation consists in promoting moral integrity in three social areas, namely Commercial Corporation, society and the international commercial transactions in Central Africa. As a matter of fact, we want to suggest ways to stop the 'disresponsibilisation' and the economic irrationalities in the



countries situated in Central Africa. Therefore, the precious contribution of business ethics in the fight against corruption has been emphasised. On the other hand, we have proved how theological ethics corroborates with business ethics and shown its capacities to enhance the reflections sketched out, with regard to the anti-corruption movement. Therefore, we have reasons to state that business ethics can indeed participate in the efforts for promoting and protecting the human dignity in Africa.

2. A summary of the five chapters

The sequence of ideas in this dissertation logically follows the objectives we have set. The first chapter presents the real situation in Central Africa, and more specifically in the Dem. Rep. of the Congo, the place that inspired us for this project and into which the essential results will be applied. However, these results are also applicable to other geographical areas. This has to be underlined. The second chapter contains a reflection on the cases in which a lack of integrity has been observed in Central Africa, and in other regions throughout the world, such as Indonesia. It offers us a modest objective representation of corruption as it occurs in enterprise, society and in the international commercial transactions. The knowledge acquired in these first two chapters is extremely important for the evaluation of the anti-corruption movement and of the crimes against humanity mentioned in the last chapter. The place of corruption in committing these crimes is indubitable. Throughout these two chapters, it becomes clear that our objective is to promote moral integrity, so as to progressively eradicate the described crimes. The third chapter, research on the ideas and programs of the anti-corruption movement, shows notorious shortcomings in the conception and evaluation of corruption and in the initiatives undertaken in order to fight against it. Still, the support of this movement can not be denied in the study of this crime and in the awareness of the dangers it implies for human beings and the society at large.

To correct the shortcomings of the anti-corruption movement and to clearly stress the objectives of this dissertation, the last two chapters concentrate on four concepts, namely integrity, justice, responsibility and human dignity. The reflections developed upon these concepts, show the need for cultural, legal and ethical tools adapted to the elaboration of a culture of integrity in social organisations, and to the market of goods and services. This imperatively implies a new vision upon society and market, as well as a sharper vigilance of political communities and researchers, especially in the fields of social sciences and philosophy.

Without applying transdisciplinarity, it would have been difficult to examine the working hypotheses of this dissertation and to validate them. In other words, this study appears as a confirmation of the relevance of transdisciplinarity in applied ethics and in other subjects related to human beings and society. This method has enabled us, as a result, to disclose the mechanisms and strategies of 'disresponsibilising' the individual and organisational agents in the developing countries, more specifically in Central Africa. Now, which essential results of this research can we retain?

3. Some results of the research

This dissertation contains four significant results. First of all, there is the objective representation of corruption and the methodological requirements for its study. By carefully investigating its nature, forms, development and function in the perpetration and the dynamics of other crimes, this dissertation effectively contributes to a good understanding of the corrupt acts. Moreover, it could be an introduction to the study of political and economic crimes. In its systemic form, corruption not only appears to be a social sin, and a lubricant of high quality in the dynamics of political and economic crimes, but it can also be a crime against humanity or a causal factor of the plurality of this last crime. This way, it corrodes the ideals of justice, truth, peace and human dignity.

Secondly, the study of corruption prepared us to properly evaluate the anti-corruption movement and, consequently, to emphasise the role of ethics applied to business in elaborating the moral culture of integrity in the organisations. Business ethics, as conceived in this dissertation, should not be reduced to codes of conduct in organisations or to corporate ethics. By the way, it transcends the business transactions and their agents, by focussing on the notion of impact of these transactions, the interdependence between the social sectors and the extension of the word 'business' (see Le Robert Dictionary). Besides, business ethics only contributes to the elaboration of the culture of integrity if it is independent from political and economic ideologies. On the other hand, it is necessary that it stays in touch with its main inspiration sources: philosophy and some religious

traditions. In fact, it only rules by serving the moral and civil values, and those of the enterprise. As a discipline of ethics, business ethics could never work without respecting the human dignity.

The elaborated reflections on ethics have enabled us to clearly focus on the comprehension of moral integrity in organisational life and on a methodological approach fitted to the evaluation of the acts of corruption. In this same perspective, it has also appeared that moral integrity asks more than the simple fight against corruption and the effective implementation of the recognised anti-corruption laws and standards. It implies respect for different dimensions of justice, the real recognition of the human dignity. Moral integrity stands for the experienced, interiorised morality and demands a favourable environment for its emergence and development. By insinuating the link of interaction between these moral categories, we want to underline the need to clarify the concepts and the language in applied ethics. Moreover, we think of the request to extend the anti-corruption movement to all forms of corruption and to other political and economic crimes.

In the third place, we have respect for justice between generations, with a particular focus on the responsibility for the future generations. Central Africa could help us to explicate the concrete implications of this respect. With regard to the history of some Central African countries, we cannot wait any longer for a social change from large international organisations and their local clients. From now on, the communities of Central Africa should undertake four linked actions: (1) to break the silence about the crimes committed, (2) to refuse all logics of 'disresponsibilisation', (3) to opt for the responsible management of the region's natural resources, and (4) to serenely subject themselves to the culture of moral integrity in the social organisations and the international commercial transactions. This thesis can be understood through the crisis of trust observed in the relationship between the local communities and the international organisations.

The selective criminalisation of the social abuses, the inefficacy of the relevant anti-corruption tools, the silence about certain crimes against humanity and the impunity of large institutions, tend to question the will of the social leaders to promote integrity. Here, a crucial ethical question arises about the sincerity of the social leaders, particularly the political and economic decision-makers. On each level of social structuring, from the national community to the global community in construction, the crisis of sincerity manifests itself in the confrontation of the three following terms: the object-problem, the privileged solutions and the moral behaviour of the decision-makers. Hence, the increase in literature about the crisis of leadership. This is the fourth result.

4. Consistent additional theses

1. Nowadays, it is not enough anymore to affirm moral and civil principles and values. They need to be made explicit, by confronting them to the historical context and to specific situations of each social organisation. Therefore, a sound interpretation of the values and crimes listed in this study can consolidate the social dialogue about the culture of integrity.

2. Without a competent, disciplined and independent public administration of political parties and a well-informed and experienced citizen army, the projects for the economic development, integrity and the promotion of the human dignity would fail.

3. From now on, the promotion of honest leadership in Central Africa demands the eradication of corruption of the external agents, the international corruption, and effectively giving up local and regional strategies of informal behaviours, in public and economic transactions, and of 'disresponsibilisation'.

4. One of the big challenges of the human rights defenders during the next five decades of the third millennium concerns the promotion of the culture of integrity in the following areas: the large business enterprises, the political parties, the intelligence services, the religious organisations and the large media corporations.

5. The dissolution of the moral responsibility of a social organisation in its structures is as inappropriate as the assignment of the institutional responsibility to an individual or a group of individuals – its active members. Hence, the need to rightly discern each agent's responsibility in the social interaction.

6. All these topics question the preaching of the Gospel in Africa. They also question the ecclesiastical organisations in Africa and elsewhere. The contribution of these organisations in the research on the African tragedy and in the resolution of the prevailing conflicts of interests in this continent still appears to be limited.



Texte: L'ETHIQUE DES AFFAIRES DANS LA LUTTE CONTRE LA CORRUPTION EN AFRIQUE CENTRALE : DEFENDRE LA CULTURE D'INTEGRITE ET LE RESPECT DE LA DIGNITE HUMAINE. A dissertation presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctor's degree in theology, Leuven 2009, pp. 373 + lxxxviii & xl.

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