AnUBUNTU/HUNHU **APPRAISAL** of the ETHICS WHISTLEBLOWING

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## An Ubuntu/Hunhu Appraisal of the Ethics of Whistleblowing

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#### **Book Synopsis**

The study appraises the highly contested concept of whistleblowing in the field of business ethics through the philosophy of ubuntu/hunhu. To unpack some of the controversies around whistleblowing, the following questions are raised: What is whistleblowing? Is it different from backbiting or mere reporting or wrongdoing? What are the positive and negative implications of whistleblowing? Is it an alien concept among the Shona? In the process of grappling with these questions, the book unravels the nature of whistleblowing and ubuntu/hunhu. All this is done through desk interrogation of both Occidental and African ethicists like De George, Larmer, James, Buchholz and Rosenthal, Mkhize, Gade and Mangena, just to mention a few. Developing from the Shona concept of kurova bembera, this work shows that whistleblowing is not an alien concept among the Shona. In fact, the study brings to the fore the benefits of whistleblowing in safeguarding African collectivism, and dynamism in *ubuntu/hunhu* acculturation as it appraises the hybridised practice of whistleblowing. It also shows the fact that the ubuntu/hunhu ethics hinges on the ancestry worldview with the departed forefathers of the Shona being the authors, implementation policing agents, and guardians of the ethical values, norms, and traditions. Although this book parades the merits and moral compatibility of whistleblowing and ubuntu/hunhu among the Shona, it also acknowledges the moral dilemmas faced by whistle blowers. To this end, an evaluation of the whole book and recommendations are proffered at the end of this work, chief among the recommendations being the constitutionality of whistleblowing and globalisation.

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### **Dedication**

To my wife Faith whose love and patience with the demands of scholarship have made it possible for this book to be written.

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#### **Abbreviations**

TNC Transnational Companies
HIV Human Immune Virus

AIDS Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

SDC School Development Committee
CCZ Crisis Coalition in Zimbabwe

COPAC Constitution and Parliamentary Select Committee

RBZ Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe

SRC Students Representative Committee
ZBC Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation

UZ University of Zimbabwe IT Information Technology

ZANU\_P F Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
MDC-T Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai
MDC-M Movement for Democratic Change-Mutambara

#### INTRODUCTION

The rampant reports in both electronic and print media of Zimbabwe about immoral practices in the business environment, concealment of dangers to consumers, and gross negligence that pose direct threat to human life have triggered concern of so many ethicists, a thing which has precipitated into this quest of *ubuntu/hunhu* appraisal of whistleblowing. This study's quest seeks to encourage the implementation of whistleblowing as a way of curtailing the dangers bewildering the Shona people in their business endeavours.

The nature and compatibility of whistleblowing with *ubuntu* is fully studied in the next five chapters. In the first chapter, the study seeks to explore the nature of whistleblowing through the defining task. Within the same chapter, factors, and sub-types of the practice is accounted for, explained, and examples given in the expiations. In this discussion, the moral conflicts that cover the practice with obscurity are unravelled and critically examined. Furthermore, the chapter will briefly task Kantian and Utilitarianism ethics to test the morality of the practice in question, but their irrelevance to the Shona and failure to uphold the collectivism of the Africans at the expense of Western individualism present the point of departure for further examination of whistleblowing through the microscopic lens of *ubuntu/hunhu-* a native philosophy which cherishes total togetherness.

To carry the discussion further, *ubuntu/hunhu* as a philosophy should be navigated by a way of elucidation on a chronological development of an *ubuntu/hunhu* source, defining the concept and parading the multi-faceted philosophy in the second chapter. The elucidation will not be completely thorough and satisfactory without highlighting the changes in ancestry mystery-based philosophy through its interaction with other worldviews through globalisation because anyone seeking to understand this native African philosophy ignores at his or her peril the unity in diversity and acculturation that has contributed immensely to the development of the current fibre of *Hunhuism*.

The third chapter presents the main thesis of the study as it explains the view that whistleblowing is non-alien and considers arguments for moralising whistleblowing among the Shona, chief among them being the veneration and credence of the need to avoid the torture from an avenging spirit. In the same chapter, advantages and disadvantages of whistleblowing among the Shona are to be spelt out. Also, the moral dilemmas faced by whistle blowers in the ancient Shona society are proffered. Building from the modification on *ubuntu/hunhu* discussed in the second chapter, it is proffered as well that the whistleblowing of ancient Shona has also diversity but still with the prime goal of collectivism's sake.

The study in the fourth chapter dwells on the cases of whistleblowing in Zimbabwe critically analysed to further validate the main thesis that whistleblowing is not alien but rather an integral aspect of *ubuntu/hunhu* seeking to safeguard a continued existence of the Shona people. The fifth and last chapter will focus on a critical evaluation of the first four chapters and recommendations and the presentation of a general conclusion of the study.

#### **CHAPTER 1**

## WHISTLE BLOWING: DEFINITIONS AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This chapter focuses on defining whistleblowing, the presentation of the background information on whistleblowing. The nature, subtypes of whistleblowing and factors that determine its morality are to be discussed. During this exploration, some ethical challenges that are normally faced by whistle blowers in general are tabled and critically reflected on. It is this chapter's aim as well to briefly describe the ethics of Kant and Utilitarian and then task them to justify the practice world over. This will fail since the two moral theorems value individualism on the expense of African collectivism, from the failure and irrelevance, there sprouts the quest to appraise whistleblowing through *ubuntu*.

De Maria (1998:1) defines whistleblowing as an open disclosure about significant wrongdoing made by a concerned citizen totally or predominantly motivated by notions of public interest. This means that an individual member or employee of an organisation can inform the public about the bad acts by other individuals within the same institution, by the institution itself which are highly harmful to the welfare of the public. Callahan (1988:331) describes whistleblowing as an alarm by employees from within the very organisation in which they work aiming to spotlight neglect of a possible abuse that threatens public interest. At the same time, Buchholk and Rosenthal (1998: 398) define whistleblowing as an attempt by an employee or a former employee of an organisation to disclose what he or she believes to be wrongdoing in or by the organisation or an effort to make others aware of the practices one considers illegal, unjust or harmful. The whistle blower would have perceived the wrongdoing in a particular role and initiates the disclosure of her or his own free will to a person or agency capable of investigating the complaint and facilitating the correction of the wrongdoing.

However, whistleblowing becomes an issue when an employee is ordered to perform some act or has obtained knowledge that the institution is engaged in activities that are believed to cause harm to the third parties, are in violation of human rights and run counter to the defined purpose of the institution. According to Buchholz and Rosenthal (1998:399), specific situations that may require whistleblowing include the production of defective vehicles, abuse of government funds, illegal dumping of hazardous wastes, and discrimination because of race, sex or age, among others. Masaka (2007:33) confirms this as he asserts that the unethical business activities include overprizing, sale of

substandard commodities at exorbitant prices and sale of commodities that are injurious to health as well as their low quality and structural shortcomings. It is worth emphasising that situations requiring whistleblowing vary from place to place since the business of business is determined by each respective society.

Depending on the situation prevailing, whistleblowing can be subdivided into many categories or types. There is what is known as 'internal whistleblowing', a scenario characterised by an employee informing his or her immediate supervisor or higher management of wrongdoing within the organisation. Some immoral activities that may trigger internal whistleblowing range from stealing the organisation's properties, sexual harassment by supervisors, and negligence of duty, to mention a few. Such disclosure is meant to seek immediate solutions, such that the proper duties is done to provide quality services to the public. Worker confidence is then ensured against sexual abuse, hence each person is given that respect that makes that person an end in themselves.

Opposite to internal whistleblowing, is external whistleblowing which is the disclosure done to non-members of the organisation, and these might be the media, consumer councils or regulatory agencies. Eternal whistleblowing comes in normally as a reactionary action following the undesired results of internal whistleblowing. In this case, external whistleblowing is an open invitation to any regulatory board or event to intervene in the crisis. The failure of internal whistleblowing might have resulted in the victimisation of the person who would have blown the whistle internally. As such, he or she is seeking both refuge and better corrective measures against the immoral acts in that organisation. However, external whistleblowing is much more effective on issues that negatively affect a wider sphere of influence.

There is the alumni whistleblowing which involves the resignation of an employee from the position and obtaining another job before blowing the whistle. This is to protect the self from being subjected to retaliation (Buchholz and Rosenthal, 1998:399). This move also ensures that the whistle-blower has continuity in financial supply for the livelihood of the self and the family at large. The resignation and securing of another job before one blows the whistle works towards avoiding the negative effects of being labelled a whistle blower because such persons are often regarded as a threat to bureaucracy. As such, a new job opportunity is hard to come by after blowing the whistle in another organisation.

On the sub-types of whistleblowing, there is impersonal whistleblowing which is done when the injury is potential or actual on the institution or others, other than

oneself. In this case, the whistle blower is trying to safeguard the interests of the organisation or the public at large. It becomes common in cases of discrimination which may affect, both the organisation staff discriminating other people and those who are discriminated. The manufacturing of defective vehicles or detergents or unhealthy consumables may trigger impersonal whistleblowing. To this end, the whistle blower is a person with *ubuntu* who does not want other people to be used as means in mere profit-making while their health is put at risk.

On the other hand, there is personal whistleblowing where and when the harm targeting oneself especially when talking to the wrongdoer. For instance, when a person is sexually abused. This means that the whistle blower is trying to protect own interests; say a disclosure of the act of victimisation on the self after turning down a love proposal from a superior. One may decide to blow the whistle after being assigned to perform an illegal act which might result in the whistle blower landing oneself in serious problems, say imprisonment or own death. For instance, a military officer might go into exile and then blow the whistle after rejecting to take part in acts of genocide.

There is governmental whistleblowing which is normally done within the government, be it within the same department or inter-department and it is directed at the regulatory agencies. Whistleblowing is also viewed differently basing on the motive behind. For instance, a teacher might blow the whistle against a headmaster who abuses school funds or school properties such as vehicles, houses, just to mention a few. Such disclosure is directed at the immediate bosses or the media to attract the attention of the anti-corruption agency to investigate the scandal in question. It is a form of governmental whistleblowing in that the Ministry of Education will probe into the problem.

Whistleblowing can be dissent, breach of loyalty and accusation. Dissent whistleblowing makes the public disagree with the authority or government policy (Donaldson *et al.*, 2002: 336). Breach of loyalty is when a whistle blower is said to have violated the oath of loyalty he or she took when signing the employment contract. All the promised confidentiality is at stake. However, this type of whistleblowing is more dangerous in the sense that, the whistle blower might be charged with treason, especially when it is against the state immoral activities. Such activities might include gross violation of human rights or illegal compulsory taking and redistribution of properties such as land. To this end, all sorts of retaliation measures or policies might be used against that person.

Accusation whistleblowing may infringe or invade personal rights and the privacy of the accused. For example, sexual harassment may result in accusation whistleblowing. This aspect normally invites strong reaction on the part of the hierarchy in an organisation leading to victimisation. In effect, whistleblowing affects the hierarchy in each institution.

While whistleblowing is a noble notion undertaken on the grounds of morality, the whistle blowers are usually entangled in many dangers. Whistle blowers are subjected to retaliation or retributive treatment by the supervisors, corporate and governments while those who risk or are guilty of causing death of some innocent people are promoted by their employers for increasing the profit or partaking in the bureaucratic responsibilities perfectly (De George, 1982:304). Normally, the whistle-blowers are viewed as threats to powerful interests rather than agents of rectifying the problems. So, they are threatened, ostracised, harassed, reprimanded, vilified, and referred to psychiatrists as they stand ready to jeopardise both their own career and the organisations' reputation (Symour, 1988:108).

Since whistleblowing involves a lot of risks to the whistle blowers which ranges from unjustified dismissal, demotion or forced transfers. In view of these problems, the potential whistle blowers are encouraged to consider many factors so that they would avoid them. Some of the considerations whistle blowers need to make are as follows;

One should examine the seriousness of the danger to the public before blowing the whistle. The degree of seriousness will determine the reaction of the public, organisation targeted and the regulatory agencies. If not dangerous enough, the whistle blower would have plunged themselves into deep and perpetual problems. For instance, the disclosure of genocide activities will draw much attention. On the other hand, false charges about fraud may result in no attention paid to the whistleblowing.

Evidence should be documented or recorded before one blows the whistle because the accused may destroy the evidence before the investigation is carried out. However, the evidence gathering process is tricky in that the potential blower might be caught recording the information such that they might be dismissed or imprisoned before they embark on the practice whistleblowing. These are some of the moral dilemmas faced by would-be blowers in their effort to safeguard the public good.

The time to blow the whistle is another factor to be considered because it is noble to blow before the injury is felt by the public. After the harm, is also an ideal time just to make sure that the perpetrators of the injury are punished to avoid such acts in future (Buchholz and Rosenthal, 1998:400). However, whistleblowing that comes before the harm is most appraised because it would have avoided the suffering of the public and goes on to influence some moral rectification.

The volume of the whistleblowing is also worth to consider, that is to do it internally or externally by informing the media or interested groups. The latter is normally the most effective one, especially where the unethical practices violate the law and regulations of the state (Buchholz and Rosenthal, 1998:400). External whistleblowing produces much volume in the sense that it is usually done through the media.

It is also important to decide whether the whistle blower discloses his or her identity, if it is disclosed the whistleblowing becomes open but if not disclosed, it becomes anonymous. The anonymous whistleblowing is meant to avoid any possible victimisation which might follow but it has been noted that identity is difficult to conceal. Frederick Elliston cited by Gene in Callahan (1998:318) argues that 'anonymous whistleblowing can both protect whistle blowers from unjust retaliation and prevent those on whom the whistle is blown from engaging in an ad hominem attack to draw away from their wrongdoing'. However, anonymous whistleblowing tends to draw less attention since the regulatory agencies would question motives of an anonymous whistle blower. On the other hand, open whistleblowing usually results in the whistle blowers victimised but, it is the most effective one because it gives room for further consultation of the whistle blower if a need to verify the charges arises.

It is also important to find out how much protection is available for whistle blowers in the industry, state or federal agency. In that regard, one needs to seek for protection before and after blowing the whistle. Thereafter, the whistle blower is certain of the nature and national guidelines that guarantees his or her protection, and to that effect proceeds to blow the whistle. If there is no such a facility for whistle blowers it therefore implies that the would-be whistle blower ought to gather much evidence and then leave the organisation before blowing the whistle to avoid demotions, forced transfers or even dismissal and being given damaging recommendation letters.

The responsiveness of the organisation in rectifying the wrongdoing also counts whether the whistle blower should continue or not. This should be considered before one effects much damage to one's own life. However, those who are much concerned with social obligation will continue to blow the whistle till the desired results are achieved. If these factors are not carefully considered, the whistle-blowers would end up entangled in disgusting moral dilemmas as is shown in the next chapter of this project.

Morality is only found in the human society because people are the only animals with rationality (De George, 1999:83). For Kant, all actions are judged based on the person's intentions which are only manufactured in the mind through the process of reasoning. Kant (De George, 1999) argued that reasoning produces the good will from which all people act accordingly, so it implies that ethics only apply to rational beings. Benn and Peters (1959:46) concur with this vein of thought as they argue that 'for whatever the individual does —whether it be scientific research, statesmanship, or commercial activity-may be marred by being done with undesirable intentions or aims in view, but integrity of character is the sole unconditioned good'. This means that rationality is not part of man's psychological make-up and the only law relevant to a rational being are the laws of logic.

Rationality entails good will from which Kant made ethical formulations. Initially, Kant distinguished between two kinds of duty (imperatives). There are conditional duties which are known as hypothetical imperative, say if you want to do x do y. But there are other duties required per se, with no ifs, ands or buts. These Kant describes as categorical and referred to the fundamental principles of ethics, the categorical imperative (Bowie, 2002:62). The categorical imperative is the ultimate basis of morality in that it is found in pure practical reason. It is in fact, a command of reason, one which ought to be upheld by everyone since it permeates the racial, geographical or cultural boundaries.

It should be known that the categorical imperative has three formulation which are normally used to judge whether or not an action or a lower —level moral principle is indeed moral (Buchholz and Rosenthal, 1998:27). The first formulation of the Kantian categorical imperative says one ought to act in such away one is willing to make the principle of one's action into a universal law (Rossouw, 1994:4).

Thus, Kant says an action is morally right for a person in any given situation if and only if the person's reason for carrying out the action is a reason that he or

she would be willing to have everyone act on. Such a rule should apply to everyone because it is a product of reasoning which is also a characteristic of every human being. As rational beings, we are commanded by reason to do what is morally right. Any action we are commanded to do, must be in such a way that, none of us interferes with or prevents others from doing it (De George, 1982:85). For instance, is it wrong to lie if one wants to borrow money? Kant would say, it is not morally right to lie to be given such services. In this view, lying cannot be taken as a universal-consistent moral law. Consider the rule "Tell the truth", everyone would agree to universalise it since it is constant hence it is a moral law. In this line of thought Kant says rational being are lawgivers on their own and as such, they are always ready to conform to their own law of morality (Poole, 1991:19).

In his second formulation, Kant argues that one ought to act in such a manner that humanity is always treated as an end, and never as a mere means (Bowie, 2002:62). On this principle, the Kantian ethics call for respect for persons because all people are equal regarding the ability to reason. Every right action in the moral matrix assumes that no human should use another as a means or take advantage of others for the sake of achieving own ends. This principle goes along with the golden rule-do to others as you want them to do unto you. The insight behind this formulation is that it encourages commercial transactions in which two voluntary parties exchange goods and services with both benefiting. Thus, it promotes negative freedom which is freedom from coercion and deception (Bowie, 2002:62). The first two formulations are in fact, complements in the formation of a rights-network and duties defined by principles of formal reason which provide the framework of justice necessary for a commercial society.

In a way, the kind of treatment that rational beings deserve, as ends in themselves, is sometimes in terms of rights (De George, 1999:87). These rights include the right to just wages, right to healthy working conditions, and the right to due process. To this end, the second formulation argues that those people who serve as means in restaurants or those that are hired should be paid adequately and subjected to non-dehumanising conditions so that they remain as ends in themselves. In agreement with the Kantian call to respect persons in themselves, Arnold in Sullivan (2003:67) says human rights is a basic tool of moral evaluation by individuals of widely divergent political and religious beliefs. People have rights of freedom and wellbeing, and then at a minimum other person have an obligation to refrain from interfering with the rights. It is in this sense that rights entail corresponding duties on the part of other persons. People have rights to non-defective products and non-harmful activities done unto them;

whistleblowing is morally justified since it denounces such things in favour of humanity's respect.

The third formulation of the categorical imperative stresses that one should act as if is a member of an ideal kingdom of ends in which one is both subject and sovereign at the same time. This principle says as rational beings we participate in making of our own laws. The law gives everyone the room to follow his or her own voice of autonomy. Thus, morality is not imposed on persons from the outside but by members of that moral society as lawgivers through the common ability of reasoning (De George, 1999:87). The autonomy entails freedom and the will to override instincts. The freedom and the will find expression in a person's law-making activities as a rational being, in acting on rational principles. The law of an ideal community or 'Kingdom of ends' are the product of agreement between rational beings as their own lawgivers (Benn and Peters, 1959:50). Thus, no one would take lying or stealing as a moral law because in one way or another, the one who makes such an impudent law is a victim of his own flaw.

In a bid to fully grasp the gist of this piece of writing, the notion of a moral dilemma ought to be precisely defined. An ethical challenge can be viewed as a situation or course of action which violates the inherently accorded respect or dignity to an individual person or a collective body of people. Thus, moral dilemma involves the assessment of being morally good or wrong.

The Deontological Theory of Ethics can be used to judge the morality of whistleblowing. De Maria (1998) defines whistleblowing as an open disclosure about significant wrongdoing made by a concerned citizen totally or predominantly motivated by notions of public interest (Martin, 1998:20). Callahan (1988:331) describes whistleblowing as an alarm by employees from within the very organisation in which they work aiming to spotlight neglect, abuses that threaten the public interest. The whistle-blower would have perceived the wrongdoing in a particular role and initiates the disclosure of his or her own free will to a person or agency capable of investigating the complaint and facilitating the correction of the wrongdoing.

In this regard, the whistle-blower values the humanity in the people to be affected and then decides to go open on the issue to save the lives, and interests of humanity. This position is only reached at through reasoning which is the central pillar of Kantianism. As such, the stakeholders, in particular the customers are being used as means for business people's ends, a practice which is grossly condemned by the Kantian ethics. The pursuit of Deontological Ethics has since

resulted in the rise of consumer movements seeking to champion the interests and respect of the consumers in all business transactions. Thus, whistleblowing plays an integral role in the upholding of humanity since it denounces all immoral activities seeking to demean the notion of personhood.

In the same way Kantian ethics have been used to judge the morality of whistleblowing, in this section Utilitarianism as the ethical theorem is also going to be used in an exercise that seeks to fully give a clear picture of whistleblowing in the occidental world before *ubuntu* come in to justify its morality in the Shona perspective. Briefly, the nature of Utilitarianism is to be unpacked and then proceed to find out how it handles the morality of whistleblowing.

By definition, 'Utilitarianism is an ethical theory that holds that an action is right if it produces, or tends to produce, the greatest amount of good for the greatest number of people affected by the action' (De George 1999:57). This definition entails that before one acts, there must be great consideration or calculation of the amount of people who are to benefit from that in comparison to those who would be negatively affected. If many people are to benefit, it therefore implies that that course of action is correct or morally right. When the opposite is true, then it is immoral to behave in that manner. Thus, Utilitarianism gives much value to the results of each particular action. However, the calculation is to be done after the action has been completed. Rather, it is done in mind or in open discussion by a board of directors who might be working in a process of business formulation. In view of this, actions are not good or bad in themselves but in close relation to their consequences.

Embedded in the above defined concept of Utilitarianism are the two version or subtypes of the theorem. These act and rule Utilitarianism. The act Utilitarianism says each particular course of action in its completeness and individualistic ought to be judged through the microscopic lens of Utilitarianism without basing on any lived experience or the general belief of the people in question. That is, the unique nature and circumstances in which the action or belief have been performed have the full capacity/influence to judge it morally.

On the other hand, rule Utilitarianism is a moral thesis which puts all the fundamental judgements in reference to a group of past examples of actions. In a way, it rests on societal or communitarian beliefs or traditions that suggest that any action of that nature is wrong without considering its circumstantial uniqueness. De George (1999:62) further argues that '...a similar analysis of a rule utilitarianism determines that people should not lie, steal, or murder'. Each of

these injunctions is the result of having observed the consequence of those acts as performed in the past, together with the assumption that the consequences in the future are similar. It is therefore a fact that rule Utilitarianism provides a technique to determine the moral value of human actions-including those on which the community has already made a moral determination.

The next task in this section is to evaluate how Utilitarianism as a moral theorem justifies the practice of whistleblowing. Buchholz and Rosenthal (1998:25) say that hedonistic Utilitarianists are those who argue that the ultimate 'good' or utility is pleasure and the ultimate 'bad' or disutility is pain, and all actions or practices ought to be evaluated in terms of how much pleasure or pain they produce for all the people affected to be considered a whole. Considering this in view of whistleblowing, it implies that Utilitarians would say as long as the practice will result on aggregate of 'goods' for the people, say through publicising the moral act for moral rectification to safe guard the public interests. So, utilitarianism would have appraised whistleblowing since a few people (ones involved in the immoral practice published) are negatively affected. It therefore implies that through the microscopic lens of hedonistic utilitarianism, whistleblowing is a morally permissible practice.

However, the pluralistic utilitarian on the other hand values an amalgamation of friendship, knowledge, courage, beauty and health as institutes that comprises 'good' as such, whistleblowing is morally good if and only if it promotes all these values. Assuming that one blows the whistle against acts of genocide, the publicising and the thereafter moral rectification create a conducive environment for friendship, attainment of health, and which may enable the courage and beauty, inherent qualities to unfold and manifest through peace of mind, guaranteed protection and provision of all the goods and social services.

Coming to the act and rule Utilitarian, one may need to consider the practice of whistleblowing in each particular situation bearing in mind its uniqueness and possible unique results. For instance, blowing the whistle against the public policy by the government will sound like an accusation and dissent, a practice which is a threat to the government/ institution image leading to loss of societal obedience and this can be considered to be a necessary evil because the whole argument behind is a need to help or promote the general good at the expense of a few in the managerial offices. In this case, act Utilitarianism is held to have appraised whistleblowing as a practice valuing the interests of the public. Act Utilitarianism is better to follow since rule Utilitarianism might be inflexible and inapplicable to new situations for which one might need new rationalization for unique and

deserving options aiming at bringing about ideal and favourable result to the trouble of the society.

Utilitarianism decision making totalises the amount the individual is to give a majority course of action at the expense of the minority. Thus, the Utilitarian appraised whistleblowing favours the majority and brings about harm or disutility to the minority. Utilitarianism does not account for how the utility of not whistleblowing is distributed. As such, this theory is individualistic and discriminative, a norm which is unethical in Africa, hence the need for a new quest to justify whistleblowing among the Africans. In view of this, *ubuntu* became the central philosophy to replace Utilitarianism among the Africans and the next chapter will explore this native philosophy and then try to forge a way forward of moralising whistleblowing in African business communities.

Turning to the Kantian Deontological ethics, this is somehow connected to the Utilitarian theory (Buchholk and Rosenthal 1998:29) and to this end it is also flawed by individualistic formulation which are contrary to the collectivism of the African legacy. It is also worth mentioning that Kantian ethics are characterised by legitimate disagreement as to exactly what action reason demands in a government situation. This suggests that the Deontological ethical theorem is somehow self-contradictory and self-conflicting; then how could it be accurately applied to test the controversial practice of whistleblowing. Acute consideration reflection on these flaws of the two applied ethical theorems, suggests that it is ideal to appeal to own native philosophy among the Africans to establish the nonalien and compatibility of whistleblowing to the African way of living through *ubuntu*. This suggestion therefore becomes the point of departure for this project offered in the next three chapters. Some moral conflicts that bewilder the potential whistle blowers are critically reflected on. However, it is important to first define the term whistle blower before any further discussion.

Davis in Larmer (2002:208) defines a whistle blower as, 'any member of a formal organisation who takes information out of channels to try to stop the organisation from doing something he believes morally wrong (or to force it to do something he believes morally required)'. Having established the task to be undertaken by the whistle blower in this definition, it follows that the whistle blowers are ever entangled in tricky situations that require accurate consideration in a bid to avoid the possible harsh results upon themselves. As such, Gene in Callahan (1988:316) raises the fact that whistleblowing is always justified because it is an exercise of free speech. However, it is important to note that the right to free speech, like most other rights is not absolute. Some rights tend to infringe on others' rights

thereby becoming a contentious viewpoint. Going straight to the point, one may have the right to blow the whistle in an accusation which might be correct or incorrect. This matter being incorrect will see the repute of the one against which the whistle is blown brought into mud. The right of the blower would have infringed onto the right to private and decency of the others. To this end, the free speech right will result in the whistle blower being prosecuted for deformation of character. In full awareness of this tragedy, the whistle blower finds it tricky and difficult to embark on the practice of whistleblowing. Thus, the whistle blower becomes undecided, whether to go by the moral obligation and blow the whistle to curtail the unjust or immoral practice by the organisation or holding back the information about such wrong doings as a well protracted move to avoid prosecution in the event of breaching the rights of the allegedly accused.

On another front, it is difficult to tell or decide when and to what extent, employees become part of the institution or not. The question is who is held responsible for bad activities or negligence by the corporate one works for? Does one's private moral dispositions have anything to with the policy of the company which employs them? Personal ethical inclinations seem to be independent of the professional ethics contained the company's policy document, no wonder a controversy arises when an employee is directed to participate in immoral practice by the business entity. As such, who is immoral in this case, is it the institution one works for or the individual worker or the top managerial team? If it is the entire organisation including the worker, one may claim that whistleblowing becomes unjustified because it is tantamount to back biting and breech of loyalty. But, if it is the institution itself without employees, then personal moral inclination coupled with the right to free speech come into play and justify whistleblowing. However, this controversy has been there since time immemorial and remains open ended, of which one may argue that since business is an activity by the people, for the people, among the people, the moral dictates that are at play in other social circles are therefore still operational even in the business spectrum. Based on this viewpoint everyone in that organisation is held morally responsible for all the activities by the business corporate, as a result it is everyone's moral obligation to blow the whistle against any immoral activity. Hence, the same zeal to avoid damage on the public in other social spheres is the same that ought to justify the obligation an employee has to blow the whistle. This position can be further substantiated by the fact one does not cease to be a member of a moral kingdom and neither does one cease to be a brother, in law nor a parent as soon as he gets employed or enters his workplace so the inherent personal ethical instincts give a free play whether to blow the whistle or not.

Another aspect of concern is the job security of the whistle blower, that is does it make moral sense to risk one's job on the expense of the public interest. One may argue that it is not mandatory to undertake a moral responsibility that puts one's own life, property, family in danger. This viewpoint entails the fact that, the would-be whistle blower needs and see if his anonymity is to be chosen for the sake of protecting their job. It is in this manner because the history of whistleblowing has it that the whistle blower is usually fired, transferred or demoted to a less interesting job. These possibilities also have a bearing on whether the whistle blower to be undertaken is current or alumni. The latter is much favourable because it tends to curtail the possible catastrophes. However, one's wrongdoing may always find the perpetrator's trace, suggesting that, even if one opts for alumni whistleblowing as soon as the current employer learns about the whistleblowing: the risk of losing the job arises again. After words, character demining recommendations and stigmatisation may haunt the whistle blower to the extent that new employment opportunities will not unveil themselves to the one. It therefore follows that, a serious consideration of these possible motives. retaliations the potential whistle blower may let go the moral practice without the disclosure, a thing which poses danger to the public interest.

It is worth mentioning and discussing the possibility that a whistle blower may have a two-pronged motive, that one facet is serving the interests of the public while the other is meant for personal profiteering from the disclosure. The motive for public wellbeing always makes the base for a moral justifiable act of whistleblowing because there is no informational exaggeration. On the other hand, the need for personal gain makes one's revelations of neglect or abuse slant questionable and less credence be put to his charges. However, one may indeed embark on whistleblowing as a quest that seeks to see moral justice and rectification be done but being conscious of the possible dismissal from work or demotion one may opt to make a profit out of the whistleblowing, say writing a book to avoid being financially crushed by the business cooperates sequels. The idea of making whistleblowing a gainful act to the whistle blower is meant to offset the losses or costs he is likely to acquire through the hiring of lawyers in the course of retaliation by the entity against which the whistle was blown. It should be noted however that, such subsidiary motives make the entire decision flawed to the extent that the investigating agencies might detect and lose interest in the charges. This type of moral conflict implies a drawback on the moral justification of whistleblowing.

To make a well-informed decision and documentary direct and accurate evidence pertaining to the charges, the potential whistle blower may contemplate

consulting legal practitioners and other stakeholders deemed equally concerned about the harmful immoral practice by the business corporate. The consultation implied herein would reduce bias and error in moral choice. However, one should note that, the practice of consultation prior to blowing of the whistle presents special problems resulting in pre-empting the act. This will result in the letting away of the cat before it is a mature point in time consideration. In case that one wanted to make it an anonymous whistleblowing, the consultation would make his assumptions, argument open to scrutiny and criticism beforehand. Such a scenario may degenerate into earlier victimisation or even dismissal from the employment if any of the consulted people backbite. In view of the conflicting importance of consultation and warring far reaching implication of consultation. the potential whistle blower finds it difficult to come up with a well protracted piece of information for the public consumption in his wellbeing endeavour. Apart from that, the would-be blower's psychological makeup is tone apart, that is, whether not to or blow the whistle. To this end, it can be claimed that, really, whistleblowing is a multi-moral dilemma driven practice hence, a need for an ethical theorem of ubuntu with precision when dealing with this practice of whistleblowing.

It is clear that the above definitions of whistleblowing imply that the practice involves a mammoth task for the potential whistle blower because it requires a lot of verifications before one undertakes the act. In short, it has been showcased by the aforementioned discussion that whistleblowing is an open disclosure about significant wrongdoing made by a concerned employee or citizen totally or predominantly motivated by moral reasons to safeguard the public interest. The discussion in question also unravelled that evidence documentation among the consideration of factors before blowing the whistle. Within the same exposition, the ethical implications were also highlighted among which, the zeal to rectify the wrong doing for the welfare or good of the general public. On another note, the moral conflicts and dangers whistle blowers normally face were also discussed. However, the Kantian ethics and Utilitarianism were tasked to justify the practice among the Shona to no avail, a result which functions as a rhizome from the quest to appraise whistleblowing sprouts.

#### **CHAPTER 2:**

## AN EXPLORATION OF THE CONCEPT OF UBUNTU/HUNHU

This chapter seeks to explore the notion of *ubuntu/hunhu* to fully comprehend its nature and essence before proceeding to test and appraise the practice of whistleblowing in the field of business ethics. On the nature of *Ubuntu*, the chapter offers an analytic cum-historical information on how *hunhu* has been defined in written source. The elucidation in this chapter will unravel the modifications *ubuntu* has undergone through modernity and globalisation but without losing its prime essence. The information also indicates that many of present ideas about to *unhu* first came into being in epistolary during the second half of the 1900s though it backdates to the 1840s. It is shown as that this period in question was marked by political regaining of power by the blacks that may suggest that *ubuntu* and self-rule by the Africans are inseparable.

To present an accurate piece of information about *ubuntu/hunhu*, it is of paramount importance to unpack the historical chronology of how a written text of the *ubuntu* philosophy came about. According to Gade (2011:303), *ubuntu* has been defined in written sources from 1846 to 2011. This would therefore suggest that it has survived so many tribulations to date. In his findings, Gade (2011: 303) notes that *ubuntu* as a philosophy or ethic as a worldview was documented from 1993 to 1995 in the Nguni proverb *'umuntu ngumuntu ngamuntu'* (a person is a person through other persons) and this was used for the first time to describe what *ubuntu* is. This notion of collective belongingness of the members of the community is common in the philosophy of Mbiti (1969:106) who says, 'I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am'. So *ubuntu* is a philosophy that values togetherness.

Verliet cited in Gade (2011:303) has written that 'ubuntu is rooted in a search towards African dignity in all circles of life'. It can now be proffered that the search for African dignity commensurate in the postcolonial era in a bid to reclaim the supremacy of the stolen legacy well-vested with the various capabilities of Africans. This view points to the fact that the African nationalists or liberation leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere among others, postulated that Africanization is vital in the formulation of a foundation of politics that consists of traditional African conception of personhood or socialist values. Gade (2011) in the trace of the development of a written source of ubuntu

observes that the narratives by legends like Nyerere (ujamaa) were attempts to identify past values that they believed would inspire politics and life in general in the future society, do away with colonial oppression and restoration of the lost dignity and culture. For the Africans, all the human beings are members of an extended family. As such, Nyerere, as quoted in Gade (2011:306), writes that, 'Ujamaa' (family hood), describes our socialism and the African past has taught them their own ethical theorem-ubuntu. This epistolary by Nyerere marked the authorship of the first texts among others about ubuntu. Alongside this viewpoint is the claim by van Binsbergen (2001) who explains that the first publication on ubuntu known to him is the Samkange and Samkange (1980) Hunhuism or Ubuntuism: A Zimbabwe Indigenous Political Philosophy (1980) (Van Binsbergen 2001:82).

Having highlighted all this, it is logically sound to investigate the meaning of the term ubuntu used in the writings. In trying to shed more light on this issue, Gade (2011) conveys it across that 'in many texts from 1980 the term 'quality' appears in descriptions of *ubuntu* and in many texts *ubuntu* is evidently considered to be very positive quality' Embedded in this description is the goodness of nature in the creation of man or the good moral disposition. This can be said about the African from an immemorial period in time since the philosophy being investigated here is central to the life style of the Shona in particular. However, one may need to contest that the description above is too narrow to carry the essence of *ubuntu* as it is today. Of course, that may boil down to a hasty generalisation. But, Gade (2011:308) goes on to expatiate on the possible bone of contention as he says, 'a term such as humanity is, for instance, ambiguous: it might refer to a human quality, but it can also refer to the members of the human race in total ... Did the different authors, for instance, believe that all human possesses the quality of *ubuntu*?' Thus, the question of the multi-faceted quality of *ubuntu* is in great obscurity if and only if it is to be grounded on these too simplistic descriptions.

Developing from the unabated debate above, it can be argued that these texts/authors understood African humanism as something complex, well devoid from a mere trait of humans. In his grappling with the obscurity, Gade (2011:308), quoted Ngubane (1963) who writes;

Supreme virtue lay in being human, in accepting the human being as a part of yourself, with a right to be denied nothing that you possessed. It was inhuman to drive the hungry stranger from your door, for your neighbour's sorrow was yours. This code constituted a philosophy of life, and great Sutu-Nguni family (Bantu has political connotations that the Africans resent) called it, significantly, ubuntu or botho (pronounced butu)-the practice of being humane (Ngubane 1963:76).

What can be drawn from the above quotation is the fact that the Africans had a philosophy which they translated into action, thereby pronouncing it an ethical theorem that seeks to govern and control the conduct of the people. In effect, this paragraph says a lot in that it entails the kindness, gentleness, humility, respect and love for others. To this end, one can argue that these authors were now starting to use the term *ubuntu* as a philosophy.

In a bid to substantiate the point raised above, that the term *ubuntu* gained much popularity in the post-colonial era, Gade (2011) argues that Samkange and Samkange's publication in 1980 marked the epistolary work as far as ubuntu is concerned. Some think that in Zimbabwe ubuntu was born on the same day with the nation of Zimbabwe. In support of this, Samkange and Samkange (1980) pose these questions: What political philosophy or ideology should inspire the new Zimbabwe in this era? Is there any philosophy or ideology indigenous to the country that can serve its people just as well, if not better than, foreign ideologies? This would suggest that the academics and leaders had to write and publish this philosophy such that they would do away with the foreign hand in their lifestyle to recover and further develop the native philosophy. Samkange and Samkange (1980:540) continue to argue that to be consistent with ubuntu/hunhu, the new Zimbabwean government should use the inhabitants' fear of ngozi (aggrieved spirits) to prevent murder. To further substantiate this argument a statement by the President of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, always reminds the Zimbabwean people that they should be governed by the desire for peace and prosperity within the boundaries of *ubuntu*. Almost through the above paragraphs, it is evident that some written sources about *ubuntu* proliferated since the mid-1840s up to date though the meaning of the term was surrounded with a lot of obscurity.

It is important to define *ubuntu* or *hunhu* before any attempt to show how its appraisal on the ethics of whistleblowing in Zimbabwe. Thus, Mangena and Chitando (unpublished) say the word 'hunhu' (and in some Shona dialects, 'unhu' is prominent in the works of Samkange and Samkange (1980), Ramose (1999), Nicolson (2008), and Mangena (2008). Other non-Zimbabwean scholars such as Van Binsbergen (2002) have also grappled with this concept. For instance, in *Reflections on Reconciliation and Ubuntu* (2002), Van Binsbergen argues that '...ubuntu/hunhu has become a key concept to evoke the unadulterated forms of African social life before the European conquest'. *Ubuntu* is an ethic or humanist philosophy focusing on people's allegiances and relations with each other. Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1999), defines a person with *ubuntu* as one who is open and available to others, affirms others, does not feel threatened because

others are more able, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed.

For Van Binsbergen (2002) ubuntu/hunhu has survived the taste of time: 'the worldview (in other words the values, beliefs and images) of pre-colonial Southern Africa is claimed to survive today more or less in remote villages and intimate kin relationships and to constitutes an inspiring blue-print for the present and future of social economic and political life in urban and modern environments...' It therefore implies that *ubuntu/hunhu* as the moral benchmark of the African people makes and protracts a guide to the African natives in all their endeavours of life. Thus, to claim that *hunhu* plays an important role in judging whether human activities are morally right or wrong be it within political social and economic realms. Hunhu is the springboard of ethics in the sub-Saharan Africa, especially in Zimbabwe among the Shona. In one way or the other, hunhu is a life time process of becoming a human being or conferment of the traits of personhood by the society since the notion of being entails the requirement of co-cooperativeness of persons is to be social. Hunhu is, therefore, an integral aspect of being a human being. Hunhu calls for members of the society to be empathic to others, to be respectful and to have conscience. Any social deviance from these well protracted benchmarks of social life repudiates the virtue of a community, resultantly a manifestation of disequilibrium and immorally activities which undermine the essence of personhood.

Caplan (1970), views *ubuntu* as a moral and political exhortation and an expression of hope for a better future that creates a moral community, admission to which is not necessarily limited by biological ancestry, nationality, or actual place of residence. To participate in this moral community, therefore, is not a matter of birth-right in the narrower, parochial sense. If birth-right comes in at all, it is the birth-right of any member of the human species to express concern visavis the conditions under which her or his fellow-humans must live, and to act on that basis. This moral community consists of people sharing a concern for the present and future of a particular local or regional society, seeking to add to the latter's resources, redressing its ills, and searching its conceptual and spiritual repertoire for inspiration, blueprints, models, and encouragement in the process. Such a moral community focuses not on a particular locality or region, but on the African continent (Van Binsbergen, 2002).

However, *ubuntu/hunhu* can be referred to as a circular moral process and in that circular moral process, moral transgressions weaken the community by

causing separation between people. As such, it makes it possible to rectify the moral transgressions provided the society thrives together, interactively to reinitiate social sensitivity through say, *kurova bembera*, accommodative and interdependence and hence a moral community. It can be claimed as well that *hunhu* is metaphysical and ethical progeny seeking to instantiate the African understanding of humanity and let alone the essence of a society.

#### In his grappling with unhu netsika Gombe (1986:11) says;

'tsika ubatanidzwa wezvinhu zvakawanda izvo zvinoti mutupo, zvitendero, zvitevedzerwa...zvinoita kuti vaShona vatevedze kumwe kuita kwavanofunga kuti ndiko kunounza ugaro nendaramo yakanaka (culture is a combination of many things ranging from totems, religions imitations...which make the Shona people to behave in a manner believed to bring good life and piece').

To expatiate on *tsika* (*culture*), the essence embedded in this notion is a set of norms or customs, traditions and values which are ever picked up by the next generation in perpetual succession which is then referred to as a historical set of *tsika*. Respectively, among the Shona and the Ndebele *tsika/nyatela* means to place one's footprint on top another's and to this end it literarily means to follow someone. Mkhize (2008:42) emphases this point as he writes;

Ubuntu as an ethical philosophy is concerned with the phenomenological or lived experience of the people in question. It is a historical philosophy being passed through the lineage of tribes or clans of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Thus, the perpetual observation of these norms, values, customs and traditions of their departed fathers, the Shona are precisely following their footprints in upholding the notion of *hunhu* which entails a virtue of being morally good. To this end, it can be safely claimed that *hunhu* is not obtained from the abstract, rather it requires us to be fully aware of our social surroundings and to discharge our duties and obligations to others and natural environment in general, thereby contributing towards the orderness of being.

In support of the above general understanding of *ubuntu* Nicolson (2008) writes;

In defence of ubuntu we must reiterate the point; ubuntu is concerned with the welfare of everyone in the community. In theory, at least, it is intended to ensure that no voice goes unheard. Although the welfare of the community is the basis of the welfare of individuals, the welfare of the community depends upon individuals being cared for. Where the needs of individuals — especially powerless individuals — are ignored or overridden, the peace and equilibrium of the community are thereby harmed. Thus, a necessary balance has to be maintained (2008:9).

Of central importance in the above quotation is the fact that, the prime goal of *ubuntu* is to safeguard the good or welfare of the community which in turn

ensures that the individual's needs are protected and guaranteed. In more simplistic words, the community comes first while the individual next as far as *ubuntu* is concerned. Thus, togetherness or collectivism without any individualism makes the gist of *ubuntu*.

It is profoundly good to paraphrase the main thrust of the above exposition on *ubuntu*. In a way, the chief characteristics of *ubuntu* may be drawn easily using an attempted longer and precise definition by Tutu (1999);

A person with ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that come from knowing that he belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed (Tutu: 1999).

Therefore, the following traits of *ubuntu* are in fact embedded in this definition; *Ubuntu* is all about communitarian way of life where togetherness is most cherished.

*Ubuntu's* togetherness assures the security or welfare of the individual since the community comprises of members who adorned with love, kindness to other. Most importantly, love because it protects everyone that is concerned as well as the wellbeing of other members.

*Ubuntu* is established in the realm of total sharing, that is whether good or bad is equitably cascaded among all the members of the society.

*Ubuntu* is well characterised by respect for all; thus, it is bent to heed to any voice from the community, hence, consensus democracy.

*Ubuntu* as a philosophy is based on mutuality or reciprocity in all dealings as members feel for each other, that is, being empathic.

Most importantly, *ubuntu* is a sort of an estate entrusted onto the living by the departed forefathers of the Africans as such it ought to be guarded jealously and kept in perpetual succession for the wellbeing the community.

Samkange and Samkange (1980) highlight the three maxims of *ubuntu/hunhu* which shape this philosophy; the first maxim asserts that, to be human is to affirm one's humanity by recognising the humanity of others and, on that basis, establish respectful human relations with them the second maxim means that if and when one is faced with a decisive choice between wealth and the preservation of the life of another human being, then one should opt for the preservation of life, and the third 'maxim' as a principle deeply embedded in traditional African political

philosophy says that the king owed his status, including all the powers associated with it, to the will of the people under him.

While sharing is incorporated within *hunhu*, it is only one of the multiplicities of virtues within *hunhu*. In the *hunhu* domain, visitors do not need to burden themselves with carrying provisions- all they need is to dress properly and be on the road. All visitors are provided for and protected in every home they pass through without payment being expected. In fact, every individual should try their best to make visitors comfortable and this applies to everyone who is aware of the presence of a visitor within a locality. This explains how David Livingstone survived on his journeys in Southern Africa especially among *ubuntu*-oriented societies of the time.

Other manifestations of *ubuntu* are that it is taboo to call elderly people by their given names; instead they are called by their surnames. This has the effect of banishing individualism and replacing it with a representative role, in which the individual effectively stands for the person among whom he comes at all times. The individual identity is replaced with the larger societal identity within the individual. Thus, families are portrayed or reflected in the individual and this phenomenon is extended to villagers, districts, provinces and regions being portrayed in the individual. This places high demands on the individual to behave in the highest standards and to portray the highest possible virtues that society strives for. *Hunhu* embodies all the invaluable virtues that society strives for towards maintaining harmony and the spirit of sharing among its members.

A key concept associated with *ubuntu* is how we behave and interact in our various social roles, e.g., daughters—in-law traditionally kneel down when greeting their parents—in-law and serve them food as a sign of respect and maintain the highest standards of behaviour that is extended or reflected to her family and all the women raised in that family. The daughter-in-law does this as part of the ambassadorial function that she plays and assumes at all times. However, this does not apply only to daughters-in-law but to all women in general, even among friends and equals such as brother and sister, and this does not imply that the woman is subordinate to the man, or sister to brother. It's all essentially considered to be a characteristic of having *hunhu* and a social interaction within the context of *hunhu*. The demands imposed upon men within the context of *hunhu* are more physically demanding than that placed upon the woman. Under *hunhu* children are never orphans since the roles of mother and father are by definition not vested in a single child. Furthermore, a man or a woman with *hunhu* will never allow any child around them to be an orphan.

The concept of hunhu, also constitutes the kernel of African Traditional Jurisprudence as well as leadership and governance. In the concept of hunhu, crimes committed by one individual on another extend far beyond the two individuals and has far-reaching implications to the people among whom the perpetrator of the crime comes from. Hunhu jurisprudence tends to support remedies and punishments that tend to bring people together. For instance, a crime of murder would lead to the creation of a bond of marriage between the victim's family and the perpetrator's family in addition to the perpetrator being punished both inside and outside his social circles. The role of 'tertiary perpetrator' to the murder crime is extended to the family and the society where the individual perpetrator hails from. However, the punishment of the tertiary perpetrator is a huge fine and a social stigma that they must shake off after many years of demonstrating ubuntu/hunhu'. A leader who has hunhu is selfless and consults widely and listens to his subjects. He or she does not adopt a lifestyle that is different from his subjects and lives among his subjects and shares what he owns. A leader who has hunhu does not lead but allows the people to lead themselves, and cannot impose his will on his people that is incompatible with hunhu.

Basing on the rate of modernity and globalisation, one may need to suggest that *hunhu* has grossly undergone a transformation in many if not all aspects. For Van Binsbergen (2002) concurs with this view as he writes 'one may say the dwellers of Southern Africa have been effectively exposed to globally circulating cultural, consumptive models new styles of dress, underpinned by equally global technologies of information (IT) and communication, (including new internet information technology) that they are no longer in any direct contact with, have no longer have any real competence with regard to the values, beliefs and images of Sub- Saharan communities'. However, information technology is also about the sharing of information; hence it is still in tandem with *unhu* because the latter enshrines the virtue of sharing in any respect of life. Ironically, the aspect of global technology in information and communications coupled with tradition therapy, that is *unhu* offers a long-lasting panacea to the immorally activities among the Shona's life settings and let alone in the business fraternity.

One should hasten to note that, *hunhu* as an over acute philosophy of the Shona and information technology fit harmoniously and co-exist with Shona culture. That is, we are not so secretive and information technology is upholding the essence of communication of the African society through sharing the information for the good of the whole community and not for the solitary perpetual triumph of an individual. This argument can be substantiated by the claim postulated by

Mkhize (2008:43), who propagates that, 'the concept of *ubuntu* has far reaching implications, given the social injustices that have become synonymous with many contemporary societies. The ethics of *ubuntu* is a call to action because an ethical being (*umuntu/munhu*)-a being with moral sense cannot look on the suffering of another and remain unaffected.' Embedded in these propositions is the fact that the Shona and the Ndebele are compelled to feel for others and obligated to help because one's suffering is automatically cascaded to the whole society since a member of a particular community is an integral part whose malfunctioning distorts the logic of structural functionalism. In a fact, this philosophy under interrogation values and up plays communitarianism and down plays individualism as a vice.

Of course, *hunhu* succumbs to intercultural dynamism, but its primary essence does not change since it is rooted in tradition and identity. As alluded to above classic *ubuntu* is embedded in the values and norms of the African; that is repudiating individualism while accommodating togetherness as a virtue. In fact, the Shona are a sensitive people that personalise information but still believe that anything can be shared, be it good or bad because it affects the entire community. For instance, they share *mitupo* (totems), *zvidau* (veneration names) and so forth, so being encouraged by information technology to share information about immorally activities by fellow members of that particular society is not bad as long as it is not for retributive reasons but for moral rectification aiming at the restoration of societal good and harmony.

Still in pursuit of *ubuntu* in this dynamic world of modernisation and globalisation, it ought to be noted that Africans (the Shona in particular) are of the view that everyone is important for the good of the whole hence there is much value attached to each member of the society. Thus, togetherness, collectivism and sharing marks the essence of *ubuntu*. Therefore, cultural cross pollination is part of being accommodativeness of *unhu* hence Shona's embracing of new styles of life is not tantamount to total eradication of *ubuntu* as some may need to proffer. To this end, *ubuntu* is humanism or character or personhood so, it is sacred and ought to be persevered for the sake of sacrosanct of *hunhu* or ethical codes in all life endeavours by the Shona.

In conclusion, it has been argued that *ubuntu* is amoral ethical reasoning among the Shona, if not the entire African continent are premised on the worldview assumptions that the departed forefathers of the people under discussion formulated and passed on that to the living. Furthermore, *ubuntu* like any other moral theorem or philosophy incorporates ideas of social justice, righteousness,

care, empathy for others and respect. That is, *ubuntu* is an integral aspect of being or personhood among the Africans and the two are inseparable. It also presupposes that social good knowledge and equilibrium of human societies are not given from above but mutually negotiated and agreed upon for the welfare of an individual which is embedded in that of the whole community since the former is a mere part of the latter.

#### **CHAPTER 3:**

# UBUNTU/HUNHU APPRAISES WHISTLEBLOWING: A COMPATABILITY REFLECTION

Having defined and explained the key concepts and terms surrounding the practice of whistleblowing and the philosophy of *ubuntu* and provided a background to the study in the preceding chapter, the next task is to build up a case for the practice in question among the Shona people of Zimbabwe. However, the study will place emphasis on the way the Shona people of Zimbabwe regard this notion of whistleblowing. The author picked the tribes of Zimbabwe because he is an insider to most of the cultural practices and the philosophy of *ubuntu* that the people in the discussion believe to have much bearing in their day-to-day life. In addition to that, the philosophy of *ubuntu* is historically accommodative and conservative as such it has interwoven with the modern life endeavours including the business ideology. This chapter explains the harmony that exists between ethical dictates of *ubuntu* and the practice of whistleblowing, therefore claiming that whistleblowing is not and has never been an imposed practice among the Shona people.

Since the practice of whistleblowing is to be discussed mostly in the realm of business ethics, it is therefore important to set the parameters and level the ground. One may wonder whether the Shona had the concept of business before the coming of the whites which may suggest that both business and whistleblowing are alien concepts. In effect, the Shona just like any other people had the concept of business since time immemorial. They used the term kushava to imply business. Chimhundu (2001:922) says 'Kana munhu achishava anenge achitsvaka zvinhu zvinomupa kurarama' (when one is doing business, one is partaking in activities that give or support a livelihood). Embedded in this saying is the fact that the Shona people do have various endeavours in life which culminate in raising a profit /wealth meant to have a livelihood. This may include, agricultural productivity, blacksmithing, mining, hunting, or even barter trade in different products of the different industries, selling one's labour and personal talents like singing and dancing. Thus, the African business is also furnished with the notions of primary industry up to tertiary industry. In light of all this, Hunhuism / ubuntu permeates and controls all these activities since the preceding chapter alluded to it that hunhu guides human life among the Shona in all the

endeavours. So, the notions of business and whistleblowing are native practices among the Shona people.

It is important to briefly explain what ethics is in general since the combination of the business and the ethics makes up the domain in which whistleblowing and ubuntu are complementing each other as far as this research is set to achieve. Ethics are rules or standards governing the moral conduct of members of a society-whether they are employees in an institution, or members of an association, or a group, or any other societal cluster. Just like ubuntu, ethics deal with values relating to human behaviour, with respect to rightness or wrongness of particular actions and the motives and ends of each action. Drawing from the aforementioned exposition, business ethics therefore studies the application of ethical theorems to any human activity which seeks to generate a profit or wealth. In a bid to fully unravel the central argument of this thesis pertaining to the justification that whistleblowing is a non-alien but highly original and compatible with the Shona philosophy of *Hunhuism*, it is therefore important that the author gives more information about the people in question. Whistleblowing is in effect a new label generated by the increased awareness of ethical conflicts encountered at the work place especially in this context of modernity turning the world into a global village. In no complicated terms whistleblowing is an indigenous practice among the Shona best described by the Shona phrase 'kurova bembera'. According to Chimhundu (2001:874), 'kana munhu achirova bembera anenge achitaura zvakaipa zvaakaitirwa paruzhinji kuti nyakuita azvinzwe, azive kuti zviito zvake zvinoziikanwa' (when someone is whistleblowing, one is informing the public about some immoral or bad practices done unto oneself so that the doer knows that his or her wrong doings are known to rectify his immoral dealings). In other words, it is when a person makes a public announcement about immoral activities done unto him or her with the intention that the doer knows that his or her doings are known. To this end, the wrong doers may cease such immoral practices or be advised by the community's moral dictates. In so far as this argument is concerned, it can be noted whistleblowing is deeply rooted in the hunhuism philosophy.

To further substantiate the above, the Shona time in, time out uses a proverb which says 'Mwana asingachemi anofira mumbereko' (a baby which does not cry dies while being carried on the mother's back), suggesting that every member of the society has the African right (an African right is privilege embedded in the wellbeing of the whole community) to say one's concerns against any immoral behaviour believed to be harmful to the institution or community at large. Drawing the facts from the above proverb, like blowing the whistle to bring

attention to a thief, whistleblowing is an effort to make others aware of practices one considers illegal, unjust or harmful to the blower himself or the entire society. This trait of whistleblowing is therefore in tandem with philosophy of *ubuntu* which pays attention even to a child or a woman without any wave of discrimination on gender and age status as alluded to earlier on. This is an African value that everyone has a contribution towards the wellbeing of the community. Hence, togetherness and collectivism are what *ubuntu* values. The gist of this argument can be contained in a quotation from Mkhize (2008:43) who says 'the ethics of *ubuntu* are a call to action because an ethical being (*ubuntu/munhu*)-a being with moral sense cannot look on the suffering of another and remain unaffected'. To this end, the morality of whistleblowing is appraised by the *hunhuism* philosophy.

The people bound by *hunhu* are expected to identify with each other and to be solitary in the pursuit of their concern. Whoever sets out to publicly deconstruct and even debunk the available conceptual and spiritual repertoire, dissociates from this moral community, dents its fabric, and jeopardises its project. From this perspective, whistleblowing is certainly morally right; and we can understand how *kurova bembera* is able to save a situation of immoral activities among the Shona by explicitly denouncing the debunkers of moral community's philosophy.

Extreme and uncalled-for violence especially between kinsmen; and to the extreme transgression of codes of conduct which regulate the behaviour between genders and between age groups (blatant disrespect of elders, overburdening under-age children, committing incest and murder etc.) is a sign of not being a munhu (an ethical person) as far as the realm of hunhu is concerned. Such acts upset the ancestors to the extent that they cause problems upon the entire community and not the selected group of the moral debunkers who would have beached the *ubuntu* fabric. It is in the mirrors of such situations that *ubuntu* values the welfare of the whole society through a thorough observance of moral principles and standards ascribed by *hunhuism* thereby moralising the disclosure of immoral behaviour for the sake of rectification. Among the Shona people of Zimbabwe as alluded to above, whistleblowing is equated to 'kurova bembera' which is an act of disclosing some evil activities a member of one's neighbourhood is doing that is threatening one's life; family; or the whole compound. All the efforts is directed to make the doer desist from such immoral acts for the good of humanity. Samkange and Samkange (1980:39), outline that as embedded in hunhu is 'the attention one human being gives to another: the kindness, courtesy, consideration and friendliness in the relationship between people, a code of behaviour, an attitude to other people and to life'. In this case

one can claim that whistleblowing is actually a gesture of kindness and appositive attitude towards life because the blower will aim at saving the life and wellbeing of the community at large.

In the proceeding chapters, the concepts of whistleblowing and *ubuntu* were discussed with their chief tenants being spelt out but a link has not yet been established between the Shona type of whistleblowing and the whistleblowing explored in general in chapter one. However, it is important to note that the establishment of such a link need to be pursued in full consideration of the interaction, counter reactions, and acculturation the ubuntu philosophy has underwent. As unravelled in the above exposition, the Shona whistleblowing was mainly anonymous and it would be done during the dawn and dusk hours of the day when there is maximum quietness conducive for everyone to clearly hear the concerns of the whistle blower. Because *ubuntu* had come in contact with other cultures, globalisation and technological advancements, it has been noted that the African native philosophy has given in to some new fibre of concepts and accommodated through for the good of the local people but without wearing away the prime essence of its way of living. Rather, globalisation seems to have complimented *ubuntu* for the good of the collectivism in a way that does not distort its main makeup. It is therefore ideal for this project to bring to the aforementioned that as much as ubuntu accommodated the IT and Western genre of business, it has also transferred the anonymous whistleblowing into all that it is in the world overview. That is, the Shona also have accustomed to the all the subtypes of whistleblowing and considered the same factors necessary before whistleblowing. This has not however: swept away the Shona's own way of going about the practice but it only enriched the concept with the societal motive of preserving the societal good and upholding the value which is enshrined in the togetherness of the Shona. Having established this positive transformation, it is therefore superb to continue with the task of parading the evidence that suggests the compatibility of whistleblowing and the philosophy of *ubuntu*. This is then expatiated on in the next chapter where a variety of cases of such types of whistleblowing is critically analysed. In effect to safeguard the perpetual succession of the Shona's collectivisms, all the people are adorned with a prima facie obligation to blow the whistle on practices that are illegal, unjust, or harmful to the entire community.

Larmer (2002:206) says whistleblowing can be defined in various ways but it is basically an attempt by someone on the inside, or formerly on the inside, to bring a wrongful practice to the attention of those who have power to publicize or remedy the situation. Central to exposition is the fact that there is information

sharing, be it good or bad, but just for the good of the society. As spelt out before in the preceding chapter, Africans share totems and praising names, to mention a few and to this effect, this idea of sharing subsequently sanctifies the practice of whistleblowing as corrective measure to the moral decadence of the business community. This is totally in line with the philosophy of *ubuntu* in that Africans, especially the Shona where they do not have private things along gender or age basis since the male sibling is the mother of the female sibling's children. That is, *sekuru ndiamai uye vatete ndibaba* (your mother's brother is your mother and your father's sister is your father). Thus, to pronounce it all that it is very important among a people of the philosophy of *ubuntu* who do not have gender, age, tribe, or even a special group which needs special treatment so whistleblowing is a mere act of proving the 'bad news' within a system meant to put back the moral orderliness in the community for a continued existence as one people.

In the Shona culture, there is the concept of *dare* (meeting place/court) where elderly people and other members of the family or community congregate to discuss issues concerning the wellbeing of the entire community. During such sessions any moral transgression which would have been aired out is brought forward to the attention of the people and solutions be proffered. The idea of airing the immoral behaviour can be in form of whistleblowing. Of course, the immoral activities would have come to the people's attention through the ministering of n'anga and the kurova bembera act. The issues discussed here at include political, social, religious and even business-related problems. The dare then proffers solutions to the problems through a consensus. This suggests that the African consensus democracy is really an integral aspect of ubuntu. To this end, such procedural deliberations by the congress of dare clearly indicate that the practice of whistleblowing in and around business operations in Zimbabwe is non-alien. In this case the elderly people may represent the managerial top brace or regulatory agency which is bound to rectify such mishaps in the business arena. It is also important to note that, ubuntu conceptualises ethical reasoning dynamically in terms of hunhu action, disequilibrium and the restoration of harmony in all life circles among the Bantu (Mkhize 2008:43). From this postulation, it can be argued that everyone is both a business person and a consumer at any given point. As such immoral practices in business negatively affect both the stockholders and stakeholders. So, everyone in Zimbabwe is in one way or the other affected by unethical practices such as the selling of expired food stuffs, boarding defective commuter omnibuses just to mention a few. In such scenarios ubuntu comes in and mandates everyone to be kind, considerate and humane enough to other, a task which can be fulfilled through blowing the

whistle so that the 'bad game' might be ceased in the interest of the public. One can safely claim that the practice of whistleblowing is indeed a humanitarian gesture compatible with *ubuntu* among the Shona-Ndebele people of Zimbabwe meant to cub and eradicate the moral illnesses of the community and not for retributive measures.

Of course, ubuntu is a closed system in that does not share information with the outsider but since it is embracing other new cultural proliferations and globalisation, the Shona are now using information technology (internet) as a media through which the whistle can be blown. This new type of internet-based whistleblowing is very important in that, issues of concerns in the political realm such as genocide which may need the international community to assist in the restoration of the rule of the people according to the dictates of *ubuntu* oriented consensus democracy might be publicized now. However, it should be clear that whistleblowing has never been an issue of moral contention and in this case only the media it is done through is changing since most societies of the Bantu people are undergoing technological revolution. This can be substantiated by an incident in a Shona novel called *Feso* when King Pfumojena's subjects secretly went away and blew the whistle to the adversaries of Pfumoiena through *Hunhuism* who in turn intervened and restored the rule of consensus democracy. Over and above, this was a genuine gesture of hunhu by both the whistle blowers and those who intervened because an ethical being among the Shona feels for others and sacrifice to bring happiness across the community.

Still in the domain of traditional literature among the Shona, Mashiri (1978:12) portrays a character by the name Tinarwo blowing the whistle against Nyanguru who wanted to usurp the power from Tigere. The Shona social values, norms and rules do not condone political power usurpers because leaders are believed to be installed by the ancestors through the divination of the gods. Tigere and the community's elders sat and reprimanded Nyanguru. Had the plotted coup materialised, a lot of blood would have been shed thereby violating the sacredness of life among the Shona. In view of this situation, it can be therefore argued that whistleblowing is an integral part of *ubuntu* way of living together since it protects the wellbeing of the entire community.

One of the renowned musicians Leornard Zhakata once sang 'pane hutsi pane moto' (smoke resembles fire). In regard to this statement, whenever one decides to blow the whistle or kurova bembera, one would have sensed some immoral practices which might be of danger to the very organisation or the public's interest. It implies that, something of essence about hunhu is pushing them to

behave in that manner, protecting the image and essence of humaneness within the community or organisation. The act of publicising the bad message is meant to trigger the process of moral rectification for the sake of the wellbeing of the community. Accordingly, Samkange and Samkange (1980:40), argue that it is a peculiarity of the concept of *hunhuism* that it is more discernible when described in terms of what it is 'hausi hunhu ihwohwo' (That is not hunhuism). These words are often used usually as a reprimand. The position site 'hwu ndihwo hunhu chaihwo' (This is real Hunhuism), is rarely pointed out. This indicates that, whatever behaviour a member of an ubuntu society does contrary their philosophy is bound to be criticised or reprimanded. Therefore, whistleblowing is a practice intertwined with the Shona way of living as it breaches neither rule nor right of the community. Rather, it exists as a means of checking and balancing of morality equilibrium in the society for peace's sake.

Just like in any given society, it has been observed that there is a tendency to blame the messengers who bring bad news, but it seems clear that there are deeper roots of the persecution of whistle blowers or the negative labelling the practice has. Whistleblowing is often described by employers and fellow employees as a betraval of trust-a lack of loyalty where loyalty is owed (Larmer. 2002:207). This viewpoint can only hold water in the western culture they value individualism and individual rights. In Africa and let alone among the Shona loyalty is a virtue of *munhu* (ethical person) whose capability is to answer to the calls of societal good. In no complicated words, ubuntu stipulates that loyalty should be given to the whole community in form of good behaviour which brings about harmony between the individual members for the perpetual existence of the former and not the latter. To this point, it can be claimed that whistleblowing brings sanity into a moral society of vanhu (ethical people). This argument can be supported by Samkange Samkange (1980:39) who write, "the attention one human being gives to another, the courtesy, consideration and friendliness in the relationship between people; a code of behaviour, an attitude to other people and to life, is embodied in *hunhu* or *ubuntu*."

It has been spelt out that, the whistle blowers in general face a lot of economic, social, and sometimes political persecution and rejection among other catastrophes simply because they are labelled traitors. However, the idea that *vanhu* (ethical people) are empathic, do not ignore the suffering of any member of community. That is, the worries or concerns of one member is or are worries of the whole community since the *ubuntu* driven morality entails a strict observance of structural functionalism as a mode of operation that support the system of a Shona society. Accordingly, Tutu (1999) has a substantial say in this

viewpoint as he expresses the fact that ethical people feel threatened when others are on the verge of destruction. Central in this saying is the fact that *ubuntu* does not spare victimization of the whistle blowers as a moral right thereby pronouncing it that whistleblowing and *ubuntu* share the same goal and endeavour in perpetual existence.

In fact, whistleblowing is as old as business while business is as old as life and humanness is essence among the Shona. This view is premised on the common understanding that *ubuntu* is a sort of an estate entrusted onto the living by the departed forefathers of the Africans. Samkange Samkange (1980:39) argue:

Since there are as many as 300 linguistic groups with ntu or a variation in the word for person, all believed to have originated from a single source, it is reasonable to suppose that these groups — the Bantu people- by and large, share a common concept of Hunhuism which varies only to the extent that individual groups have undergone changes not experienced by others. For instance, the role of behaviour, the attitude to other people and to life of a ruler, an induna, in a highly centralised military Nguni kingdom is different from that of an Ishe in a less centralised and less martial Shona state.

Drawn from this argument are the untraceable sources of the people's origin and the differences in the lived history of the Bantu people varying from the Nguni to the Shona people. Nevertheless, the *ntu/nhu* remain common to mark the classic *ubuntu/hunhu* which is spring boarded on the notion of togetherness. The philosophy of *ubuntu* therefore permeates all the spheres of human life among the Shona which entail business and both its good and bad activities. Hence, whistleblowing tries to moralise everything in the business spectrum since time immemorial.

In the *hunhu* domain, sharing and protection are incorporated and guaranteed to everyone. All visitors and strangers are well provided for and protected in every home they pass through without bothering who they are. In view of this, everyone with *unhu* among the Shona is caring, generous and protective such that these attributes also pervades into their business life. On this basis, they are bending to provide standard and nontoxic services and goods to fellow members because if they do it the other way around, the community's wellbeing is diminished. Their business operations may also come to a halt since the individual's capabilities are enabled by that of the entire society. The implication of this position is that if any immoral activity is identified in any endeavour of the Shona people, that particular person who would have seen the act should be ready to inform those capable of making the bad habit end. That is, if it is within a business entity, the managerial team ought to be informed and that would be internal whistleblowing. When it happens within a government department, the

type of whistleblowing is governmental whistleblowing since the information about the unjust practice is channelled to the regulatory board or to the media. The involvement of the media then makes it external whistleblowing. An intense consideration of these issues validates the vitality of whistleblowing in the maintenance of moral equilibrium and harmony in the Shona life setting. Whistleblowing is therefore a tool used by the Shona to initiate and marshal the corrective moves that are meant to provide and ensure the existence of a conducive environment for reconciliation between the two parties that would have wronged each other. It is in this manner because only the truth sets anyone free and the same grain of truth is the kernel of all good gestures of ubuntu. It is worth to be reiterated that the philosophy of *ubuntu* should be upheld in any given Bantu multiracial society because it is through which all good and bad acts are vetted and judged Drawing a conclusion from this exposition, one can safely claim that the *ubuntu* initiated whistleblowing is a non-alien practice among the Shona because it strives to guarantee the perpetual existence of peaceful and nonharmful interactions between vanhu (ethical people) within the realm of hunhuism philosophy.

Within the spectrum of *ubuntu*, almost all the people, especially the elderly people are called by their surnames or totems as assign of respect for the whole family from which the person comes from. Most importantly, it banishes the ideology of individualism and replaces it by the representative role in which the individual person effectively stands for the people among which he or she comes from all the times. When one is a representative of the family or clan or community it implies that the person is functioning as a watchdog of hunhu. Hence, the individual has the mandate to blow the whistle whenever he or she sees an immoral practice with potential harm to the public by a fellow employee or the organisation's policies. The same concept of representation also explains how the wrongdoings of one person affects the whole family, clan if not the entire village. In this case, it is everybody's obligation to carry out the task of blowing the whistle whenever an unjust or potentially harmful practice to the business entity itself or to the public interest is performed within the one's vicinity. Being on guard against any criminal offences, may avoid the catastrophes associated with ngozi (an avenging spirit) of a dead person, say; a murdered person seeking appeasement from those who wronged the person before death because through the same notion of representation, it follows anyone a trace of its murderer including his relatives with direct, indirect, or who have no contribution in the murder. Bourdillon (1987:233) explains the same idea as he says, 'the angry spirit attacks an individual through his family causing a succession of death, or death followed by serious illness in other members of the family'. It is

therefore mandatory among the Shona to blow the whistle, always, as a strategy of curbing the occurrences of such cases resulting in dreadful consequences causing the ailing of the entire family.

Still pursuing the notion of representation, it ought to be noted that this ideology makes any one member of the society to a policing agent on guard so that the dictates of *hunhu* are observed to shun *ngozi*. Suggested by this view is the fact that, if one notes an immoral act meant to negatively affect any one individual, and let it go without blowing the whistle, would have wronged the whole community. Whistleblowing is a way of calling for a quick cessation of that immoral behaviour. The general awareness that anyone can blow the whistle against dangerous dealings in the business fraternity ensures the precipitation of high demand on the individual to behave in the highest standards and to portray the highest possible virtues that society strives for. To this end, whistleblowing and *ubuntu* complement each other to guarantee the everlasting harmony between prosperity and morality in the Shona communities.

Closely related to the philosophy of *hunhuism*, is the fact that it entails the notion of social role. For instance, *kupfugama/kutonona* (kneeling down) or *kuchonjomara/kutonona* (squatting) when greeting parents-in-law and serving food reflects good behaviour or culture from where one is born and bred. The person who is squatting and kneeling down acts as an ambassador of the people they represent. The observation of etiquette entails the ideology of love and respect for others. Likewise, this ambassadorial function should be reflected even in the business fraternity. A business *munhu* (ethical person) should also be exemplary in his or her ethical operations. Any failure to resemble the fibre of *ubuntu* will result in that business institution being a victim of whistleblowing. The triggered whistleblowing is aiming at restoring *hunhuism* for the sake of prosperity in the community.

Still in the quest of justifying the practice of whistleblowing and explaining its compatibility with *ubuntu*, it is important to note that the latter uphold the people driven leadership and governance while the former stands in to denounce any immoral activities by the rulers meant to disadvantage the populace and then seek rectification. Chitongo (1998:9) writes:

'Umambo vanhu, hunogadzwa navanhu
Ugotonga vanhu, vanhu vachikukudza'
(Chieftain is the popular vote; authority is given by the masses,
With that authority you rule the people, the people obey your political authority)

The main argument in this quotation is that proper governance among the Shona be installed by the ancestors because the living are kept under the wings of their departed forefathers for warmth protection. It implies that, the ancestors are the living. So, the Shona leadership is the rule by the demos. As such, the rule by the demos does not therefore perpetrate criminal crimes like genocide as a way of attaining and retaining the power. In *hunhuism* crimes have far reaching implications to the people from which the perpetrators come. In so doing, there is a moral obligation upon all the people of that kingdom blow the whistle in a strict attempt to cub the criminal activities which may bring a curse onto the land. Apart from curtailing the catastrophes associated with the avenging spirit, the blowing of the whistle also assures peace and tranquillity ideal for developmental projects to be undertaken.

The *unhu* jurisprudence tends to support remedies and punishment that tend to bring people together. A leader with *unhu* listens to the concerns of his subjects. Such leaders are selfless and consult widely before making a decision. Likewise, an individual who opts to be a whistle blower in case of immoral practice threatening the wellbeing of the people. Such people are greatly appreciated in the Shona political-economic circles because they disclose the bad news in the name of protecting the public interest. The Zimbabwean late musician and Reverend Aaron Rusukira once sang:

...munhu hunhu, pasina hunhu tinoti ibenzi. Hunhu chii? Hunhu kukudza vanhu, hunhu kuda vanhu, hunhu kufarira vanhu, hunhu kukoshesa vanhu zvisinei nezera, kwavanobva, upfumi, dzidzo, kana mutauro....' (A person is humanity; without humanity we say it is a fool. What is humanity? Humanity is respect, love, being open and welcoming, valuing other people regardless of their age, origin, wealth, education or language).

The whistle blower who would have brought the wrongful practices to the attention of those have the power to publicize or remedy the situation for the sake of the wellbeing is said to be well adorned with *hunhu*. In this case, *vanhu* (the demos) are the people in whom the power to remedy the situation is vested because there is always the reign of consensus democracy. To this end, whistleblowing would have brought about amoral rectification in the society for the general good.

Lapin (1993) as cited by Mafunisa in Nicolson (2008:115), argues that there is a need to develop a work ethic that is congruent with and indigenous to the various values, systems and traditions operating in the South African workplace despite the divergent culture because all share common universal values-for example that stealing and infidelity are wrong. Premising on the author's argument on this view, whistleblowing is in compatibility with *ubuntu* in that, the latter does not condone

acts of infidelity which might be inform of makuna-makuna (incest). For instance, father having sex with his own daughter or son having sex with his own mother as a traditional business ritual or *muti/mushonga webhizinisi* (traditional medicine for business prosperity). Some unethical businesspeople sometimes practice what the Shona call kuchekeresa (ritual murder). Others keep zvikwambo (goblins) which are believed to bring business fortune while on the other side causing some problems for the family. The goblin's negative implications include successive deaths or continuous sickness of the extended family. In one of his songs, Alick Macheso sang 'Baba naamai kana paine ane chikwambo ngaabude pachena chidzorerwe kumwene wacho' (Father and mother if any one of you has a goblin should come to the open and return it where it belongs). This is unacceptable among the *ubuntu* society. So, from this perspective, the ancestors and elders of the clan who are the daily guardians or police of human morality do advise or give a directive that such acts should immediately come to an end. The members of any society, business corporation or political organisation who happen to gather information about such acts are therefore encouraged by the norms and values of *ubuntu* to blow the whistle so that the custodians of morality would act in a bid to bring the 'game' to an end. In this regard whistleblowing is congruent with ubuntu which have regulations such as always tell the truth, be faithful in marriage, keep justice, only to mention a few.

In most cases whistleblowing comes to publicise information about corruption, stealing, policies of institutional resource by individuals which is an act of being self-centred, a feeling unwelcome within the parameters of ubuntu. It is a sign of being selfish in that the resources of that any organisation are in one way or another meant to benefit the stockholders and the stakeholders, implying the whole community where the business operates. In agreement with this postulation, Mafunisa in Nicolson (2008:114) says that "in traditional African community, life revolves around collective body... In these settings, formal and informal rules and customs are developed to advance the primacy of the collective." Premising on this viewpoint, it can be proffered that whistleblowing is morally good among the Shona if it targets immoral activities meant to compromise the general wellbeing. In effect, the wellbeing of the community should be guarded jealously because the freedoms of the individuals lay in the privileges; immunities and honesty are obtained from the communal life. Tshikwatamba (2004) cited by Mafunisa in Nicolson (2008) reiterates that since business institutions should promote the welfare of the community, public employees should therefore always be fair and reasonable in their interactions with each citizen. The fair and reasonable called for herein can be inferred even

to the extent of sanctioning of whistleblowing because it only aims at the promotion of the communal welfare.

Like any other human practice, whistleblowing is characterised by both advantages and disadvantages. However, the flaws are to a less extent and cannot wash down all the good of whistleblowing since it always seeks to protect the wellbeing of the whole community. The researcher therefore sees it proper to briefly highlight some of these demerits in this section of the chapter. It is well known that no land has any social deviants. As such, some people in the ubuntu bound society might be selfish to the extent of blowing the whistle unnecessarily just to meet personal gratifications. The whistle can be blown in seeking retaliation of prior social misunderstandings; for example, an employee of a business entity can be dismissed on charges of theft and later embarks on alumni whistleblowing. This is done based on fabricated immoral charge meant to blackmail the business corporation. Such fabricated lies might include the practice of kuchekeresa (use of traditional business medicine made from human partsmurder). All this boils down to immoral intentions by the fake whistle blower against the ubuntu social regulations-for instance do not backbite and do not tell lies.

Another phenomenon that flaws whistleblowing is the nature of the religious set up of the Bantu people which sometimes sanctions the killing of human beings believed to be traitors. In view of this ideology, the social rule which say killing a person except at war comes into play unjustified because the whistle blower in any circumstance will label a traitor, thereby warring the entire community. Out of this conviction, many people are or have been killed during liberation struggles or economic reforms such as the land redistribution programmes under the cover label that they are villains. That is the people against which the whistle is blown use their political muscles to end the life of the blowers and this can be executed through hanging or stoning if it were in the ancient societies of the Shona. These retributive measures against the whistle blowers are normally done when the intended goals whistleblowing did not manage to materialise. This shows that though the practice of whistleblowing its of positive intentions towards the promotion of societal welfare, it may turn into a tragedy to the whistle blowers and the close family members as they are banished from the community or exterminated on the pretext of a treason charge.

In Ndau culture they say *akuna mukaka usina chibi* (there is no milk without a spot of dirt), meaning that the Shona way of life be it political, business, religious is of course marred with legitimised immoral activities which may need to be

resolved without spilling the dirt all over. Basing on this belief, whistleblowing is detrimental to the special hierarchy and the respect owed because the Shona also have a social regulation which says do not despite those of high status, but always respect them. It therefore entails that if whistleblowing is done against the mother, father, chief, or any other revered personalities of the community, they would have lost grip on the subordinates. This may result in chaos or moral deviance since there will no one to restrict some of these acts in the respective groupings be they business or political. Such consequences are normally associated with accusation whistleblowing. At this juncture in time, it can be therefore claimed that whistleblowing also has some moral flaws associated with it.

Whistleblowing tends to disclose political wrongs of a system which may lead to military intervention by the international community. More than in most cases, military intervention has much negative results than positive ones; these range from infrastructural dissolution, industrial production coming to a halt, installation of puppet leaders for easy siphoning of local resources and most dreadful, the eradication of local culture for the complete proliferation of new and non-ubuntu oriented culture through neo-colonialism. Going back to that example drawn from Feso, it was better that the identity of that people was spared because it was the fellow Shona who intervened with the prime goal of putting back the ubuntu based leadership which would honour the demos. But, if it were the Western forces intervening in that manner, no African legacy would be left for the next generation because they would be instilling Western consciousness in the locals. They would even leave these troubled states worse than they were before. This view can be substantiated by the Iraq and the Ivory Coast incidents where there was much damage than moral rectification in the way the former two governments used to manage the affairs of the people. To this effect, in 2009, as quoted Robert Mugabe in a newspaper article entitled Zimbabwe Celebrates Peace Days quoted by Gade (2011:311), appealed to ubuntu in his indirect and diplomatic contention against whistleblowing led international intervention, it reads;

Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe has last week proclaimed Friday, Saturday and Sunday as peace days-during which Zimbabweans from different political persuasions are expected to encourage and promote national healing and reconciliation. Mugabe said the three days set aside for national healing offered Zimbabweans a choice to either consolidate their identity or expose themselves as a disintegrated nation, "We should realize that the desire for peace, harmony, and stability is a desire for progress, national identity, prosperity and hunhu, ubuntu,"

The gist of the extract is to encourage the Zimbabweans not to disclose their internal problems to the outsiders who in turn mastermind division among and

lose of national or communitarian identity which may go down to the legacy of *ubuntu*. It is therefore evident that despite the aims whistleblowing has, it also has jarring effect on the community in cases of external forces' penetration.

The same way it happens in today in the modernised business fraternity, the whistle blowers in the old Shona society had the fears of being banished from the grouping, dismissal from the workplace or to be exterminated. Whistle blowers almost always experience the retaliation perpetrated by fellow employees, employers or political leaders depending on an immoral act. If it concerns issues surrounding state secrets one may face death penalty. Larmer (2002:207) concurs with this point as he argues that whistleblowing is often described by fellow employees and employers as a betrayal of trust- a lack of loyalty where loyalty is owed. In ancient Shona societies, the disrespect or accusation of political leaders or powerful and influential businesspeople would result in hired thugs or warriors sent to physically punish whistle blowers or be ex-communicated. Being aware of all these possible fatal results, the potential whistle blowers would take much serious consideration before embarking on the practice despite how dangerous the immoral behaviour witnessed would be to fellow employees, the organisation itself or the welfare of the public.

Despite the constant reminders about the social regulations at the *dare* or in the folktales, the marriage ethics debunkers were always there. Some were adulterous or were involved in incest activities, that is, having sex with own children, parents or blood sisters. To this extent, eyewitnesses of these repugnant activities could see it very difficult to blow the whistle because it would be detrimental to the entire family since the transgression carries a heavy punishment from the ancestors. The situation would be worse when a child sees their own mother being intimate with a neighbour because blowing the whistle against one's mother would carry terribly burden of *kutanda botso* (a strenuous and painful process appeasing the avenging spirit of the dead mother) since the mother could commit suicide or be divorced. The full knowledge of the resultant hardships, the potential whistle blower is confused, thereby having a moral dilemma. No wonder cases of whistleblowing were limited in the ancient Shona communities. However, this does not mean the non-existence or non-compatibility of whistleblowing and *ubuntu*.

Since it has been brought about in the afore discussion that the life and morality among the Shona revolve around the ancestry mystery and the lived history, if one decides to ignore a case of immorality which warrants whistleblowing for the better of the entire society, say a person's murder by your mother for a business

ritual, the spirit of that dead person will still torment the family seeking appeasement. In such scenarios the issue at stake is two pronged in that whistleblowing against own mother is tantamount to insulting her- a case which warrants *kutanda botso* (her avenging spirit after her death). Assuming that the would-be whistle blower in question decides to avoid the possible hash consequences by ignoring the incident, the victim of murder will arise in the form of an avenging spirit against the perpetrator of the crime and the one who saw it happening and ignored. These circumstances would leave the potential whistle blower deeply undecided hence, a mental torture which is in effect a moral dilemma.

Almost related to the above, the whistle blower might be bewitched by the one who has been the victim of whistleblowing. For instance, if one caught a *n'anga* (a traditional healer) burying a fellow member of the society alive as part of a ritual meant to boost his divination capabilities or doing it for their own employer then one decides to go for whistleblowing against them. Traditionally, the *n'anga* could rest on his powers to concoct *juju* against the whistle blower either to kill or cause an everlasting misfortune in their life. Apart from that, the traditional healer could make the potential whistle blower mad before embarking on the practice as a way of silencing themm. Having the awareness of these whistleblowing related problems, one would remain tongue tied despite the intensity of the harm likely to emanate from an immoral practice which would have been committed. But deep down the *n'anga's* mind, a moral guilt is felt thereby resulting in amoral dilemma.

It is clear from this exposition that the Shona had the concept of business which ranges from primary industries such as farming, hunting to selling own labour as a worker. In this piece of philosophical argumentation, it has been shown as well that whistleblowing is equivalent to *kurova bembera*. Both, whistleblowing, and business have been presented as integral parts or components of the Shona since they promote the best welfare for the entire community within the parameters of *ubuntu*. Despite the evidence or postulations supporting or proving the compatibility of the philosophy of *ubuntu* and whistleblowing proffered in this chapter, it has also shown that the harmony between them is characterised by moral dilemmas bewildering the Shona whistle blowers from time immemorial. However, the chapter also unravelled the fact that some extent, the practice poses some threats if not dangers that sometimes result in the killing of innocent people who would have opted to blow the whistle against immoral activities that diminishes a continued existence of the collective community.

## **CHAPTER 4:**

# WHISTLEBLOWING IN ZIMBABWE: AN EXPOSE

This chapter states and explores many cases of whistleblowing that happened in Zimbabwe. In doing so, the nature and gravity of the possible injury, moral dilemmas and the possible result of the blowing is expatiated on. All this is done within the dictates of the philosophy of *ubuntu* as a moral theorem that seeks to address ethical problems in the business environment in Zimbabwe. These cases are to be critically analysed through the philosophy of *ubuntu*, a process which will see the compatibility between whistleblowing and *hunhu* further justified.

In the Zimbabwean business environment there have been many whistleblowing cases, among them being the case of external-government whistleblowing by some non-governmental organisation such as Crisis Coalition in Zimbabwe (CCZ) to the international community against the violation of human rights which took place during the 2000 fast track land redistribution which was reported in the Zimbabwean Independent of November 24 to 30, 2006, in which a Transnational Company (TNC), Olivine Industries was instructed by its headquarters overseas not to buy raw materials such as groundnuts, sunflowers, macadamia nuts or any farm product from the 'stolen farms' in Zimbabwe. This was a directive from the American government following the blowing of the whistle by the nongovernmental organisations such as the CCZ that claimed that there was gross violation of human rights by the Zimbabwean government through and during the 2000 fast track land redistribution which saw white farmers and their top managerial employees thrown out of the farms. In turn the whistle blowers (nongovernmental organisations and individuals suspected by the then government to relate to the West) suffered from retributive laws and policies from the Zimbabwean government. Indeed, the suffering of other African at the hands of fellow Shona people was a direct and serious threat to the well-being of the entire community in the eyes of *ubuntu*. Such scenario poses a moral dilemma to the potential whistle blowers, whether to risk their private life and business opportunities in pursuit of upholding the essence of ubuntu which values the general good of the whole community. Accordingly, the decision by the nongovernmental organisations to blow the whistle was in effect a practice based on empathy because they wanted the politically perpetrated violence to end. By then, the three political parties in the country Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF), Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai (MDC-

T) and Movement for Democratic Change-Mutambara (MDC-M) were trying to bring back the influence and dominance of *ubuntu* through the political activities within the borders of Zimbabwe. In effect, they were calling for reconciliation and diversity in unity because without these the essence of togetherness in *ubuntu* is non-functional.

Another case was an act of government-cum-external whistleblowing in which the Governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) Doctor Gideon Gono was screened on the Zimbabwean National Television denouncing some top chefs in the government for perpetrating corruption and a high inflationary business environment in the country through the so called 'burning of forex' in 2009. This was an ubuntu initiated practice which came after the Governor saw that the masses of Zimbabwe were being exploited by a few business tycoons with the honour and love for other, a quality greatly called for by the philosophy of ubuntu. These activities abused African humanity in Zimbabwe, in that, only those with hefty pockets were draining the few cents the poor had for their survival. This was incompatible with one of the chief tenants of *Hunhuism* that is. of being empathic and valuing of collectivism. The general populace of Zimbabwe could not buy the basic commodities as the prices were eve-skyrocketing a sign that, there was need of *ubuntu's* restoration, a process which would only come by if and only if the whistle was blown to alert those with powers to rectify the immoral activities. To this end, the philosophy of ubuntu condemns the government chefs and upholds the doctrine of whistleblowing since it was meant to way of inculcating good behaviour through a well protracted path of valuing the native values, norms and traditions. He (Dr Gono) faced a moral dilemma as to whether to state or not the names of the top government officials involved as the legislators pressured him to do so. He did not want to jeopardise the reputation of the people involved, though it was a noble and moral good to expose them as a way of discouraging such acts. He also feared for his own security and physically and professionally. In such a case, one may claim that there was a breach of loyalty, an act best described by Bok (1998:292), who says whistleblowing is an act of disloyalty because the exposure of the alleged immoral practices is a violation of loyalty, both to the organisation and fellow employees. However, loyalty to individuals who do not up hold ubuntu does not imply that we have a duty to refrain from reporting the immoral actions of those to whom we are loyal; rather royalty in Africa only applies to the collective body.

In another case of government-cum-external whistleblowing involving Mudiwa who informed the police that Chitungwiza chief internal auditor Tsangamwe wanted a bribe from the informant to give a distorted report of the audit exercise

he had carried out at the Chitungwiza Municipality that would have denied the rate payers of the right information about how their money was being used for their own benefit was reported in the Zimbabwean Independent of 24 to 30, 2006, Subsequently, Tsangamwe was arrested for that immoral practice since the act of bribery cannot be accepted as a moral law. To this end, Mudiwa, be it socially or professionally, his security was at stake in case that Tsangamwe wanted to retaliate in the foreseeable future. So, many people are undecided on whether to blow the whistle or not considering the risks involved in partaking in the act of whistleblowing. After all, the act of stealing is a prohibited practice according to underlying essence of *hunhu*; that is the call for morally ever uprightness in all life endeavours.

In January 2007, the Sunday Mail reported that one of the Trust Bank tellers informed the authorities about a suspicious client who intended to withdraw sixty typical example of internal-cum-impersonal This was whistleblowing since the teller simply reported the immoral act through the organisation's protocol. Among the Shona is considered to a vice of which the disclosure of such an act was a sign of being a real munhu (an ethical person). An investigation was done only to find out that one of the bank tellers transferred the money from a customer's account into a friend's (a suspicious withdrawer), eventually the two friends were arrested on the strength of the alert teller who blew the whistle. However, the arrested had a syndicate which later threatened the private life of the teller- whistle blower. In view of this whistleblowing becomes a moral dilemma-oriented act not only to the Zimbabwean populace but the world-over, since would be blower is mentally divided over the conflicting social obligation versus the private security duty. However, the blower decided the right way because he was a pure munhu with ethical standards congruent with the ethical dictates of ubuntu.

The Manica Post of 21-27 March 2011 reported a case of Mr Chapoterera, a Chancellor Government Primary School Headmaster in Mutare, who appeared before the Mutare Magistrate Court following an act of whistleblowing by one of the ancillary staff at the school that the accused stole eleven asbestos sheets and ferried them to his village in Nyanga. Mr Chapoterera is said to have done this immoral act some time in 2008. The non-academic staff-cum whistle blower opted for both internal external whistleblowing because he informed the School Development Committee (SDC) and the Mutare Provincial Office which in turn facilitated an arrest which was followed by suspension from duty. This was government whistleblowing the whistle blower informed the ministry which is a regulatory entity supervising the day-to-day activities in government institutions.

Eventually, an audit team was tasked by the Ministry of Education permanent secretary to further unravel more immoral practices by the headmaster in question. The charges he faced included that, stated above, misappropriation of school funds and many fraud cases which later implicated many tender suppliers in the Eastern Province capital of Mutare. Mr Chapoterera later gave in to many of the above stated allegations including the asbestos issue. This meant his dismissal from the teaching profession. As if it was not enough, he was sentenced to stay in prison for seven years with three years suspended on good behaviour.

The decision by the ancillary staff member to blow the whistle against the headmaster was greatly centred on *ubuntu* because the stealing of school property by the headmaster was tantamount to the destruction of the community since the school children who were supposed to benefit from stolen property are an integral part of the whole Shona people. His decision to publicize the immoral activities was done in the favour and protection of the public interest so that the 'game' could be ended. Indeed, the government and the court of law's decision of dismissal and imprisonment was the proper stance in consideration of rectifying the immoral practices by the headmaster. To this end, the whistle blower in this is an ethical person according to the chief tenants of *ubuntu* who values and upholds the welfare of everyone including children who attend school at this institution.

A closely related to the above incidents, a case of a Tongogara Secondary in Chipinge teacher by the name Tichaona Mutema embarked onto an internal-impersonal whistleblowing when he blew the whistle against a fellow teacher, Mr Manyumwa at the same institution who was sexually harassing various female students. Mr Manyumwa, a 34-year-old married man who has already fathered three children was caught red handed having sexual intercourse with a 16-year-old Chipiwa Mupedzani, after being in that improper association/ relationship with the juvenile for two years when she was still doing Form two. To make sure that proper investigation was done, Manyumwa was given a forced transfer to Chikore High School where he was later dismissed from the public service.

According to Mutema, the whistle blower, he had been tracking all the sinister moves by the teacher in question during which he caught him red handed having sexual intercourse with the minor. Without any hesitation and resentment, Mutema informed the Headmaster Mr Gondavakuru who then passed on the relay button to the Chipinge District Education Office and subsequently the Permanent Secretary. Following the informative notification, further investigations were done, only to find out that the girl was three months pregnant. At the same

time Manyumwa confessed that he had been in a hexagonal love relationship with other girls. Among the victims of Manyumwa's sexual abuse, there was a thirteen-year-old form one student schooling at the neighbouring Secondary School.

A disciplinary tribune was congregated/ convened out of which a dismissal out of the Public Service was proffered against the immoral teacher. Further charges were filed against him for statutory rape and subsequently Munyumwa was both dismissed and subsequently jailed. This was internal whistleblowing done after the damage was done to the juvenile though it however curtailed further sexual abuses by the same teacher. The whistle blower showed a gesture of ubuntu because Manyumwa's behaviour would have resulted in a high risk of spreading of the dreadful Human Immune Virus (HIV) which causes the untreatable Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Such consequences would have led to the diminishing of the collective body of vanhu through AIDS related death and lose of educated personnel or skilled labour succumbing to the disease. Accordingly, it is worth noting that there is a social regulation embedded among the Shona culture that prohibits the heinous act of adultery, as such Mutema's effort was in tandem with this teaching as he denounces the immoral practice which may have ended in marriage collapse. It is therefore evident that whistleblowing, that, whistleblowing is an integral part of the ubuntu philosophy which makes the basis of the Shona ethical theory.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November 2010, the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) reported a case of a Harare T.M. Supermarket female worker Tsitsi Nyabeza who internally blew the whistle against her manager who sexually harassed her. The whistle blower said the manager allegedly called her up to his office and upon her arrival he stripped off his clothes tying to entice the lady into a sexual intimacy. Immediately the subordinate rushed out of the office and informed other workers and the senior management that in turn passed on the case to the police. In an interview with the ZBC crew, Nyabeza said;

'The manager wanted me to participate in immoral practices which are non-compatible with *hunhu hwedu* as married people. He is only my boss and not my husband. I will not give in to adultery.'

About this comment, the woman showed that she is a really *munhu* (ethical person) who values the cultural norm and regulation inculcated by the philosophy of *ubuntu*. She undertook personal whistleblowing which was meant to curtail the damage on her. The immoral manager was prosecuted and lost his job. In a way, the whistle blower's decision is greatly appraised by the values and traditions of *ubuntu* in that the pending damage could end up affecting the whole society since

the diminishing of one person is the disintegration of the whole community because the philosophy at work in this project upholds the idea of *ubuntu*. It therefore follows that, almost every whistle blower among the Shona people partakes in the practice with the intention of safeguarding the values, norms and traditions entrenched in the teachings of ubuntu in perpetual succession.

According to the philosophy of ubuntu, every member or institution within a society represents the whole. If it is a business, it is developed, moulded and kept 'alive' by societal values, norms and traditions for the people and for itself. That is, the business institution's policy should be in harmony with the expectations and general ethical fibre of the community. It therefore points to the fact that an African businesses corporates among the Shona should value the importance of togetherness and empathy. Thus, it should feel for all the stakeholders. Contrary to this philosophy, the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) had the practice /policy of charging late registration fines to all the students upon the expiry of the set period for registration during the beginning of each semester. The policy has been causing a lot of implications for many economically disadvantaged students in that the failure to pay fees in time implies poverty. An ethical person would then wonder, where and how the poor are to get the doubled amount. That is, the original fees and the late registration fine. This financial policy by the famous highest institution of learning in Zimbabwe was an act of adding salt to a bleeding wound to most students and parents.

Deeply affected and concerned with the practice, the then Student Representative Committee (SRC) presidency aspirant, Agency Gumbo, decided to blow the whistle against the University, an act which was both external and impersonal in nature. He informed the media (the Herald and ZBC) that further gathered more details about the matter and then publicised it. The publication ended up informing some regulatory agency. For instance, the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, a wing of the government later intervened to restore respect for the poor. In turn, the ministry gave a directive to the UZ administration that the policy of late registration fine be removed and the already collected money (fine) be refunded to the concerned students because the move was washing down the ubuntu-oriented Cadetship Scheme meant to help the underprivileged from the government coffers. Gumbo's decision was driven by the zeal to promote and protect the general interest of the entire society because the late registration fine would end up barring some potential medical practitioners, lawyers, teachers, and all other personnel poised to benefit the entire nation. As an ethical person who knows that he threatened when others

are diminished, he was there equally to the task and saved the situation as a whistle blower.

In this section of the research, it has been found important to present some case of gross immorality which warranted the practice of whistleblowing according to the underlying essence of *ubuntu*, but it went away with whistleblowing for moral rectification. The first one pertains to the behaviour of bus crews of various companies plying various routes in Zimbabwe who load and make passengers pay bus fares with the full knowledge of road unworthiness conditions of their vehicles. This immoral practice has seen many people losing their properties, health and even their lives. In some cases, the buses would break down shortly after travelling a small portion of the journey resulting in passengers being held in ransom stranded by the road as the bus crew tries to fix the technical problems. Such behaviour or practice is unethical according to the *ubuntu* philosophy. In a bid to find out why these workers participate in such unethical practices, some rank marshals (mahwindi) were interviewed and they revealed that they were working under the directive of their bosses, failure to stick to the instruction, they risk losing their jobs. Reflecting on this remark, one may argue that the bus crews were forced to do accordingly, because if they were to lose their jobs, it would be difficult to come by in these times of high rate of unemployment. However, this is an acute violation and demeaning of the ethical fibre embedded in ubuntu since the transport operators and their employees are not living by the dictates of their own philosophy. Rather, they seem to be the capitalists who value their profit margins contrary to the doctrine of ubuntu which defines and mirrors the concept of personhood through the wellbeing of the collective. The fact that whistleblowing in such case would curtail human deaths and lose of property implies that the insiders in which transport operators operates should blow the whistle for moral rectification hence the upkeep of humanity's sacredness and togetherness under the emblem of ubuntu.

The aforementioned stated expositions contained in the chapter therefore present the different condition and cases that demand the practice of whistleblowing among the Shona. As such, only the upholding of the philosophy of *ubuntu* gives rise to morality among the Shona since good intentions make the morality of any human action. It has been shown in this study as well, that *ubuntu* solves many moral dilemmas in the business environment especial regard to whistleblowing. In a bid to fully explore the notion of whistleblowing in the business realm, some moral dilemmas were also typified and elaborated in the context of the Zimbabwean situation. It has been shown from the above exposition that the Shona are well acquainted with this practice of whistleblowing.

In view of these cases it can be claimed that through passage of time their native philosophy of *ubuntu* has accustomed and accommodated many Western traits of whistleblowing which have fitted very well into the Shona culture. It has been unravelled in these cases that the whistle blowers were *ubuntu* oriented whenever they decided to blow the whistle seeking to see the *ubuntu*-way of living being restored for the benefit of all the members of the Shona community. The cases in question also showed that among the Shona everyone is important as the concerns of children, woman and the general populace were given an attentive ear resulting in moral rectification taking its course of action.

## **CHAPTER 5:**

## AN EVALUATION AND WAY FORWARD

Drawing from the above chapters, many arguments trying to unravel the compatibility between *ubuntu* and the practice of whistleblowing have been presented and to a larger extent, it has been shown beyond any reasonable that the practice in the discussion is a non-alien one. First, among the merits of whistleblowing is the fact that it safeguards the essence of humanity in that people are not supposed to be used as means to other people's ends. Also, any act that warrants whistleblowing implies that it is immoral and accordingly it cannot be enacted as an ethical theorem governing the conduct of people among the Shona. Whistleblowing can be acclaimed to be noble and moral ideal in that it guarantees the room for check and balances in an organisation or even a state since every member of it longs to act in a manner that makes him or her both subject and sovereign because everyone is a potential whistle blower who safeguards the philosophy of *ubuntu*.

Secondly, the act of whistleblowing is infested with some moral problems. First, it endangers the whistle blower and his or her family is at stake since the denounced may retaliate physically. The whistle blower might be dismissed from the job leading to the suffering of their family. Psychologically, the blower is affected in that they may suffer social exclusion, especially when the whistleblowing is dissent in nature. It may also result in forced relocation due to persecution in the case that it was a government arm denounced for acting immorally, exactly a thing which happened to some workers of a considerable number of nongovernmental organisations in Zimbabwe.

It is important for the Zimbabwean people that the government should reintroduce the whistle blower fund as a way of cushioning the blower who would have lost his or her job in the event of victimisation resulting in dismissal. Such a scheme was once proposed by the Reserve Bank Governor Dr. Gideon Gono in 2004, seeking to promote whistleblowing but it failed to kick off. In support of such a view, Stoner (1985:589) argues that a whistle blower should not be given a deaf ear and leave him or her vulnerable to retaliation but, be invited to bring their concerns straight to the top. Nevertheless, the moral dilemmas will still pervade the Zimbabwean society as it wonders whether the fund will protect the whistle blowers professionally, socially, politically or physically. These possible threats conflict with the moral obligation being supported by monetary motivation herein. As a solution to such a conflict, this project therefore suggests

and recommends that the supreme law of the land (the constitution) be made that it protects the whistle blowers for the sake of checks and balances in all institutions.

Building from the discussed acculturation and globalisation in chapter two, the author therefore suggests that Zimbabweans, particularly the Shona people, settle for glocalisation which is a denial of total cultural globalisation which may result in total disregard for their cultural values and norms which are in tandem with morally controversial concepts like whistleblowing. Robertson, as cited in Steger (2003:75) says glocalisation is a complex interaction of the global and the local characterised by cultural borrowing leading to cultural hybridity. Thus, there is no clear-cut manifestation of sameness or difference. Therefore, there is a middle position with a culture which identifies itself with the morally justified administration of whistleblowing among the Zimbabweans, particularly the Shona.

Since there is a need to find out whether there is protection for the whistle blowers as a factor to be considered before blowing the whistle, it is therefore worthy it to suggest that there must be constitutionality of whistleblowing be for the sake of *ubuntu*-oriented whistleblowing which protects the ideology of collectivism. This task can be achieved through the operations of Constitution and Parliamentary Select Committee (COPAC). The legalising of the practice is ideal for cushioning the public including the whistle blowers especially in the times of economic hardships and non-rule of the law.

#### GENERAL CONCLUSION

By way of conclusion, it has been observed that whistleblowing is the disclosure of an immoral practice, unjust treatment or negligence tendencies of fellow employees on the business corporate itself by a concerned employee on moral grounds meant to see the 'bad game' coming to an end, although it is controversy ridden. In the aforementioned expositions, the sub-types of whistleblowing, factors to be considered before one embarks on the practice, moral controversy surrounding its permissibility and impermissibility were also unravelled during the discussion. It has also been noted that Western ethical theorems like Deontology and Utilitarianism are irrelevant when it comes to the justification of whistleblowing among the Shona hence, the call to invoke the African's native *ubuntu* philosophy.

The philosophy of *ubuntu* was also presented as a multi-faceted concept which values togetherness, ahead of individuals, empathy, just to mention a few. In this study, it was shown that *ubuntu* is in effect an ethical theory which gives the dictates according to which the Shona live together in harmony. Most importantly, it was learnt that the worldview contained in *ubuntu* is based on ancestry mystery which explains that the departed for- fathers of the Shona are authors, custodians and policing agents to the formulation and implementation of the ethical values, norms and traditions. On such basis, the study further showed that any breach of the ancestry based ethical codes; one is bound to suffer the wrath of ancestors and avenging spirits. It has also been argued that every member of the community or family play on ambassadorial role of which the individual is always expected to do good that raises the family or community's name high.

Despite the controversy obscurity around the morality whistleblowing as a practice, it has been argued that since time immemorial, it has been there among the Shona hence the justification of its compatibility with the philosophy of *Hunhuism*. It was also substantially proven that the concept of business was an integral aspect of the Shona life and to that effect the *ubuntu* ethics permeates into all spheres of life among the Shona including business. The research also proffered that in the ancient Shona society the practice of whistleblowing was equivalent to *kurova bembera* which was characterised by anonymity, a feature also common in the Western concept of whistleblowing. Basing on the postulations that *ubuntu* has also been argued and substantiated the anonymous kurova *bembera* has now assumed the accommodation of the various subtypes and factors to be considered, the same way it is in the occidental world.

Having drawn the above stated positions, the study also presented many critically analysed cases of whistleblowing in Zimbabwe as a way of further justifying the claim that whistleblowing is a non-alien practice among the Shona and its implementation seeks to protect the communal wellbeing other than owing loyalty to individuals on the expense of collectivism's sake. The research also systematically evaluated the afore discussed facts and then round off by giving some recommendations meant to see a successive hand over of the *ubuntu*-oriented practice of whistleblowing to next Shona generations.

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## **Synopsis**

The study appraises the highly contested concept of whistleblowing in the field of business ethics through the philosophy of ubuntu/hunhu. To unpack some of the controversies around whistleblowing, the following questions are raised: What is whistleblowing? Is it different from backbiting or mere reporting or wrongdoing? What are the positive and negative implications of whistleblowing? Is it an alien concept among the Shona? In the process of grappling with these questions, the book unravels the nature of whistleblowing and ubuntu/hunhu. All this is done through desk interrogation of both Occidental and African ethicists like De George, Larmer, James, Buchholz and Rosenthal, Mkhize, Gade and Mangena, just to mention a few. Developing from the Shona concept of kurova bembera, this work shows that whistleblowing is not an alien concept among the Shona. In fact, the study brings to the fore the benefits of whistleblowing in safeguarding African collectivism, and dynamism in ubuntu/hunhu acculturation as it appraises the hybridised practice of whistleblowing. It also shows the fact that the ubuntu/hunhu ethics hinges on the ancestry worldview with the departed forefathers of the Shona being the authors, implementation policing agents, and guardians of the ethical values, norms, and traditions. Although this book parades the merits and moral compatibility of whistleblowing and ubuntu/hunhu among the Shona, it also acknowledges the moral dilemmas faced by whistle blowers. To this end, an evaluation of the whole book and recommendations are proffered at the end of this work, chief among the recommendations being the constitutionality of whistleblowing and globalisation.

## **About the Author**

Elishah Mutigwe is a lecturer in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University. He has been with the university since its inception in 2012. He is a PhD student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. He holds a Master of Arts Degree in Philosophy (UZ 2012), a Special Honours Degree in Philosophy (UZ 2010), and a Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies and Philosophy degree (UZ 2003). Mutigwe has vast experience in university systems which he gathered during his tenure in various positions, ranging from Programme Coordinator, and Departmental Chairperson to Acting Faculty Coordinator/Dean. He teaches Business Ethics and many more Philosophy modules. Elishah has published several articles on Ethics and Philosophy in general. He also coordinates the Student Dissertation Supervision Committee in the department. He is also a part-time tutor with Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU). His research interests are in Ethics, Philosophy of Ubuntu, and Social and Political Philosophy.