



Ephraim-Stephen Essien and Frank Aragbonfoh Abumere. *African Political and Economic Philosophy with Africapitalism Concepts for African Leadership*. African Philosophy: Critical Perspectives and Global Dialogue series, Lanham-Boulder-New York-London, Lexington Books, 2024. ISBN 978-1-66693-110-5 Hardback. 978-1-66693-111-2 eBook.

African Political and Economic Philosophy with Africapitalism is a compelling collection of essays that navigates the interrelations of African leadership, political philosophy, and economic thought, particularly through the lens of Africapitalism. It is part of a series that aims to highlight discussions of indigenous philosophies and address the urgent issues encountered by the African continent today. The editors set a solid foundation for understanding the significance of Africapitalism, explaining it as a paradigm that articulates the ability of Africa's private sector to drive economic transformation and social prosperity (pp. 1-3).

The distinguished thinkers of the volume engage with historical contexts, indigenous philosophies, and contemporary challenges beleaguering the African socio-political landscape. Abayomi Sharomi, Nana Kwasi Amoateng, and Thaddeus Metz and others offer pertinent insights into the underpinnings of Africapitalism, its moral implications, and how it connects to concepts of self-reliance and sustainable development. A significant strength of this volume is its capacity to merge theoretical analysis with actionable implications. Essays challenge the notion that African development is solely a matter of Western economic models, instead showing Africapitalism as a robust alternative. Essien, for example, contends that Africapitalism goes beyond a simple adaptation of Western capitalism to include an indigenous framework that promotes local values and social wealth creation, stressing successful practices such as the Igbo apprenticeship system (pp. 11-17). The integration of indigenous philosophies and the emphasis on cultural context allows authors to suggest a form of capitalism that aligns with African communal values rather than imposing foreign ideologies.

The multifaceted critique of past development theories, including African socialism, adds considerable ground to the narrative. The contributors engage with the historical failures of socialist policies in Africa and present Africapitalism as a needed evolution in economic thought—a means of escaping the pitfalls of its predecessors (Abumere, pp. 61-81).

Authors are also consistent in articulating the moral dimensions of Africapitalism throughout. Many authors call for a moral grounding in economic practices, underscoring the necessity for responsible leadership that favours social wellbeing alongside profit (e.g. Sharomi, pp. 17-29). This creates a compelling argument that aligns economic prosperity with ethical responsibility, proposing that the two are not mutually exclusive and making a strong case for a morally conscientious approach to governance and economic engagement in Africa. Authors also contribute meaningfully to current dialogue about leadership in Africa. They provide a framework for comprehending how concepts like Ubuntu and Africapitalism can be linked to contemporary leadership models to enhance accountability, cooperation, and sustainability (Adahada, pp. 159-181). By positioning traditional African values within the realm of political philosophy, the authors adequately elucidate a path toward a more just and equitable society.

This volume presents commendable insights, then, but some shortcomings call for attention. One is the potential overemphasis on Africapitalism as a panacea for the different barriers facing African states. The research posits that economic transformation can be determined by the private sector, but that risks underplaying the systemic issues linked to governance, corruption, and inequality that continue to plague many African nations (Etuk, pp. 89-102). Such obstacles are deeply grounded, suggesting that undue focus on Africapitalism may minimize the complexities of African development.

And while the authors engage extensively with moral philosophy, some are more nuanced than others in explaining how there can be a systematic implementation of these moral imperatives across different sectors and contexts. Although there is an emphasis on the need for moral capitalism, the actionable steps to enact these principles within entrenched bureaucratic and political systems remain abstract. Abumere's chapter on the resource curse in Nigeria, for example, presents the stark reality of corruption and moral failure, yet does not adequately explore how Africapitalism can change these profoundly ingrained practices in a genuine way (Abumere, pp. 61-81).

Some readers may also find that the breadth of the anthology leads to an unbalanced depth with particular topics. Chapters that focus on the philosophical underpinnings of Africapitalism versus its application, might leave readers desiring a more substantial evaluation of real-world implications and case studies with concrete examples.

However, the volume makes an important contribution to discussions about the role of philosophy in addressing developmental challenges in

Africa. It positions Africapitalism within the wider context of indigenous philosophical traditions, pushing back against the monolithic narratives that usually characterize African economic discourse. By advocating for the inclusion of local values and practices into economic frameworks, the authors enlighten the transformative potential of Africapitalism, offering it as a model for sustainable development that favours community and social well-being (Essien & Abumere, pp. 3-5).

The rich tapestry of perspectives on leadership, also, should galvanize critical reflections on what makes efficient governance in the continent today. The emphasis on moral imperatives within economic practices confronts dominant norms that usually identify the maximization of profit as the basic goal of business (Adahada, pp. 159-181). In this sense, the anthology revitalizes African political thought, encouraging new generations of thinkers and leaders to rethink the ethical implications of their actions and decisions in a fast transforming global context.

Future editions of this volume could benefit from deeper case studies that demonstrate successful applications of Africapitalism in specific contexts. The integration of more empirical data and examples would ground the theoretical discussions and also provide practical insights for practitioners and policymakers. The book could also broaden its scope to examine collaborations between Africapitalism and other rising economic ideas within Africa, such as social entrepreneurship or cooperatives, which may offer additional avenues for community development but still keep to capitalist principles (Isanbor & Ukagba, Chapter 9, pp. 121-135).

Overall, this book is an insightful and thought-provoking anthology that advances critical discussions around leadership, philosophy, and economic practices in Africa. Ably edited by Essien and Abumere, the volume is a rich ground for exploring Africapitalism as a viable answer to Africa's socio-economic challenges, while simultaneously advocating for a renewed commitment to indigenous values and moral responsibility within the framework of African leadership. Even though there are shortcomings, the book serves as a significant contribution to African philosophical discourse and will resonate with scholars, policymakers, and leaders engaged in the complex dynamics of political and economic ideologies in the region.

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