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Oath-Taking and Accountability: Two Epistemic Antidotes to Injustice, Corruption and Under-Development in Africa

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ABSTRACT.

Most of contemporary Africa is replete with injustice, corruption, and under-development; though extant attempts to curb these vices have failed (perhaps because they are not radical enough or they lack outright efficacy to do the desired), still, they need to be curbed. Civilized society desires order, evolves a structure incorporating both individual freedom and a clear set of rules for interpersonal relationships; understands the need for a characteristic and effective set of principles for assigning basic rights, duties, and burdens of social cooperation amid responsibility. And the adequacy or otherwise of such principles has corresponding effect on justice and development. Justice and accountability are also predicated on the law and oath-practice as a premise for social responsibility or order. With Africa in focus, this paper analyzed the issues and indicated that only efficacious oath system and effective principles of accountability (along with social, moral, legal, and individual responsibility) are a sine qua non for justice, peace, and development.

Keywords: Justice, development, corruption, oath/oath-taking, accountability.

'Let your yes be yes and your no, no; anything more than this is lies'

─The Holy Bible

I. Introduction

Injustice and corruption are a serious bane of development in Africa. Yet one of the most or foremost virtues of the individual, society, and institutions is justice or the idea of justice. This is because every society desires order and thus evolves a system or structure which incorporates both individual freedom and a fair distribution of goods and other interpersonal relationships. In other words, civilized society understands the need for, and is always prepared to affirm, a characteristic set of principles for assigning basic rights and duties, and for determining what it takes to be proper distribution of benefits and burdens of social cooperation. It could be indicated that the adequacy or otherwise of such principles has corresponding effect on development. Accountability is necessary for principles to be effective. Perhaps this is why public officials are required to swear to some oath of allegiance as a premise for social responsibility. Accordingly, it shall be argued that an efficacious oath system along with social, moral, legal, and individual responsibility and accountability are a *sine qua non* for justice, peace, and development in society—particularly the African society. We shall proceed by discussing alternative conceptions of justice, development, oath-taking and accountability, and thereafter indicate their interrelationships.

II. Justice

According to Aristotle, justice is the first virtue of every society and, as stressed by Sadurski, "it is the most important virtue displayed by a society."[1] The term has its roots in the Latin word, *Justus*, which means the quality of being *just*, fair or impartial. It means evenhandedness and adherence to truth or fact and the rendering of what is due or merited to ones-self and others. It also means conformity with right principles with honesty and integrity.[2] Similarly, Gilson contends that justice is not only the virtue results in each person receiving his or her due, but that it is also the quality of being right and

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[1] W. Sandusky, 1985. Giving Dessert to Its Dues: Social Justice and Legal Theory (Dordretch: Reid 1985), 12.

[2] Webter's New World Dictionary (Concise Ed.) (USA: The Southwestern Company, 1978), 516.

fair.[3] But Aristotle institutionalizes the conception of justice, that it is the kind of state character which makes people act justly and wish for what is just. Tom Campbell sees justice as normally the language of complaint and sometimes of revenge, considering cases of perceived injustice.[4] Justice could connote utilitarian principles—the greatest happiness principle. "Actions are right in proportion they tend to promote happiness, wrong as tend to produce the reverse of happiness…."[5] According to Dworkin, "the possession of rights enhances the dignity of the right holders."[6] Thus this has a legal association with justice as such infringements could only be redressed by a properly constituted court (of justice). *Desert* is another approach to justice. Among the ancient Greeks, '*moira*' of the gods translates "a man's share or lots" and each was given his share by the gods (a kind of determinism), believing that whatsoever one sow, he reaps. It is retributive, simply summed up in the principle of 'an eye for an eye' and 'a tooth for a tooth' (Matt.5:38-42).

However, underlying these approaches are the ideas of freedom, morality and equality. Roggers is probably right when he asserts that justice is in respect a tool for securing what is desired.[7] Succinctly put, when we say a society is just, we judge believing such to be free, informed and rational, committed to a respect for the good life. All the descriptions of justice above seem to dwell simply on social justice and less emphasis on the commutative, legal, restorative, economic and moral nature of the concept. Remarkably, it is here proposed that to achieve development, one must eliminate corruption and recognize justice as an ideal which attainment requires equality and fairness amidst a reflection a people's socio-historical background. Otherwise, it degenerates into corruption and underdevelopment.

III. Corruption and Statement of the Problem

Corruption is the act of doing something with intent to give some advantage inconsistent with expectation (and often ignoring others' rights). Corruption is "…depravity, perversion, or taint; *it is* an impairment of integrity, virtue or moral principle."[8] Corruption is impropriety and indicates impurity and debasement. The manifestations of corruption in Africa are multidimensional and obvious in religious, political, social and individual circles. At the religious level, for example, both leaders and their followership of religious groups, at 'baptism' or indoctrination, swear and promise not to violate or act contrary to canonical, biblical or divine/sacred laws. But alas, this promise is merely verbal but ineffectual. There has not only been a commoditization of the church, it has also become a centre for crime, corruption, and immoralities. Religious leaders are no longer preachers of hope, they have become unassailable agents of concealed cheat, corruption, adultery, and fornication. What they vociferously condemn, they surreptitiously practice. Criminals, corrupt politicians, and other successful *evil* practitioners, after successful plundering, now come to the church for charity, succour and 'reinvestment'. Here again, the oath fails. This could explain the thrive in churches today, there couldn't have been any more compelling reason; otherwise, the growth in religiosity, especially in Africa today, is enough to pull down even the most docile of gods!

In politics and society, while the nations of Africa are embracing or celebrating democracy, the political actors of the system are also celebrating recourse to legalized embezzlement, pabendalism, ringing; corruption, and other anti-people practices, after all, what can the people do if laws and gods "can understand"? But again, are all these acts or behaviors not against the oath of office at swearing in? Yet once one is not legally culpable, the oath is ineffectual. This is why Hobbes's *Leviathan* is rather disabling than enabling in considering the people's rights and the terms of the social contract; and even the gods are also disabled since the contract was not binding on them. So, occupants of positions, family heads, community leaders, administrators, teachers, lecturers, and all now operate and behave freely without fear or restraint as if we are back to the Hobbesian *state of nature*; boys and girls now uphold 'next to nudity', and the inordinate pursuit of money, power, and influences, as expedience. The reason is not far fetched: to satisfy a voracious self and ego and to care for large extended familial/primordial responsibilities.[5] But as ASUU (Academic Staff Union of *Nigerian* Universities) has argued,

…it is matter of ordinary human psychology that those who have benefited immensely and who derive political power from fraud are morally, politically and otherwise too weakened and too compromised to deal ruthlessly with corruption. Unfortunately in Nigeria …compromised leaders determine who is accused and punished and who is not, and this has created severe credibility problems and handicaps in the struggle to defeat the cancer of corruption… They have made corruption in Nigeria an inevitable feature of the political culture…into an art and a political industry …the abandonment of social welfare by a government that was sworn in to protect the people. …Corruption is so systematic that superficial, occasional arrests and dismissals will not make a dent in fighting it. A major problem is that the processes/mechanisms and organs established to address corruption are, themselves, suspect… (emphasis mine). No public investigation has been established…. Public support for any anti-corruption campaign depends on the public perception of the institutions involved and the credibility of such institutions.**[6]**

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[3] L.B. Girson, Quoted by Peter A. Matinich, "Language and Its Uses," in Rutledge History of Philosophy, vol. x. (London: Routledge, 1967), 11-35.

[4] Thomas Campbell, Issues in Political Theory (London: Macmillan, 1988), 1.

[5] Jeremy Bentham, An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation (New York: Hafnew, 1970), 527; See also John S. Mill, Utilitarianism, Liberty, Representative Government (reprinted) (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1972), 6.

[6] Ronald M. Dworkin, Taking Rights Seriously (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1977), 84.

[7] A.K. Roggers, The Theory of Ethics (New York: Macmillan Company, 1922), 181-195.

[8] A. Garner, Bryan A. Black's Law Dictionary (New York: Thompson Reuters, 2009), 397.

The ASUU conception concludes by calling on the organized Labour and all concerned to work out an agenda for a sustained anti-corruption campaign, "to establish anti- corruption agencies not open to manipulation and control by any government, not compromised by their own history and by private interests. This is feasible, however difficult, with positive patriotic creativity and will".[7] Present contribution to be seen in this light because corruption has become so pervasive in all of African polity in a vicious cycle in political, legal, and social spheres.At the judicial sphere, Judges and Solicitors are no longer harbingers of justice; they have become collaborators and accomplices in crime. To worsen the situation, persons are, on oath, sworn into offices or admitted to the evidence duck, and yet, convinced that they are dealing with either a powerless/docile *constitution* or a patient *God*, especially the Christian God, but, contrary to their vows or oath, lie. Such attitudes sow the seed of underdevelopment.

III. Development/Under-development

Development implies advancement and growth in any organized states, not merely quantitative but also in qualitative terms: establishment of structures, building of attitudes, institutions—economic, social, political, religious, and legal. Under-development is the absence of these. Development is positive in nature. In some sense, development implies a comparative state of affairs: between past state of the same society, or between two or more societies—a matter of per capita income. Development is also a "strategy of spatial reorganization crucial for the whole process of political mobilization and central state control of the planning of productive forces, not necessarily centralized at just a point".[9] This means that development is the exploitation of nature, education, human capacity for social upliftment. Human development connotes enhancement of man's thought and rationality, purity, and being; the moral uprightness of individuals. A society of moral individuals is already one with a foundation for infrastructural development—involving the provision of amenities, services, and other physical and technological structures for man's use. Whether in human or infrastructural aspects, the aim of development is utilitarian: to provide man with basic necessities of life (food, shelter, clothing, security, etc); to free man from all forms of human misery, ignorance, servitude, and dependence. Hence purposive national development plan must reflect those two ideals—human and material. This is lacked in Africa. Why?

It could be said that imperialism/colonialism is the cause of underdevelopment in Africa. But it is common knowledge that is not all African states that emerged from colonialism. Marxists hold that every state of society is a historical phase in the history of such society. But some societies under capitalism have developed without revolution. Modernization theorists would want us believe that development comes naturally, a product of handwork, and that traditional social structures (such as kinship, ethnicity, extended family, superstition, etc) hinder it; yet there still are those who hold that development is a product of historical and political evolution. Thus none of these theories can wholly account for the continuing underdevelopment in Africa. There still is hunger, want, insecurity. Lack of social amenities, infrastructures, corruption and injustice are a bane to the achievement of development in Africa. And it has become a crisis.

Concerning African contemporary infamy, Uroh puts it as "…a crisis of development, the problem is necessarily multidimensional…. It is equally socio-cultural as well as moral. It is a product of Africa's chequered history…."[10] Perhaps he holds it a crisis because development is "a rise in the standard of living of a people...a progressive elimination of poverty, unemployment, social inequalities, authoritarian political structures…."[11] One may ask, what led to this embarrassing state of affairs? It is arguable that our immediate post independence leaders did not have long vision for their various states and they simply channeled their energies to the attainment of political independence. This is because of the corrupt/immoral character of the hegemonic class and the devastating role of successive military regimes, dictatorship and wars on the continent. Today, individualism and self enrichment is the order of the day. According to Claude Ake, "…alienations, resentment, inefficiency, and corruption"[12] are manifestations of underdevelopment. Yet any successful scheme must also reflect the very historical values and practices of the particular society. Ake further holds that "all the African countries that are supposed to be sponsoring NEPAD have been adjudged very corrupt by Corruption Perception Index (CPI) survey of 2002, …Nigeria, Madagascar, Kenya, South Africa, Senegal, Egypt, Angola are all wallowing in corrupt practices".[13]

A general conception holds that corruption is any act undertaken either to satisfy oneself or a favored candidate, but act which deviates from social norms. It could be in form of bribery, misappropriation, misapplication or misallocation on ethnic or nepotism grounds. It could be planned/institutional; it could be endemic—involving all and sundry; and it could be developmental (that in the guise of performing contract in which the public official indirectly amass wealth to himself). In Nigeria for example, this kind is called 'blocking' or 'settlement' or '10%'. Some of the most indices of corruption include: self-interest, laziness, economic crunch, poverty, unnecessary bottlenecks attached with service rendering, absence of effective monitoring and laws, African value for community and extended family hood, and capitalist ideology. The manifestation of all these is underdevelopment—loss of faith, timidity, criminality, delinquency, deviance, capital flight, inefficiency, lack of infrastructure, instability, and violence.

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[9] n. i. (1994). Unpublished material

[10] Chris Uroh, Africa and the Challenge of Development (Ibadan: Hope Publications, 1998), 1-2.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Claude Ake, "Education and National Development: A Critique of NEPAD" by P.I Alozie," in Philosophy and Praxis; Journal of Nigerian Philosophical Association, 1, 2005, 66.

[13] Ibid.

IV. Two Anti-dotes to Injustice, Corruption & Under-development in Africa

(a) Oath/oath-taking

One effective remedy to injustice and corruption in Africa is the institution of oath-taking. Oath is "a ritualistic declaration, as by appeal to God, that one will speak the truth, *and* keep a promise…."[14] It is a sworn statement as to the truthfulness of what is said or that a person will or will not do a certain thing; it frequently involves an appeal to a superior.[15] In Hebrew Scriptures, oath is *Shevu'ah*', which means "an oath or a sworn statement" (Gen.24:8); and *Sha'va'* means "swear" or to take an oath or come under the influence of seven things.[16] Another term is *'a-lah'*, meaning "oath, cursing"—threat of calamity in case of misdeed). So, among the earliest societies, oath was in a sense more of a religious act, involving deities and God. Generally, this act could be performed in making a promise, or in seeking justice. Oath is a formal promise to do something or a formal statement that something is true; a solemn and faithful promise to act in some way and not otherwise. It is pledge or undertaken, a kind of voluntary self submission to some responsibility if one act contrary to such pledge. These definitions imply that oath is some sort of faith which implies to be believed, to believe somebody and to believe something, not mere amorphous contiguity. The process of swearing to any object of such promise is *oath-taking*. Sometimes, an oath is a deliberate, conscious and teleological machination to ensure that truth is told and justice done. And this is historical, traceable to the earliest, pre-state societies. In Africa, for example, every aspect of reality is believed to have been brought or made so by some deity or ancestor or force, hence individual wellbeing and social cohesion was/is ultimately achieved by recourse to those forces.[17]

Thus oath and oath-taking is an ancient practice with modern significance. Today, all nations of the world and any association of leadership impute some article expressive of some allegiance, and most times more obvious in stipulating oath. For example, by virtue of the Seventh schedule of the Nigerian 1999 Constitution, oath-taking/oath of allegiance is provided for, and once sworn to any, it's a promise not to act contrary a promise. Thus for our present research, the term, oath (ancient or modern) means allegiance, promise, swearing, covenant, using any symbol of faith for sakes of telling the truth, in other words, to be under some swearing.

Almost all religions and peoples have different conceptions of and attitudes towards oath. In Islam, for example, oath is only done by swearing to only Allah, saying "I swear by Allah". All promises are regarded as having Allah as their witness and guarantor.[18] But Christianity distinguishes simple promises from oaths/vows. Oaths and vows are involved with deities, who are either witnesses to or recipients of the promise. However, a Christian under oath would not lie but would tell the whole truth called for, or he may refuse to answer if it jeopardizes the righteous interest of God or fellow Christians—in which case he must be ready to suffer any consequences that might result from that refusal (1Kin. 22:15-18; Matt. 26 &27). Invariably, vows are regarded as having the strength of an oath, as sacred and to be fulfilled even though they resulted in loss to the *avower*. It is thought that God is watching to see that vows were carried out, and capable of bringing punishment for failure (Num. 30:2; Deu. 23:21-23). An interesting aspect of Christ's teaching on oaths is that he did not prohibit the making of oaths. So Jesus says: "Just let your *yes* be yes, your *no*, no; for what is excess of these is from the wicked one" (Matt. 5:37). And so, "He that swears by heaven is swearing by the throne of God and by him that is sitting on it" (Matt. 23:16-22). Without fulfillment, such swearing is being dishonest with God and reproachful of his name and God plainly states that he hates false oath (Zec. 8:17). But these statements of Jesus (and corroborated in James 5:12) against such indiscriminate practices do not prevent Christians from taking an oath when necessary since they need to assure others of their seriousness and truthfulness of what is said or claimed. More so, oath implies truth, and whether under it or not, one must speak the truth (Matt. 26:63-64).

Often an oath is made by swearing by any sacred symbol, especially the name of God or deity. This is an invocation of an efficacious force in cursing. Commonly, such statements as "May God (or any other object of oath) do so and so to me (or, to you)… if such and such happens or does not happen…" or "if I (or you) fail to do as sworn". Other times, it is made more emphatic by the individual(s) pronouncing his/their own name(s). While Christians or Muslims may commonly call the name of God or Allah, but other less religious employ the names of any other symbol such as sacred place/object as cowry, ancestor, grave, thunder, and other celestial or terrestrial force in nature which are held by Africans to possess effective power over human mortals. Since false takers could take-up the body of another person or animal, the oath-statement adds: "May such and such happen to me if I assume other than my body or speech". In such case, it is actually two oaths in one. Most modern oath statements begin with swearing but end with an appeal "so help me…" (followed by mentioning of the sacred force). If the oath is administered, the taker (agreeably) responds with an "Amen!" which means total agreement to susceptibility to the terms of the oath. "As long as God lives…", "If this world is one…", and "if you were born by your father…" are common assertions adding gravity to one's attestation of determination or truthfulness of a statement in Africa.   Oath could be a mere promise, without strict obligation. An obligation is

a legal or moral duty to do or not do something…anything a person is bound to do or forbear from doing whether the duty is imposed by law, contract, promise, social relations, courtesy, kindness, or morality…, a formal binding agreement or acknowledgement of liability to pay a certain amount or do a certain thing for a particular or set of persons…or in civil law, a legal relationship in which one person, the obligor, is bound to render a performance in favor of another, the oblige….[19]

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[14] See Webster's, Op Cit.

[15] http://www.promise/wikipedia. Accessed October 20, 2009, 4.15pm.

[16] See Theological Dictionary (1970), 459.

[17] Vincent S. Asekhauno, Personal Communication, August 16, 2002, 4.00pm.

[18] http://www.islam/oath/wikipedia. Accessed October 20, 2009, 4.00pm.

[19] See Bryan A. Garner, Black's Law Dictionary (New York: Thompson Reuters, 2009), 1,179.

Mere promise places no strict obligation on the part of the taker even in case of breach (for the oath breaks down as the condition warranting do no longer hold). Wedding vows, friendly exchanges fall under this kind. On the other hand, there could oath of strict obligation, a breach of which is met with punishment, either by the force of the oath or by the law providing for it. Thus oath of obligation is followed by a curse—a threat of calamity in case of misdeed or breach of the terms of the oath laid on the oath-taker or by others. Covenants, blood vows, and swearing (including inauguration) fall under this kind of oath. This implies that a promise is an obligation. This obligation could be *obligatio naturalis* or *obligatio civilis. Obligatio naturalis* refers to that arising only from the law of nature and may not be legally enforceable; and *obligatio civilis* refers to that recognized under civil law and enforceable by law.

Oath could be taken as a result of claim of innocence, gap in identifying the doer of some evil or misdeed (retroactive). While the proactive is preventive and forward-looking (promising, as in covenants), the retroactive is oath seek to redress of some past injustice, vindictive or vindicative and rectificatory or retributive. However, in involuntary oath, the party to it is not directly involved in the oath-making but is deeply involved in the issues necessitating or leading up to the oath—as in oath of justice.

In Africa, it is common to conceive of man in both some natural and vivid supernatural light. Also in Africa, every aspect of reality is believed to have been brought or made so by some deity or ancestor or force; hence individual wellbeing and social cohesion was/is ultimately achieved by recourse to those forces. Thus for the African, the term, oath, means allegiance, promise, swearing, covenant, using any symbol of faith for the sake of telling the truth; in other words, to be under some swearing; a practical and applicative activity. It involves also social and spiritual connotations. Thus it is efficacious, and its justice is either instant or assured; and the role of the Jury is simply administrative and application of the law.

An example of instant justice suffices in the biblical story of the effectiveness of the power of the early Christians in the case of Ananias and Saphira. Since oath is conducted via a sacred symbol, a holy book, or a constitution, each, then, is believed, has some level of spiritual force. It is administered based on the *belief on empirical evidence, that it is only the external that man can appreciate and the rest left for conscience, posterity, or God, to judge.* There couldn't have been more compelling reason; otherwise the oath could have been just a verbal promise. A Judge's basic premise for his judgment, "*By the evidence before me…*" buttresses this point. For the phrase it-self alludes to the possibility of other evidences (but which are not before the court!). Yet the *Christian God* postpones His judgment till 'judgment-day', and He sticks to this plan; while the *African god* is capable and known for instant justice where applicable. In formal settings, oath, as it is presently administered, is predicated on either a faceless symbol or the *Christian (or Muslim) God;* and the people, knowing the nature of their God and His plans, take advantage of it. Thus there ought to be two aspects of securing justice: the role of the jurist and that of the object of the oath, and both roles ought to be complementary in the execution of justice. We can only appreciate their worth in output, and then efficacy is the crucial test. And judging by this efficacy test, and seeing all the corruption, injustice and underdevelopment in Africa today, the police, the courts, the constitutions, the Qu'ran, and the Bible have all failed (though the Bible abhors oath-taking and all forms of swearing and may thus not be held responsible for its seeming laxity; even swearing to the Bible therefore is not only paradoxical but also sinful and immoral); they lack the present, practical force necessary and needed to assure justice, which man, left alone as mortal, cannot ensure. And this is a vital role. Hence there are two considerations in the contemplation of justice, legal and moral/ethical considerations. Legality itself is or ought to be a fortification or enforcer of moral codes, to enhance conformity and sanction deviance. So, legality though is an aspect of it, complements morality. Hence one could be both legally or morally wanting. Yet again, one could be morally and not legally wanting. Let us consider the following example. Jones was arraigned for the murder of Smith. During the trial, Jones, in his evidence on oath, was able to defend himself, extricating himself from all legal and logical culpability, say on *alibi.* Convinced by this defense and the inability of the prosecution to prove its contrary, the court acquitted Jones. Now, the perplexing question is: if Jones actually killed Smith, (but could not legally be established) is the judgment not morally wrong? Prosecution and defense are matters of logical argumentation, validity; they hardly can be predicated on *actual truth, soundness.* But whatever it is, the courts only appreciate logical truths and since there is more to truth than logicality, there must be a way of determining the whole truth. This, we think, is the idea behind oath-taking. In the present dispensation, some truth is suppressed in the face of logical superiority and this is not healthy. Determining this aspect of truth ought to be the sole goal of oath. This is because oath and justifications are like a game of football where the judge is the central referee; and oath, the Football Association (while the spectators go away with the final scores). The referee, like a judge, spots infringements and award penalties instantly. Yes, rightly or wrongly, the referee officiates the game but his decisions could be overturned by the Association on closer examination. The Board then is like the oath. The decision of the Board is uppermost. This is a good example of efficacy. Following this analogy, *oath* needs to be efficacious and it should be the sole test for usefulness, relevance and need for oath-taking, and administration of justice.

Formal oath-practice in Africa today is alien to Africa, and it has not proved its desired relevance. People have learnt to evade the law, and they carefree about a probabilistic distant judgment. This lacks of efficacy. Need we add that the African gods, and other ancestral powers, reserve a modicum of efficacy? A prompt recourse to them could be wise and appropriate to deal with corruption and injustice in Africa.

(b) Accountability

Generally, accountability is an ethical concept with several meanings. Often, it is used synonymously with such other concepts as answerability, enforcement, blameworthiness, liability and other terms associated with the expectation of account-giving and individual/social responsibility. As an aspect of governance or responsibility, it has been central to discussions related to problems in both the public and private (corporation) worlds. Accordingly, there is sanction in the case of eventual misconduct. Accountability is described as "'A' is accountable to 'B' when 'A' is obliged to inform 'B' about 'A''s (past or future) actions and decisions, to justify them…." Further, it implies

…the acknowledgment and assumption of responsibility for actions, products, decisions, and policies including the administration , governance and implementation within the scope of the rule or employment position and encompassing the obligation to report, explain and be answerable for resolution consequences.[20]

The word "accountability" stems from the Latin *accomptare* (to account), a prefixed form of *computare* (to calculate), which in turn derived from *putare,* to reckon. The word is historically associated with the Ancient Greek use to describe a kind of money lending and repayment. One would borrow money from a money lender, be that a local Temple or Merchant, and would then be held responsible to their account with that party. Vow and Responsibility are also close synonyms. This is because perhaps the first written statement of accountability is in the Code of Hammurabi, as in the statement that: 'If a man uses violence on another man's wife to sleep with her, the man shall be killed, but the wife shall be blameless.' Other early examples can be found in the Bible as in the case of 'the rich man and his servants'. Technically, accountability involves either the expectation or assumption of account-giving behavior. Historically, Scott[21] as well as Austin[22] represents recent theories on the study of account-giving/accountability as a sociological act. Yet, there are many types of accountability, according to Stone, Dwivedi, and Jabbra,[23] up to eight of them. These are moral, administrative, political, managerial, market, legal/judicial, constituency relation, and professional.

(i) *Political accountability.* This type is largely between individuals and the state. Political accountability is the answerability of the government, civil servants and politicians to the public and to legislative bodies such as congress or parliament, and even to themselves. This is traceable to the 17th century theories of the English contractarian, John Locke, who staunchly advocated separation and check on power. Hence generally, however, voters do not have any direct way of holding elected representatives to account during the term for which they have been elected. In many ways, constitution, or statute, can empower a legislative body to hold their own members, the government, and government bodies to account, either by a direct/internal interrogation or independent inquiry, once there is an allegation of corruption or inefficiency. Accordingly, the powers, procedures and sanctions vary from one country to another. This could be done by a vote of 'no confidence' or impeachment. Some have called for increased political accountability mechanisms to be applied to otherwise non-political entities. Legal scholar Anne Davies, for instance, argues that the line between public institutions and private entities like corporations is becoming blurred in certain areas of public service provision in the United Kingdom and that this can compromise political accountability in those areas. She (among others) argues that some administrative law reforms are necessary to address this accountability gap.[24]

(ii) *Administrative accountability.* All modern states have internal 'rules and norms as well as some independent commission are mechanisms to hold civil servant within the administration of government accountable'. Thus within a department or ministry, behavior is bounded by rules and regulations; and civil servants are subordinates in a hierarchy and accountable to superiors. Nonetheless, there are independent "watchdog" units to scrutinize and hold public departments accountable, dwelling more on reports by citizens.

(iii) *Market accountability.* Among many states today, there is high preference for decentralization and privatization of enterprises and services provided are nowadays more "customer-driven" and should aim to provide convenience and various choices to citizens. This perspective has generated much comparisons and competition between public and private services and this, ideally, improves quality of service. Accordingly the standard of assessment for accountability is therefore responsiveness of service providers to a body of 'sovereign' customers and produce quality service. Outsourcing service is one means to adopt market accountability. Another is to evolve and adopt strict business ethic. But problems arise when dominant bank industry players, in performing vital economic roles like lending to the government and managing the money and credit supply, are performing public and sometimes political functions without corresponding public and political accountability.

Usefully, high accountability standard constrains the extent to which elected representatives and other office-holders can willfully deviate from their theoretical responsibilities, thus reducing corruption. There is a relationship between the concept of accountability to related concepts like the rule of law or democracy. In Nigeria today, we need a 'misrepresentation of the people' act to curb corruption at the high levels.

V. Conclusion

The problems of corruption and underdevelopment are multi dimensional and therefore require multidimensional solution; and past attempts to solve them never succeeded because those who contrived them where not unaffected by the virus and theirs lacked the philosophical and technical underpinning to tackle the problem from its source. Thus the philosopher's role is complemented by that of the professional accountant in that the education of the

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[20] A. Schedler, "Conceptualizing Accountability," In The Self-restraining State: Power and Accountability in New Democracies, A. Schedler, L. Diamond, and M.F. Plattner, (eds.). (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999), 13-28.

[21] Marvin Scott, Stanford Lyman, and Steven Soroka, "Accounts," in *American Sociological Review,* 1, 1968: 46–62.

[22] John L. Austin, "A Plea for Excuses," in Proceedings of Aristotelian Society, reprinted J.L. Austin: Philosophical Papers, 3rd Edition. J.O. Urmson and G.J. Warnock (eds.) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 175-204.

[23] See Bruce Stone, Joseph G. Jabbra, & Onkar P. Dwivedi, (eds). Public Service Accountability: A Comparative Perspective, Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1989.

[24] Marvin Scott, et al, Op. Cit.

human mind as to what constitutes the good is a desideratum, and this is the role of the philosopher. This is within the normative goal of social philosophy. Therefore, what is to be done? First, this paper opines that

    a.   firm laws could deter corrupt minds from actualizing their potentialities;

    b.   there should be moral education of citizens on the evils of corruption (even though the pains and pangs are everywhere felt) as courses in our school curricula, and by especially the press. According to Okonjo,

…no nation in the world today has been able to accumulate material wealth and improve the quality of life of its citizens and become an industrial and advanced nation without giving its citizens…years of schooling and skill training…. Countries pump in money to enable the universities and research institutions have answers to the problems of their societies.[25]

    c.   there should be a modification of political ideology in the governance of African states, an ideology which must reflect some basic traditional (unique) African realities and values of truth and duty. At least this will avoid conflict of African and Western cultures and values;

    d.   there ought to be good and enforced practices of Fiscal Transparency; good guidelines for debt management and principles of corporate governance, measuring up with International Accounting/Auditing;

    e.   there ought to be good and core principles for effective banking and supervision; there should be stiff anti-money laundering laws; there should be good principles for Securities and Insurance. These are the hallmark of Accountability; and

    f.   if accountability and efficacious oath-taking are evolved and taken seriously and applied aptly, the evil of injustice, corruption and underdevelopment in Africa would be matter of history. Perhaps harnessing strategies of their practical application ought to be the focus of contemporary academics.

Finally, irrespective of excuses, justifications, rationalizations, apologies and other abnormal forms of account giving behavior by individuals and corporations, culprits should be made to be responsible for their misdemeanors. To this end, global/regional bodies should be form to ensure members live up their responsibility. There should be global move for justice since nations have distributional desires amidst condemnation of ill consequences of injustice. On a final note, one must acknowldge that accountability is becoming an increasingly important issue for the non-profit world—emphasizing the 2005 "accountability charter". In the Humanitarian field, initiatives such as the 'HAPI' (Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International) which have emerged should be encouraged. Individual NGOs have set their own accountability systems (for example, the ALPS: Accountability, Learning and Planning System of Action Aid). These and similar strategies should be encouraged.

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[25] See Christian Okonjo, The Quiet Revolution (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 2000), 22.

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