



Understanding ethics and accountability in post-colonial Africa

Dawood Omolumen Egbefo¹, Basil N Chinada²

¹ Department of History and International Studies Edo University Iyamho, Edo State Nigeria

² Centre for Strategic Research and Studies National Defence College, Garki Abuja, Nigeria

Abstract

This paper is a study on Understanding Ethics and Accountability in Post-Colonial Africa. By implication, the political structure of Post-Colonial Africa at independence was permissive of exploitation of the masses by the leaders. This had remained for decades after independence, with political and other offices becoming gateways to treasury looting. Rather than encourage and promote ethical values, accountability respect for the rule of law and patriotism, the post-colonial structures enhances had leadership, misguided governance and mismanagement of resources. It is on this note that the paper asserts that for there to be purposive development in 21st century Africa, the political terrain has to be of ethical standards, uncompromising stance on accountability, responsibility and transparency as well as strengthening good governance best measures to rescue post-colonial Africa in the mission to greatness.

Keywords: understanding, ethics, accountability, post-colonial and africa

Introduction

Accountability is a concept in ethics with several meanings. It is often used synonymously with such concepts as answerability, enforcement, responsibility, blameworthiness, liability and other terms associated with the expectation of account-giving. As an aspect of governance, it has been central to discussions related to problems in both the public and private corporation worlds. In leadership roles, accountability is the acknowledgment and assumption of responsibility for actions, products, decisions, and policies including the administration, governance and implementation within the scope of the role or employment position and encompassing the obligation to report explain and be answerable for resulting consequences.

In Africa in recent years, there has been a growth in the need for transparency with more and more pressure being pin on corporations and businesses to be more accountable in their actions in the society and the environment. Transparency, as used in the humanities, implies openness, communication, and accountability. It is a metaphorical extension of the meaning used in the physical sciences: a "transparent" object is one that can be seen through transparency in accountability is introduced as a means of holding public officials accountable and shunning corruption. When government meetings are open to the press and the public, when budgets and financial statements may be reviewed by anyone, when laws, rules and decisions are open to discussions, they are seen as transparent and there is less opportunity for the authorities to abuse the system in their own interest. Transparency creates opportunities for everyday participation in the political process by media and the public. One tool used to increase everyday participation in political processes is freedom of information legislation and requests.

Accountable and Transparent procedures include open meetings, financial disclosure statements, the freedom of information legislation, budgetary review, audits, etc. In government, politics, ethics, business, management, law, economics, sociology, etc.,

transparency and accountability are the opposite of privacy and unethical orientations; an activity is transparent and accountable if all information about it is open and freely available. Thus when courts of law admit the public, when fluctuating prices in financial markets are published in newspapers, those processes are transparent (Baven, 2007). When military authorities classify their plans as secret, accountability, ethics and transparency are absent. This can be seen as either positive or negative; positive, because it can increase national security, negative, because it can lead to secrecy, corruption and even a military dictatorship. In this paper, we shall basically explore accountability and ethics and how they could be strengthened in Africa.

Contemporary Evolution and History of Accountability

Accountability involves either the expectation or assumption of account-giving behaviour. Communication scholars have extended this concept through the examination of strategic uses of excuses, justifications, rationalizations, apologies and other forms of account giving behaviour by individuals and corporations. In Britain, accountability has been formally identified by government since 1995 as one of the Seven Principles of Public Life. According to Burall and Negligan (2005), "Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office". The goal of accountability is at times in tension with the goal of leadership. A constituency may have short-term desires which are at odds with long-term interest. It has also been argued that accountability provides in certain situations an escape route for ministers to avoid the consequences of ministerial responsibility, which would require resignation.

Recently, accountability has become an important topos in the discussion about the legitimacy of international institutions. Because there is no global democracy to which organizations

must account, global administrative bodies are often criticized as having large accountability gaps. One paradigmatic problem arising in the global context is that of institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF which are founded and supported by wealthy nations and provide aid, in the form of grants and loans, to developing nations. Should those institutions be accountable to their founders and investors or to the persons and nations they help in the debate over global justice and its distributional consequences, Cosmopolitans tend to advocate greater accountability to the disregarded interests of traditionally marginalized populations and developing nations. On the other hand, those in the 'nationalism' and 'society of states' traditions deny the tenets of moral universalism and argue that beneficiaries of global development initiatives have no substantive entitlement to call international institutions to account.

Accountability is becoming an increasingly important issue for the non-profit world. Several NGOs signed the "accountability charter" in 2005. In the humanitarian field, initiatives such as the HAPI (Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International) have appeared. Individual NGOs have set their own accountability systems (for example, the ALPS, Accountability, Learning and Planning System of Action Aid). Historically, accountability stems from the Latin word *accountare* (to account), a prefixed form of *computare* (to calculate), which in turn derived from *putar* (to reckon). The word is an extension of the terminology used in the money lending systems that first developed in Ancient Greece and later, Rome. One would borrow money from a money lender, this could be a local temple or merchant, and would then be held responsible to give account to that party. Responsibility is also a close synonym. Perhaps the first written statement of accountability is in the Code of Hammurabi, Hammurabi describes certain undesirable actions and their consequences. One example: "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 and the Qu'ran.

Concept of Accountability

The concept of accountability has become a major controversial topic for discussion. This concept means different things to different People and it has been defined in myriad ways. But accountability is still a largely untested concept in the field of education in Nigeria. A few speak of accountability as the task of establishing goals and looking at the results. Others suggest that accountability also needs to consider a cost analysis approach. Akinwumiju and Orimoloye (1983) ^[1] state that accountability includes setting correct goals, evaluating whether they have been achieved (perhaps through external means). Babalola (1961) ^[2] observed that a major component of accountability is to define objectives, to develop practices that would (liable such objectives to be met and to assess the productivity as involving responsibility, evaluation and specified goals.

Accountability is a key requirement of good governance. Not only governmental institutions but also the private sector and civil Society organizations must be accountable to the public and to their institutional stakeholders. Who is accountable to whom varies, depending on whether decisions or actions taken are internal or external to an organization or institution. In general, an organization or an institution is accountable to those who will

be affected by its decisions or actions. Accountability cannot be enforced without transparency and the rule of law. African governmental institutions as well as the private sector and civil society organizations must be accountable to the public and to their institutional stakeholders. In general, organizations and institutions are accountable to those who will be affected by their decisions or actions.

Types of Accountability

Five types of accountability, namely: administrative, political, market, legal/judicial, constituency relation, and professional are observed by Baven (2007).

Political Accountability

The case in which the legislature holds other civil servants accountable is part of political accountability. Mechanisms of political accountability. are vested in the constitution, either written or unwritten, or statute and implemented in three dimensions: election, legislature and ministerial.

Election is the most direct way for accountability, and is a way for enforcement. An election gives a chance for the proposed cabinet and proposed legislators to run for campaigns and attend forums so as to inform and explain their purposes and goals if they are elected. On the other hand, it is also a sanction for those who misbehaved or failed to act as representatives for their fields in the past tenure by giving the vote to others.

Constitutions or equivalents also empower legislatures to hold civil servants accountable. Firstly, legislature may invite public servants for inquiry sessions to explain explicitly planning or policies made, or to unfold any misappropriation. Further, the legislature can organize an investigation committee for particular issues by inviting those concerned and others to a public hearing. The above mentioned arc mechanisms aiming to compel civil servants to dialogue and hence be answerable. They can introduce motions for impeachment and no-confidence in case of misbehaviour or misconduct.

Ministers, as conceived as the top of the hierarchy of the ministry, arc supposed to be held accountable for affairs in the ministry; as all civil servants within are merely cogs and wheels and operate in the light of the ministers' vision. However, ministerial accountability is vague in the parliamentary system. The parliament has to constitute the cabinet to execute the government, yet, holds the executives accountable as mentioned.

Administrative Accountability

Internal rules and norms as well as independent commissions are mechanisms to hold civil servants within the administration of government accountable. Within departments or ministries, firstly, behaviour is bounded by rules and regulations; secondly, civil servants are subordinates in a hierarchy and accountable to superiors. Nonetheless, there are independent "watchdog" units to scrutinize and hold departments accountable. Apart from internal checks, some "watchdog" units accept complaints from citizens, bridging government and society to hold civil servants accountable to citizens.

Judicial/Legal Accountability

Court action and judicial reviews are two mechanisms by which the public may address violations of law and constitution. Moreover, court actions also fill the gap of accountability

between executives and legislature; if the executives fail or are reluctant to exercise legitimate decisions made by legislature, or vice versa, one can appeal through the court and tribunals based on constitutional provisions or equivalents.

Professional Accountability

Professional public servants, namely lawyers, doctors, engineers, and accountants, are also bound by professional codes and norms established in the light of public interest. Professionals are obliged to join correspondent professional societies and take oaths to be licensed.

Market Accountability

With the policies of decentralization and privatization of the government, services provided are nowadays more “customer-driven” and should aim to provide convenience and various choices to citizens. With this perspective, there are comparisons and competition between public and private services and this, ideally, improves quality of service. Outsourcing service is one means to adopt market accountability. Government can choose among a shortlist of companies for outsourced service; within the contracting period, government can hold the company by rewriting contracts or by choosing another company.

Constituency Relations

With this perspective, whether a particular agency or the government is being accountable depends on whether voices from agencies, groups or institutions, which are outside the public sector and representing citizens’ interests in a particular constituency or field, are heard. Moreover, the government is obliged to empower members of the agencies with political rights to run for elections and be elected; or, appoint them into the public sector as a way to hold the government representative and ensure voices from all constituencies are included in policy-making process.

Social Implications

In politics, and particularly in representative democracies, accountability is an important factor in securing legitimacy of public power. Accountability differs from transparency in that it only enables negative feedback after a decision or action, while transparency enables negative feedback before or during a decision or action. Accountability constrains the extent to which elected representatives and other office-holders can willfully deviate from their responsibilities, thus reducing corruption. The relationship of the concept of accountability to related concepts like the rule of law or democracy, however, is equally worthy of consideration and elucidation. In a BBC documentary, the Misrepresentation of the People Act was proposed to make members of parliament in the UK more accountable. Such a thing should equally be strengthened in Africa.

Efficiency of Accountability Instruments in Africa

African countries have gradually developed and are developing systems of checks and balances to control the exercise of power, and prevent abuse and arbitrary exercise of power in the context of accountability mechanisms. The issue of accountability in Africa is gaining increased attention in the literature. Most studies address the issue of efficiency and accountability. However, little attention has been paid to the issue of efficiency of accountability

mechanisms. A literature search shows surprisingly little results on this topic, with only a few exceptions, such as a recent study by Burall and Neligan (2005)^[5], Duran and Maryan (2017)^[10]. We believe however that the issue of efficiency of accountability mechanisms should be examined more in depth, because:

1. a potential trade-off exists between efficiency of accountability mechanisms and effectiveness of accountability mechanisms,
2. it is not entirely clear how accountability mechanisms should be designed in an international multilevel environment.

The issue of trade-offs between efficiency and effectiveness is an important line of investigation in policy analysis with regard to assessing policy outcomes (Wildavsky, 1979). It is our view that a trade-off perspective should also be applied to the issue of efficiency of accountability mechanisms. Clearly, it submits that more research should be done on the design of accountability mechanisms since understanding their design is an important first step in assessing their effectiveness and efficiency.

Effectiveness and Efficiency

It is important to make a distinction between efficiency and effectiveness of accountability mechanisms. Effectiveness is here defined in terms of achieving goals regardless of cost, i.e. the degree to which a certain system, for example a control system, achieves its aims (Ostrom, 2015)^[19-20]. Efficiency is understood in terms of cost-efficiency, i.e. achieving a result in the most cost-effective way (Suzuki & Nanwani, 2015)^[22].

For accountability mechanisms to be legitimate, they need to be effective. For example, lack of controls may allow for abuse of power and arbitrariness. However, effective mechanisms can be expensive and can generate unintended or even perverse consequences. As a result, a trade-off between efficiency and effectiveness has to occur when a system is effective but very expensive (e.g. extreme high cost to maintain it or when a system is very low-cost but not effective. Understanding and investigating this potential trade-off is crucial for understanding the issue of efficiency of accountability instruments.

Effective Accountability Rules and the Importance of Enforcement Mechanisms in Africa

According to Wouters and Marx (2007) several mechanisms exist to hold actors accountable, such as codes of conduct. In African countries, a key aspect of the effectiveness of these mechanisms is enforcement. Throughout a range of different studies one can identify two crucial design parameters for enforcement, namely sanctioning and monitoring (North 1990, 1993, 2005; Osborn, 1999, 2015; World Bank, 2016). Ideal-type systems of enforcement are very elaborate and consist of:

1. The presence of clear, unambiguous and precise standards and guidelines with specific attention to the issue of conflicts of interest, which is a key-issue in accountability;
2. Top-down monitoring systems with independent (internal and external) auditors who perform unannounced audits with clear audit protocols and procedures;
3. Bottom-up monitoring systems with well-developed complaint procedures and transparent information provision which is publicly available;
4. A clear gradual sanctioning system with appeal possibilities.

However, implementing such systems can also imply:

1. High organisational cost, which in a context of increased public scrutiny on spending of nations is a very sensitive issue. A very effective enforcement mechanism might well exceed an acceptable budget from the point of view of the international organisation.
2. Too much control can result in policy inertia (over bureaucratisation) since it can inhibit the capacity of organisations to act and to realise policies. In other words, the effectiveness of accountability mechanisms can inhibit the effectiveness of policies.
3. Too much control can generate another potential important trade-off, namely the trade-off between freedom of decision and effective control or between autonomy and independence of the international civil service, on the one hand and control of the international civil service, on the other hand (Marx, 2007) ^[13].

Consequently, balancing costs and achieving results with regard to accountability mechanisms are important issues. Moore *et al.* (2006) ^[15] argued in the context of conflicts of interest that conflicts of interest are pervasive facts of life for nil types of organisations and it is prohibitively costly to try to reduce such conflicts to zero. This of course should not imply a *laissez-faire* stance toward conflicts of interest. It is precisely this balancing between efficiency and effectiveness which is in need of further investigation in the context of international organisations.

Design of Accountability Mechanisms

A second important issue to focus on in future research and discussions is the issue of the design of accountability mechanisms. Accountability is defined by Bovens (2007: 450) ^[4] as a relationship between an actor and a forum, in which the actor has an obligation to explain and to justify his or her conduct, the forum can pose questions and pass judgement, and the actor may face consequences. This definition builds on a principal-agent approach to accountability and highlights this second challenge to research on accountability in an international multilevel regulatory environment (Jameson *et al.* 2017) ^[9].

In a simple principal-agent model, an agent reports directly to the principal who delegates to the agent the freedom to act on his/her behalf. However, as Benz, Harlow and Papadopoulos (2007:444) ^[3] stress, systems of multilevel governance do not easily fit into this conceptual framework. In their views “By complicating and obscuring straightforward ‘chains of delegation’ they make it hard to identify a principal.”

The latter, the identification of principals in multilevel systems, constitutes a major research topic for scholars studying African institutions. Progress has recently been made in this context by the recent studies. However, more comparative research needs to be undertaken. Comparative research designs might highlight striking differences between and within (international) public organisations and across policy domains/arenas. More in general, comparative research which focuses on the institutional design, i.e. rules, procedures and decision-making, might generate learning effects across international organizations especially in Africa. The importance of such comparisons is also pointed out by Tomkins (1999: 763-764) ^[23], who notes that the British government’s ministerial code is far more elaborate and specific,

and, hence, probably more effective. However, this is a huge challenge to Africa.

Philosophy and the Concept of Ethics

The field of ethics, also called moral philosophy, involves systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong behaviour. Philosophers today usually divide ethical theories into three general subject areas: metaethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics. According to Kant (1985), Metaethics investigates where our ethical principles come from, and what they mean. Are they merely social inventions? Do they involve more than expressions of our individual emotions? Metaethical answers to these questions focus on the issues of universal truths, the will of God, the role of reason in ethical judgments, and the meaning of ethical terms themselves. Normative ethics takes on a more practical task, which is to arrive at moral standards that regulate right and wrong conduct. This may involve articulating the good habits that we should acquire, the duties that we should follow, or the consequences of our behaviour on others. Finally applied ethics involves examining specific controversial issues, such as abortion, infanticide, animal rights, environmental concerns, homosexuality, capital punishment, or nuclear war.

By using the conceptual tools of metaethics and normative ethics, discussions in applied ethics try to resolve these controversial issues. The lines of distinction between metaethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics are often blurry. For example, the issue of abortion is an applied ethical topic since it involves a specific type of controversial behaviour. But it also depends on more general normative principles, such as the right of self-rule and the right to life, which are litmus tests for determining the morality of that procedure. The issue also rests on metaethical issues such as, “where do rights come from?” and “what kind of beings have rights?”

Metaethics

The term “meta” means after or beyond, and, consequently, the notion of metaethics involves a removed, or bird’s eye view of the entire project of ethics. We may define metaethics as the study of the origin and meaning of ethical concepts. When compared to normative ethics and applied ethics, the field of metaethics is the least precisely defined area of moral philosophy. Two issues, though, are prominent: (1) metaphysical issues concerning whether morality exists independently of humans, and (2) psychological issues concerning the underlying mental basis of our moral judgments and conduct.

Normative Ethics

Normative ethics involves arriving at moral standards that regulate right and wrong conduct. In a sense, Bate (2017) observes that it is the search for an ideal litmus test of proper behaviour. The Golden Rule is a classic example of a normative principle: We should do to others what we would want others to do to us. Since I do not want my neighbour to steal my car, then it is wrong for me to steal her car. Since I would want people to feed me if I am starving, then I should help feed starving people. Using this same reasoning, I can theoretically determine whether any possible action is right or wrong. So, based on the Golden Rule, it would also be wrong for me to lie, to harass, victimize, assault, or kill others. The Golden Rule is an example of a

normative theory that establishes a *single principle* against which we judge all actions. Other normative theories focus on a set of foundational principles, or a set of good character traits. The key assumption in normative ethics is that there is only one ultimate criterion of moral conduct, whether it is a single rule or a set of principles. Three strategies will be noted here: (1) virtue theories, (2) duty theories, and (3) consequentialist theories.

1. **Virtue Theories:** Many philosophers believe that morality consists of following precisely defined rules of conduct, such as “don’t kill,” or “don’t steal.” Presumably, I must learn these rules, and then make sure each of my actions lives up to the rules.
2. **Duty Theories:** Many of us feel that there are clear obligations we have as human beings, such as to care for our children, and to not commit murder. Duty theories base morality on specific, foundational principles of obligation. This reflects our actual moral convictions:
 - Fidelity: the duty to keep promises
 - Reparation: the duty to compensate others when we harm them
 - Gratitude: the duty to thank those who help us
 - Justice: the duty to recognize merit
 - Beneficence: the duty to improve the conditions of others
 - Self-improvement: the duty to improve our virtue and intelligence
 - Nonmaleficence: the duty to not injure others etc.
3. **Consequentialist Theories:** it is common for us to determine our moral responsibility by weighing the consequences of our actions. According to consequentialist normative theories, correct moral conduct is determined so/e/y by a cost-benefit analysis of an action’s consequences (Mill, 1991). Consequentialism indicates that an action is morally right if the consequences of that action are more favourable than unfavourable. Consequentialist normative principles require that we first tally both the good and bad consequences of an action. Second, we then determine whether the total good consequences outweigh the total bad consequences. If the good consequences are greater, then the action is morally proper. If the bad consequences are greater, then the action is morally improper. In particular, competing consequentialist theories specify which consequences for affected groups of people are relevant. Three subdivisions of consequentialism emerge:
 - Ethical Egoism: an action is morally right if the consequences of that action are more favourable than unfavourable only to the agent performing the action.
 - Ethical Altruism: an action is morally right if the consequences of that action are more favourable than unfavourable to everyone except the agent.
 - Utilitarianism: an action is morally right if the consequences of that action are more favourable than unfavourable to everyone (Flume 2000).
 - All three of these theories focus on the consequences of actions for different groups of people. But, like all normative theories, the above three theories are rivals of each other. They also yield different conclusions.

Applied Ethics

Applied ethics is the branch of ethics which consists of the analysis of specific, controversial moral issues such as abortion,

animal rights, or euthanasia. In recent years applied ethical issues have been subdivided into convenient groups such as medical ethics, business ethics, environmental ethics, and sexual ethics. Generally speaking, two features are necessary for an issue to be considered an “applied ethical issue.” First, the issue needs to be controversial in the sense that there are significant groups of people both for and against the issue at hand. The issue of drive-by shooting, for example, is not an applied ethical issue, since everyone agrees that this practice is grossly immoral. By contrast, the issue of gun control would be an applied ethical issue since there are significant groups of people both for and against gun control.

The second requirement for an issue to be an applied ethical issue is that it must be a distinctly moral issue e.g. on any given day in the United States, the media presents us with an array of sensitive issues such as affirmative action policies, gays in the military, involuntary commitment of the mentally impaired, capitalistic vs. socialistic business practices, public vs. private health care systems, or energy conservation. Although all of these issues are controversial and have an important impact on society, they are not all moral issues. Some are only issues of social policy. The aim of social policy is to help make a given society run efficiently by devising conventions, such as traffic laws, tax laws, and zoning codes. Moral issues, by contrast, concern more universally obligatory practices, such as our duty to avoid lying, and are not confined to individual societies. Frequently, issues of social policy and morality overlap, as with murder which is both socially prohibited and immoral. However, the two groups of issues are often distinct.

Ethics, Accountability and Good Governance in Africa

The basic problem of maintaining an ethical regime in any nation’s life is the existence of an entrenched belief by a powerful group of politicians, bureaucrats, business and industrial personalities, organisations, both governmental and nongovernmental, and other persons from other callings and professions, that although all human beings are equal, they are more equal than others. Law and judicial systems exist for those who are less equal than them while they float above the law and the arms of the court are not long enough to reach them. This dichotomy in the day to day affairs of a nation is a breeding ground for corruption. The search for a policy and technique to combat corruption is essentially a search for a leveller.

In Africa, corruption is serious threat to ethical standards, accountability and responsibility and resultant good governance. So if corruption is to be combated, it would have to be addressed both by way of a change of heart and a change of consequences. According to Kamal (1999:4):

As we kill mosquitoes by constant cleaning of stagnant waters, we have to cleanse the fickle minds of human beings almost constantly with the thought that living in this world for a period of 50 to 100 years is only a temporary stay and we do not take away our riches and wealth when we have to finally breath our last. If this short and fleeting stay is not governed by an ethical and moral regime, we fall prey to all kinds of deviations and delinquencies including corruption.

An ethical or moral regime in Africa is essentially a regime of choice between right and wrong, between what is materially attractive and morally reprehensive. Transparency International has planned, debated and recommended multi-pronged policies

to take meaningful preventive and repressive steps to fight corruption, keeping the special needs and problems of various regions of the world in view.

An ethical environment is also a precursor to accountability - who accounts for his actions when no one asks for it? When an African society sustains a moral environment, accountability becomes a part of national psyche. It works as an automata and it is ingrained into the national ethos. Institutions and human activities develop built-in methods of accountability. Where, however, an ethical environment is a far cry, conscious steps need to be taken to ensure accountability in written constitutions of African countries, in public administration, in business, commercial and industrial activities and so on. Accountability is closely related to transparency. The prime enemy of transparency is the conspiratorial method of decision-making and even more secretive method of executing decisions. The prime emphasis will be on open democracy, not merely a facade of democracy, on open discussions, not merely a kitchen cabinet consultation and on the easy access of people to public documents and decision-making procedures.

About 120 countries gained their independence since the Second World War. Donor countries, multinational financial institutions and private entrepreneurs have rushed into these countries with financial and technical help in the fields of agriculture, industries, communications, energy and so on. But little or no help has been forthcoming in judicial development programmes. Some of these countries have suffered a highly independent higher judiciary on their own, but have kept the subordinate judiciary, where most cases originate at the grassroots level, firmly under the executive control, keeping them undermanned and underdeveloped, poorly paid and indifferently maintained. Now that the donor countries, multi-national financial institutions and private entrepreneurs are finding their investments interminably locked in mind-boggling uncertain litigation with inordinate delays at every turn, they are turning more and more to his long-neglected sector and are discovering the delays, corruption and lack of case management to which they themselves have no mean contribution. Arms-twisting as a method of subjecting weaker economies into submission is a visible, high profile procedure. But this method is not known to have been used to being pressure to bear upon recalcitrant governments, unable or unwilling to grant their judiciary, higher or lower, total independence in judicial, financial and administrative matters. The civil societies in these countries have also played no significant part in securing an independent judiciary for their own benefit.

Good governance in Africa is an extension of the principle of the rule of law. A society is well-governed when there is a rule of law; not a rule of man or woman. A modern state is extensively governed by rules and regulations, by complex guidelines and instructions, by a web of regulations, restrictive, prohibitive and penal procedures. As a fish starts getting rotten from the head, good governance starts sliding from the hands of the people when the top people in parliament, executive and judiciary put rules and regulations aside and start ruling by the rule of the thumb. A democratically elected government is not necessarily a democratic and open government. It has often been found in history that a democratically elected government can also be despotic and autocratic in practice. The external world is satisfied if the adults entitled to suffrage go through the motion of voting at intervals, but little do they enquire whether these periodic

exercises have made any difference in the manner and quality of governance.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the distinction between efficiency and effectiveness of accountability mechanisms and pointed to a potential trade-off between effective and efficient systems. It also went through a number of crucial design-parameters for effective accountability mechanisms. This analysis, which focused mainly on enforcement mechanisms, was subsequently applied to the code of conduct or ethics. This application shows that the current code of conduct in African countries lacks some key mechanisms for effective enforcement. More elaborate enforcement mechanisms are necessary in this regard. This comparison should mainly focus on the design of enforcement mechanisms and should include an assessment of the trade-off between effectiveness and efficiency.

From the above discussion, it should be clear that good governance is an ideal which is difficult to achieve in its totality. Very few countries and societies have come close to achieving good governance in its totality. However, to ensure sustainable human development, actions must be taken to work towards this deal with the aim of making it a reality. Ethical standards, uncompromising stance on accountability, responsibility and transparency as well as channelling various efforts towards strengthening good governance are the best measures to rescue post-colonial Africa in the mission to greatness.

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