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ABSTRACT. This study presents the major historical development that has been responsible for the development oj current accounting thoughl and philosophy. While accounting thought and philosophy have developed over time in response to many changes in the economic and sociological environment, it has also developed along geographical lines to meet the different needs of many national cultures. economic and political systems. Many nations have followed the lead of the more advanced countries oj the world. but there is increasing evidence that no single nation or group of nations has a monopoly on the development of accounting thought and accounting research. This places a greater emphasis than previously on an international exchange a/ideas and an understanding a/ the basic reasons for differences in accounting thought and practice throughout the world. Double-entry was created in response to challenge of the /5th century commercial enterprise. The accountancy profession grew out of the economic demands of the Industrial Revolution. The greater the complexity oj the structure of production and exchange, the more important it is that financial information and advice should be given with competence and honesty. It is for this purpose that accounting profession today exists, and upon its ability 10 respond to the demands of the future will its continued progress depend. This is true in all the economy oj the world, even Nigeria.

CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW

The greatest moral rectitude necessary for adult persons must proceed from a right knowledge and practice of keeping orderly accounts (Matthew, 1776). The history of accounting thought and philosophy is as old as civilization, key to important phases of history among, the most important profession in economics and business, and fascinating, Accountants participated in the development of cities. trade and the concepts of wcalth and numbers. Accountants participated in the development of money and banking, invented double entry book keeping that furled the Italian renaissance, and saved many industrial revolution, inventors and entrepreneurs from bankruptcy, helped develop the confidence in capital markets necessary for western capitalism, and are central to the information revolution that is transforming the global economy.

There are no household names among the accounting innovators, in fact virtually

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no names survive before the Italian renaissance. It took archaeologists to dig up the early history and scholars from many fields to demonstrate the importance of accounting to so many aspects of economics and culture. The role of accountants in the ancient world is coming into elearer focus. with new archaeological discoveries and innovative interpretations of the artifacts. It is now evident that writing developed over 5000 years - by accountants. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of double entry book keeping. It was central to the success of Italian Merehants, necessary to the birth of Renaissance. Industrial Revolution firms required accountants to provide the information necessary to avoid bankruptcy and their role developed into a profession. Big business requires capital markets that depended on accurate and useful information. This was supplied by the expanding accounting profession. Today, a global real-time integrated information system is a near reality suggesting new accounting paradigms. It is against this backdrop that understanding the history and philosophy of accounting thought is needed to develop the linkages to predict this future.

THE **ORIGIN OF MODERN** ACCOUNTING **THEORY**

Accounting is sometimes spoken of as being a new subject. a recent introduction to the educational curricula, a product of the commercial and industrial activity of the modem age. Such is far from being the case. Sidebotham (1977) argued that, whenever and wherever economic affairs have progressed beyond the most elementary conditions of production and exchange, systems of accounts have appeared. Keister (1963) had explained that inventories, wage lists, tax assessments and accounts as old as 4500 B.C have been found. and there are plenty of Egyptian, Greek. Roman and early European and mediaeval accounting records in existence.

At each stage of development, men have used accounting, according to their needs, and within the limits of the recording and analyzing techniques knO\\11 to them, to enumerate and control assets, as a reporting device for agents, stewards and tax gatherers. as evidence of Irade, for the control of production and the management of business. While those very early records and concepts are of interest, mere record keeping adds linle insight into the development of accounting theory to the present, and the concepts alone were not adequate to form a theory of accounting. Therefore, the origin of double entry book keeping in 14th Century is an appropriate starting point for a study of the development of accounting thought and accounting concepts.

Accounting by double-entry has substantial advantages over the uncoordinated recording methods used earlier. It is firmly based on the dual nature of each business transaction – for each debtor there must be a creditor, for each payers, a receiver and. for each seller, a purchaser, etc. It provides the basis for the comprehensive and orderly recording of all the financial aspects of the transactions of a business, affords a means of proof of accurate accounting through the equality of total debit and credit entries, and the integration in the ledger of personal. real and nominal accounts. provides materials for the development of statement of profit and loss. and of equity.assets. and liabilities. It has been described by Sombat (1924) as "… using the same spirit as the system of Galileo and Newton. … Using the same means as these. it orders the phenomena into an elegant system. and it may be described as the first Cosmos built up on the basis of mechanistic thought", yet it is unlikely to have been an invention. the conception of any single scholar or merchant. More likely it was a natural development of earlier recording systems under the stimulus of the growth of trade generated in the Mediterranean by the crusades, and by the Mercantile activities of the Italian City states during the Renaissance.

In the account of Littleton and Yamey (1956) the Fourteenth Century Italian Merchant and Manufacturers had developed substantial industrial activities. and had established trading branches throughout the known world; the Florentine Peruzzi Company. for instance. had branches in Avignon, Barletta. Bruges. Sardinia. Cyprus. London. Majorca, Napks, Paris, Pisa, Rhodes, Sicily and Venice. As the century progressed, the city states became very wealthy. They created banking and other fmanciai institutions. organised trade throughout the middle East, and their economic and political influence extended from Scandinavia to India. It is from this century. and from Italy. that we have the earliest known sets of accounts fully satisfying the requirements of the double-entry system.

The gradual development of double-entry is well illustrated by the records of Francisco di Marco Datini, a Tuscan Merchant-banker, Many of whose records from around 1335 to 1410 are preserved in Prato. Though, in the early stages of Datini's business. the books were kept by single entry, double-entry was certainly in usc by 1390. Datini's balance sheet on January 31st. J399 contains entries such as Debtors. Creditors. Balances with foreign correspondents. Balances with branches. Goods in stock. Bad debts. Reserves for Accrued taxes and contingencies. Owner's equity and perhaps most significant of all "Unraced Error in Casting the balances" (Sidebotharn, 1977).

The Medic Bank of Florence. which was founded in 1397, provides another interesting examples. Besides considerable banking business conducted in Florence and through branches in other Italian cities and major trading centres abroad. the bank operated several manufacturing establishments. Each branch, and each factory was a separate entity, with separate partners, capital. and accounts though the Medici-fairly had a controlling interest in each of them; an organization not dissimilar from the modem holding company and subsidiaries. The bank used double entry extensively as any lesser system would have been inadequate for the range and volume of its transactions. A copy of each branch's balance sheet was sent each year to Florence. and was subject to audit, mainly as a control over aging or doubtful debts. The Medici accounts contained provisions for accrued wages. bad debts, and contingencies. and these provisions were on occasions used to correct overstatements of profit in previous years.

THE THEORY BEHIND THE ITALIA I METHOD

While we have already indicated that double entry developed logically with the growth ofcommerce. credit. and partnerships. there are several basic characteristics of the book keeping methods of tile Italian cities that makes interesting eontrast with current methods and theory.

Firstly, during the period prior to the 16th century. the major objectives of accounting was to provide information for the owner, Racioli stated that the purpose of book-keeping was "to give the trader without delay information as to the assets and liabilities" (Green. 1930). It also provided a means for reporting on stewardship and a basis for the granting of credit. As a result of this. the accounts were held in secrecy and there was no external pressure for accuracy or uniform standards of reporting.

Secondly. the characteristics related to the first was the reporting together of all of the personal and business affairs ofa proprietor. Pacioli stated that the inventory should include cash. valuables. clothes. household goods. and other property possessed by the owner (Green. 1930). However. there is some evidence to support the theory that the business was recognized as a separate entity distinct from the personal affairs of the owner, Green stated that it was infrequent to find a merchant keeping a set of books for his home and another for his shop. Furthermore. Pacioli recommended that a partner's contribution of cash. property. or accounts receivable should be debited for the value of the contribution and partner's capital account should be credited for the same amount.

'Thirdly. lack of a concept of tile accounting period or a continuing nature of the business enterprise, Most ventures were of short duration. or at least not continuous after a specific trading objective had been reached. As a result. protit was calculated only upon the completion of the venture. Without the concept of periodic profit, here was no need for accruals and deferrals. As fixed assets played only a small part in the affairs of businessmen. there was no need for the calculation of dcpreciation. For those businesses. which were organized for longer periods of'timc. there was still little need for periodic computation of profit because the owners were in personal contact with the affairs of the business. Pacioli emphasized the importance of computing an inventory, but this inventory had its purpose in establishing a starting point for the business and the computation of final profit rather than as a cut of valuation for the determination of periodic profit.

Tbe fourth characteristic stems from the lack of a single stable monetary unit. Withoutsome common denominators. double-entry book keeping is impossible; with many monetary units in existence during tile mediaeval period. double entry was possible but awkward. As a result. entries in the memorial or day book were quite descriptive and the inventories were explained in full detail. With respect to the i\lemorial. Paeioli stated that "not only was the name of the buyer or seller recorded. as well as the description ofthe goods with its weight. size or measuremcnt. and price. but the terms 0 payment were also shown" and "wherever cash was received or disbursed, the record would show the kind of currency and its converted value".

DEVELOPMENT IN THE 1TfH AND 18TH CENTURIES

Starting with the close ofthe 15th century, the Italian cities began to decline politically and as the centre of trade. With the discovery of the New World and the opening of new trade routes, the centres ofcommerce moved to Spain and Portugal and to Antwerp and the Netherlands. Hendriksen (1970) argued that, it was natural, then. that the Italian system of double-entry book keeping should spread to these other countries. Little change was made in the book keeping techniques, however, but the writings began to show a change according to Peragallo (1938) during the period from J458 10 1558. writers were intent on settling forth the mechanics ofbook keeping as developed by business. No one attempted to devel op a theory ofdouble entry and no one went beyond the book keeping needs. ofthe Mercantile firm.

In the second cycle, extending from 1559 to 1795, a new element appeared - the critique of book keeping. This was also the period when double entry extended its field ofapplication to other types oforganizations. such as Monasteries and the State. With the critique and the widening sphere of book keeping, began theoretical research into the subject. One of the significant developments early in this period, according to Bowden etal (1937) was the practice of balancing the profit and loss at the end ofeach year rather than at the end of each venture. This led to a recommendation a half century later that balance sheets be drawn up at stated intervals. Precisely, while the profit and loss account was advocated by a Dutchman, Simon Steven in 1605, the balance sheet was suggested by a Frenchman, Jaques Sawary in 1655. (Ukpai, Kiablc. Obara, 1998). This development was largely as a result of the fact that partnerships established for a single transaction or venture were becoming less frequent and many more businesses were organized with the purpose ofestablishing a continuity ofmanufacturing and trading over long periods of time.

The textbooks in the 17th and 18th centuries, however, began to personalized all accounts and transactions. The authors were attempting to rationalize debit and credit rules when applied to impersonal and abstract accounts. Initially, all accounts represented personal relationships between merchants. With the development ofdouble-entry book keeping, accounts were used for impersonal items such as ‘cash' and 'inventoryand personification, the practice of treating accounts as if they were independent, living entities, can be traced to the earliest writings on double-entry book keeping, it was most common in the writings ofthe 17th and 18th centuries; and it continued in different forms throughout most ofthe 19th century for setting forth the general rules ofbook keeping to be learn by rote. Hendriksen (1970) argued strongly that. "it is possible that personification hindered the development ofaccounting theory by the substitution of rationalization and detailed rules for logic".

Other important institutional and economic changes occurring during the 17th and 18th centuries in Western Europe and influencing the later development of accounting theory include the start of the industrial revolution and the growth of the joint-stock company and other forms of organization. As the effect of these changes. accounting became manifest in a later period. their entire development was the basis of modem accounting theory.

DEVELOPMENT IN THE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES

The 19th century saw a series of economic events. which gave rise to a tremendous expansion of accounting providing the impetus for the development of a system of book keeping into a field of accountancy. Accounting expanded at an accelerated rate because of the rapid growth in trade and industry. particularly in the United States and England. According to Hendriksen (1970) accounting theory and philosophy were probably influenced to a greater extent by the changes in the economic institutions and in the objectives and uses of accounting data. In earlier periods. bookkeeping provided information mainly for managerial uses. in the more complex economic society of the 19th ccnturey, financial information was also required by stockholders. investors. creditors and the government.

The period 1800 to 1930 is na arbitrary period and covers many events not necessarily related to the development of accounting theory. The year 1800 itself was not an important turning point, but the general period was one of transformation. Although the Industrial Revolution was well on its way. many of the mechanical inventions of the 18th century were not perfected or placed in widespread use until the 19th century. The turn of the century also marked a change in policy regarding trade. The doctrines of Adam Smith's Wealth of'Nations, published in 1776. and the influence of the physiocrats in France provided the arguements for reducing the tariff barriers and establishing free trade.

The New York Stock Exchange and the American Institute of'Ccrtificd Puhlic Accountant played a prominent role in the establishment of accounting principles and in the expanding of the reporting requirement of the British Companies Act of 1929. One can therefore argued that. the main influences on accounting theory during the period 1800 to 1930 can be classified as follows: (a) the textbook presentation of book keeping and the development of newer methods of teaching accounting. (b) the Industrial Revolution with its influence on cost accounting and the accounting for depreciation, (c) the growth and development of railroads. (d) government regulation of business. (e) the development of the corporation and the growth of industrial and financial giants through mergers. and the influence of economic theory.

All these influences the development of accounting thought and philosophy ...nultaneously,

TilE EFFECT OF TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGES ON ACCOUNTING THEORY DEVELOPMENT

The tremendous changes in the technological methods of industry in the United States and England during the 19th and early 20th centuries had definite effects on the development of accounting thought. The direct affects were the development of the concept of depreciation and the development of cost accounting. Prior to the 19thcentury, depreciation was not an important concept, largely becuase fixed assests were not a significant aspect of commerce and industry. With the advent of thc factory system and man production. fixed asscsts became a sizeable cost in the production and distribution process, There also arose a need for management information regarding the costs of production and the costs to be assigned to inventory valuations.

Indirect affect to technological changes include the increasing significance of the distinction between capital and income, the development of the going-concern concept and the greater adherance to cost as the basis of asset valuation. Large requirements of capital necessitating the separation of'the investor and the manager meant that one of the major objectives of uccounting became the accounting to absentee own ers. '111US, income as a return to investors had to be distinguished from a return of capital to the owners.

The evolution of managerial accounting parallel the development of business organizational forms from early nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. The need for maintaining the financial chastity of business operations. ensuring the reliability of recorded experience resulting from these operations and conducting a frank appraisal of such experience. has made accounting a prime activity along with such other activities as finance, production and marketing, Much of this discussion on the historical perspective or management/cost accounting is based on the historical analysis conducted by Kaplan ei al (1987), Though this history is brief. but vel)' useful in understanding the significant changes that are occuni ng in managerial accounting.

Growth in the size of the typical manufacturing unit, which was slow until the middle of the eighteenth century, accelerated under the impetus of the discovery of new, mechanical methods of manufacture and improved means of transportation. Edward (1937) argued that. the replacement of outworking by factory working, and the migration into the factory centres of much of the previously rural population presented many and novel problems of production control for the early factory capitalist. The treatment of the capital cost and depreciation of buildings and machinery, growing quickly in size and value, the control of stocks of raw materials and finished goods and of work in progress, estimating and tendering for contracts, price fixing and control of large labour forces were all industrial demands to which there must have been an accounting response.

Garke and Fells (1887) in their submission described the Industrial Revolution as not been solely a technieal revolution. To them. the new machinery. the factories required to house it. the labour forces needed to operate it, and the increased inventories of all sorts, from raw materials to finished goods, called forth by longer and more complex production cycles, have all demanded greatly increased financial resources. If advantage was to be taken of the technology, it was essential that means of generating industrial capital be devised.

Early attempts to finance factory development naturally took the form of partnerships. Manufacturers who had been working on their own, on a limited scale. joined together to pool both their expertise and their resources, but the pace of development was too fast for arrangements of this kind to provide adequate capital in thc longer period. Partnership has. in addition. other disadvantages. Partners die. or withdraw from the association. or prove to have resources inadequate to the firm through periods of adverse trading conditions. Furthermore, it is a general principle of partnership that each partner has the right to a share in management of the firm. and that a man is wealthy is no guarantee that he is well endowed with managerial talent.

The Joint Stock Company was not a new idea in Britain in the 19th century, From the 17th century companies such as the East India Company and the Hudson Bay Company had been operating with the liability of their members for company debts subject to limitations defined in their charters of incorporation. but such companies were exceptional. They were created by Royal Charter. usually with the object of conducting trade with some distant territory, and it was not to be until long after the Charter Companies had led the way that the devices of separate corporate personality and limited liability for shareholders were to be applied generally to production and trade.

By 1844 partnership enterprise had clearly become inadequate as a means of organizing industrial activity. A committee of the British Parliament. reporting in that year, pointed out that there were serious disadvantages in large joint stock partnerships in particular, because not all partners took part in management, there was ample scope for falsification of unaudited accounts. The Joint Stock Companies Act. 1844 was the first statute to make it possible to form a company by the comparatively simple method of registration with the registrar of Joint-Stock Companies. Though the Act made no provision for limitation of the liability of shareholders in the new joint stock companies. It did provide some measure of protection for shareholders by requiring that books of account be kept, and periodically balanced, that a *"full and fair"* balance sheet be presented to the shareholders at each annual meeting. and that auditors be appointed. charged with the duty of reporting on the balance sheets presented to the shareholders.

The Act required that a copy of the audited balance sheet presented to the shareholders be filed with the registrar of Joint-Stock Companies. The principle of limited liability for shareholders in joint stock companies were first introduced by British Acts of Parliament in 1855 and 1856, but these Acts removed the compulsory accounting and auditing provisions, which had been introduced in 1844. The reasons seem to have been that, matters of account are confidential. and for private debate between directors and shareholders only, and that it had proved difficult to frame a compulsory scheme financial reporting which would adequately protect shareholders' interest. A model form of balance sheet was, however, appended to the 1856 Act, and the model Articles of Association also provided include Sections on accounting and auditing maters. Such remained the situation in Britain until the companies Act of 1900 reintroduced an obligatory audit for registered companies. Since that date successive measures have increased the powers of auditors, have specified the qualifications they must have before appointment and have required progressively more information to be included in reports made to shareholders and filed with the Registrar of companies. Developments in the United State followed a somewhat different pattern. Corporation legislation was first introduced in Connecticut in 1837, and other States followed sit. but there were substantial differences in the provisions concerning both audit and disclosure of infonnation in the Acts of the several States. Because of weakness in statutes of some States. the New York Stock Exchange began to make agreements with companies whose shares were traded on the exchange concerning the observance of certain uniform accounting principles, and providing for the disclosure of adequate information in puhlished company reports.

From the point of view of the historical pictures above, it becomes very clear that, the main impetus for the growth of professional practice in accounting was the development of limited liability company enterprise. The earliest Companies Acts contained a provision requiring accounts to be presented to shareholders at specific intervals. Subsequent Acts have increased and speeificd the amount of information which must be supplied. and as the divorce of ownership and management has developed, provisions relating to the audit of company's accounts have become an essential feature of company legislation. The professional accountant, acting as auditor, is the representative of the shareholders, often charged with the duty of reporting. on their behalf. that the accounts presented by the directors show a true and fair view of the activities of the company.

Auditing was not the only field of employment opened for accountants by limited company legislation. Accountants were active in advising on the formation of companies. their reconstruction. amalgamation, subdivision and winding-up and were representing shareholders, debenture holders and creditors besides acting in many ways for companies themselves. It may well be said that the practicing accountant has become the limited companies family doctor. He acts as midwife at its birth, correct its childhood ailments, gives it an annual check-up, is present at any weddings, supervises the birth of children, signs the death certificate, and as often as not, deals with the deceased's estate.

The accountancy profession thus developed in two separate, though related ways. Accountants in public practice drew their business from the increasing complexity of company finance, from governmental action, particularly in the field of taxation and from the widening basis of industrial investment. In industry. accountants were concernec with the control of increasing quantities of capital equipment and other productive factor: and with thc formation of management decisions. Sidebothan (1970) argued that

> *"the work done by the two groups is so dissimilar as to justify them into two professions. bUI both groups base their practice of accountancy on the same principles. they have a common history. and the transfer of accountants from one sec/or of the organization 011 other is by no means uncommon*

DEMAND AND RESPONSE

Since the beginning of the industrial revolution, economic development in Europ and Amcrica and later in Austra-lasia, has been continuous. though there have beer periods of relative stagnation. particularly in the [930·s. and disastrous experience: such as the two world wars. The volume and diversity of production. the size of busines organizations and the problems of finance have all increased apace. Upon the swellin! tide of economic expansion. the accountancy profession has been borne forth. In industr and commerce. in banking. insurance and foreign trade. in the service of government: and universities besides in public practice. accountants are playing an invaluable part it the direction of business and government.

Double entry was created in response to the challenge of the 15th centur- commercial enterprise. The accountancy profession grew out of the economic demand of the industrial revolution. The greater the complexity of the structure of production an, exchange, the more important it is that financial information and advice should be giver with competence and honesty. It is for this purpose that the accountancy profession o today exists, and upon its ability to response to the demands of the future will its continuer progress depend.

THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

The mainstream of writing Accounting History is set in the context of'the well publicized civilizations of Asia. Near East and Europe (Asckhemie, 1992). Liulcroi and Yamey (1 956) and Chatfield (1974) arc representative of mainstream writing where as far as accounting is concerned. settings like Nigeria are without a historica existence because of the neglect which history in these other countries has suffered. B discussing accounting in pre-colonial times or indigenous accounting here we are dispellin the myth of non-historicity-a task that has long been successfully accomplished by thos in general and political history of Nigeria.

Gambling (1975) has described accounting as being concerned with th Semantics of wclfare. The implication of this definition is that, once people have a sens of wclfare or the opposite of it. they are bound to have a system or systems of calculatin the magnitude of these. And a sense of weifare or dis-welfare is a basic human trait. Therefore. all societies - primitive or advanced. old or new. should have a system or systems of accounting: however crude or unsophisticated it may appear to the *"modem"* eye. There is ample evidence in books and Museums on the Nigerian participation in global development in technology. igerians participated effectively in the Oldowan. Acheulian. Sangoan industries of the early stone age and also in the late stone age. They also used clay. iron and copper in their technology. They were good, in some cases excellent. in these matters compared to their contemporaries, These men and women of ingenuity and high taste should have been able to develop accounting systems adequate for their needs.

Besides. the history of accounting in other civilizations has taught us that widespread illiteracy, costly writing materials. dillicult counting and writing systems and the absence of money as a common denominator of value did not stop the practice and development of accounting in those civilizations, Indeed, there is a growing feeling among accounting historians that accounting may have predated not only writing. but also counting. On the other hand. accounting and counting may have had concurrent development (Swanson.1984). with regard to writing materials, for example, the medium has varied from clay and stone to papyrus and paper. There is no priori reason why the same factors. if they had been present in the Nigerian situation. should have made accounting an impossibility. Asechemie (1992). argued that because of these difficulties, igerian would have developed different solutions to suit the peculiarities of their circumstances.

NATIVE BOOK-KEEPING FORMS IN NIGERIA

Book keeping forms extant in native Nigerian society were a faithful reflection of the accounting environment.The environment offered certain possibilities and constraints. Nigerian society, as a collection of rational and practical people, attempted to use to the greatest advantage the possibilities for the production of relevant information for the management of the economic resources at their disposal. The data need for the native book keeping were in three perspective: (i) knowing the extent of debts owed to or by the bookkeeper. This was the major reason for keeping record, (ii) determination of wealth for the purpose of taking consumption decisions-both physiological needs and socio-psyehological needs such as taking more wives, and (iii) evaluate performance in economic activities which were principally hunting, fishing and farming. Such information is necessary to them in resource allocation decision.

For these purposes, it seems that native Nigerian book keeping systems have, within the limited scope of the economy, served rather wcll. If it were not so, Nigerian could have developed alternative forms of book keeping. Today. these native forms still exist where they are found useful. Where they are no longer useful, alternative have been adopted most of which bear European influence. The accounting forms found in Nigeria may not be peculiar to Nigerians, they may be found in other parts of the world too. Indeed, Wilks (1975) discusses how sticks and grains were used in accounting for military manpower in the Asante of the 19th century. As in modem book keeping. the "account" was at the centre of the native system. The device of an account made it convenient to accumulate data on relevant accounting categories. so that the status of those categories could be ascertained without much difficulty. The wall stroke system. counter containers system. tallies system, raffia system. carving system and the memory-based systems were the ancient bookkeeping system used in Nigeria igcrian accounting history cannot he fully told without recounting the intluenees that were external to its development. They are basically two patterns of extemal accounting intluenees: Islamic civilization and European contacts.

These may not be the only external sources of accounting ideas. hut they appear to me to be more susceptible to historical analysis than any other possihilities. We can identify also three major sources of European accounting influence in the development of accounting thought and philosophy in igeria. These are traders. missionaries and colonial administration. Others may inelude accounting hooks sold to Nigerians. Accounting practice in igcria has gone through several stages of development academically and professionally. From the academic point of view. nearly all the universities and polytechnics in igeria now run a programme on accountancy. This rend is a welcome development as it is capable of enhancing knowledge of the subject for several generation. Again. professional practice has also improved over the years. With just one professional accounting body (ICAN) in 1965 to about four professional hodies (ICA . A A , ICPA IT) today.

CONCLUSION

Accounting really is a problem-oriented disciplined. Its history is best portrayed in terms of the most crucial socio-economic problems with which a society is plagued at certain period of time. Accounting concepts. methods and techniques are designed to provide information for diagnosis. analysis and eventual resolution. hopefully of these crucial problems. There is increasing evidence that sociological and economic changes have a considerable impact on accounting practices and accounting thought. The decades of the 1950's and 1960's have seen many environmental changes that have affected directly and indirectly the work of accountants and. in many cases, these changes have forced upon the accounting profession the adoption of new methods and new thought about the accounting process. In the technological field, the computer is probably one of the most important development.

While accounting thought and philosophy has developed over time in response to many changes in the economic and sociological environment and because of continued research. it has also developed along geographical lines to meet the different needs of the many national cultures and economics and political systems. Many nations have followed the lead of the more advanced countries of the world. but there is increasing evidence that no single nation or group of nations has a monopoly on the development of accounting thought and accounting research. This places a greater emphasis than previously on an international exchange of ideas and an understanding of the basic reasons for differences in accounting thought and practice throughout the world.

In summary, recent development in accounting theory and philosophy are proceeding in several directions at the same time. Many of these developments are necessary to keep up with the changing economic institutions and to meet the new economic and sociological situations. But many of the changes challenge the fundamental basis of accounting theory and philosophy. While a wholesale rejection of "received" accounting theory and philosophy \\;11 not occur rapidly, accountants should be receptive to new ideas and recognize that accounting theory and philosophy is not and probably never will be in a completely stable state. This is true also for igerian as a developing economy.

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