

Forgiveness In Secular Practice

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Definitions

Forgiveness is

- *'part of the spirituality of all human beings'* (Anthony Bash)
- **Recognition** of wrong/hurt/offence/loss
- **Mitigation** of outcome of wrong/hurt/offence/loss
- A **disposition** to relational **attitude** and **behaviour**
- A net gift, adding moral value

Definitions

Forgiveness as

- Conditional or unconditional?
- Cause or effect?
- Overt or covert?
- Forensic detail or blanket cover?
- Bilateral or unilateral?
- A condition or a process?

Related concepts



Related concepts – cause and combinations

Hannah Arendt's '*predicament of irreversibility*'

Forgiveness	Reconciliation	Restoration /remorse	Justice	Punishment /revenge
	Personal space		Social space	
= cause	no process = an internal personal resolution			
= result	quits = <i>moral zero sum game</i>		as in religious substitutionary atonement	
= cause	friends again	may be impossible? or outcome mitigation	outcome mitigation = <i>moral value added</i>	
		if possible and agreed		
			as in penal code	
	ultimate virtue?			

Forgiveness mitigates justice = a superior virtue to justice?

The need for forgiveness in secular practice

- Personal healing and well being
- Societal health (= virtue) and functioning (= practical)
- The cost of unprocessed wrong/hurt/offence/loss

- Inadequacy of religious definition and practice
 - eg zero sum game of substitutionary atonement theology

- But how to establish an institutional process of forgiveness in secular society?

Institutionalising forgiveness in secular practice

Domain	Institution
Politics	South Africa Truth and Reconciliation Commission
Economics	World Bank
Work	ACAS, Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service
Marriage, family	Relate
Law	Mediate.com Courts
Interpersonal	Church? cf synagogue vs temple

Forgiveness in legal practice

‘To Blame or to Forgive? Reconciling Punishment and Forgiveness in Criminal Justice ‘

Nicola Lacey and Hanna Pickard *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, Volume 35, Issue 4, 1 December 2015, Pages 665–696, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ojls/gqv012> April 2015

‘the choice to blame, and not to forgive, is inconsistent with the political values of a broadly liberal society and can be instrumentally counter-productive to reducing the risk of future re-offending’.

‘we ought—so far as possible—to replace blame with forgiveness as a guiding ideal within penal philosophy and criminal justice policy’

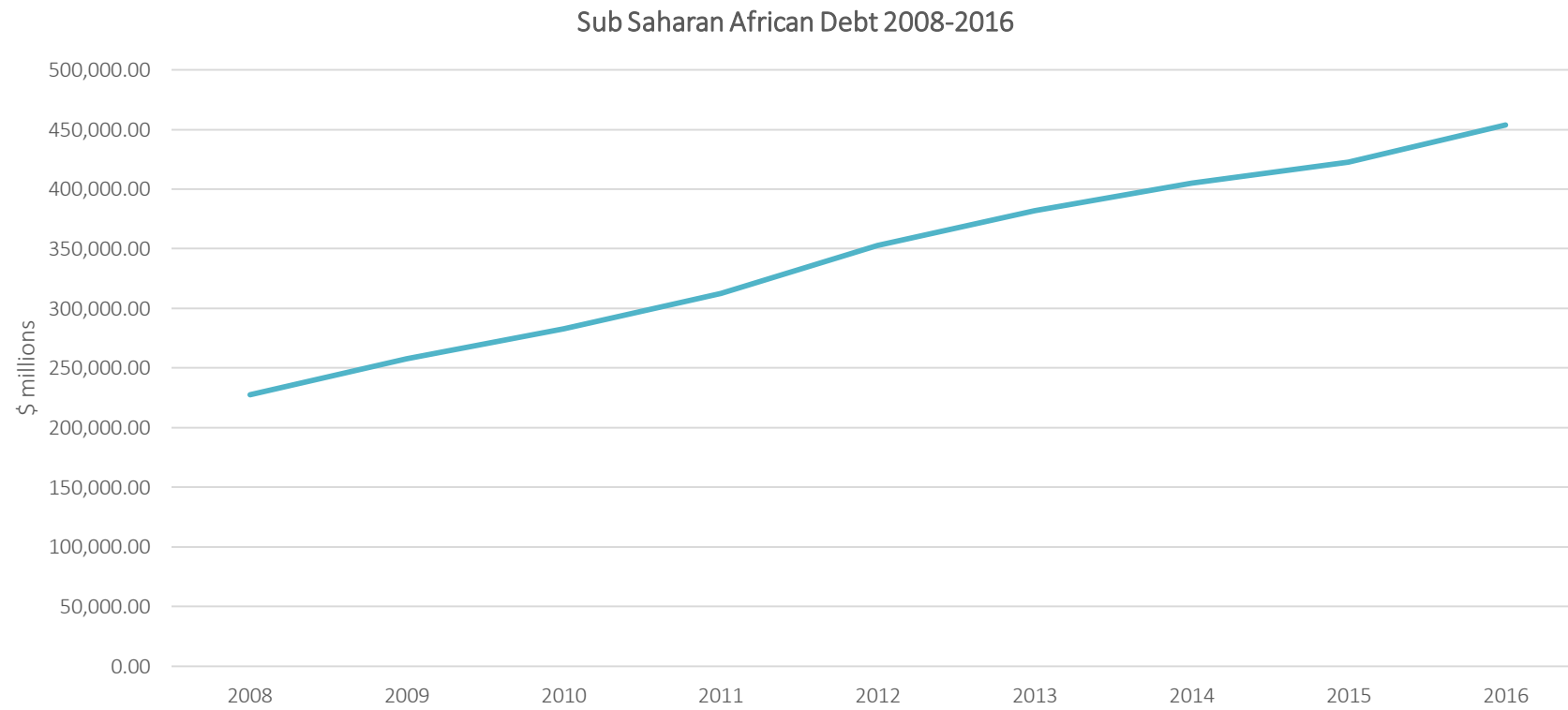
‘the criminal law itself can offer forgiveness, not on behalf or in place of victims, but in its own right’

‘importing to the criminal law a conceptual framework derived from clinical practice that sharply differentiates responsibility from blame’

Forgiveness and Mercy (Cambridge Studies in Philosophy and Law) Paperback – 1 Nov 1990

by [Jeffrie G. Murphy](#) and Jean Hampton

Forgiveness – developing country debt



Forgiveness – developed world debt

