

ISSUES OF LEADERSHIP AND ITS STRUGGLES IN NIGERIA: A PLATO'S APPROACH

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Abstract

Leadership in all spheres of our lives, including government, business, education, the church, and so on, is now the root of Nigeria's problems. The need for genuine leadership has been criticized and largely held responsible for Nigerian society's struggles and poverty. Without a doubt, Nigeria's issues stem from a lack of leadership. Due to the poor performance of our politicians, many Nigerians have yet to benefit from many of the benefits of democracy, including decent roads, pipe-borne water, rural electricity, and healthcare facilities. What role does this research study play in addressing the issue of leadership through platonic political philosophy? The main problem in Nigeria right now appears to be how to deal with the leadership crisis. This article will use an explanatory and analytical approach to discuss the Platonic Political Philosophy and the struggle for political leadership in Nigeria. The work will look at how leadership and power are organized in modern Nigerian politics. It will claim that the country's immense political and economic potential has been thwarted by ineffective leadership. Additionally, it would evaluate Plato's political philosophy intellectually, as well as class concerns and the justification of Plato's political philosophy. It would eventually demonstrate if the concept is workable in a contemporary country like Nigeria.

Keywords: Plato, Political Philosophy, Leadership, Corruption, Morality.

Introduction

The lack of competent, responsible leaders with integrity, vision, and high moral values has been the bane of the country. It is simply disheartening that Nigeria, a country blessed with natural resources and manpower, is now doomed with uncertainty, where abject poverty, a high unemployment rate, unresolved assassinations, looting and squandering of public funds, etc., all as a consequence of corruption, have become the order of the day. One still wonders why a country that has ruled itself for the past sixty-three years attributes its systemic challenges and institutional decay. For the avoidance of doubt, the

challenges confronting Nigeria are purely institutional. This is rooted in the type of leadership Nigeria has had in the last sixty-three years of its existence as a corporate entity. Thus, the country's leadership has often been seen to be comprised of corrupt individuals who do not see their positions as service to the country but as avenues for personal enrichment and aggrandizement. Although the situation looked very bad, it is not beyond remedy. To achieve this, there must be a complete change of attitude on the part of the Nigerian leadership class, and there must be good moral values. To achieve this, Nigerians must adopt Plato's philosophy because no matter how perfect or excellent the constitution or other instruments for ensuring accountability and checking corruption in the country might be, all will come to naught unless the people of Nigeria and the leadership class show the political will to abide by and enforce them. The thesis of this essay is that Platonic political philosophy will serve as a reliable means of attaining good leadership in Nigerian politics.

Nigeria's Leadership Problem: An Overview

The most urgent issue in Nigeria currently seems to be how to address the problem of leadership. Nigeria's leadership problem has remained perpetually unresolved because of bad governance. It has had the misfortune of being governed by corrupt and visionless leaders since its independence in 1960. Having done away with military leadership for twenty-four years now, Nigerians thought that embracing democratic rule would bring to us a responsive and responsible political institution that would promote a government that is accountable and a government that would prevent corruption, but the reverse is the case. In view of this, the purpose of this study is to see how the issues of corruption and incompetent leadership, since they remain the most difficult problems in the Nigerian leadership system, could be addressed. Oyebola observed that "there are at least three main areas of failure in Nigeria's leadership. For him, they include "lack of bold and courageous leadership, lack of moral ingredients in leadership, and premature exposure to leadership (Oyebola, 1976:11).

Nigeria, as a country, is doing little to develop the younger generation in the act of leadership. No one wants to take a risk for the survival of our country. The few who want to demand their rights are being pursued. Many Nigerians are yet to enjoy many of the dividends of democracy, such as good roads, pipe-borne water, rural electrification, and healthcare services, due to the poor performance of our leaders. For our leaders, all these things do not matter. According to Osuji, the leadership concept is centered on racial interests and individual wealth,

which has led to the well-known absence of a shared national objective (Osuji, 2018:148). Today, millions of Nigerians would not be starving to death if our leaders had known that their primary duty was to care for the masses and not enrich their foreign accounts and western mentors. Regrettably, all they are interested in is having a master's degree in traveling outside the state, competing on who becomes the widest traveler, and making every possible plan to hand over a state bereft of infrastructure. (Bolarinwa & Osuji, 2022), sees the problem of leadership from the politics of Nigerian government. Chinua Achebe summarized it thus in his book *"The Trouble with Nigeria"*: "The problem with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership" (Achebe, 1983). Oyebola minced no words when he said in his *"Blackman's Dilemma"* that "very poor leadership appears to be the Blackman's greatest problem." (Oyebola, 1976:13). Achebe articulated it further as the inability of the leaders to rise to their responsibility:

There is nothing fundamentally wrong with the Nigerian land, climate, water, air, or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the challenges of personal example, which are the hallmarks of true leadership.

For most Nigerians, however, the pressing problems of everyday survival remain the highest immediate priority. And how could such an immediate priority get to us without effective leadership and management? Nigeria is undoubtedly endowed with abundant human and natural resources to address its problems. The solution for addressing its problems and consolidating democratic governance in the federal republic lies in having a government that works on the principles of good governance and is, most especially, accountable to the Nigerian people.

The leadership crisis has done more harm than good in this nation of ours. Men are shouting, women are screaming, and children are crying- it is chaotic. The most baffling and awful of all is that Nigeria has all that it requires to be great. Who can lead the people of Nigeria out of this dungeon? Our leaders have lost the quintessence of true leadership in pursuit of shadows. We have not truly had any significant input into the design and structure of our government. Consequently, Nigeria is gradually but inevitably dwindling into mediocrity and ineffectiveness. Our leaders are no longer servants but masters. There is utter disregard for Ojukwu's advice that "those who aspire to lead must bear in mind the fact that they are servants and as such cannot ever be greater than the people, their masters" (Okolo, 1985:23).

The Role and Concept of leadership

It is a reverent duty to be a leader. It is intended for people who have a sense of giving and altruism. It is the capacity of the person to skillfully guide the group's actions toward the accomplishment of organizational goals (Omolayo, 2006). According to Fayemi (2008:3), being a leader means having the capacity to "take initiative, motivate, influence, direct, and control the thoughts, opinions, and actions of the followers in any given society towards the achievement of purposeful desired ends. A leader ought to be selfless in their goals and objectives. He has to have complete knowledge of the group he is in charge of. High intelligence, motivational skills, good impact, and a focus on results are all necessary for leadership. Anyone who can persuade others to act in ways that go above and beyond what is required of them is referred to as a leader. Because every civilization is ordered, leadership develops. The people can't be leaders. A small number of leaders are required (Ujo, 2001). Leadership is both the glue that holds a team together and the spark that ignites employee motivation, having a significant impact on how well a company performs. Leadership, according to Omolayo (2005), is the necessary oil that keeps the wheels of government turning smoothly. He asserts that strong leadership is what separates a nation's success from failure. It entails providing guidance to the people, who are the country's most valuable resources. Leadership is a reflection of the qualities put in place by office holders to guide their people or followers in order to achieve reasonable and beneficial societal development, including but not limited to knowledge, vision, courage, openness, accountability, determination, transparency, uprightness, motivation, and patriotism. Deep transformations need dedicated leadership that is shown through transformative laws and practices (Ukaegbu, 2010).

What Makes a Good Leader?

A leader should or must have specific attributes, according to academics and practitioners, in order to lead effectively. The study establishes the following core characteristics of a successful leader based on this premise:

- i. Honesty: A good leader must be free of dishonesty and must be genuine and sincere. People are easier to persuade when leaders rise above ethical differences and make honesty their guiding principle and core value.
- ii. Competence is often equated with integrity by authors, and although this is true, it is not sufficient. It involves upholding high moral standards. Competence is destroyed by a lack of

integrity. Competence is sustained by integrity. A leader must maintain his integrity and not let his feelings or emotions rule him. It is the duty of the leader to grasp the bigger picture, convey it to the group, and then influence, inspire, and direct them toward the common goal.

- iii. Vision: Effective leadership requires a clear vision. In other words, a leader must be cognizant of the present while still being able to see or plan for the future. Samuel (2011) expressly quotes Proverbs 29:18 from the Bible to state that "where there is no vision, the people perish."
- iv. Self-confidence is something you get through experience. Lacking self-assurance, leaders are unable to take initiative or motivate followers or subordinates to do the same.

Good leadership necessitates a unique fusion of knowledge, intellect, and training since it impacts everyone's general wellness. A good leader lifts his people to the level of human beings while also defending their lives. According to Plato (1955:282), who insisted that leadership should not be given to people of mean qualities and qualifications, the best laws and the best constitution come into existence when the supreme power in a man coincides with the greatest wisdom and temperance, but in no other way.

When the individuals we now regard as kings and rulers truly and genuinely become philosophers and, as a result, political power and philosophy are held in the same hands, philosophers will govern this planet. There is no other way to reach true pleasure, either for an individual or for society as a whole.

In accordance with Jacob & Jacques (1990), Leadership is a process of giving purpose (meaningful direction) to collective effort and causing willing effort to be expended to achieve collective purpose. This definition implies that effective leadership entails the ability of the leader to outline the right path for the team or individuals he leads and convince them that they must move in the desired direction. Roger Gill (2012) asserts:

From this term, it might be inferred that the leads are illiterate, lost, or, thus, "blind." As a result, they view the world through the eyes of the guide. The person guiding them sees for them, but he also goes above and beyond to assist them, convince them of the better future, and encourage them to overcome the hardships they would inevitably face on the way to their "promise land."

To accomplish his conviction, he consequently requires a certain level of intellectual sagacity and knowledge. The people then need to be given the power to fulfill their important duties. Therefore, it is clear that being in a position of leadership is difficult. Blount (2012) stated as follows:

It takes work to be a leader. It takes a lot of self-control and sacrifice; you'll experience heartbreak and ego damage; there will be disappointment, errors, and failure. Because you are human and fallible, you will occasionally injure good people. This is not a result of malice.

The approach and manner in which most individuals compete for leadership positions across the continent of Africa are largely due to this lack of knowledge of leadership responsibility. They likely believe that holding a position of authority would provide them with a sudden financial windfall and allow them to exact revenge on those who have wronged them or their tribe. Iyar (2012: 164) appears to comprehend this point:

across all tiers, there are serious misconceptions about what leadership is, how it should function, and why it is required. Nigerian politicians and other Nigerians who are applying for leadership roles perceive these positions as an opportunity to under-develop the nation and instead focus on their own personal growth since the culture of underdevelopment in Africa has eaten deeply into Nigeria's spirit.

Uveges (2003:214) also claim that:

by its very essence, leadership includes the use of social power. Therefore, leadership should not be seen independently from social power due to its significant impact on individual behavior, individual and organizational productivity, and adaptation to working environments, and morale in organizations. As a result, leadership is the capacity to shape the actions of others in a group or organization, establish collective objectives, devise ways to achieve those goals, and establish some social standards inside the group.

In any society, including Nigeria, "the followers depend on their leaders to give them specific services. Consequently, there is a link between leadership and providing services. The principal duty of the leader is to provide the people with the services they deem essential. In Nigeria, the government's legitimacy to levy taxes and administer society is predicated on its ability to offer the populace a variety of

services that no other actor wills" (Adamolekun, 2002:123). Therefore, it is essential to note that the first step in assessing our leaders is whether or not they uphold the Federal Republic of Nigeria's Constitution. A visionary leader who wants to provide the people with high-quality services must be prepared to uphold the constitution he has promised to uphold. Available data and experience suggest that the majority of Nigerians attribute their country's problems to colonial control. Little do the Nigerian organizations and their supporters know that South Africa and Ghana were also colonized like Nigeria? One wonders how, sixty-three years after gaining independence, "the giant of Africa," as we are conceitedly referred to by the western world and our pretentious politicians, still holds on to this archaic viewpoint. One continues to be perplexed as to why a nation that has been in self-government for the past sixty years blames the colonialist, who has long since departed her country, for her systemic problems and institutional declines. For the avoidance of doubt, Nigeria is only facing institutional issues. This has its roots in the style of leadership Nigeria has had throughout the course of the last sixty-three years as a corporate organization. As a result, it is frequently seen that the country's leadership is made up of dishonest people who view their positions as opportunities for personal advancement rather than service to the nation. So who is a leader, and what factors contribute to a lousy or ineffective leader? What behaviors characterize a leader as either excellent or bad? According to the aforementioned definitions, a leader is simply someone who leads. Yet what does someone in a position of leadership actually do? These are a few of the concerns that many leadership researchers either seem to disregard or disregard as essential to the debate on leadership. It ought to remain obvious that becoming a leader calls for extensive preparation. Leadership positions are a call to duty, and one should not accept one out of persuasion, even if they are ones he knows he cannot handle. The challenge is not insurmountable, though. Around the world, both in the present and in the past, there have been effective leaders. Therefore, it is crucial to take into account the variables that might influence a leader's success or failure, as well as what makes a leader good, bad, or ineffective.

An inadequate or poor leader is a plague on the group he leads or the nation. He is responsible for his followers' destruction. According to Blount (2012:9), "poor leadership sub-optimizes earnings. Decent businesses and decent individuals are held back by it. It undermines productivity, robs the workplace of fun, and ultimately harms real people." If a person possesses the following qualities, he can be a better leader.

The vast majority of leaders fail not because their vision is poor or incorrect, but rather because they are unable to effectively convey it to the followers they are responsible for. When they feel a connection to the people they lead, leaders are known to perform better. Being close to the people suggests that a leader participates in their struggles and successes. When they are joyful, he is also joyful, and when they are sad, he is sad. In actuality, a good leader finds satisfaction in the happiness of the people. Blount (2012) argues, about the significance of being connected is the ability of the team to connect with each other will also increase their willingness to take the training, coaching, feedback, direction, and vision that are essential to putting them in a winning position. Strong bonds are difficult to sever and serve as the cornerstones of genuinely successful, long-term partnerships based on mutual trust. The capacity to serve is another quality of a strong leader. Anyone who wanted to lead had to be willing to serve, as the Lord Jesus instructed His followers. Anyone taking on a leadership role needs to keep in mind that it is a call to service. They cherish their positions more than the duties that come with them, which is another factor in the rarity of excellent leaders. Greenleaf said, as cited by Roger (2012: 69),

A servant leader puts others first. It starts with the instinctive desire to serve first and foremost. The desire to lead is then brought about by a deliberate decision. He or she differs significantly from someone who initially becomes a leader, possibly out of a need to quell a power need or amass worldly belongings.

It therefore implies that any leader who does not uphold these fundamental requirements is incapable of delivering and ought to be despised for it. Ineffectiveness, rigidity, intemperance, callousness, corruption, insularity, and immorality were among the characteristics of a bad leader that Barbara (2004) highlighted. The history of Nigerian leadership is rife with corrupt, inept, and dogmatic figures. Although it is a mammoth undertaking, effective leadership is only feasible for people who are familiar with all of the details involved.

Corruption: Conceptual clarification

Though there isn't a widely accepted or complete definition of what defines corruption, the majority of the definitions place a strong focus on the misuse of public authority or positions for one's own benefit. The condition is described as "an impairment of virtue and moral principles" in a straightforward dictionary definition (Lewis, 2006). The World

Bank and Transparency International (TI), a prominent international organization that monitors and fights corruption, define corruption as the misuse of public office for personal gain to the advantage of the office holder or a third party. Political corruption may be broadly defined as immoral behavior that contravenes the rules of the system of political order, as seen from these definitions (Heidenheimer and Johnston, 1993: 6). In essence, political corruption may be done for personal and group wealth as well as to maintain power. Politicians frequently engage in misconduct, including theft and favoritism, as well as misconduct involving both public and private players, including, but not limited to, bribery, extortion, influence peddling, and fraud. In this way, corruption jeopardizes democratic processes, sustainable development, decent governance, and ethical corporate practices. It is clear from the definitions and explanations above that leadership definitions explain the idea from a positive perspective, whereas corruption definitions place the phenomenon on the negative axis. Therefore, it becomes challenging for the political leadership class of a country to act constructively in the interest of the state, and it is clear from the definitions and explanations above that leadership definitions explain the idea from a positive perspective, whereas corruption definitions place the phenomenon on the negative axis. Therefore, it becomes challenging for the political leadership class of a nation to behave constructively for the good of the state and its population when it endorses corruption. Since gaining its independence, the Nigerian state has remained in this condition. The political leadership class has sacrificed effective leadership on the altar of corruption in order to gain or maintain power, repress dissent, and have access to limitless cash for personal benefit. In actuality, Nigerian political leadership has become increasingly corrupt throughout the course of succeeding military and civilian generations, starting with the first class of political leaders. Political corruption has unchecked spread throughout Nigeria's government like a disease. We have witnessed the growth of a sizable system of institutionalized political corruption over the years, which frequently come from the very top and permeate all governmental institutions with a negative impact on the entire population.

The Effect and Implications of Corruption

Political, economic, social, and environmental costs are the four categories into which the cost of corruption may be divided. On the political front, corruption is a significant barrier to the rule of law and democracy. When utilized improperly for personal gain, institutions and offices in a democratic government lose their legitimacy. This undermines our democracy. In a corrupt environment, our democracy

and political leadership cannot flourish. On an economic basis, corruption causes our nation's riches to be depleted. It has resulted in the use of limited public resources to finance unprofitable, high-profile projects like power plants and pipelines that cost billions of dollars, when instead these funds could be used to build schools, hospitals, roads, and supply rural areas with water and electricity, which are necessities of life. The creation of fair market structures has been hampered, which has affected investment and resulted in employment losses. People no longer have faith in the political system as they move up the socioeconomic scale. They have cultivated a nonchalant attitude and overall apathy toward government policies in its institutions and leadership, which has led to a weak civil society. Degradation of the environment is yet another effect of corrupt systems. Nigeria's environment has been contaminated as a result of a lack of implementation of environmental laws and regulations. Because of the careless exploitation of natural resources, including oil and minerals, by local and foreign actors, the country's residents' health has been negatively impacted. Given that they are an obvious target for diverting public funds into private pockets, projects that have the greatest potential to harm the environment are given priority financing.

Concept of Morality

Morality is one of the most challenging yet significant topics on which individuals might differ. Although most people believe that morality is crucial to people's well-being, there is no universally agreed-upon definition of what constitutes moral behavior. Morality is the process of learning to discriminate between virtues and vices (from the Latin *moralitas*, which means "manner, character, and proper behavior"). The right set of moral standards and guidelines encourages good customs (virtues) but also forbids negative customs (vices). Whether an activity should be viewed as suitable or wrong, selfish or unselfish, depends on moral judgment. Morality is a set of rules that people use to govern their behavior. The various types of concerns that may be posed regarding this rule of conduct give birth to a theoretical interest in morality. Ndubuisi (2008) emphasizes the following:

On the other hand, morality can be viewed as a set of guidelines, a state of mind, or a mode of activity that involves abiding by the standards of righteous, moral, or virtuous behavior. How do individuals truly live by their practical rules? Is one of the questions posed? This is a descriptive inquiry meant to shed light on the actual customs of diverse cultures, communities, and people. The outcomes of such an effort will define "morality" in a descriptive sense. It might be argued that there are several moral

standards since different social groupings adhere to various standards of behavior. The legitimacy of the norms of conduct that individuals follow is a second issue.

This branch of philosophy focuses on morality and seeks to identify the standards that should guide people's behavior. (The moral philosophy's instructions for how people should live need not correspond to real activities or moral standards that are widely held.) The findings of this investigation will define "morality" in its normative sense. Regardless of where they come from- culture, philosophy, religion, society, or even an individual's conscience- morals are assessed using reasoning, experience, and sound judgment. In the normative and universal definition, morality refers to an ideal standard of behavior that, given certain circumstances, would be chosen by all reasonable individuals over alternatives.

Moral skepticism is the idea that there is no such thing as "morality" in this sense. Akin to Omoregbe (1993: 46) correctly stressed:

while morality is inherently universal, it still contains certain components that are relative. Additionally, while moral principles and standards are universal, it would be incorrect to state that morality as a whole is wholly relative.

Morality is sometimes used as a synonym for ethics, the systematic philosophical study of the moral domain. Ethics seeks to address questions such as how a moral outcome can be achieved in a specific situation (applied ethics), how moral values should be determined (normative ethics), and what morals people actually abide by (descriptive ethics).

Plato's Conception of Philosophy

The efforts of philosophy continue to contribute to the rebuilding of the world. It is a phenomenon that is essential to human society. Through its fundamental branches, such as metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics, it supports human existence and directs human behavior. The ability of philosophy to offer ideals, directions, and mental growth is crucial. The duties and obligations of great academics and philosophers are to address issues of ideology and orientation. Great philosophers from the ancient eras include Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle; nevertheless, for the sake of this lengthy article, we shall focus on Plato's philosophy. Prior to Plato, philosophy consisted of either ethical theory (Socrates), practical debate about how to succeed in politics (the Sophists), or scientific theory about nature (the Pre-Socratics).

It is obvious that Plato's theory of form lies at the core of his conception of philosophy. His metaphysics is nothing more than his philosophy of form. His metaphysics is a significant advancement towards Aristotle's first logical system's theory of logical connection. The logical and architectonic quality of Plato's vision and the breadth of his debate served to identify such disciplines or studies as vital parts of philosophy today, even though he rejected the temptation to split philosophy into specialties like ethics, epistemology, and psychology. The majority of Plato's writings, especially his idealism, are metaphysical in nature. His idealism served as the intellectual foundation upon which all human conduct must be based. Therefore, according to Plato, man's metaphysical capacity is what allows him to grasp concepts in the realm of Form. He believed that the particular principle of philosophy was what might enable man to project and find concepts in the realm of Form. His most well-known conviction is that if one is not philosophical, one cannot transcend the senses. It is frequently held that the path of reason is the truth, and the way of the senses is the way of opinion. According to Omoregbe (1991:41),

Since non-philosophers cannot advance through dialectical argument to the point where they may reach the object of genuine knowledge, namely the essence or "form" of things, they can only have opinions and not true knowledge. Therefore, they stay at the level of opinion, whereas philosophers get to the level of knowledge through dialectical reasoning by learning the essences, "forms," or ideals of the objects that are the subject of knowledge.

Although Plato wants people to be rational, his view of metaphysics has evolved from metaphysics to rationalism. Rationalism is the philosophical tenet of Plato. He utilized his theory of knowledge to represent the idea that reason is a philosophical idea that may help a man arrange his life, actions, and feeling of duty in the community in order to promote peace and justice. Plato, on the other hand, believed that ontology produced philosophy. It is based on Plato's claim that only a philosopher can understand the essence of things. The point made by Omoregbe (1991:40) is valid:

where is the standard by which we assess something's aesthetic value? Where is the yardstick by which we evaluate something's goodness? To put it another way, where can we discover the essence of justice, equality, kindness, and man-who is neither black nor white, tall nor short, big nor skinny, but rather the perfection of man, the perfect nature of man, and who is

humanity itself- that is neither? In what Plato refers to as the world of forms, the realm of ideas, the ideal world, or the intelligible world, these are timeless, unchanging realities.

This point of view makes it very evident how important Plato's philosophy is to humanity. Every aspect of human interaction and engagement uses it. Through the education of philosophers who will guide the populace, Plato envisioned philosophy as a means of transforming human civilization. Before being deemed suitable to reign. This philosopher is thought to have undergone rigorous schooling and training. Omoregbe (1991:43) states:

The highest aspect of the soul is its rational aspect; it is the immortal and indestructible aspect that should govern mankind. Man differs from animals due to that aspect of the soul. Its primary purpose is to lead men and govern the other components.

In this way, Plato's philosophy is a tool for remaking society. On the basis of Plato, this power is the logical and metaphysical authority of a philosopher-king who will utilize it to rule and manage society and bring about social stability, peace, and justice.

Plato's Conception of Morality

For Plato, moral conceptions can only be understood in the context of social organization. The "good" in life is related to a person's place in life and how well they carry out their obligations in that position. Thus, a social organization that would be advantageous to everyone may emerge.

Plato believed that in order for people to be happy, they had a duty to uphold moral principles and lead morally upright lives. These virtues, however, could only be attained by a limited number of people who had the required knowledge and training and then shared it with others in the community.

Plato was determined to demonstrate that allowing irrational impulses to outweigh reason is a breach of what it means to be a real human. He held that immorality and unhappiness occur when illogic rules supreme. If this could be shown, it would be clear that morality is supported by human nature. It would be obvious that morality has its own reward and that wrongdoers unavoidably suffer as a result of their immorality. The strongest case for morality may be made using this line of thinking. Plato understood that the ordinary man would always act for his own best benefit rather than according to any external moral

norm since he could not rationally justify his actions to himself or to others. This perilous situation, which results in moral disorder, concerned Plato. According to Plato, morality must be grounded in objective reality and reconciled with self-interest, i.e., it must be demonstrated to be in the best interests of the person. However, Plato felt that since man is fundamentally rational, a civilized society should be structured, and a civilized life should adhere to rational principles. In the philosophy of Plato, the typical man mistook the fulfillment of his irrational impulses for his self-interest, but the genuine fulfillment of his true nature and self-interest lay in the rational management of those desires.

Therefore, Plato was determined to demonstrate that allowing irrational desires to prevail over reason is a breach of man's actual nature. He held that immorality and unhappiness occur when illogic rules supreme. If this could be shown, it would be clear that morality is supported by human nature. It would be obvious that morality has its own reward and that wrongdoers unavoidably suffer as a result of their immorality. The strongest case for morality may be made using this line of thinking.

The Moral Principles of Plato

Laws are often moral precepts, but moral precepts are also norms of moral behavior to which we should aspire. They serve as guidelines for appropriate human behavior by outlining specific actions or patterns of behavior that should be embraced. As Omoregbe (2001: 156) accurately highlights,

moral principles are exploitations of this moral law's imperative, adding further guidelines for what is good to do and what is evil to avoid. Positive and negative moral principles come in two varieties. The good points out what we should do and the mindset we should nurture and embrace. This promotes the development of virtues such as altruism, generosity, compassion, hospitality, respect for human life and dignity, and other virtues such as justice and honesty. The negative principle forbids some behaviors and methods of acting that are improper and need to be avoided since they are harmful to society and to oneself. It forbids acts like murder, theft, misappropriation of public finances, adultery, incest, bribery, fraud, enmity, and others.

Moral principles are an inherent component of nature and are relevant to all communities. For instance, no civilization in the world would consider murder to be righteous and justice to be evil. The moral code is universal and consistent with human nature. We must make a

distinction between the terms "universal" and "absolute" when referring to moral law principles. Morality is the pinnacle of virtues; upright conduct is what separates virtues from vices. Given that the two subscribe to separate Codes of Conduct, morality is defined in both a descriptive and normative sense. A Code of Conduct is a set of rules that are supported and followed by a society, a group, or, far less commonly, an individual. As a result, moral principles and etiquette standards are acknowledged in this depiction. Under some hypothetical circumstances, all reasonable people would agree on a code of conduct known as normative morality. To ensure fair play and peace among people, as well as to make each individual into a decent person in order to have a good society and to have a good connection with the force that created us, morality calls for good behavior. We must understand that morality is a human invention created to satisfy the requirements of a stable society. Happiness, according to Plato, is the highest virtue in life, and it can only be attained by a select few people who have the knowledge and training to pass it on to other members of society.

Plato's Philosophy and the leadership problem in Nigeria

Since its origin in antiquity, philosophy has served as a source of inspiration and ideas for societal change. This is true because philosophy, in its effort to address social issues, raises important questions about human experiences and offers logical solutions.

Is there a morality issue with the political process in modern Nigerian society? Is that the first thing that pops into one's head while examining the country's political system? Anything's ethical component is defined by the "laws that apply when they are observed; an activity's overall view and outcome will be one of order and decency. In the Nigerian political system, such ethical considerations are never brought up. In fact, the leadership crisis in Nigeria has become so acute that one might be forced to agree with Wambutda (1991:16) that "Nigeria is unquestionably in need of good leadership, for the constant change in the leadership in our history clearly testifies that we are a people groping in the dark, searching and yearning for a more reliable form of government- government that is fair, just, and caring enough to evoke spontaneous patriotism from the people."

Leadership in many of today's communities in Nigeria is a pollution of leadership skills, according to Ehusani (2002:210). What we have in place of leadership is a dishonorable act of spineless compliance and an adulteration of bravery and valor. What we have in place of leadership is an unkind demonstration of material haughtiness and a repugnant

reminder of group exploitation. Plato outlined an ideal state in his well-known work, *The Republic*. Plato made an effort to spell forth key rules for the establishment and upkeep of a robust and virile state based on justice in this conception of his ideal state. According to Plato, justice is achieved when each part of a system functions well without interfering with the operations of other parts. This is what is now known as the subsidiarity of responsibility principle, which John Locke further developed as the principle and theory of the division of powers much later. Three classes, which are comparable to the three aspects of the soul, make up his ideal society or utopia. These are the warriors (the courageous portion), the guardians (the sensible element), and the artisans (the competitive part).

In order to make society happy, Plato (1955:89-90) emphasizes that effective governance must incorporate openness, equity, and honesty, as well as a cool head, a sound intellect, a lover of the truth, and forthrightness. Plato defined leadership as having a clear mind, a calm demeanor, and excellent character. He would be public-spirited and wise if he were free from emotional attachments and financial considerations. Because the state exists to further the greatest and noblest objectives, good individuals will not agree to rule in exchange for money or honors. They do not want to be labeled as thieves or mercenaries for seeking payment in cash for doing government duties; they will not labor for honors because they are not ambitious; the worst punishment for refusing is to be controlled by someone worse than themselves. That, in my opinion, scares honorable men into accepting power, and they don't approach it as if it were something they would like to have.

It is noted by Bassey (2007: 16) that:

When there is effective government, protection, and production, a state is considered to be developed. A developed state is a good state, and a decent society is a product of a good state. Nigeria's underdevelopment is a result of poor leadership. Development cannot be accelerated by production, protection, or sound governing principles. Nigeria has clear-cut objectives for its socioeconomic and political growth at times.

Additionally, they have policies that are occasionally both lucidly stated and operationalized. However, it is uncommon to come across anything that can be classified as a plan.

Taylor (2010) argues that, because politicians in ancient civilizations were revered and respected not for their knowledge and virtue but for their ability to flatter people and fulfill their most primal needs and instincts, Plato places a higher emphasis on the attributes of leaders in a state. In order to achieve social order, unity, progress, and development, Nigerian society exists to promote moral virtue in both the national leadership and the populace. Under a democratic system of government, Nigerian leaders are required to obtain acquiescence from the populace without resorting to force. Democracy is defined in this context as "a system of government in which the majority of the people rule but the rights of the minority are protected" (Morrow, 1988:7). When there is effective government, protection, and production, a state is considered to be developed. A developed state is a good state, and a decent society is a product of a good state. Nigeria's underdevelopment is a result of poor leadership.

Development cannot be accelerated by production, protection, or sound governing principles. Nigeria has clear-cut objectives for its socioeconomic and political growth at times. Additionally, they have policies that are occasionally both lucidly stated and operationalized. But it is challenging to come across anything that can be legitimately referred to as a strategy (Bassey, 2007). Due to our leaders' political illiteracy in the game of politics, Nigeria has experienced a significant setback. The best course of action right now is to incorporate Plato's philosophy into Nigeria's political system in order to clarify the leadership issues the nation is now facing.

Conclusion

It is disappointing that Nigeria is experiencing a leadership crisis. The high prevalence of corruption, greed, and the unchecked hunger for material wealth, luxury, and grandeur might be attributed to the leaders' lack of moral principles. It is absolutely appalling and depressing that Nigeria, a nation endowed with the material and human resources necessary for national development, is now doomed to uncertainty, where extreme poverty, a high unemployment rate, a declining educational standard, preventable health crises, unresolved assassinations, insecurity, looting, wasteful spending of public funds, etc. are all commonplace due to poor leadership and corruption. Modern leadership approaches and styles in Nigerian culture have failed to reflect the nation's fundamental societal principles. Building an honest, accountable, and transparent culture among Nigerians is necessary. It's also important to promote a tradition of selflessness and patriotism in public service, as well as a culture where individuals may

successfully invest and raise their quality of life through hard work. Nigerian policymakers should make a fresh start by discarding old corruption patterns that have stymied economic growth. Nigeria demands leaders that value the well-being of their subjects' more than personal gain. Nigeria needs leaders who are more concerned about the future of their country's youth than the positions they will have in the future.

Leaders who feel responsible for the future are what we need. This nation requires leaders who care more about changing society than building their personal fortunes. It is important to choose leaders with the necessary governance understanding and training. Nigeria needs kind leaders who will create top-notch institutions and create laws that remove incentives for corruption. To provide effective services and achieve sustainable socioeconomic growth, Nigeria requires institutions that are robust and transparent. It is a given that no nation can grow strong institutions without the advantages of excellent and outstanding leadership. Therefore, through trustworthy democratic procedures, the electorate should choose good and outstanding leaders who will foster the climate required for establishing and maintaining strong institutions. Nigerians must acquire Plato's philosophy in order to change how they behave in society.

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