

## **PLATO'S THEORY OF JUSTICE AS A PANACEA TO POOR GOVERNANCE AND CORRUPTION PROBLEMS IN MODERN NIGERIAN SOCIETY**

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### **Abstract**

*Nigeria is a nation with enormous potential. This potential has, however, been marred by numerous issues. Due to dysfunctional leadership and widespread corruption, which are all signs of weak, underperforming, or non-performing governmental institutions, poor governance has become the norm in Nigerian society. Many of the advantages of democracy, including as good roads, piped water, rural electricity, and healthcare facilities, have yet to be enjoyed by many Nigerians as a result of the poor performance of our leaders. What part does Plato's theory of justice play in this research study's approach to the problem of governance and leadership? How to resolve the leadership crisis that is impairing good governance in Nigeria currently seems to be the key issue. The battle for good governance in Nigeria and Plato's theory of justice will be covered in this essay using an explanatory and analytical approach. The study will examine how leadership and power are structured in contemporary Nigerian politics. It will contend that the country's weak leadership has stymied its enormous political and economic potential. It would also assess Plato's philosophy academically, as well as issues of class and the support for his conception of justice. In the end, it would show whether the idea is feasible in a developing nation like Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Plato, Leadership, Corruption, Morality, Justice

### **Introduction**

The country Nigeria has suffered from a severe lack of capable, accountable leaders with moral character, vision, and integrity. It is simply depressing that Nigeria, a nation endowed with natural resources and human capital, is now doomed to uncertainty, where extreme poverty, a high unemployment rate, unresolved assassinations, looting and wasteful spending of public funds, etc., all as a result of corruption, have become the norm. One continues to wonder why a country that has been in self-government for the past 63 years blames its institutional decline and structural problems. It should be clear that Nigeria is only facing institutional issues. This has its origins in the style of governance Nigeria has experienced over the course of its sixty-three-year corporate history.

As a result, it is frequently perceived that the country's leadership is made up of unethical individuals who use their positions for their own benefit rather than the benefit of the nation. Despite how horrible things appeared to be, there is still hope. In order to do this, the Nigerian leadership class must completely transform its mentality, and ethical standards must prevail. To do this, Nigerians must adopt Plato's theory of justice due to the fact that no matter how perfect or excellent the constitution or other mechanisms for ensuring accountability and preventing corruption in the nation may be, all will be for nothing unless Nigeria's citizens and the ruling class demonstrate the political will toward abiding by and uphold them. The key contention of this essay is that good leadership in Nigerian politics can be attained through the use of Plato's theory of justice.

### **Nigeria's Poor Governance and Corruption Problems: An Overview**

How to deal with Nigeria's issues of bad governance and corruption appears to be the most critical matter at the moment. Due to inadequate leadership, Nigeria's problems with corruption and poor governance have never been fixed. Since its independence in 1960, it has had the unfortunate experience of being led by corrupt and bad leaders. Nigerians thought that embracing democratic rule would bring about a responsive and responsible political institution that would promote a government that is accountable and a government that would prevent corruption, but the opposite is true. This is because the military has been in power for twenty-four years now.

Given that corruption and poor leadership continue to be the most challenging issues in the Nigerian leadership system, the primary objective of this study is to determine how these issues might be resolved. There are at least three major areas of leadership failure in Nigeria, as described by Oyebola. According to him, they consist of "lack of brave and bold leadership, lack of moral ingredients in leadership, and premature exposure to leadership" (Oyebola, 1976:11).

Little is being done by Nigeria as a nation to prepare the next generation in leadership skills. For our nation's survival, nobody wants to take a chance. A select few are being sought out in order to demand their rights. Due to the inadequate leadership of our country, many Nigerians have yet to benefit from many of the benefits of democracy, including good roads, piped water, rural electrification, and healthcare facilities. These things don't matter to our leaders

at all. The leadership model is based on racial interests and individual wealth, according to Osuji, which has resulted in the well-known absence of a common national goal (Osuji, 2018:148).

If our leaders had recognized that their top priority was to take care of the people, not enrich their overseas accounts and Western mentors, millions of Nigerians would not be starving to death now. Unfortunately, all they care about is getting a master's degree and leaving the country, vying to see who can travel the most, and making preparations to take over an undeveloped state. As noted by (Bolarinwa & Osuji, 2022) the Nigerian government's politics have a leadership problem. It was succinctly stated as follows by Chinua Achebe in his book "The Trouble with Nigeria": "The problem with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership" (Achebe, 1983).

Oyebola did not hold back when he declared in "Blackman's Dilemma" that "very poor leadership appears to be the Blackman's greatest problem." Oyebola (1976:13). There is nothing inherently wrong with the land, the climate, the water, the air, or anything else in Nigeria, as stated by Achebe, who further defined it as the leaders' failure to accept responsibility. The issue in Nigeria is that its leaders are unable or unable to take on the demands of setting a strong personal example, one of the defining characteristics of effective leadership.

However, the most important immediate concerns for the majority of Nigerians continue to be the dire issues of daily existence. And how could such a pressing matter reach us without good administration and leadership? Without a question, Nigeria is gifted with an abundance of natural and human resources to solve its issues. The federal republic's problems can be solved and democratic governance strengthened by having a government that adheres to good governance principles and is, above all, answerable to the Nigerian people.

In this country of ours, the leadership crisis has caused more harm than good. It is hectic; there are men shouting, people screaming, and kids sobbing. The most perplexing and horrible aspect of all is that Nigeria already possesses everything needed to excel. Who is capable of leading the Nigerian people out of this prison? In their quest for shadows, our leaders have forgotten what true leadership is all about. We haven't really made a big contribution to how our government is organized or designed. As a result, Nigeria is inexorably and

gradually slipping towards mediocrity and inefficiency. Our leaders are now masters rather than subjects.

Ojukwu's warning 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) is completely disregarded.

### **Plato's Theory of Justice**

The right arrangement of people and things within a society is what justice is all about. Various viewpoints can be used to interpret the concept of justice. It also has comprehensive definitions. A few authors have defined justice as things like legitimacy, equity, and fairness. The super-conclusion of Thrasymachus, according to (Gerasimos, 2006: 128), that justice is in the interests of the ruling party, will never be proven to be true; but, for the majority of cases, what is initially believed to be justice turns out to be in the interests of the stronger side, which is a worrisome enough conclusion.

In accordance with Omoregbe, justice entails treating all people fairly or as equals. But the fundamental equality of all men is the cornerstone of justice. Ontological equality, not social equality or any other kind of equality is the type of equality at issue here. Men are not created equal, as we all know. However, all men are equal ontologically (i.e., as humans), and this idea forms the cornerstone of any discussion of justice. Plato's Republic aims to present a definition of the "just state" among other things. Plato explains how such a state would be run, who would rule it, how the children would be educated, and other details. He goes into great length, outlining concepts that the modern reader may occasionally find foolish, trivial, or even immoral. In *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Sir Karl Popper contends that Plato's ideal society is dictatorial, with little tolerance for variation and a perverse dedication to a Spartan-like regimentation of social life.

Justice is therefore the possession and exercise of one's own rights. Any form of surplus or deficit is unfair. The Platonic definition of justice seems plausible in this version. For instance, a thief is unjust because he desires to possess something that is not his. Because he is ignoring his proper responsibility, a doctor who does not care about curing his patients' illnesses can be accused of being unjust. By taking away the victim's rightful possession, his life, a murderer commits an unfair act. Generally speaking, unfair people either fail to recognize

the virtues and obligations appropriate to their circumstances in life or treat someone worse than he deserves. Similar to this, an unjust state is unable to fulfill its obligations. These duties of the state, in Plato's view, include creating the conditions that allow everyone to take care of their own needs for food, clothing, and shelter as well as their pursuit of the good.

The idea Plato held that everything in nature has a hierarchy and that nature is idealized as a huge harmony, a cosmic symphony, with each species and every individual performing a role, informs his view of justice. Anarchy, which is the most unnatural and unfair order of circumstances, is viewed in this perspective as the greatest sin. Therefore, the just state is hierarchical, just like in nature, with people being rated according to their abilities and categorically assigned to different social classes. There is a hierarchy within each person's soul as well; the spirited half is subordinate to the logical, which is subordinate to the appetitive. Nevertheless, every one of them is essential.

In order for a person's soul to be in harmony and not at odds with itself, reason should control that person, but appetites must also, to some measure, be paid attention to. A "moderate" and ordered condition of events is the inevitable outcome if every aspect of the soul performs its function effectively or appropriately. A well-ordered soul means that the virtuous person understands what justice is and acts in accordance with that understanding. He is aware of where he fits in the state, what his skills are, and how to use them. Along with following reason's rules, he practices moderation in whatever he does.

There are three main classes in Plato's ideal society, which correspond to the three facets of the soul. The city is governed by the guardians, who are philosophers; it is protected by the auxiliaries, who are warriors; and its lowest class is made up of the producers (farmers, artisans, etc.). The same education, which starts with music and literature and finishes with gymnastics, is shared by the guardians and auxiliaries. For educational purposes, the arts are restricted; for instance, any poetry poems that attribute detestable deeds to the gods are prohibited from being taught. Only poetry that feeds the students' developing qualities can be taught in the classroom.

In a same vein, guardians are forbidden from learning musical genres that seem depressing, delicate, or feminine. This appears to leave only the Dorian and Phrygian modes. Because they encourage bravery, restraint, and peaceful living,

Socrates finds them to be acceptable. Socrates believes that some poetic meters and instruments, like the flute, are associated with vice and should be avoided in the ideal city-state.

Therefore, it is true that living in Plato's ideal society would be similar to living in a totalitarian one. Socrates proposes harsh legal regulations. One occupation is permitted per person, and it must be the one for which they are naturally most qualified. The line between the public and the private, it seems, is nonexistent. Excess and vice of any type are highly prohibited, whereas only behavior that promotes temperate life is praised. Because both extremes promote vice, neither wealth nor poverty are acceptable.

For the typical liberal, Plato's views on women and children might be even more terrifying. Through Socrates, he makes the case that the conventional family structure should be abandoned. Men should get along well with women and produce kids so that nobody has overwhelming feelings for one lady in particular or knows who his children are. Even mothers are not permitted to know the identities of their offspring. After birth, their babies are taken away from them, and as long as they have milk, they are given new babies to nurse.

To the modern liberal democratic world, the Platonic worldview is rather alien. Our culture is dynamic, free, and occasionally chaotic; inflexible hierarchies are hardly ever present. Any idea that smacks of a caste system is categorically condemned. People are not valued based on their innate worth or their contribution to society. We don't believe in drawing parallels between nature and society, and we don't even consider the world to be harmonious in the best case scenario. Although we admire order, we do not regard it as the highest ideal.

Instead of admiring those who are content with who they are or practice moderation, we idolize ambitious, driven individuals. In general, our culture lays minimal emphasis on a particular ideal and instead chooses to condemn behaviors that obstruct others from pursuing their pleasure. However, Plato would view our ideal condition as debauched, chaotic, and unjust. Class hierarchy is central to Plato's theory of justice. Plato attempts to utilize the example of the soul to describe his view of justice in society while attempting to explain his concept of justice.

The three components of the soul with regard to Plato are the rational (reason), the spiritual (higher emotions), and the appetitive (lower emotions). And the general harmony that the soul experiences when all of its components are working properly is the result of that justice in the soul. It means that each component must perform its function.

As Wolin (1960: 71) rightly noted:

Justice in the state was the ability of the three social classes- ruler, warning, and producer- to carry out their respective roles of production, defense, and deliberation independently of one another. "One class, one duty; one man, one work" is how justice was defined. Plato compared the three social classes to the component of the human soul. There was a social class for every soul. The dominating element in each person's soul would be recognized as their unique talent, and this element would be organized into coherent classes in a just society. The guardian class consisted of the rulers and troops.

The comparison of justice in the soul to justice in society served as the starting point for this analysis. Plato understood justice in society as the social harmony that emerges from each class in society carrying out its function properly under the control of the ruling class, which is to say that he came to this conclusion from the comparison. The governing class, the military, and the populace are the guardians, auxiliaries, and artisans, respectively, much as he divides the soul into these three categories. The role of the ruling class is to direct and rule the state as a whole and to maintain control over the other two classes.

The artisans and the people have the responsibility of meeting the material and financial demands of the state, while the auxiliaries have the responsibility of defending the state. Each class should effectively play its part without interfering with the parts of other classes. In this way, the state will be just, just as the soul will be harmonious when each component of the soul is working properly. Likewise, when each of these classes effectively does its duty, there will be peace and fairness in society. Using the words of Omoregbe (1991),

The tasks of each class should be carried out effectively without interfering with those of other classes. Justice will then be the harmony that results from each fulfilling its duty effectively and without interfering with the roles of other classes, and there will be justice in the state as a result. In this

way, justice will exist in the state, just as it does in the soul, where justice is the harmony that arises from each of the three classes doing their respective roles in harmony. Plato wants us to understand that a society advances when certain aspects of the soul are performing their duties correctly.

Plato foresaw the requirement for cooperation amongst the members of society when each individual fulfills his or her social responsibility. Working in a field where one is psychologically fit is necessary. When one does his obligation, he does so fairly and without interfering with others as they perform their own duties. This notion of justice is allegedly responsible for societal inequity. This is entirely accurate because not all men are created equal in society. This disparity can be seen in the areas of intelligence, diligence, and zeal. Despite the fact that we are all unique, we should be aware that each of us has some potential that can be unlocked.

From Karl Popper's perspective, who founded his definition of justice on a humanitarian meaning, it is clear what the issue with this concept of justice is. Plato's political philosophy, according to Karl Popper, was not just pure totalitarianism but also anti-humanism. He further implied that Plato's political agenda was not only morally similar to totalitarianism but also a form of it. The Republic's portrayal of his perspective on justice was interpreted as being unfavorable. Because he felt that the state is smart and has sound judgment, Plato only used the phrase in *The Republic* to refer to actions that are in the best interest of the state.

The fundamental idea of justice is the upholding of strict class rules. He said that everyone should engage in the work that best suits their nature. According to Madntyre (1971:34), Thrasymachus himself clarifies the idea of justice, saying that he does not believe that "just" means "what is in the interest of the stronger," but rather that, historically speaking, rulers and ruling classes invented the idea and the standards of justice for their own purposes and that it is actually more profitable to act in an unjust manner than in a just one.

Fortunately, Plato truly focused on class opportunity since he believed that talent determines class; he said, "No individual is seen as born for a certain position; no post can be bought by a person from a privileged class. People are, however, given jobs based on their talents in an environment of equal opportunity. The



fact that Plato made an open remark about class opportunities is supported by this viewpoint. He is not against people. When you are a member of a class, carry out your vocation. In fact, if such a person is given the chance to change his situation, he can migrate to a different class. He advocated against letting someone join a group to which they were not appropriate.

As a result, his idea of justice, which is based on a rigorous division of labor and class rule, is perceived as a class opportunity where participation is based on talent. Plato's idea of fairness is good because it encourages involvement from all citizens, regardless of class. Unity is crucial for achieving social growth, as taught by Plato. It is a tool for fostering political progress and stability. His view of justice can lead to positive national growth.

### **Plato's types of justice**

Contrary to Aristotle, Plato had never distinguished between other types of justice or provided any of his own, but from his ideas of justice, certain concepts can be taken to characterize his particular brand of justice. In accordance Plato, fairness is a feature of human society. His justification for justice as a duty, a virtue, and a component of societal harmony will be separated into three parts:

1. Justice is a class obligation.
2. Justice is a virtue.
3. Justice is social harmony.

### **Justice as a Class Obligation**

Class rules-based duties create this kind of justice. The exact division of labor is what it is known as. Based on Plato, justice will exist once every member of each class fulfills their obligations. He frequently is aware of his talent. Everyone should behave in accordance with their innate abilities and proclivities, according to him. Since everyone cannot be held to the same standard, each person must fulfill his or her obligations in accordance with the class to which they belong. According to Madntyre (1971: 36),

The notion that one man is better suited to one task and that this kind of labor division is always the optimum form is not unquestionably erroneous. However, the notion that men are naturally divided up into individuals who are best suited for each of these functions is unquestionably false. Duty is a feeling of obligation in class. It teaches people how to live morally upright lives.

We must perform the tasks that we believe are worth our best efforts. Only by doing this can we make a positive impact on society? Justice as a class duty shows that justice is possible if we merely carry out our societal duties. By forgoing what we should be doing for society, we must not act unjustly. As a result, attending class is a right action. It embodies a strong sense of patriotism. It seeks to clarify social ethics and engagement in a social setting. Having to attend class will help prevent societal corruption. The majority of people contribute to corruption in society by failing to do what is morally and legally required. There is no feeling of responsibility, discipline, or accountability in their services. As a result, if there is a lack of accountability, discipline, and a feeling of duty in society, there is no need to develop these traits.

It follows that duty and obligation will be treated unfairly. His historical philosophy and republican doctrine are reflected in this thought. One could argue that the principle of specialization is class obligation. (Satine, 1973: 52) The workers who produce and the guardians, who are further divided into the soldiers and the rulers, or the philosopher king, if he is a single ruler, are the first two classes. The guardians, in turn, are divided into the soldiers and the rulers, though not as sharply. The viewpoint mentioned above suggests that when one guy performs one thing that comes naturally to him, does it at the correct moment, and leaves the other things, all things are produced more abundantly, easily, and with higher quality. According to some, this deed brings justice to society.

### **Justice as virtue**

The knowledge of good is where the aspect of justice starts. A philosopher king, according to Plato, is someone who possesses virtue because he is aware of what is right. He advocated knowledge as a virtue. A person is considered knowledgeable if they have upheld virtue-equating traits through their knowledge of the good. A moral person acts in a way that is consistent with his knowledge of the right and good. Satine (1973:53) argued further that Plato's master's teaching that virtue is knowledge served as the inspiration for the republic's core principles.

The idea was strengthened and crystallized by his unsuccessful political career, which led to the establishment of the academy with the goal of instilling the spirit of real knowledge as a cornerstone of philosophic statecraft. However, the claim that knowledge is virtue, that there is an objective good to know, and that

this good may actually be discovered by reasoned and logical investigation rather than through intuition, conjecture, or luck. Plato, like Socrates, proposed that virtue and knowledge are interchangeable based on what was stated above. Plato really concurs with Socrates in saying that happiness is the ultimate aim of man, and that the only path to it is virtue.

Without virtuous behavior, no type of enjoyment is possible. Only virtuous men are supposedly happy. Happiness seems to be a legitimate byproduct of living a moral life. Plato argued that if the virtues are effective in carrying out what each component should, then we shall achieve justice. As Omoregbe (1991:44) correctly notes, "a result, Plato made each of the three elements of the soul suited for one of the four cardinal virtues of the Greeks, with justice being the harmony that arises from each part performing its role as it should".

### **Justice as social harmony**

A fair social experience is what we mean by "social harmony." Social stability and peace are felt when there is social concord. It is rooted in social responsibility and doing duties correctly. It is a way for people to socially commit to doing their civic responsibility. In order for social harmony to arise from justice, there must first be peace and social responsibility on the part of each individual to carry out their duty properly. Everyone would participate in carrying out a socially necessary function, which would reduce- if not entirely eliminate- the likelihood of becoming a free rider or a shirker, as Wolin (1960:69) correctly noted. Second, society was pictured as a cohesive, well-organized whole that valued the contributions and abilities of each individual.

Plato, on the other hand, associated justice with peace in the spirit or community. As a result, harmony comes from its efficiency. Social harmony is essential for a society's development. Through a sense of responsibility, tolerance, unity, respecting one another's diversity, integration, and love, we start to observe more societal peace. Social harmony makes civilization more productive and prepared to handle current global changes. Political change and instability are stopped by social peace. Even while change is required, it is most desired for societal continuity. If there are no good intentions in ethical disagreements, we may have a serious problem with harmony.

The struggle for power based on our ethnicity and in accordance with political party impulses and failing to perform one's duties can occasionally be a source of

societal unrest if the mind is prejudiced or lacks social integration. Political governments are anticipated to offer social services, jobs, a positive social atmosphere, manpower, and youth empowerment programs that will enable the youth to develop their creative output, which will in turn create an enabling climate where harmony is valued equally to justice. Negation, a component of societal harmony and fairness, leads to political violence, which undermines such ideals.

The Middle Eastern youth revolt, which affected Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, and other regions of Asia, was a kind of political violence against the social dysfunction, social depression, economic depression, and lack of political action in those nations. Even though societal harmony was on vacation, there is a call for justice that will go and bring it back. As Wolin (1960:127) continued, "In what justice is: on the assumption that in each society the laws determine what justice in that society is; the method consists of an empirical investigation of the goals of the laws and the motives of legislation in each society, then generalizing from the results to what is common to the justice of all societies."

### **Plato's Argument for Justice**

On his defense of the ideal state, Plato bases his defense of justice. According to Plato, justice is the cornerstone of a perfect society. His human psychology served as the foundation for his ideal state analogy. His assessment of individual psychology makes sense in the context of human psychology. Plato believed that a person is healthy if every aspect of their soul works in harmony and that a man is physically healthy if he is free from illness. The rational element and the appetitive element, two of the three divisions of the human soul, were used to deepen his research of human psychology.

A perfect society would therefore consist of three classes: the king to govern it, the warrior to protect it, and all other residents to provide for basic needs like food and shelter. Each of these categories thus represents a different way in which the particular soul is divided. The class system, or division of the classes, under which a philosopher's king reigns, is at the heart of Plato's justification for justice. He must study math, geometry, astronomy, and other relevant sciences in addition to philosophy (dialectics). He needs to learn how to rule, be given the necessary training, and become the social ruler. Plato concurred that acquiring the art of ruling was a prerequisite for becoming a ruler.

He added that the verdict only applied to the select few who successfully completed the program. They must be given unrestricted authority. A monarch needs to have moral wisdom. Knowing right from wrong will motivate him to act morally. Despite this, Wolin (1960:59) acknowledges that Plato's idea of the ideal state stems from the idea that the philosopher has the knowledge, intelligence, and training necessary to serve as a leader. It was indicated by the numerous allusions to the immorality of the soul that philosophy was the only way to heaven. Since the goal of ruling was to ensure everyone's general welfare, it required the same talents and credentials as any other task. The fundamental tenet of Plato's reasoning is that the administrator, or philosopher king, who is in charge of society duties, is the one who will administer justice. In epistemic and ethical circumstances that are based on knowledge and morals, the philosopher king is required to advance justice. The idea is that the monarch must be aristocratic and repressive.

### **Plato's Conception of Morality**

For Plato, social structures are the only context in which moral conceptions can be understood. The "good" in life is determined by one's place in life and how well they carry out their obligations in it. As a result, a social system that would be advantageous to everyone could emerge. Plato came to the conclusion that the duty to be moral and to live a life consistent with those virtues was a prerequisite for happiness. However, these virtues could only be attained by a select few people who had the required knowledge and training and subsequently transmitted them to others in society. In a wise observation by Hospers (1972: 179):

All moral men are happy, which appears to be demonstrably incorrect, and all immoral men are miserable, which has some degree of plausibility, are two independent propositions that are present in this sentence. Plato was determined to demonstrate that allowing irrational desires to outweigh reason is a violation of what it is to be a human. He thought that immorality and unhappiness arose from the supremacy of the irrational.

If this could be proved, it would be clear that morality is supported by human nature. It would be evident that morality has its own rewards whereas wrongdoers naturally suffer as a result of their immorality. The strongest case for morality may be made using this line of thinking. Plato understood that the

average man would always act in 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. According to Plato, this was a perilous situation that resulted in moral anarchy. According to Plato, morality must be grounded in reality and reconciled with self-interest; that is, it must be demonstrated to be in the best interests of the individual. However, Plato felt that because of man's fundamental nature of reason, civilization must be constructed and lived according to the rules of reason.

In accordance with Plato, the ordinary man incorrectly associated his self-interest with the fulfilment of his irrational desires, whereas man's actual self-interest and fulfillment of his true nature rested in the control of the irrational desires by reason. Therefore, Plato was determined to demonstrate that allowing irrational desires to rule reason is a violation of what it is to be a man. He thought that immorality and unhappiness arose from the supremacy of the irrational. If this could be proved, it would be clear that morality is supported by human nature. This would be unquestionable 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's Philosophy and Poor Governance with Leadership Problems in Nigeria**

Philosophy has been a source of inspiration and concepts for societal transformation since its beginnings in antiquity. This is true because philosophy, in an effort to solve social challenges, poses crucial inquiries about the nature of human experience and suggests logical answers. Does the political system in contemporary Nigerian society have a moral flaw? Does that come to mind when one considers the nation's political system? The laws that apply when they are observed define anything's ethical component; an activity's overall perspective and end will be one of order and decency. Such moral considerations are never brought up in the Nigerian political system.

Indeed, Nigeria's leadership crisis is so severe that one might be compelled to concur 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." According to Ehusani (2002:210), leadership in many of today's communities in Nigeria is a

contamination of leadership abilities. Instead of leadership, we have a disgraceful display of cowardly obedience and a falsification of bravery and valor.

Instead of good leadership, we have a cruel example of material haughtiness and a repulsive reminder of group exploitation. In his well-known classic, *The Republic*, Plato described a perfect polity. In this idea of his ideal state, Plato made an effort to lay forth the fundamental principles for the construction and maintenance of a strong and virile state founded on fairness. According to Plato, justice is attained when each component of a system operates effectively without interfering with the activities of other components. This is what is now known as the subsidiarity of responsibility principle, which John Locke later expanded upon as the idea and theory of the division of powers.

His ideal society, or utopia, consists of three classes that are equivalent to the three facets of the soul. They are the guardians (the prudent component), the artisans (the competitive component), and the warriors (the fearless component). Plato (1955:89-90) argues that transparency, equity, and honesty, as well as a level head, a sound intellect, a lover of the truth, and forthrightness, are necessary components of efficient administration in order to make society happy. For Plato, being a leader meant having a clear head, a composed attitude, and exemplary moral integrity. If he were unencumbered by sentimental ties and material concerns, he would be charitable and smart.

Good people will not consent to rule in exchange for rewards like money or honors since the state exists to serve the highest and noblest goals. They don't want to be associated with mercenaries or criminals because they want remuneration in cash for performing official tasks; they won't work for honors because they aren't ambitious; and the harshest punishment for refusing is being subordinated to someone worse than themselves. I believe that intimidates honorable guys into accepting power, and they don't approach it as if it were something they would wish to have. According to Bassey (2007: 16),

A state is deemed developed when there is efficient production, protection, and government. A decent society is a byproduct of a developed state, which is a good state. Nigeria's lack of progress is due to ineffective leadership. Production, protection, or sound governing principles cannot speed up development. Nigeria occasionally has

specific goals for its economic and political development. They also occasionally have policies that are both well-articulated and operationalized. It is rare to find anything that can be categorized as a plan, though.

According to Taylor (2010), Plato places a greater focus on the qualities of state leaders since they were adored and respected in ancient civilizations for their capacity to flatter people and satisfy their most basic desires and instincts rather than for their knowledge and virtue. The Nigerian society exists to encourage moral virtue in both the national leadership and the public in order to create social order, unity, growth, and development. Nigerian leaders must win the people's consent without using force in accordance with the democratic system of government in place there. As stated by Morrow (1988:7), a democracy is "a system of government in which the rights of the minority are protected but the rights of the majority are maintained."

A state is deemed to be developed when there is efficient government, protection, and production. A decent society is a byproduct of a good state, which is a developed nation. A lack of effective leadership is to blame for Nigeria's underdevelopment and dysfunctional government. Production, safeguards, or ethical controlling principles cannot speed up development. For its socioeconomic and political development, Nigeria occasionally has definite goals. Additionally, they occasionally have policies that are clearly specified and operationalized. However, it is difficult to locate anything that can be rightfully referred to as a plan (Bassey, 2007). Nigeria experienced a serious setback as a result of the political ignorance of our leaders. Plato's philosophy should currently be incorporated into Nigeria's political structure in order to make sense of the current leadership problems the country is experiencing.

### **Evaluation of Poor Governance and Corruption Problems in Modern Society**

As a consequence of bad leadership, issues with poor governance and corruption have never been fixed. Since gaining independence in 1960, it has had the unfortunate experience of being led by dishonest, illiterate, and unscrupulous officials. Nigeria's reputation as a poor product has changed as a result of corruption. And just like a defective product, it would be quite challenging to persuade any potential customers to buy Nigeria in its current dire condition. No number of catchy advertising slogans can make a bad product appealing, and the



same is true of attempts to improve Nigeria's negative reputation and turn it into a "great society."

It is clear from our study of Nigeria's poor governance and corruption so far that the country's problems extend beyond corruption to weak leadership caused by moral slackness. Since 1960, with the full assistance of the political leadership class, corruption in Nigeria has reached an unthinkable height and is now taking on a pandemic magnitude. Since people without a history are like a tree without roots, it is obvious that as a nation we cannot move forward without taking a look back. It is undeniable that there has never been a time in Nigerian history when exceptional leadership flourished.

The country has suffered from a severe shortage of capable, accountable leaders who also possess integrity, vision, and high moral standards. It is simply depressing that Nigeria, a nation endowed with natural resources and human capital, is currently surrounded by uncertainty, where extreme poverty, a high unemployment rate, unresolved murders, looting and waste of public funds, etc., all as a result of corruption, have become the norm. Despite how dire things appeared to be, they can be fixed. The Nigerian leadership class needs to completely transform its mindset in order to do this. Additionally, there needs to be an exceptionally high standard of conduct.

To do this, Nigerians must adopt Plato's philosophy because, no matter how perfect or excellent the constitution or other tools for ensuring accountability and preventing corruption in the country may be, all will be for naught unless the people of Nigeria and the leadership class demonstrate the political will to abide by and enforce them.

### **Conclusion**

That Nigeria is going through a leadership crisis is unfortunate. The lack of moral standards among the leaders may be responsible for the high prevalence of corruption, greed, and the unbridled desire for material prosperity, luxury, and grandeur. It is horrifying and depressing that Nigeria, a country with the human and material resources required for national development, is now doomed to uncertainty, where extreme poverty, a high unemployment rate, a declining educational standard, avoidable health crises, unresolved assassinations, insecurity, looting, wasteful spending of public funds, etc. are all commonplace due to poor leadership and corruption.

The core cultural values of Nigerian culture have not been adequately reflected by contemporary leadership approaches and styles. It is essential to cultivate an honest, responsible, and transparent culture among Nigerians. Promote a culture where people may successfully invest and improve their quality of life through hard labor, as well as a tradition of selflessness and patriotism in public service. Nigerian officials ought to start again by getting rid of the old corruption habits that have hampered economic development. Nigeria needs leaders that place their people's welfare above personal wealth. Leaders in Nigeria are needed that care more for the future of the youth of their nation than the positions they will hold in the future.

We require leaders who take ownership of the future. Leaders in our country must be more concerned with transforming society than with enhancing their own wealth. The right leaders must have the knowledge and experience in governing. Nigeria needs compassionate leaders who will establish first-rate institutions and draft legislation removing incentives for corruption. Nigeria needs institutions that are solid and open to the public if it is to deliver efficient services and have sustained socioeconomic growth. It is a certainty that no country can have robust institutions without the benefits of outstanding and exceptional leadership. Therefore, the voters should select good and exceptional leaders through trustworthy democratic processes who will create and preserve strong institutions. To alter their social behavior, Nigerians must learn the teachings of Plato's theory of justice.

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