



**A DISCOURSE ON PLATO'S CONCEPTION OF JUSTICE AS A PANACEA TO THE  
CHALLENGES OF CORRUPT PRACTICES AND LEADERSHIP CRISES IN  
CONTEMPORARY NIGERIAN SOCIETY**

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**Abstract**

*Nigeria is a nation full of potential. However, this development potential has been hampered by a number of issues. Due to the high rates of corruption and dysfunctional leadership in Nigerian culture, which are both signs of weak, ineffective, and non-functioning institutional systems of government, terrible governance has become the norm. In light of our leaders' dismal performance, a large number of Nigerians have not yet had the chance to experience many of the advantages of democracy, including good roads, piped water, rural electricity, and medical facilities. In what ways does this study apply Plato's notion of justice to the problem of leadership and governance? The primary issue that seems to be affecting Nigeria's governance at the moment is how to handle the leadership crisis. Using Plato's idea of justice as a starting point, this essay will explain and analyze the struggle for good governance in Nigeria. We'll look into the leadership and power structures in contemporary Nigerian politics. It will contend that the country's weak leadership has prevented it from realizing its enormous political and economic potential. Plato's philosophy would be assessed from an intellectual perspective in addition to class issues and the evidence supporting his conception of justice. The final goal would be to show whether the idea could be implemented in a developing nation like Nigeria.*

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

**Introduction**

Nigeria has suffered greatly from a serious shortage of qualified, dependable leaders with moral integrity, vision, and character. It's just sad that Nigeria, a country rich in natural resources and human capital, is doomed to an uncertain future where rampant poverty, high unemployment, unsolved murders, public fund looting and waste, etc., are all commonplace due to corruption. One still wonders why a nation that has enjoyed self-government for the previous 63 years attributes its structural issues and institutional deterioration. It ought to be evident that Nigeria is only dealing with institutional problems. This stems from the type of government Nigeria has had over the sixty-four years that it has been a country. In light of this, the public often believes



that the nation's leaders are a group of dishonest people who exploit their power for personal gain rather than the good of the country. There is still hope, no matter how bad things seem to be. The Nigerian leadership class needs to drastically change its mindset to do this, and moral principles must be upheld.

To achieve this, Nigerians must embrace Plato's theory of justice because, regardless of how good or flawless the country's constitution or other mechanisms for guaranteeing accountability and preventing corruption may be, they will all be for naught unless the people of Nigeria and the ruling class show a political will to uphold and adhere to them. The main argument of this essay is that good leadership in Nigerian politics can be achieved by applying Plato's theory of justice.

### **Corrupt Practices and Leadership Crises in Nigerian Society: An Overview**

Currently, it seems that the most pressing issue is how to address Nigeria's problems with corruption and poor government. Nigeria has never been able to resolve its issues with corruption and bad governance because of insufficient leadership. Its sad experience since gaining independence in 1960 has been being under the leadership of bad and unscrupulous people. Contrary to what Nigerians considered, adopting democratic governance would result in a responsible and responsive political establishment that would support an accountable and anti-corruption government. This is a result of the military's twenty-four-year rule. This study's main goal is to ascertain potential solutions for the two most difficult problems facing Nigeria's leadership system- corruption and ineffective leadership. According to Oyebola, there are at least three main areas where leadership in Nigeria has failed. "Lack of brave and bold leadership, lack of moral ingredients in leadership, and premature exposure to leadership" are among them, in his words (Oyebola, 1976:11).

Nigeria is not doing anything as a country to develop the leadership abilities of the future generation. Nobody wants to take a chance with our country's survival. To demand their rights, a chosen few are being sought. Numerous Nigerians are still deprived of numerous democratic amenities, such as piped water, decent roads, rural electrification, and access to healthcare, because of our nation's poor leadership. Our leaders couldn't care less about these matters. Osuji claims that the leadership paradigm is predicated on individual wealth and racial interests, which has led to the well-known lack of a shared national objective (Osuji, 2018:148). Millions of Nigerians would not be starving to death right now if our politicians had realized that helping the people should come first, rather than enriching their foreign bank accounts and Western mentors. Unfortunately, their only priorities are obtaining a master's degree, leaving the nation, competing to see who can go the furthest, and preparing to annex an impoverished state. In the words of Bolarinwa & Osuji (2022), there is a leadership issue with the politics of the Nigerian government. Chinua Achebe put it concisely in his book "The Trouble with Nigeria":

The problem with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership" (Achebe, 1983). When Oyebola stated in "Blackman's Dilemma" that "the Blackman's greatest problem appears to be very poor leadership," he did not mince words. Oyebola (1976:13). According to Achebe, who



went on to characterize it as the leaders' unwillingness to take accountability, there is nothing fundamentally wrong with the land, the climate, the water, the air, or anything else in Nigeria. One problem with Nigerian leadership is that its leaders are not up to the expectations of leading by example, which is a crucial component of good leadership. Nonetheless, for the bulk of Nigerians, the pressing problems of everyday life remain their top priorities. And without sound management and leadership, how could a situation this urgent reach us? Without a doubt, Nigeria is endowed with an abundance of human and natural resources to address its problems. An administration that upholds good governance principles and is, above all, responsive to the Nigerian people may resolve the issues facing the federal republic and promote democratic governance.

The leadership crisis in our nation has done more harm than good. It's frantic; men are complaining, people are screaming, children are weeping. The worst and most confusing part of it all is that Nigeria already has everything it needs to succeed. Who can guide the people of Nigeria out of this prison? Our leaders have lost sight of the fundamentals of good leadership in their pursuit of shadows. Our contribution to the structure and operation of our government has been little. Nigeria's decline towards mediocrity and inefficiency is therefore unbeatable and steady. Instead of being subjects, our leaders are now masters. The advice given by Ojukwu, which states 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 totally rejected.

### **Plato's Conception of Justice**

Justice is about the proper distribution of people and things within a society. The concept of justice can be interpreted from a variety of angles. It also provides thorough definitions. Authors have defined justice in terms of legitimacy, equity, and fairness. The super-conclusion of Thrasymachus, according to (Gerasimos, 2006: 128), that justice serves the interests of the ruling party, will never be demonstrated to be accurate; however, in most cases, what is initially thought to be justice serves the interests of the stronger side, which is a conclusion that is concerning enough. Justice, according to Omoregbe, is treating everyone equally or fairly. However, the foundation of justice is the inherent equality of all men. The form of equality at stake here is ontological equality, not social equality or any other kind of equality. We all know that men are not created equal. All men, however, are equal ontologically, or as humans, and any discussion of justice must begin with this premise. One of the main goals of Plato's Republic is to define what a "just state" is. Plato describes in detail the people who would govern such a state, how the children would be taught, and other aspects of how it would be administered.

He continues on and on, explaining ideas that any regular reader today could find inconsequential, silly, or even unethical at times. As stated by Sir Karl Popper's argument in *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Plato's ideal society is authoritarian, has little room for variation, and is crazy about regimenting social life in a way that is akin to Sparta. So, having one's own rights and using them is justice. Injustice exists when there is an excess or a deficit. This version appears to support the Platonic definition of justice. If a thief wants to



have something that is not his, for example, it makes him unjust. A physician who is unconcerned with healing his patients' ailments may be charged with injustice since he is neglecting his rightful duties. Murderers commit an injustice when they rob a victim of his life, which is his legitimate possession. Generally speaking, unfair people either treat someone less well than they should or fail to see the obligations and virtues that are appropriate for their situation. Like this, an unjust state cannot carry out its responsibilities. According to the philosophy of Plato, these responsibilities of the state encompass establishing the framework that enables each person to attend to their individual requirements for clothes, food, and shelter, in addition to pursuing the greater good. Plato's conception of justice is based on the notion that everything in nature has a hierarchy and that nature is idealized as a vast harmony, a cosmic symphony, in which every species and person plays a part. According to this viewpoint, anarchy is the biggest evil since it is the most unfair and unnatural state of affairs.

As a result, the just state is hierarchical, just as nature is, with individuals classified into distinct social classes based on their abilities and a hierarchy within each individual's soul; the spirited half is subordinate to the logical, which is subordinate to the appetitive, but all of them are necessary. Reason should govern an individual for their soul to be in harmony and not at odds with itself, but appetites must also be attended to, at least in part. If all of the elements of the soul fulfill their respective roles, then a "moderate" and ordered state of affairs will inevitably result. A moral person who behaves in accordance with their idea of justice is said to have a well-ordered soul. He knows his place in the state, his abilities, and how to apply them. He not only abides by the laws of reason, but he also exercises moderation in all that he does. In Plato's ideal society, three main classes represent the three aspects of the soul. The city is ruled by the guardians, who are philosophers; it is safeguarded 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 continues with gymnastics, is shared by the guardians and auxiliaries. The arts are restricted for educational purposes; for example, poetry that attributes deplorable deeds to the gods cannot be taught. Poetry that fosters pupils' growing traits is the only kind that should be taught in the school. In a similar spirit, parents are not allowed to teach their children any musical genres that appear gloomy, delicate, or feminine. It seems that the Dorian and Phrygian modes are the only ones left. Socrates deems them acceptable since they promote bravery, moderation, and a peaceful way of life. According to Socrates, the flute and other lyrical meters are connected to vice and ought to be avoided in the perfect city-state.

Consequently, it is accurate to say that residing in Plato's ideal society would be comparable to doing so in a totalitarian one. Socrates suggests strict laws. Each person is only allowed to work in one occupation, and that one must be the one for which they are best suited by nature. It appears as though there is no distinction between the public and private spheres. Any form of excess or vice is strongly discouraged, while only actions that support a moderate lifestyle are commended. Poverty and money are unacceptable since they both encourage vice. Perhaps even more frightening to the average liberal are Plato's views on women and children. He advocates for the dissolution of the traditional family unit through Socrates. Men should get along well



with women and have children to prevent anyone from developing intense affections for a single woman or from knowing the identity of their offspring. It is forbidden for even mothers to know who their children are. After giving birth, their babies are taken from them, and they are given other babies to breastfeed as long as they have milk. The Platonic worldview is somewhat foreign to today's free democratic societies. There are very few rigid hierarchies in our culture, which is dynamic, free, and occasionally chaotic. We strongly oppose any concept that may somewhat hint at a caste system. People's contributions to society and inherent worth are not factors that determine their value. In addition to not thinking that, in the best of circumstances, the world is harmonious, we reject the idea that society and nature can be compared. We don't think of order as the ultimate ideal, even if we respect it.

We idolize ambitious, driven people, rather than appreciating those who are content with who they are or who exercise moderation. Our culture, for the most part, prefers to criticize actions that prevent other people from enjoying themselves and places little emphasis on any one ideal. But Plato would see our ideal state as chaotic, depraved, and unfair. The basis of Plato's idea of justice is class hierarchy. In an attempt to clarify his understanding of justice, Plato uses the example of the soul to explain how he views social justice. For Plato, the soul consists of three elements: the appetitive (lower emotions), the spiritual (higher emotions), and the rational (reason). And it is this justice in the soul that leads to the overall harmony it feels when every one of its parts is functioning as it should. This implies that every element needs to carry out its specific purpose.

Justice in the state was the ability of the three social classes—ruler, warrior, and producer—to carry out their respective tasks of production, defense, and deliberation independently of one another, as Wolin (1960: 71) correctly pointed out. Justice was characterized as "one man, one work; one class, one duty." The three social classes were compared by Plato to a facet of the human spirit. Every soul belonged to a certain social class. Each person's special gift would be acknowledged as the prevailing element in their soul, and in a just society, this element would be arranged into cohesive classes. The rulers and soldiers made up the guardian class. The foundation of this study was the analogy between justice in the soul and justice in society. In other words, Plato deduced this understanding of justice from the comparison: justice in society is the social harmony that results from every class in society performing its duties under the direction of the governing class. Similar to how he splits the soul into these three categories, the guardians, artisans, and populous are the ruling class, the military, and the general public, respectively. In addition to overseeing the other two classes, the ruling class's duties include directing and governing the state as a whole.

It is the duty of the artisans and the populace to supply the state's material and financial needs, and it is the auxiliaries' duty to protect the state. Without affecting the roles of other classes, each class should efficiently fulfill its own role. The state will be just in this way, just as the soul will be harmonious when all of its parts are functioning correctly. Likewise, there will be justice and harmony in society when each of these classes successfully fulfills its responsibilities. In the words of Omoregbe (1991), each class's assignments should be completed successfully



and independently of other classes' assignments. The state will then be just as a result of everyone carrying out their responsibilities in a harmonious manner without interfering with the tasks of other classes. Justice, which is the harmony that results from each of the three classes carrying out their respective responsibilities in harmony, will thus exist in the state in the same manner that it exists in the soul. Plato wants us to know that when particular facets of the soul are carrying out their assigned roles properly, society progresses. Plato anticipated that when each person carries out their social responsibilities, society's members will need to work together. It is essential to work in a field requiring psychological fitness. When someone fulfills their obligation, they do it equitably and without getting in the way of other people doing their own tasks. It is said that this idea of justice is to blame for social injustice. Given that not all men are created equal in society, this is completely true. This difference is evident in zeal, diligence, and intelligence. We should be conscious that, despite our differences, every one of us has potential that is waiting to be realized. It is evident what the problem with this conception of justice is from Karl Popper's standpoint, which based his definition of justice on a humanitarian interpretation. Karl Popper established that Plato's political theory was both anti-humanist and pure tyranny. He also suggested that Plato's political program constituted a type of totalitarianism, not just something morally comparable to it. The Republic's depiction of his view of justice was regarded as being negatively. Plato exclusively used the word in *The Republic* to refer to actions that are in the best interest of the state since he believed that the state is intelligent and has good judgment.

Maintaining rigid class norms is central to the concept of justice. Everyone should do the work that most fits their nature, he stated. Madntyre (1971:34) notes that Thrasymachus himself further elucidates the concept of justice, stating that, in his view, "just" does not imply "what is in the interest of the stronger," but rather that, historically speaking, rulers and ruling classes created the concept and the standards of justice for their own ends, and that, in fact, it is more advantageous to act in an unjust than in a just manner.

However, Plato placed a strong emphasis on class opportunities since he thought that talent dictates class: "No one is considered born for a particular position; no post can be bought by a member of a privileged class." On the other hand, employment is granted to people in an equal opportunity setting according to their talents. This point of view supports the fact that Plato made an open comment regarding class opportunities. He has nothing against people. If you are a class member, then fulfill your professional obligations. In truth, such an individual can move to a new class if allowed to improve his circumstances. He argued against allowing someone to become a member of a group for which they were unfit. His conception of justice, therefore, is seen as a class opportunity where participation is contingent on skill and is predicated on a strict division of labor and class control. Given that it promotes participation from all citizens, regardless of class, Plato's conception of justice is beneficial. According to Plato, unity is essential to achieve societal progress. It serves as a tool for promoting stability and political advancement. According to him, justice can foster constructive national development.

### **The types of justice proposed by Plato**



For Plato, fairness is a characteristic of human society. His defense of justice as a duty, a virtue, and a component of societal harmony will be divided into three parts. Unlike Aristotle, Plato 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:

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

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

This sort of justice is produced by duties based on class rules. It's called the precise division of work. For Plato, once each member of each class carries out their responsibilities, justice will exist. He knows he's talented, often. He believed that everyone should act in accordance with their inherent talents and tendencies. Each person must fulfill their responsibilities in line with the class to which they belong because no one can be held to the same standard as everyone else.

Duty is a feeling of obligation in class. It teaches people how to live morally upright lives. Madntyre (1971: 36) states that while the idea that one man is better suited to one task and that this kind of labor division is always the optimum form is not unquestionably false, the idea that men are naturally divided up into individuals who are best suited for each of these functions is.

Justice as a class duty demonstrates that justice is possible if we simply carry out our societal duties. By forgoing what we should be doing for society, we must not act unjustly. In light of this, attending class is a right action, embodies a strong sense of patriotism, and seeks to clarify social ethics and engagement in a social setting. It also helps prevent societal corruption, as most people contribute to corruption in society by failing to do what is morally and legally required.

Their services are devoid of any sense of accountability, discipline, or duty. Therefore, there's no need to acquire these qualities if society lacks discipline, accountability, and a sense of obligation. It follows that obligations and duties will not be treated equally.

This idea reflects his republican worldview and historical philosophy. It is possible to contend that class duty underlies the specialization principle. (Satine, 1973: 52.) The first two groups are those who create and the guardians, who are further subdivided into warriors and rulers, or, if a single ruler, the philosopher king. Not quite as starkly, the guardians are further split into troops and rulers. The aforementioned point of view contends that everything is created more freely, abundantly, and of greater quality when one person does what comes naturally to him, does it at the right time, and leaves the other things to him. Some claim that doing this upholds social justice.

### **Justice as virtue**

The beginning point of the justice element is the knowledge of good. Plato agreed upon virtue as the knowledge of what is right, and a philosopher king as someone who possesses this knowledge. He promoted wisdom as a virtue. If someone has upheld virtue-equating attributes



through their knowledge of the good, they are deemed knowledgeable. The actions of a moral person are in line with their understanding of what is good and moral. Satine (1973:53) went on to say that the republic's fundamental ideas were inspired by Plato's masters teaching that virtue is knowledge. His unsuccessful political career served to fortify and clarify the idea, culminating in the founding of the academy with the intention of fostering the spirit of true knowledge as a pillar of philosophical statecraft. The assertion that knowledge is virtue, on the other hand, that there is an objective good to know- and that this good can be found not by chance or intuition but by reasoned and logical investigation- is strong. Based on what was said above, Plato, like Socrates, suggested that virtue and knowledge are interchangeable. Plato actually agrees with Socrates when he states that the pursuit of happiness is the ultimate goal of humanity and that virtue is the only way to reach it. Pleasure of any kind is impossible without virtue. It is said that only moral men may find happiness. Contentment appears to be a justifiable consequence of leading a moral life. According to Plato, we will attain justice if the virtues are successful in doing what each part is supposed to do. According to Omoregbe (1991:44), justice is the harmony that results from each component of the soul carrying out its assigned function. As a result, Plato assigned each of the three components of the soul to one of the four Greek cardinal virtues.

### **Justice as social harmony**

"Social harmony" refers to a fair social experience. Societal harmony is a prerequisite for societal stability and tranquility. It is based on doing out obligations accurately and with social responsibility. People can socially commit to carrying out their civic duties in this way. Justice cannot bring about social harmony unless there is first peace and social responsibility on the part of each person to fulfill their duties. As Wolin (1960:69) accurately pointed out, everyone would take part in performing a socially required role, which would lessen, if not completely eliminate, the probability of becoming a free rider or a shirker. Second, society was portrayed as a unified, orderly entity that appreciated the unique talents and skills of every person. Conversely, justice was connected by Plato to communal or spiritual harmony. Consequently, its efficiency is the source of harmony. A society cannot develop without social harmony. We begin to see greater societal peace when people exhibit a feeling of duty, tolerance, unity, and respect for one another's diversity, integration, and love. Social harmony increases civilization's productivity and makes it more equipped to deal with the changes that the world is currently experiencing. Social calm prevents political upheaval and instability.

Change is most wanted for societal continuity, even though it is necessary. We might have a severe harmony issue if ethical disputes are not motivated by good motives. Occasionally, if the mind is biased or lacks social integration, the battle for power based on our ethnicity and in accordance with political party inclinations, together with neglecting to fulfill one's tasks, can be a source of societal instability. In order to support young people in developing their creative output and fostering an environment where harmony is valued equally to justice, political governments are expected to provide social services, jobs, a favorable social atmosphere, manpower, and youth empowerment programs. Political violence is a direct result of negotiation, which is a necessary component of social harmony and justice. The youth revolution across the



Middle East, which impacted countries like Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, and other parts of Asia, was a form of political violence directed against the social breakdown, economic downturn, and lack of political engagement in those areas. Justice is being called for, and even though social harmony was on vacation, it will return. 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**

Plato grounds his support of justice in his defense of the ideal state. Justice, in Plato's view, is the essential component of an ideal society. His ideal state analogy was based on his understanding of human psychology. In light of human psychology, his evaluation of individual psychology makes sense. According to Plato, a man is physically healthy if he is free from illness, and a person is healthy if every part of their soul functions in harmony. He employed two of the three divisions of the human soul- the rational and the appetitive elements- to further his studies in human psychology. Consequently, a perfect society would have three classes: the warrior class, which would protect and rule the realm, the king class, which would govern it, and the rest of the populace, which would take care of necessities like food and shelter. Consequently, each of these categories denotes a distinct division within the individual soul. Plato's argument for justice is based on the division of the classes that governs the realm of a philosopher-king. Not only does he need to study dialectic, but also mathematics, geometry, astronomy, and other pertinent sciences. He must be trained in leadership, learn how to govern, and rise to the position of social leader. In order to become a ruler, Plato agreed that one had to learn the art of ruling.

Wolin (1960:59) notes that Plato's conception of the ideal state is based on 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. He went on to say that the verdict only applied to the select few who completed the program. They must be granted unrestricted authority. A monarch needs to have moral wisdom. Knowing right from wrong will motivate him to act morally. At the heart of Plato's reasoning is the idea that justice would be administered by the administrator, or philosopher king, who is responsible for society's obligations. Justice must be advanced by the philosopher king in epistemic and ethical situations that are founded on knowledge and morality. Repression and aristocracy are considered necessary qualities for a monarch.

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

The only framework, within which moral concepts can be grasped, for Plato, is social structure. One's position in life and their performance of their responsibilities within it define their "good" in life. A social structure that benefits everyone might therefore develop as a result. According to Plato, happiness was contingent upon fulfilling one's moral obligations and leading a life that



upheld those obligations. But only a chosen few with the necessary skills and education could acquire these virtues, and then they could pass them on to others in the community. Hesper (1972: 179) made the astute remark that there are two separate propositions in this sentence: all immoral persons are wretched, which has some credibility, and all moral men are joyful, which seems to be manifestly erroneous. Plato was determined to show that it is an affront to the human condition to permit irrational desires to triumph over reason. He believed that the dominance of the illogical was the source of immorality and unhappiness.

It would be evident that morality is supported by human nature if this could be demonstrated. It would be clear that moral behavior pays off, whereas immoral people inevitably suffer the consequences of their actions. This kind of reasoning can be used to make the strongest argument possible for morality. Since the average man could not rationally defend his acts to himself or to others, Plato realized that he would always act in his own best interest rather than in accordance with any external moral norm. Plato claimed that moral anarchy ensued from this dangerous circumstance. Plato held that morality was to be based on truth and made to balance self-interest, meaning it needed to be shown to be in the best interests of the individual. Plato believed that civilization had to be built and peopled in accordance with the laws of reason since reason is an essential aspect of man. Plato argued that whereas the average man mistakenly connected the satisfaction of his irrational impulses with self-interest, the real self-interest of man and the realization of his true nature lay in the control of his irrational desires by reason. Plato was therefore committed to proving that it is an affront to the essence of manhood to permit irrational passions to supersede reason. He believed that the dominance of the illogical was the source of immorality and unhappiness. It would be evident that morality is supported by human nature if this could be demonstrated. It goes without saying that morality has its rewards and that those who commit immoral acts will inevitably suffer for their actions. This kind of reasoning can be used to make the strongest argument possible for morality.

### **Plato's Philosophy and Challenges of Corrupt Practices and Leadership Crises in Nigerian Society**

Since philosophy's inception in antiquity, it has served as a wellspring of inspiration and ideas for transforming society. This is because philosophy, in seeking to address social issues, raises important questions regarding the nature of the human experience and offers reasoned responses. Can one say that Nigeria's political system is morally flawed? The ethical component of anything is defined by the laws that are applicable when they are followed; the general viewpoint and goal of an activity will be one of decency and order. In Nigerian politics, moral issues of this kind are never discussed. The severity of Nigeria's leadership crisis may in fact force one to agree with Wambutda (1991:16) when he states 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." Plato, in his classic work *The Republic*, described a perfect polity. In this idea of his ideal state, Plato attempted to lay forth the fundamental principles for the construction and maintenance of a



strong and virile state founded on fairness. Instead of good leadership, we have a cruel example of material haughtiness and a repugnant reminder of group exploitation.

According to Ehusani (2002:210), leadership in many of today's communities in Nigeria is a contamination of leadership abilities. Justice, in Plato's view, is achieved when every element of a system functions as intended without obstructing the actions of any other element. John Locke eventually developed this idea and theory of the separation of powers into what is now known as the subsidiarity of responsibility principle. Three classes make up his utopian society, which he compares to the three aspects of the soul. They are the craftspeople (the competitive component), the warriors (the courageous component), and the protectors (the cautious component). Plato (1955:89–90) contends that fairness, honesty, and transparency- along with composure, intelligence, a love of truth, and forthrightness- are essential elements of effective governance that contribute to the happiness of society. According to Plato, a leader must possess excellent moral integrity, a levelheaded mind, and a calm demeanor. He would be wise and philanthropic if he were free from money worries and sentimental attachments. Since the purpose of the state is to further the greatest and noblest objectives, good people will not agree to rule in exchange for benefits like money or prestige. The toughest consequence for refusing is being subordinated to someone worse than themselves. They don't want to be connected with mercenaries or criminals because they want payment in cash for completing official activities; they won't labor for honors because they aren't ambitious. In my opinion, that scares decent guys into assuming authority; they don't treat it as something they would want. A state is considered developed when there is effective government, protection, and production, according to Bassey (2007: 16).

A developed state is a good state, and it produces a decent society as a result. Inadequate leadership is the reason behind Nigeria's lack of development. Development cannot be sped up by production, protection, or good governance. Nigeria periodically sets definite objectives for the advancement of its politics and economy. Occasionally, they also have operationalized and clearly stated policies. However, it is uncommon to come across something that fits the definition of a plan. Taylor (2010) argues that Plato emphasizes the attributes of state leaders more than their knowledge and virtue because in ancient societies, leaders were valued for their ability to appease the masses and satiate their baser instincts and appetites. Nigerian society exists to foster moral virtue in the populace and in the country's leadership in order to foster social order, cohesion, progress, and development. Nigerian leaders are required by the country's democratic style of governance to obtain the permission of the populace without resorting to force. A democracy, according to Morrow (1988:7), is "a system of government in which the rights of the minority are protected but the rights of the majority are maintained."

Effective protection, production, and governance are indicators of a developed state. A good state, or developed nation, produces a decent society as a consequence. Nigeria has a dysfunctional government and underdeveloped country due to a lack of effective leadership. Development cannot be sped up by production, safety measures, or moral benchmarks. Nigeria sometimes sets clear objectives for its political and social progress. There are also sometimes well-defined, operationalized policies among them. It is challenging to find anything that is



legitimately referred to as a plan, nevertheless (Bassey, 2007). Our leaders' lack of political knowledge caused Nigeria to suffer a significant setback. It is currently necessary to integrate Plato's philosophy into Nigeria's political framework in order to make sense of the nation's current leadership issues.

### **Evaluation of Corrupt Practices and Leadership Crises in Contemporary Nigerian Society**

Issues with corrupt practices and bad governance have never been resolved as a result of bad leadership. The unfortunate experience since attaining independence in 1960 has been being ruled by ill-informed, unscrupulous, and dishonest authorities. Because of corruption, Nigeria's image as a subpar product has altered. Additionally, it would be quite difficult to convince any possible buyers to purchase Nigeria in its current horrible state, much like a defective product. Just as a poor product cannot be made to seem better by using clever marketing phrases, neither can attempts to transform Nigeria's ugly image into a "great society." From what we have learned about Nigeria's poor governance and corruption thus far, it is evident that the nation's issues go beyond corruption to include morally bankrupt, weak leadership. Corruption in Nigeria has risen to unimaginable heights since 1960 and is currently approaching pandemic proportions, all thanks to the complete support of the political leadership class. People without a past are like trees without roots, so it goes without saying that looking back is necessary for us as a country to progress forward. It is indisputable that extraordinary leadership has never blossomed in Nigerian history. The lack of capable, responsible leaders with integrity, vision, and high moral standards has been a serious problem for the nation. It's just sad that Nigeria, a country rich in natural resources and human capital, is living in a state of uncertainty right now, where things like extreme poverty, high unemployment, unsolved killings, public money thievery and waste, etc., are all commonplace due to corruption. The situation is fixable, even though it seemed hopeless. In order to do this, the Nigerian leadership class must drastically change its perspective. A remarkably high standard of behavior is also required. In order to achieve this, Nigerians must embrace Plato's philosophy because, regardless of how good or flawless the nation's constitution or other mechanisms for guaranteeing accountability and combating corruption may be, they will be ineffective unless the populace and the ruling class show the political will to uphold and enforce them.

### **Conclusion**

That Nigeria is experiencing a crisis of leadership is unfortunate. The high rates of greed, corruption, and the unchecked desire for wealth, opulence, and grandeur may be caused by the leaders' lack of moral principles. It is appalling and disheartening that Nigeria, a nation endowed with the human and material resources necessary for national advancement, is now destined for an uncertain future in which rampant poverty, high unemployment, a deteriorating quality of education, preventable health crises, unresolved assassinations, insecurity, looting, extravagant public spending, etc. are all commonplace because of incompetent leadership and corruption.

Modern leadership approaches and styles do not fully represent the fundamental cultural values of Nigerian society. Developing a culture of integrity, accountability, and openness among Nigerians is crucial. Encourage a history of selflessness and patriotism in public service, as well



as a society where people can successfully invest and enhance their quality of life through hard labor. Nigerian officials need to start again by kicking out the long-standing corruption tendencies that have impeded the country's economic growth. Nigeria needs leaders who prioritize the well-being of their people over their own financial gain. Nigeria needs leaders who are more concerned with the future of their country's youth than with the positions they will eventually occupy.

Leaders who own the future are what we need. Our nation's leaders should prioritize changing society over increasing their personal fortune. The ideal leaders need to be knowledgeable and experienced in running a government. Nigeria needs kind leaders who will build top-notch institutions and create laws that eliminate the incentives for corruption. For Nigeria to provide effective services and have long-term socioeconomic growth, it needs institutions that are stable and accessible to the general people. There is little doubt that without the advantages of extraordinary leadership, no nation can have strong institutions. Thus, through reliable democratic processes, voters should choose outstanding leaders who will build and maintain robust institutions. Nigerians need to understand Plato's philosophy of justice if they want to change the way they behave in society.

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