Developing Quality Leadership and Effective Politics in Nigeria: A Philosophical Impact in the 21st Century

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Abstract

This study dealt with the necessary roles required to enhance politics and ensure effective leadership through the narrow lenses of philosophy in Nigeria. Its major concern is how to improve the living standard of human existence. The study examines a state of nature on why society was formed and the role of a philosopher-king, from antiquity in terms of the distribution of resources, equity, obedience to the law, and sovereignty via the development of the citizens; which are sacrosanct in the 21st Century. It identified the Nigerian problem as a lack of quality and disciplined leadership, which has been giving room for different social vices -such as incessant killings, socio-political crises, ethnic-religious crises, and others. The imperative question remains, how can these diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria coordinate and harmonize their abundant resources for common good and ensure mutual understanding? The quality and criteria of involving individuals in governance were also identified in this paper. Content analysis was used as a methodology. The study identified that as many Nigerians scramble to be at the top of governance, the issues of insecurity and disorderliness continued to be at a high rate in Nigeria.

Keyword: Quality politics, Leadership development, Philosophical impact, Nigeria

Introduction

It is a known fact that the Nigerian city-state from hitherto is characterized by three classes, namely: philosophers, political stakeholders, and masses that desire philosophical change in governance. These categories of people look out for how best Nigerian society can be governed and maintain social order through an ideal political system that is the quest of philosophy. For example, Plato as one of the Greek philosophers played a prominent role in resolving the political crisis in ancient Athens when political instability got to the peak of violence and corruption. He sought to treat the malevolent situation with his ideal state

and justified ruler (philosopher-king). He classified society into three groups: guardians, auxiliaries, and artisans.

From independence, Nigeria has experienced leaders with different nostalgic feelings. Nigerian political history cannot be completed without the influential philosophers that fought to make it a sovereign nation. For example, posterity cannot forget leaders such as Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Michael Okpara, Sam Mbakwe, Chukwuemeka Ojukwu, etc. During a political crisis, these leaders used their philosophical ideas to calm down the political turbulence. These men thought they have died are fresh in the minds of Nigerians. Plato, in his *Republic(473)* quotes:

> Until philosophers are kings or the kings and princes of this world have the spirit and power of philosophy, and political greatness and wisdom meet in one, and those commoner natures who pursue either to the exclusion of the other are compelled to stand aside, cities will never have rest from their evils.

Nigeria as a nation today lacks competent and integrity leaders with the difference in all ramifications! Leaders with impeccable characters that give an account of their stewardship in fear and trembling! According to Igbo proverbs, "One cannot give what he or she doesn't have; and no farmer plants maize and harvest rice." The truth is clear here, how can there be peace in Nigeria when its philosopher-kings are not in power? Hence, living in peace justifies the wealth of any society in terms of development.

In other words, philosophy has a distinctive role to play in society. Active participation of philosophers in governance brings happiness to individuals and society at large. According to *Aristotle, the state is an Organism, is a living being that exists for some end, for some purpose. The purpose is to promote a good life for humanity* (Moore and Bruder 332). Since independence, Nigeria has been testing different forms of government that could be suitable for the development of her diverse ethnic groups, such as the Parliamentary system, Military, and Democratic rules but none proved to be the solution to her tyrannical problems.

Plato considered the state as the man wrote large, meaning that justice is a general virtue of a moral person, also justice characterizes a good society, but when the reverse is the case, it metamorphoses into total failure (Stumpf 69). Can one imagine how life would be in a country where there is no government? In a state of nature where people have no freedom, a corrupt government controls every aspect of life. The government supposes to regulate everything in society, but the corrupt government does not. A city-state was formed for common good. Some important philosophical questions are 1. What are the features that validate the creation of a government? 2. What are the limits of the government's authority over the people? Political Science as a discipline focuses on the structure of a specific

government just as it was in ancient Greece. Political philosophy, in contrast, looks at the issues focusing on principles and arguments justifying the existence of government. In other words, philosophical issues surrounding the existence of government need to be identified, such as justification of the existence of a particular government and how government meddles into human lives. It is on this note that Aristotle discovers the fundamental normative problems of politics and what constitutional forms should the lawgiver establish and preserve for the sake of the common good of the citizens.

In this 21st Century, Nigerian society appears to be lacking philosophers and 'nature abhors a vacuum.' This results in inter-ethnic violence, political crisis, inter-religious crisis, conflict, killing and adoption, lawlessness, vandalism of public and private properties. This lack calls for sensitization and revitalizing of the consciousness in training our future leaders (Moore 330) note:

> *…as a selected few, highly educated and profoundly rational individuals, including women so qualified. An individual becomes a member of a class by birth, but he or she will move to a higher or lower class according to aptitude.*

Hence, is a situation where the government loses its legitimate powers to protect the lives, liberty, and property of Nigerians, thereby creating a setback for the state. In other words, posterity will not be happy that philosophy which should be an interface of common people and government voices is silent. Philosophy is a tool in correcting the bad influences that are infiltrating the government in recent times, which was not there from the cradle. As the mother of all disciplines, the importance of philosophy needs to be made available to the consciousness of our leaders in state formation. To instill on our political leaders, some moral virtues that go with public offices and suggested ways of development and solutions to some peculiar problems alongside the recent economic meltdown recourse must be made to philosophy.

In this 21st Century, Nigeria is undergoing the same similar political experience that Athens had in the past. The leadership of Nigeria today loses total control of her economy; hence, there are low industrial production and a high exchange rate. All sectors of the economy are negatively affected in terms of the high rate of commodities, inflation, hunger, and death. The policies fail to salvage the situation. But all hope is not lost for Philosophical Knowledge can proffer a solution to this societal menace. Plato's ideas can serve as catalysts for the transformation of the mindset of the Nigerian leaders, provided they can implement these viable philosophical ideas. If they did, there will be a new Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification

Philosophy

The word philosophy was first used by Pythagoras (580-500 B. C). He coined philosophy from two Greek words 'Philos'- which means love, and 'Sophia'- meaning wisdom. To put them together, philosophy means the love of wisdom. But this is not the formal definition of philosophy. Its love means the disposition of wills: feeling affectionate, kind, fond, and covetous. Sometimes, it could be a mixture of all these features depending on the situation. Love is in three types: Agape, Philae, and eros. Eros is the name of the Greek god of love. It is a desire, especially an amorous desire. It is a strong passion to covet or possess something. The eros is where philosophy fits in on influence. It is a quest to acquire something. Wisdom is different from knowledge. Wisdom is the knowledge of the universal reality while knowledge is on a particular field or discipline. It is a necessary condition for a leader to excel in all ramifications. A leader in possession of wisdom is a true political animal. Wisdom is an attribute of political power. It is a quest for absolute knowledge of every reality. When someone studies philosophy he or she understands how and why people do certain things and live a good life. *It is a fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence, especially when considered as an academic discipline*. In other words, philosophy is a study that attempts to discover the fundamental principles of sciences, arts, and the world that sciences and arts deal with. Philosophy studies general and fundamental problems. Like Ethics, (moral *theory or attitude), it acts as a guiding principle of behavior*. Philosophy is also the study of ideas about knowledge, truth, nature, and the meaning of life.

Development

Development does not mean a single phenomenon or activity. It is a process of social change. Heraclitus an ancient Greek philosopher sees change as the only constant reality. There is a dynamic concept associated with all actions to influence the entire process of things. Development is one major challenge facing Nigeria as a nation. Development doesn't just fall like manner. It is an effect of hard work which has an efficient cause. It is a product of hard work, both from the leaders and citizens. Whenever the term development is mentioned, the mind-set of people quickly runs to the economic, political, social, industrial, and technological progress of a country or a well-known geographical location. Meanwhile, development can be defined in *an applicable manner to all societies based on their historical periods as an upward or ascending movement featuring greater levels of energy, efficiency, quality, productivity, complexity, comprehension, creativity, mastery, enjoyment, and accomplishment*. (Jacobs 152). However, this research laid more emphasis on the intellectual development of the Leaders and citizens influencing societal development in all ramifications. Development in all the aforementioned sectors has the same principles that govern it. *It is a process of social change and not only a set of policies and programs instituted for some specific results. In the last five centuries, the process of development picked up in a speed and intensity manner, and during the last five decades, it has witnessed surge acceleration in many regions* (International Commission on Peace and Food 162). Economic development and

human development need policies that are aimed at quantitative growth in income and qualitative growth in knowledge for the good of society.

For instance, Nigeria is blessed with numerous natural resources. With quality training, leaders should know how best to harness and coordinate these resources to improve the average living standard of men and women across our land. For instance, crude oil production and export goods that boosted our national income have virtually failed to benefit the poor. Nigerian leaders hardly have proper plans for the future of their country. Their policies fail to improve health care services, quality education, living standards, the security of life and property, reduction of crime, socio-political crisis, inter-ethnic conflict, kidnapping and adoption, incessant killing by herdsmen, Boko-haram, Militancy, etc. All these anomalies that are happening in this 21st Century call for Plato's word inviting philosopher-king or kings and princess to become a philosopher to restore peace and tranquility not only in Nigeria but Africa at large.

Politics

Politics is the practice of the distribution of power and resources within a given community, which is usually hierarchically organized as well as interrelated. A variety of methods are employed in politics, which include promotion or force of one's political views on others, negotiation of other political subjects, lawmaking, exercising of legitimate force, including warfare against opponents. It is exercised on a wide range of social levels, from clans to tribes of many societies, local governments, companies, institutions, and sovereign state. The political system defines acceptable political methods for a given society. The history of political thought can be traced back to antiquity -such as Plato's Republic, Aristotle's politics, Leviathan of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and other teachings.

Politics is as old as man. Aristotle states that *self-sufficiency is an end and a chief good. This makes it clear that the city-state is a natural growth, and man by nature is a political animal.* Through the aforementioned statement, men are becoming inhuman to one another and proliferate a high rate of killing and struggle for the property. This led to the expansion of the political system and practice into various forms of government from self-governance to clan, community, monarchy, oligarchy, military, and democracy.

Leader

There is no generally accepted definition of a leader. According to (Kofele-Kale 81), *a leader is the one who makes things happen or otherwise. If a leader causes changes that he intended, he has exercised power. But if a leader causes changes that he did not intend or want, he has exercised influence, but not power.* A leader is a person who considers the alternative, who is creative, find a solution, an event-maker, and influential on certain issues that affect the common good of people. According to (Mandela retrieved on Sept 8, 2016) "I have fought against

white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I cherished the ideal democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die". A leader is an individual with legitimate power to invoke the command and ready to lay down his life for his subjects. Mandela states that "struggle is my life." (Mandela retrieved on Sept 8, 2016). Good leaders possess power that transforms ordinary things into extraordinary.

A leader is said to be democratic when he assumes power with the people's mandate and will. It is a government of the majority which subdues the will of the minority class. Many societies practice Democracy to spur up development. It is a liberal government where people exercise their freedom of speech. A leader in a Democratic setting seeks the consent of the majority before concluding about deciding any matter. His primary interest is what concerns the common good of the people. He works towards developing the society and the citizens with skills that will enable them to grow and be productive. His primary function is to set goals and work towards achieving them. He must have the intellectual ability to reason.

The role of a leader in a society is to foresee challenges and proffer ways of tackling them. He/she sets some goals with priorities and work with professionals as a team. He/she possesses some elements of good morals and gives a listening ear to his/her subjects.

Ignorance and Irony of life in the State of Nature

Life before the creation of government is characterized by survival of the fittest where individuals search for food and other necessities of life without the help or protection of the community or state. The state of nature then was a dangerous one because their wants are numerous and the means to provide them are scarce. This creates serious competition among the people due to limited resources. If everything one needs in life could be easily acquired, such as food, clothing, and shelter, no one would be interested in stealing. It is this struggle for limited resources that resulted in the fight. Another reason is that human beings are naturally selfish and cannot be trusted. According to Hobbes, human nature is nothing less than the war against one another. They act in hostility to gain access to certain things or reputation. Hobbes comment:

> *in such condition, there is no place for industry, because the fruit thereof is uncertain, and* consequently, *no culture of the earth, no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea, no commodious building, no instruments of moving and removing such things as require much force, no knowledge of the face of the earth, no account of time, no arts, no letters, no society, and which is worst of all, continual fear and danger of violent death, and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.* (131)

He argued that without a strong government, society would collapse. Greece saw the need to come together and form a formidable state. For Plato, the state grows out of the nature of the individuals. The individual comes before the state. It is a natural institution that has a structure of human nature. A state comprises human beings and other existing realities bonded together with natural laws.

> *An individual has not started living fully until they can rise above the narrow confines of individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of humanity. Every person must decide at some point, whether they will walk in the light of creative altruism or the darkness of destructive selfishness. This is the judgment: Life's most persistent and urgent question is: 'What are you doing for others?* (Coretta 3)

Plato's concept of man is a being meant to live a happy life, with good morals. A state came into existence due to the economic needs of individuals, since no one is self-sufficient. No one possesses all the skills needed to produce food, shelter, and clothing or that of a builder, barber, driver, etc. This calls for the division of labor for more goods and services to be rendered in a better way, bearing in mind that human needs are numerous and insatiable

Plato's Republic: A Bridge to Ideal State

Plato conceived an ambiguous plan to restructure the political state in Athens by neither using a democratic (rule by mob) setting nor Aristocracy (rule by few). His intention was to set-up a formidable ideal state which will be an example for others to emulate. *Rulers will be willing to give orders, and assistants to do what has been ordered, but rulers must themselves in some things obey our laws, and in other things exhibit the spirit of those laws in matters which we leave to their discretion* (Rouse 256). Plato divided the citizens into three classes, namely, the guardians (rulers), auxiliaries (soldiers), and artisans (common people). He also classified the soul into three parts: Reason, Spirit, and Appetite. The guardians (philosopher kings) are to possess the rational soul which is the highest level because of their leadership role in the state. The auxiliaries are to possess the spirited soul because they defend the state. The artisans share the appetitive soul because they provide the material needs for the State.

Methodic Approach to quality Leadership

Children at the age of 18 are randomly picked within the three classes: guardians, soldiers, and artisans. They are confined to undergo quality and rigorous educational training on classical philology, philosophy, and geometry. As they continue in the training, their trainers will select the best and place them in further formation with their close observation. Those with guardian quality are selected and kept in a separate place. The guardians, according to Plato must be the best men in their class and must be intelligent, powerful, and careful, love the state and pursuing the true interests of the state without

any thought of personal advantage or disadvantage. While those with broad shoulders and muscles should be kept in a separate place for further training on how to know and identify the real enemies of the state. Those who neither fit into rulers nor soldiers are sent back to their respective homes. They will continue staying there until they attain the age of leadership which Plato identifies as 50 years. However, the two groups will not have a nuclear family, rather, they have women in common. Their children are trained by the state. The ideal state is achieved when the three classes fulfill their roles without interference to the role of one another, there will be harmony among the three classes. For harmony to exist there must be absolute justice.

The opinion of Plato on guardians was to avoid having private families, in order not to get distracted and to be able to rule well. He proposed having wives, children, and houses in common. Democracy to Plato is not the best form of government. He believes democracy is the rule by mob. His view was that after the quality and rigorous training of individuals they will be able to rule well through their intellectual and physical preparations. Having known the good things needed to enhance the state and how to avoid the appetitive element of the lower level. Plato suggested Aristocracy in place of Democracy. Aristocracy is the rule by the few learned fellows. To him, it is the best form of government because the state will have better rulers when it has few dedicated individuals (philosopher kings) than when the mobs are in government. A state where everyone is under the law is preferable including guardians and soldiers. The law directs all its elements.

The value of philosophy to politics: Towards enhancing Quality leadership in Nigeria

Philosophy serves as a catalyst that enhances political leaders' ability. It had been tested and approved in Athens as a cornerstone for promoting quality leaders and how society can be developed. Development is needed by every human being but leadership quality is a product of few individuals. Development is not achieved in isolation, people made it to exist.

Aristotle refers to man as a political animal' meaning that politics is inherent in man but various levels or degrees. The knowledge of philosophy expands the scope of a political leader who puts to birth political ideas and policy in practice. As the human body has many parts, in which each part has its role, likewise philosophy and politics in enhancing leadership ability.

Nigeria is backward in development not because the country is poor, but because the leaders who should be the light of the nation lack wisdom to drive their nation and her economy toward development. For example, King Solomon in the Holy Bible asked for wisdom for he foresaw the importance of wisdom to his seat. The love of wisdom changes a leader. The book of Hosea (K J V retrieved on 11/09/16) state that *my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children* For a

leader to be active in government, there must be an intellectual training (knowledge of philosophy and politics) to function well while in office. Latin proverb says Nemo quod non-habit (you cannot give what you don't have).

One of the major factors that dwindle development in Nigeria is the lack of good vision. Henry Ford proverb; "vision without execution is just hallucination." Lack of development is a result of the epistemic naivety of a leader. Nelson Mandela states that *it is better to lead from behind and to put others in front, especially when you celebrate the victory. Also, on the other hand, you take the front line when there is danger. Then people will appreciate your leadership.* (Mandela retrieved on 29/08/2016) There are a structure and logical relationship that binds a leader and the commoners. It is high time for Nigerians to use their intellectual ability to develop their nation with a functional government. The symbiotic relationship between philosophy and politics gave birth to development. Simply put, the rigorous training in philosophy and politics promotes the intellectual development of a leader in an administrative office. One of the concerns of philosophy is humans' harmonious co-existence in society.

Society came into existence through philosophy and politics. Both disciplines have their blueprint of enhancing life patterns. They are originated from diverse methods. Philosophy is the mother of all disciplines. Politics is one of her beloved children. Simply put, the root of other disciplines is philosophy, while one of the stems is politics. For any nutrient to get to the branches it must pass through the root which is philosophy. A negation of philosophy and politics will result in sterile and stunted development.

What it implies is that philosophers should pilot the strategic positions in every sector of the economy and leadership. Peace does not dwell in a disordered society. An absence of peace is a crisis in various forms and degrees. Philosophy and politics are indispensable as far as leadership is a concerned. Socrates states thus '*man knows thyself*'. It is very crucial for a leader to know his/her worth and to examine his actions before moving to the public. Philosophy transforms the reasoning of every good leader.

Recommendations

The 21st Century Leadership in Nigeria lack commitment in their important office. A proverb has it that "a life of sacrifice without sacrificing itself is a contradiction." Hence, this work has the following recommendations to make:

1. There is a need to introduce the Philosophy of Agriculture in Nigeria with mechanized equipment and good roads to convey goods and services.
2. A good leader should not be tribalistic. There is a need to adopt theme work. No one knows it all.

3. To maintain Rule of Law as the top priority of any elected leader in Nigeria, from the federal to the local government. To develop a decision-making process that starts from the community involves the people that will represent the interest of the general public. The government should avoid partiality in the appointment of political officeholders. There should be equal representation in federal characters; no group should be deprived of this right.
4. The role of a leader as the chief security of the nation should be to secure lives, properties and to put smiles on the faces of the citizens which are essential.
5. Nigerians should always elect or appoint individuals with impeccable character and integrity to manage the affairs of the state. They must be transparent and accountable to society.
6. The leaders must fulfill their promises. They should make good policies and execute them. The citizens are tired of failed campaign promises. The country is in search of leaders who can be trusted, men of good character and principle.
7. The country needs to eradicate two legislative arms and retains one legislative house. Their salary structure should be reviewed with fewer allowances and aids. The leadership office should be made less attractive.
8. There is a need for constitutional reform. A single tenure of 5 years in office should be adopted. The age limit for any political office should be between (40-65 years).
9. There is a need to enhance the national grid (electricity) to enable industrial production and technological inventions to function.
10. A good leader should give equal opportunity to researchers and sponsor creativity from individuals. Those who had developed automobiles and airplanes should be encouraged and make them a federal project.
11. To reduce importation, homemade goods should be patronized. The welfare of all citizens should be ensured. Teamwork helps in building a strong nation. In Plato's world, the ideal state is possible, but in contemporary Nigeria, ideas and practices that can make Nigeria better should be encouraged.
12. Nigeria should develop a form of government that can accommodate all the diverse ethnicity. If Democracy works best in United State, is not a prerequisite that it will function in our great country.

Conclusion

In philosophy, the end always determines the nature of the means. A philosophical mind always likes to make things better than how he or she met it. One who has a driving force considers an alternative when his or her first plan fails to work. Francis Bacon states that '*knowledge is power*'. Knowledge is a catalyst that changes vision to reality. Ideas rule the world but philosophy rules ideas. Philosophers control ideas to move in the right direction. For instance, in Nigeria, the government is always busy fighting corruption while the poor citizens are dying of hunger. A wise man thinks about how to save lives by boosting the economy of his country. No farmer plants okra and expects to harvest rice or yam. Life is

precious and needs to be preserved. No one gives what he or she doesn't have. In fighting corruption every other sector of the country must not suffer a setback. Good policies trigger rapid development. Philosophy is a guard–fly that stimulates constructive thinking in a leader. Philosophy is a light to every nation. Plato exemplified this with the allegory of the cave where individuals were caged in a place all through their life. They were in the dark. They do not know the true nature of the universe. There came a day when one person out of many forced himself out of the cave to see beyond the life in a cave. Behold, he finds the reality of the world completely different from what they believe to be real in the cave.

A harmonious and loving state can come to reality only when wisdom and power (Philosophy and Politics) unite into a self-evident whole, in the person of a philosopher-king. They are called to serve and not to be served. Once the legislative, executive, and judiciary are in harmony, the country will be free of nepotism and egocentrism.

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