

## Plato's Concept of Justice and its Relevance to Contemporary Nigerian Society

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### Abstract

The Nigerian state has been defiled with the diseases of corruption, injustice, extortion and ethnicity occasioned by power drunken leadership who does not have the recourse of the virtue of Plato's concept of justice. This wearying scenario had caused Nigerians to question the leadership and its neglect for justice and demand for good governance in Nigerian State. This paper reviewed the ongoing yearning for Plato's concept of justice as criteria for desirable change, equality, fairness and equity in the Nigerian state. The study was anchored on John R. Awls theory of justice. A qualitative method of data gathering was employed for the study. The data collected through the second method were thoroughly subjected to content analysis. This paper observed that the lack of Aristocratic justice is the bane for the historical evil that bequeathed the Nigerian state. Therefore, the paper recommended among other things that Plato's concept of justice should strictly adhere to for peaceful co-existence of the various ethnic groups in the Nigerian State.

**Keywords:** Justice, Contemporary Society, Leadership

### Introduction

From the inception of democratic rule in May 1999 till date, the Nigerian state has been characterized by social evil. The tidal current of social evil and injustice is on the fast lane of growth without restraint. The state has been eclipsed with state-wide corruption, banditry, cultism, terrorism, militancy, just to mention but a few that have characterized the Nigerian state. The aforementioned social malfeasance has a very negative effect on the lives of the citizens and the Nigerian state. The institutions of the state are weakened by it, which resulted in mutual distrust. These political institutions that are supposed to dispense justice have become very corrupt hence could not live to their expectations. The institutions have been imbued in recent times with social evil such as bribery and corruption. The concept of justice which is the bond of perfection is like a centripetal force that pulls and stick together any society. It creates very harmonious and peaceful relations among the citizens of the state. But these features are absent in the Nigerian state. Rather there is flurry and promotions of injustice in the state. Government officials used their political positions at various levels, to perpetrate evil. Our judicial system which is the traditional landmark for social justice has become money-making venture. As these are influenced by corrupt politicians who have been rejected by the ballot box, goes around influencing the judiciary for their favour. According to Bakare (2018, p. 1),

However, the Nigerian nation should change its values and put honesty and hard work above any other things. The government should put into practice the principle of reward and punishment. And it should be stipulated that anybody found guilty of committing any of these social maladies should be given optimum punishment and justice should prevail.

Nigeria is a state where we celebrate and esteem corrupt political leaders, who through embezzlement of public funds became stupendously rich. While five heavily armed police security operatives are assigned to protect each of these corrupt political elements, one ill-equipped policeman with batten protects more than a hundred law-abiding citizens of the state. As a disease patient sought the doctor's attention for a cure, the Nigerian state should seek Plato's concept of justice to cure her social maladroitness. This is because of the sick leadership of the state, a state where those who have depleted our national treasury ride around the cities with a police convoy. A leadership that lacks the empathy for those they have impoverished, through looting, bad policies, un-conducive business environment, police extortion to mention but a few.

It is from this background that, this paper is seeking answers from Plato's concept of justice and its relevance to the contemporary Nigeria state. Plato's ideal state was founded upon a solid ground, where justice reigns like a king. It is an ideal state where there is no interference because each was given his rightful place. An ideal state justice points to the ultimate good for the common benefit of all and sundry. The Nigerian state must build on the solid foundation of justice, to root out all social evil bedeviling the state. Nigeria needs the pedigree of educated political leaders who have drunk from the philosophical calabash; to enable them to contemplate the good. According to Mukherjee and Ramaswamy (20011, p.72), "...justice of doing one's job for which one was naturally fited without interfering with other people." The virtue of justice is what will place the Nigerian state on the pedestal or fast lane of success. But rather Nigerian leadership voyage is on verge of sinking because; the state is founded on the faulty ground of ethnicity, nepotism, tribalism, and religious dogmatism.

The increasing unrestraint social evil in Nigeria, unquestionable killings, nationwide official corruption, illegal detentions without trial or justice, are just very few social maladies that have drawn the Nigerian state. Government officials use their positions at various levels of leadership to oppress the commons. The concept of justice is monetized, the poor and dejected fellows are denied justice and their rightful place in the Nigerian state. The opulence always has its way out, as laws are made to protect these ruling oligarchs and their wealth. The status quo will remain constant, unchanged, unless there is a deliberate effort and attempt to bring about the desired changes in Nigeria. The above situation gives a lucid and vivid picture of the contemporary Nigerian state. Therefore, this study is confronted with the problem of justice deficit in the body polity of Nigeria. This is what constitutes the topic for this study, as it seeks answers from Plato's concept of justice and its relationship to the contemporary Nigerian state. It is on this basis that the following research questions are formulated to guide the study.

- (a) Does justice exist in the Nigerian state?
- (b) Does evil exacerbate in the Nigerian state for lack of justice?
- (c) What is the relevance of Plato's justice in contemporary Nigerian state?

### **Concept Clarification**

This section concerned itself with a very brief clarification of major concepts involved in this paper. These are Justice, Contemporary, Society and Nigeria.

**Justice:** One major important political and moral concept is justice. The Merriam Webster Dictionary defined justice as the administration of what is just as by assigning merit rewards or punishment. It is the ideals of being just or being fair, devoid of impartiality. Justice is the application of moral rightness in one conduct, action or attitude.

**Contemporary:** It is a concept that is used to denote modern or the present time.

**Society:** It refers to an organized group of humans who are living in a particular community, characterized by a pattern of social relationships.

**Nigeria:** It is the most populated state in West Africa with an approximated population of 225,954,000. The state is bordered to the North by Niger, to the East by Chad and Cameroon, to the South by the Gulf of Guinea of the Atlantic Ocean and to the West by Benin. Its form of government is federalism, with Bicameralism. With the Senate having 109 seats and House of Representative 360 seats situated at Abuja as the capital. Thousands of languages are spoken, with English language as its official language, and Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa/Fulani as the major ethnic groups in the state.

### Theoretical Framework

In respect of the variables under investigation, the study adopted the theory of justice by John Rawls cited in Barry (1973, p. 35) First principle: Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all.

**Second principle:** Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they, (a) to be the greatest benefit of the least advantaged, consistent with the just savings principles and (b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity. The most justifiable reason for the adoption of Rawls theory of justice is that he sees the state as well ordered when it is not just designed to further the good of its members, but when it is also effectively regulated by a public conception of justice.

### Literature Review

The concept of justice can be traced to Latin *JUS*. It means to bind to contract. The word also means fairness, justness, equity and it could also stand for a righteous cause. The concept is as old as the bible. A lot of scriptures can be used to buttress this point. For instance, the central epistemic of justice is, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12) which is generally referred to as the golden rule. Most Greek philosophers see it as a virtue, when equity as a concept is referred to, we are equally referring to justice. It is an integral part of political theory, different scholars give different interpretations to it. The concept of justice occupies the centre stage in a well-ordered state. It is the standard-bearer and a property of a well-regulated state. A state is judged to be just and fair in its actions and dealings with its citizens due to the rightful application of justice. First, it is seen as a relationship among the members on how well they treat one another in the state. When the issues of abuse of freedom, denied opportunities, disagreements are manifested in a state, without hesitation we make a quick appeal to justice to see to the resolve of such conflicts in the state. According to Daniel (2016, p.1), "Justice is a journey, it is a pursuit to ensure that...every single person has the opportunity to be treated with the kindness, compassion, fairness, and empathy that they deserve." The trajectory of justice must not be limited to the scope of the state judiciary alone, even if that is correct. In spite of the existence of the variance or types of justice, they all point to one identifiable objective which is the attainment of fair play, equity, just or rightful conduct. Dabbs (2010) opined that, without justice, decent political society would decline into anarchy or tyranny." In other words, justice is a stabilizing force that keeps the different elements stable in the state. According to Sen (2009, P.4), "It is sometimes claimed that justice is not a matter of reasoning at all; it is one of being appropriately sensitive and having the right nose for injustice." The political climate of the 17<sup>th</sup> century was characterized by constant fear and danger of violent death; and the life of man solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short. This gory condition and plight of man prompted Hobbes to see justice in a contractual agreement that would be justly executed by a man or an assembly of men. According to Hobbes (2005, p.56), "this is the only way that men can live peaceably in the

new state because there is now a supreme and absolute man or assembly of men that power has been conferred with power upon to rule and execute equity and justice.” And that leviathan can not commit injustice against the people but can commit iniquity against God.

The search for justice dominated the thought process of a 17<sup>th</sup>-century philosopher like Hobbes; Rousseau was preoccupied with finding a lasting solution to the root cause of the injustice of inequality. He blamed the persistent condition of inequality that has impoverished; enslaved and made humans appear to be corrupt, due to the injustice of the pursuit and accumulation of private property that has defined the human condition. According to Rousseau (2002, p. 7),

A new intellectual was unleashed, destroying the simplicity and harmony that had reigned in the state of nature between one's need and one's desire. The novel concept of division of labour also took hold, robbing people of their self-sufficiency. Now new technological advances, such as agriculture and metallurgy, were introduced, accompanied by the notion of “private property” people competed for property, increasing their wealth at the expense of others. Production started to surpass people's needs, feeding a new hunger for superfluous, “luxury” goods. Equality was vanquished by ambition and greed.

The existence of economic disparity exacerbated injustice in the society as some grew richer and more esteemed than others. Justice from the Rousseauian connection was made possible by their decision to obey the “General Will.” Rousseau (2002) opined that:

A democratic society possesses a General Will. The “Will” reflects what enlightened people would want if they were able to make decisions solely as social beings and citizens and not as private individuals. Individuals may possess a private will that expresses their particular interest, but citizens must be recognized and concur with the General will that mirrors the good of all...The General Will is always constant, unalterable, and pure. Always mirroring perfectly the common good of all members of the community. The ultimate authority and ultimate sovereignty thus reside not really in the people, who may err in their estimation of the General Will, unable to transcend their private will but rather in the infallible General Will itself (p. 10).

Those who rejected the General will are seen as the necessary evil and enemy of the state. They are eager to perpetuate injustice by expressing selfishness, their “Individual Will” which pervades and thwart the common good of all. The most intrinsic good in any political society is justice because justice and morality shared a very important foundation in the precipitation of governance in the state.

Bentham the grandmaster and philosopher of utilitarianism, was unequivocal about the injustice by the political class of the state. He was sanguine that justice will only flourish in the state, if legislators on their path, will legislate on good laws as a matter of policy. As a state justice can only be maximized. If the bill that must metamorphose into laws sought for the good of all, this will produce the greatest happiness of the greatest number. According to Schofield (2006. P, 34) “The actions of the legislators should, as a matter of fact, be guided by the principle of utility.” The happiness of the individual, of whom a community is composed: that is their pleasure and their security. Bentham attributed the injustice in the state to bad governance. According to Mukherjee and Ramasawamy (2011. p, 324), contended that the reason for misrule was that, the government was controlled by those whose interest it was to perpetuate bad governance.” This could be changed if people who desire good government were made to take charge.



The maxim of Bentham political theory (utilitarianism) stipulated the greatest happiness (justice) and not pain (injustice) for the greatest number, as the end of the state. In the eighteenth century, Marx was acquainted with the rising injustice orchestrated by capitalism. He sees it as a total wasteful economic system that led to the impoverishment of an uncountable number of people. The suffering masses of unemployment and squalor. It's a division of the state into two antagonistic and hostile in the society where workers were denied their economic justice. In addendum, it brought man into a ruthless acquisitive position. The system eliminated that good innate instinct for empathy away from man, hence making the man heartless in his bit to accumulate capital to the detriment of the common man. The system was a class-divided society in the face of justice; the property class bourgeoisie owned and controlled the means of production and distribution. They lived off the sweat of the proletariat (workers) who sold their labour to survive. The fundament to Marx political theory was the major injustice of capitalism. According to Price (2013):

In capitalism, in particular, workers are forced to labour, not for themselves but someone else, indeed for something else, namely capital. The harder they work, the stronger and richer they became capital which rules over them, drains them of their energy, and increases their power, due to their effort. This is alienated labour. All the institutions of society are alienated, powers ruling over the working class due to what the working class has given them. People are reified (thing-ified) while things are seen as alive (p.23).

The above assertion captures the evil and injustice of the prevailing capitalist system of the eighteenth century. Marx, therefore, becomes a crusader and vanguard for economic justice. Through his political philosophy which will be in sync with the hope and aspirations of the fettered and suffering proletariat. The proper theoretical solution to this injustice Marx envisioned was social/communism. Justice will all start with the dictatorship of the proletariat, with communism as a classless society where there will be equality and justice for all.

### **The Character of the Nigerian State**

The paper will be incomplete until a mention of injustice in terms of unrestrained corruption. It got to its crescendo under the military oligarch. A systemic failure, that led to a threshold of "king-size corruption" and blatant looting of the state. The sharing of oil blocs among the ruling class like personal fortune has become a common thing, like spoils from a defeated state after a war. The introduction of the state into the global capitalist system after colonialism, have grave consequences on Nigeria. The acquisitive/accumulation of capital and made the ruling class have a voracious appetite for public wealth. This is another dimension of corruption in Nigeria. According to Akani (2001, p. 38),

Corruption accelerates the engine of the capitalist mode of production because of the economic and political benefit. In other words, the more corruption expands, and the more it became sophisticated depending on the level of socio-economic development.

Corruption in the Nigerian state has defiance justice and the ethos of morality. This is because the ruling class of the state is seen as stronger than those they governed. They controlled the state apparatus of the police, army, judiciary, prison; these apparatus are used against any who tend to question the authority. They determined what is just and unjust; this explained the marked evil that characterized the Nigerian state. The capitalist mode of production in the state filliped all manner of anti-moral practices in Nigeria. Akani (2001, p. 38 ) opined that "in achieving this goal, therefore, the capitalist engaged in all kinds of things including killing, war and corruption. The history of

colonialism and the imperialist activities of transnational corporations are pellucid examples.” The ideals of justice, morality and fairness are virtues the Nigerian state has deliberately rolled into the drain. Justice and fairness are Siamese words that are interchangeably used. Justice is always used as a reference to measure the rightness fairness of the conduct of an individual, and state actions and dealings with her citizens. Nigerian state fundamentally lacks the sense of justice in all ramifications. The Nigerian state has failed woefully, to provide the basic common needs of the state. This is due to her indulgence and ravenous nature and character of the leadership of the Nigerian state. The state only exists to promote the interest of the foreign bourgeoisie, to the negation of the common good of all. As such justice is a far cry in the Nigerian state. The efflorescence of selfish interests of the ruling class is rigorously pursued to the detriment of the poor masses. The hallmark of injustice is demonstrated when the Nigerian state (ruling class) lay claim to oil blocs in the Niger Delta and left the zone underdeveloped. You find real poverty, lack of social amenities such as good hospitals, good roads, safe drinking water, good and well-equipped schools to mention but a few. You find the most dejected and poor people living in thatch and mud house occasionally confronted perennial flood, with a very high misery index in the remote villages in the Niger Delta states. A gross injustice perpetrated on the people and zone that lay the golden egg. A zone whose fortune (wealth) on a daily basis is being milked out from their rightful owners to the enrichment of the ruling class in Nigeria.

Justice meant giving every zone in the Nigerian state their rightful due. This includes their source of livelihood. According to Godwin, Olatuji, Osahon, Todo, and Ibrahim (2020),

Irrked by the alleged double standard displayed by the federal government in the Zamfara gold mining saga, individuals and interest groups in Niger Delta are, among others, calling for an amendment to the petroleum Act and the Mining Act. They also want in place, an equilibrating mechanism, where oil-bearing states in the region are allowed to own and explore resources in the domain and pay taxes to the central government (as done in true federalism), and in line with the tacit granting of resource ownership to northern states including Katsina, Zamfara, and Kaduna by the government (p.34).

The above assertion depicted the gross denial of justice in Nigerian. The outrageous display of favouritism of one zone, to the detriment of another by the ruling class. Before the coming on board or mining of gold in Zamfara, the money that accrues from the sale of oil was shared as revenue to the thirty-six states in Nigeria. This manifested injustice by the Nigerian state has been highly criticized and condemned by well-meaning Nigerians. The state of Zamfara in the northern part of Nigeria to mine and manage her gold and another solid mineral in their purview, while disallowing the Niger Delta states from managing their oil and gas is a clear indication and manifestation of lack of justice in the Nigerian state, as what is good for the goose is good for the gander. The policy is not only discriminatory but a display of injustice.

### **Brief Biography of Plato**

Plato was born into a noble family background around 427 BC in Athens. He lost his father when he was pretty young. His mother, Perictione, got remarried to her second husband Pyriccione; a politician at the time who became Plato’s stepfather and raised him. He grew up as a boy in a turbulent period of the Peloponnesian war. He also witnesses the defeat of his city Athens by Sparta and the political upheaval that characterized the period. He became an ardent follower and a student of the renowned philosopher Socrates. He had a clear ambition as a young fellow, of going into politics, because the political climatic condition gave him that privilege. According to Plato (1974, p. XVI),

I had much the same experience as many other young men. I expected, when I came to age, to go into politics... The existing constitution which was subject to widespread criticism was overthrown. Among other things, they tried to incriminate my old friend Socrates, whom I should not hesitate to call the most upright man then living, by sending him, with others, to arrest a fellow citizen and bring him forcibly to execution; Socrates refused, and risked everything rather than make himself a party to their wickedness. When I saw all this and other things as bad, I was disgusted and drew back from the wickedness of the time.

He was optimistic of societal reforms by the Committee of the Thirty that was given supreme power to rule. He was rather perplexed when the Athenian democracy passed judgment on his master Socrates. They condemned him to death, for a charge of impiety and corrupting the youths. A teacher he respected so much for his wisdom. For Plato, the condemnation of his master and mentor meant a final disillusionment for contemporary politics. Thereby he dropped the thought of it, and rather goes into philosophy. Fundamentally, the execution of Socrates sends strong signals to him and made him believe that the Athenian society was not only corrupt but politically was filled with flaws and inadequacies. The remedy to the societal ills could only come from philosophy. With this in mind, Plato decided to model an ideal state; where he attempted to lay a very solid and firm foundation and principles hinged on justice, therefore, he postulated that the philosopher should be king because he has seen the good.

### **Plato's Concept of Justice**

Plato's ideal state/city was founded on justice, which was the hallmark or crown of his work. It was a type of justice predicated upon functional-departmentalization. His optimism was that the state must have a tripartite relationship, appetitive, auxiliary, and the guardian class who are philosophers that were to govern the city. A state is just only and when these aforementioned three distinct entities appropriately function for which it is best trained or suited for. Each distinct body must be in her rightful position or (stratification) or duty. The appetitive, auxiliary, and guardian class must function harmoniously and distinctly without interference or meddling with one another's function. According to Plato (2003, p. 150), "then we must remember that each of us will be just and perform his function only if each part of him is performing its proper function." He sees justice as the ultimate, supreme good virtue. It is usually seen as a bond of perfection. That held the different components of the state together in unity. It plays a key function by providing the individuals with what he or she is best suited for. As a state, conserved specialization and brings excellence and perfection to bear. It, therefore, eliminates mediocrity in the state. According to Plato (2003, p.121), "but if the guardians of the law and state, who alone have the opportunity to bring it good government and prosperity, become a mere sham, then clearly it is completely ruined." In other words, injustice is when one left his area of specialization and meddling in an area he is not skilled. An instance of a medical doctor failing to be in the hospital to attend to sick folks, but functions as a politician with the aim of governing a state. In the Platonic worldview, the state will be completely ruined, because it is an injustice perpetrated on the state. According to Purshouse (2007, p. 36),

To satisfy our needs most efficiently, we divide labour so that each person specialized in a particular task, producing a certain type of good (such as food or clothing) which he then supplies for his fellow citizens, in return for their providing him with the commodities in which they specialize.

What makes the actions of the state virtuous/piety is the condition of the soul of those leaders. Piety is a quality, inner rich deposit of those rulers who are in the realm of affairs. Through justice, Plato was able to organize the state according to the diverse human aptitude for the purpose of mutual

benefit for all. His conception of justice, each of us will be just and perform his function only if each part of him is performing its proper function.” It was informed by the mortification, anarchism, his experience of war and horror that was orchestrated by the thirty tyrants on a supposedly democratic Athens. Aristotle (1975, p. 149) opined that the deficiency of this sort of disposition is called pettiness.” Athens in Plato’s days fell from grace to grass; especially when the noblest Socrates was put to death for a charge of corrupting the Athenian youths. In light of the above, Plato gave a prominent place to the concept of justice. It was the meddlesomeness and frequent busybody of the thirty tyrants who did not keep fate with justice that brought the Athenian society into rubbles. A city that had its shares of very powerful and noble leaders. Justice was Plato’s curative therapy for the Athenian society which was bedevilled by political malfeasance. His thrills of seeing the need for political change preoccupied his mind, hence the Republic was birthed.

### **Does Justice Exist in the Nigerian Society**

The judiciary is described as the last hope for the common man. This is because; it is one of the machineries of government that dispensed legal justice. The onus of interpretation, adjudication and mediation between aggrieved parties rested with the legal justice. This variance of legal justice is quite different from Plato’s concept of justice which is the basis of this study. The Nigerian state lacks Plato’s concept of justice. This in contrast is attributed to the lack of genuine purposeful leadership. This scenario was the experience of Athens during the reign of the thirty tyrants (404-403 BC). According to Purshouse (2007, p.11), “tyrants is the most extreme unjust known to man. Someone whose soul is tyrannical, this period was characterized by lawlessness in Athens. It led to the fleeing of most of the moderate and great minds” As the period witnessed the killing of more than one thousand residents. The worse and most disappointing event was the execution or putting to death of a revered and well-respected teacher and philosopher of encyclopedic pedigree, Socrates. For two count charges; impiety, and the corruption of the Athenian youths, who was convicted and was made to face a horrible death by drinking Hemlock poison. According to Pueshouse (2007, p.7), “the Assembly was notoriously fickle and easily swayed by demagogues of whom Cleon and Pericles are perhaps the best known. He was disillusioned with the trend of corruption in Athenian society and the violence that characterized her democracy by the tyrants. His stern opposition and disdain for this political evil warranted him to seek an answer for the diseased Athenian society through his ideal city (Republic). The Nigerian state is not too distant from this description given above. This led to the absence of everything that is just and desirable including Plato’s concept of justice, which has the opportunity of bringing good governance, prosperity and wholesomeness to the Nigerian state. the state is marked by her Thrasymachean notion of justice which, “justice is in the interest of the stronger party.” The rulers/leadership of the Nigerian state (government) is the stronger party, while the governed are those oppressed and exploited party, through vicious and obnoxious laws and policies occasioned by the stronger party (government). According to Odukaya (2017) ‘ironically, what Mandela said about Nigeria in 2007 is the story of virtually every African state including South Africa. It is the story of a people with great potential but whose collective power and influence have been contained by the rapaciousness or self-centeredness of a few indifferent leaders’. It is worrisome and saddening that the goodwill Nigeria enjoyed, particularly among African countries and the comity of nations generally in the not-too-distant past, has not in any way translated to tangible benefits for her people. On the contrary, those who looked up to her for her leadership on the continent and everywhere else have been largely disappointed (according to Mandela). And it is because those who are entrusted with power used it to oppress the masses, subjugating national interest to personal interest.



The intractable problem Nigeria contends with is a system of motley political leadership. A system of leadership that is blemished with self-centeredness, greed-ridden corrupt leaders, who purposely ignored Plato's concept of justice. They are blinded as to see or appreciate its multi-faceted benefits to the state. The crop of leaders in Nigeria absolutely lacks the willingness and the patriotism to formulate a purposeful program that will transform the lives of the people in the state. They fatally misconstrue the reasons why they were elected into public office. The Nigerian state is in dire need of Plato's concept of justice. This is because this brand of justice will help to streamline Nigerian society and will prevent or restrict the political actors to confine themselves in the areas they are best suited for. It disgusted Plato when leaders meddled or interfered with other areas of callings, without sticking to their areas of specialization. He sees it as utter injustice that is capable of ruining and sinking the political ship of the state. It has graver implications on the Nigerian state. The acts breed corruption which led to the killings, violence. The lack of Plato's concept of justice in the Nigerian state leads to mediocrity like the saying goes; jack of all trades master of none all. It also gives room for free-lance to politicians to loot the state treasury and manifests very poor leadership.

### **Does Evil Exacerbate in the Nigerian State for Lack of Justice?**

Plato concept of justice meant a tripartite division of the Nigerian state, (Producers, Auxiliary, and the guardian class.). Justice flourished when our educational system is tailored to produce these professional categories. This means the rulers (guardian class) must have to be well educated, so as to eliminate a "government by opinion" in other words, majoritarian government. Plato believed that the guardian class is not a rule by the majority, because they were filtered by a thorough educational process. Those who emerged become the philosophers because it is not everybody in the state was mentally fit to be a philosopher, it was meant for the best brains. Those whose souls are not mixed with bronze or metal. Those who have seen a picture of the good that has mutual benefits for the whole state. The current of their minds flows toward the acquisition of knowledge and not wealth and accumulation of capital to the detriment of those they rules. Plato (2003, p. 195) "the philosopher is involved with the truth that is, not with the changing world of sensation, which is the object of knowledge." The guardian class must not meddle or interfere with any other job. The onus of rulership rested on them. Justice of this kind brings specialization as they are trained to carry out a job they are well fitted for. That is what made Plato's Republic/city ideal and a special kind of its own.

He selected individuals based on their abilities for the job, not because of tribe or relationship. Until Nigeria becomes the society that was described by Plato, there will be no end to her troubles of kidnapping, banditry, Boko Harem, killings the list is endless. Our leaders have lost the sense of Plato concept of justice. That is why they concerned themselves with the acquisition of property and the accumulation of capital. It is a system of oligopoly, their motive of coming into the corridors of power: is not for the love of truth, but materialism. That also explained the anarchical electoral systems. That is put in place to prevent those well-meaning Nigerians who have seen the object of good (knowledge), who when they come into power would have fixed the state. Plato (2003, p. 162) "Till philosophers become kings in this world or till those we now call kings and rulers really become philosophers, and political power and philosophy thus come into the same hands." The Nigerian state will not see the light of the good. If the onus of rulership continues to rest on the shoulders of leaders whose soul is corrupted with metallic bronze, those who use their political office as an avenue to nest their selfish interest. Leaders who could not decipher between personal interest and collective (national) good, those leaders who have the admixture of alloy or iron should not be allowed to be in the guardian class, but rather without delay should be thrust out

into the artisan/ agriculture (producers). Until this bold step is taken to filter our leaders, injustice will soar higher, evil/crime will exacerbate in an increasing measure.

In Plato's elucidation of justice in the state, the military class was distinguished by their spiritedness and courageousness. Plato (1997, p. 58) "Nevertheless, they certainly ought to be gentle to their friends and dangerous only to their enemies: else they will not wait for others to destroy them, but will be the first to do it for themselves." It is an injustice for the military class in Nigeria to abandon their primary role for the pursuance of wealth. According to Ibunge (2021),

Rivers state governor, Mr. Nyesom Wike, has said the fight to stop crude oil theft has continued to fail, because top-ranking officers of the military, police and the Nigeria civil defence corps (NCDC) were involved in the illegal activities...He urged the Nigerian government to consider the damage caused by the activities of crude oil thieves to the economic mainstay of the country and treat them as treasonable offenders.

Plato concept of justice will be very meaningful to the Nigerian state when our military class confine themselves to the task of security which they are trained for. Plato (1997, p. 77) averred that "further, we must not permit our men (military) I presume, to be receivers of bribes or lovers of money." Because of the injustice of interfering and meddlesomeness, they are relatively spiritless. The Nigerian military class in Plato's conception ought to be expunged from the temptation of corruption, they rather become vanguards of evil and corruption by venturing into oil bunkering and theft. If the military class does not live up to their responsibility but begins to interfere, evil and crime will exacerbate in the state. Plato (1997, P. 109) stated that:

But whenever they come to possess lands and houses, and money of their own, they will be householders and cultivators instead of guardians and will become hostile masters of their fellow citizens rather than their allies: and so they will spend their whole lives, hating and hated, plotting and plotted against, standing in more frequent and intense alarm of their enemies at home than for their enemies abroad: by which time they and the rest of the city will be running on the very brink of ruin. On all these accounts, asked, shall we say that the foregoing is the arrangement of their houses and other concerns of our guardians and shall we legislate accordingly or not?

Plato by his encyclopedic wisdom, stratified his ideal state into three professional classes, for the avoidance of crimes, hooliganism, corruption as is presently manifested in the Nigerian state. The lack of Plato's concept of justice in the state is the bane of all evil and crime in Nigeria because it gives our political office holders the free-lance to interfere and meddle with other areas where they are not needed. Our ruling class continued to use their political office as an advantage over the electorates who voted them into power. The state is constantly witnessing the incessant interference and meddlesomeness. Plato (1997, p. 133) added that "Well but we resolved that a state is just when then three classes of character present in it were severally occupied in doing their proper work: and that it was temperate, and brave and wise, in consequence of certain affections and conditions of these same classes." Interference and meddlesomeness are in itself is an invasion and banditry. For this and other problems like Boko Haram, corruption, and other political malfeasance to be solved, there must a strict adherence to Plato's concept of justice as a matter of rule. Since justice is the virtue upon which all other desirable values are built. It is therefore very crucial for the government to provide or remodel our educational system to recognized and meet Plato's

concept of justice. It is a truism that a just state recognized the role of education and educates its citizens in the direction of their various God-given talents according to the dominant element of everyone's soul. And order these elements into harmonious and coherent classes for the overall mutual benefits of the state.

The economic class should be so trained and be distinguished to meet the basic appetitive need of all. The state also should provide the necessary tools and requirements with which this class will effectively function with. Our system of democracy is not only a failure and disappointment to us as a people but to the African continent. This huge disappointment stems from the fact that, tragically, it negates Plato's concept of justice which is the fundamental of all types of justice. Our system of democracy lacks responsive institutions that are distinct but harmoniously working or striving together to sustain the noble ideals of his concept of justice upon which all other virtues consist. The lack of Plato's concept of justice provides the basic matrix for crimes to flourish in the Nigerian state. Hence evil exacerbated in the state, the spate of evil/injustice ranged not only in killings, banditry, Boko Haram, robbery. According to Plato (2003, p. 139), "Interference by the three classes with each other's job, and interchange of job between them. Therefore, does the greatest harm to our state, and we are entirely justified in calling it the worst of evil." The Nigerian state has an overbearing challenge of impending and interference on jobs. This injustice inhibits the development and growth of our state. It is a commonplace for politicians to interfere and interfere. This is due to personal interest, greed and what they can gain from the system. This practice has led to increased and exacerbated evil in the Nigerian state. It also explained the reasons for the assassinations, kidnapping, it accounts for the politics, outsmart one another and the currying of favour. This is the culture that has dominated our national politics also as politician defects/canoe jumping from one party to another more than a hundred times in a given period reason. They lack stick-ability as a philosophy. The total absence of Plato's concept of justice increased political corruption. It undermines good governance and flouts formal processes and manifested evil in the Nigerian state. Evidence of the lack of Plato's concept of justice in Nigeria has made injustice flourish. The exacerbation of unhealthy cut-throat competition of political gladiators to the detriment of the common man in the state. The primary function of unification of the Nigerian state become problematic, as the margin/division of the state became wider than ever before. According to Ekekwe (1986, P. 30), "That there could be a united Nigeria is indicative of the absence of serious commitment to building a strong central state." There is a reinforcement of nepotism, ethnicity, and tribalism made possible by the lack of Plato's concept of justice. Evil soar higher as the motive of coming into power is to accumulate capital. This scenario has kept citizens in perpetual poverty and misery According to Akani (2019):

The Nigerian state since 1960 has assumed a character that is in contradiction with the common good of the Nigerian people. The dream of the founding fathers at independence is now a mirage. The "Giant of Africa" is now bound to neo-colonial imperialist shackles...A thorough examination of the Nigerian state will show that its policies and programmes mirror the obnoxious practice of a post-colonial state. This is why its activities are mostly described as internal colonialism (p.175).

The evil of lack of patriotism, insensitivity, the unbridled tenacity for the competition of political power, marked by fraudulent electoral practices in the Nigerian state has reached its crescendo. Plato thought that, the conflicting interest of different segments of the Nigerian state can live harmoniously and coherently without interference. His theory of justice was believed to be the best rational and just for our political system. The theory is capable of causing Nigerian society to

flourish. If only we confined ourselves to the areas we are best suited or trained for. Plato's theoretical design of justice and practical implementation is hinged on the morals of our leaders. This is because political actors have failed to see his concept of justice as something that has some advantages for the whole Nigerian state. Thereby our society will be internally fragmented due to unjust interference or meddling of these three classes. The Nigerian politicians/leaders believed virtually all of them irrespective of what he or they studied, can steer the political ship of the Nigerian state. Therefore the artisans can interfere or dive into any area of political office. This practice only ended up exacerbating evil in the Nigerian state because interference and meddling only undermines the concept of Plato's concept of justice. As such Nigerian society is characterized by increased unrestrained evil and injustice as earlier mentioned above. The Nigerian state has to borne the cost of this fundamental and grandiose mistake and the incessant political unrest that follows in some parts of the state was due to the lack of observance of the concept of Plato's concept of justice in Nigeria.

### **What is the Relevance of Plato's Concept of Justice in Contemporary Nigeria?**

Plato's concept of justice is fast becoming fascinating and relevant to the contemporary Nigerian state. This fascination is due to the many-sided injustice that is endemic in our socio-political system. The value of patriotism has fizzled out from our national lives and discourse. The Nigerian society/state is proud of unwholesome acts they should be very much ashamed of. Moral decadence inevitably manifested itself in our national lives. This odious phenomenon in Nigeria enervated the spirit of patriotism in the lives of well-meaning Nigerians. A critical examination of the Nigerian state revealed that from 1999 when we started democratization, unimaginable injustice and crimes has been done to humanity and the Nigerian state. In the recent past, the media was awash with the news of banditry, kidnapping, Boko-Haram, leading to thousands of innocent Nigerians. In the Southeast, it was with the news of secession struggle which forced millions of people to sit at home every Monday, killings and the reign of terror. Nigerians today are faced with untold hardship as a result of leadership marked by greed and self-centeredness. Some have been driven into destitution, hence could not boast of three square meals because of poverty and squalor. Leaders live in affluence and wealth at the expense of others. For young Nigerian graduates to access jobs in Nigeria, discrimination by tribe, religion, godfatherism and the social status of parents must speak louder than their academic certificates or qualifications. The Nigerian state is the only state where a young graduate who studied political science works as a laboratory attendant, graduate medicine is secretary to the local government chairman so on. Nigeria is one of the states where people (workers) are not rightfully placed according to their specializations. This is in itself an injustice condemned by Plato because it is the genesis of all evil and the crimes mentioned above in the state.

The relevance of Plato's concept of justice in contemporary Nigeria cannot be overemphasized, as it is seen as the cornerstone of an ideal society. His concept of justice was a product of a very corrupt society. Athens was at the time ruled by a very fickle assembly that was easily swayed from a profound democracy from whence the western world emulated and admired. This is because of its high degree of participation by all free-born male citizens. While it is quite difficult to trace the beginning of democracy in Athens, suffice it to say that it has become a world view for a state to practice democracy as a system of government. Athens democratic system was bartered a neighbouring militarize Spartan state. The city came under major criticisms for its notorious government led by thirty oligarchs in 404 BC. Socrates was one of the well-known critics of the government and its institution. The leadership was despotic, which also led to his execution. Purshouse (2007. p, 3) opined that,



Socrates death was perhaps the most important single factor influencing Plato's increasing hostility to the society in which he lived. Socrates was prosecuted in 399 BC. Officially on two counts: impiety, or more specifically the introduction of new divine powers, and corruption of the Athenian youth. These accusations may well have been a smokescreen for more political charges, as Socrates was well known for criticizing his city's government.

From the foregoing, Plato wanted a just society where every citizen of the state performs his or her duty most appropriately or for which they are best suited. Therefore he divided the state into auxiliary, economic and the guardian class, and strongly advocated for the philosopher to be the king because he has seen the perfect good based on his knowledge and reason. The description is a vivid picture of the contemporary Nigerian state. Presently Nigeria is ruled by leaders in sheep clothing, known for their greed, selfishness, fickleness, who within a second robbed the treasury with a single stroke of the pen. Ifowodo (2013) averred that:

But how less menacing is the robber armed with a pen, who steals billions with a single stroke, thereby inflicting mortal injuries on the body politic? The consequences of pen robbery are far more lethal than armed robbery; to say this is not to minimize the material and psychological consequences of the latter (p.12).

Leaders came into power through electoral malfeasance, for the sole purpose of enriching themselves. Turned the state wealth to personal fortune, and that is why our democracy is characterized by evil. Those disgruntled leaders always sort for ways to manipulate the system to the detriment of the citizens, for what they will get out of the system. According to Plato (1997, p. 270), then shall we not assert that the cause which produces such persons therein is wanted of education and bad training, and a bad condition of the commonwealth?...well then, this or something like it, will be the character of a state governed by an oligarchy; and if not more.

Therefore, the relevance of Plato's concept of justice to the contemporary Nigerian state is his idea of the best brain to rule the state (Philosopher) preconditioned on education blended with philosophy. The Nigerian state has not gotten it right. A closer inspection of her past and present leaders revealed that the state has been ruled by military dictators who did not have the requisite educational qualification. Because of the capitalistic nature of the state, these men in khaki who by the constitution known for defence, left with the business of defending the state from external aggression tend to capture political power. They used political power as an instrument of amassing untold wealth to the bewilderment of all. The military junta recorded remarkable failure in the history of Nigeria, and caused a great setback of the state as they went on a looting spree, human right abuses, unrestrained corruption was the order of the day. The military regime continued from one coup to the other. According to Akani (2019, p.168);

From 1966-1997, the Nigerian state has passed through ten coups and counter-coups about one hundred and forty eight Nigerians killed. The most deadly, was that of April 20, 1990, led by Gideon Orker. These deaths certainly do not include those whose death was not officially recorded either on the parade ground or in the barracks.

There was a displayed inept leadership that threatens the state unity of the state, which culminated in the Nigerian civil war (1967-70). These became a political mollymawk bird patching on the neck of leaders as they battled to accumulate capital. It was this background that informed Plato's emphasis on the philosopher ruler based on his knowledge and reason. This is a great lesson for the

Nigerian state. Leaders did not emerge through rigorous educational training as advocated by Plato, but rather by the electoral deficit. Leaders emerged in his ideal city through rigorous educational training and years of training based on their abilities; hence rulers were able to make good laws and take the right decision on what is best for the mutual benefit of the state.

His innovation of justice of the state and the notion of departmental excellence is another key relevance to the contemporary Nigerian state. According to Plato (1997, p. 133), well, but we resolved that a state was just when the three classes of character present in it were severally occupied in doing their work: and that it was temperate, and brave and wise, in consequence of certain affections and conditions of these same classes.

Plato's concept of justice forbade inter-switch and meddlesomeness; therefore it brings departmental excellence to the Nigerian state that is what made his concept of justice important. Each class becomes professional in their job, the Nigerian state has not fully operationalized these ideals due to the interference or the incessant diving into areas they are ill-educated. Another area of relevance worth mentioning is the uniqueness of his military class that was admonished to be kind and gentle to friends and dangerous to enemies. Plato (1997. p, 58) averred that "Nevertheless they certainly ought to be gentle to their friends, and dangerous only to their enemies; else they will not wait for others to destroy them but will be the first to do it for themselves." The Nigerian military was once feared than loved for her doggedness across the African sub-region. It was well known for its peace and security missions across the trouble zones of Africa. According to Enyiocha (2021);

The soldiers and officers of the Nigerian Army had undergone intensive military training at the General Martin Luther Agwai peacekeeping centre in Jaji, Kaduna ahead of their departure to Mali on a peacekeeping mission. They were subjected to three weeks of special intensive training, and the completion of the pre-departure training qualifies them to be deployed in the United Nations Multi-dimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) (p.6).

In the recent past, we have witnessed the lapses of the Nigerian military class, because they have lost public trust and confidence. They are no longer seen as men trained for the protection of our borders but have become active in the state's politics. No election in Nigeria comes to a logical conclusion without military involvement. There is a corpus of literature of military involvement in politics; they are used as an effective tool of oppression and intimidation of electorates by corrupt and unpopular politicians at the poll because of their weapons, as it is unwise to fight a man who is well armed, the unarmed electorates always become prey to these predators. And as a result hundred of electorates have lost their lives because the military has left their primary duties for the pursuance of wealth. They come under incessant attacks and lost good numbers of soldiers to Boko Haram. They have become materialistic, involved in oil bunkering. Profiteers of illegal arms deals, looted monies meant for the purchased of arms thereby making some top-ranking military officials be so rich due to primitive accumulation of untold wealth and capital for themselves. Soldiers used maximum force on innocent Nigerians; they have become victims of their own atrocities and evils they perpetrated on the civilian community. According to Sogunro (2019):

In January 2017, the Nigerian Air force bombed an IDP camp in Ranni, Borno state and killed 167 civilians, again including children. A 2018 report by Amnesty International also showed how soldiers used force and threat of

force to rape women in IDP camps. To date, no one has been held accountable for these horrific incidents.

There is often a show of military might and power when they are dealing with the civilian community but blamed the government for non-provision of equipment for their inability to defeat the Islamic extremists' code-named Boko Haram. Corruption has eaten deep like a cankerworm in the military. It has also held them back from improving on her capabilities. The terrorist group has held some states hostage. Properties worth millions have been destroyed. The moral lesson the Nigerian state can learn from Plato is that the military should abstain from every materialistic tendency as it is a profanation. Plato (1997, p. 109) stated that:

We must tell them that they are in perpetual possession of a divine species of the precious metals, placed in their souls by the gods themselves, and therefore have no need of earthly Ore; that in fact it would be a profanation to pollute their spiritual riches by mixing them with the possession of mortal gold, because the world's coinage has been the cause of countless impieties, whereas theirs is undefiled. Therefore to them, as distinguished from the rest of the people it is forbidden to handle or touch gold and silver, or enter under the same roof with them. Or to wear them on their dresses, or to drink out of the precious metals.

Materialism is profanation in Plato's ideal state. It made the military class be professional and spirited because there was no meddlesomeness and interference. This is one key relevance or importance of Plato's concept of justice in the contemporary Nigerian state. The state needs fundamental military reforms that will help strengthen our military class and cause them to conform to Plato's ideology which is justice. The Nigerian state has much to learn from Plato's military class. We must reform the military education in Nigeria also, let it be structured to eliminate anything that will cause them to be spiritless and be effeminate and strike out effectively from them the causes of fear and death. But instil in them the courage or task of protecting the state from external invasion. Hence the Nigerian soldiers must be spirited, courageous and bold to withstand the firing power of Boko Haram and dislodged every terrorist group. That is what makes Plato's concept of justice to be very much relevant to the contemporary Nigerian state. The military displayed uncommon ruthlessness when dealing with civilians. According to Ukpong (2020) Mr Saro Wiwa and eight others Ogoni leaders were tried by a secret military tribunal and executed by hanging on November 10, 1995. A tragic end to their non-violence campaign against the Royal Dutch shell Company and the Nigerian government over the economic injustice and the pollution of Ogoni that arose from oil exploitation...Saro Wiwa was a world-renowned peace advocate who fought for the liberation of the Niger Delta but was cut down in his prime by the Gen. Sani Abacha military junta.

The above was one of the darkest moments in Nigeria and the world at large. The Nigerian military displayed power and might on armless activists who wanted a better living conditions for their people due to environmental degradation orchestrated by oil giants. They maimed and killed without restraint. The reforms of the Nigerian army tilt towards discipline, an army with readiness to attack the enemy of the state and put out every adversary bravely. The Nigerian state must be ready and train its military fit for warfare at any given time. Therefore the military must not be ill-equipped, but like an attacker's dog, more willing to attack. Therefore, Plato admonished that they must not meddle or dangle into areas they are not fit or trained for nor allowed their souls to be corrupted by private property. Plato (1997, p.110) noted that:

And in this arrangement, we were more consistent with our former conclusions. For I believed we said that all private property whether in house or lands or anything else, must be forbidden...And prevent them from tearing the city asunder by applying the term mine each to a different object, instead of all to the same...

The challenge confronting the Nigerian military today is to eke out the common enemy from their hideout. But is occasionally met with some difficulties because the military has compromised standards. According to Solomon (2017);

As Nigeria fights the brutal insurgency of Boko Haram, its army is hampered by an equally dangerous enemy corruption is according to a new report by Transparent International (TI) a German-based non-governmental organization, which found that Nigerian military officers, politicians and other elites have enriched themselves by diverting money that was meant to fight terror (p.34).

Plato foreseeing the corrupting influence of private property advocated for an army that would not acquire property, but an outstanding military that is feared focused and courageous in taking the war on terror/insurgency to its logical end. This is made possible by a renewed military might by recapturing the swathes of territories in the states that are under the dictates of these dark forces. For this to be feasible or practicable, president Muhammadu Buhari must assume the personal command of the Nigerian army as it's not just enough, to be addressed as Commander In Chief of the armed forces. According to Machiavelli (1999, p. 41),

A prince should assume personal command and captain of his troop (military) himself; a republic must appoint its citizens, and when a commander so appointed turns out incompetent, should change him, and if he is competent, it should limit his authority by statute. Experience has shown that only prince and armed republics achieve solid success and that mercenaries bring nothing but loss.

It is quite important as the Nigerian state reposition her military as securing the state is key and more critical at this moment where insurgent has become the order of the day. This and more are some important is what the Nigerian state learns from Plato concept of justice. Plato's concept of justice provides or forms the bedrock for conventional justice for a state to flourish. Incidentally, the Nigerian state was not founded on Plato's notion of justice but rather lacks everything that represents justice as a noble virtue. The Nigerian state becomes an appendage of capitalism and promotes imperial tendencies. Hence the state is rive into two irreconcilable hostile classes. With the emergence of the bourgeoisie class in the wake of empty independence of the Nigerian state, the class set the precedence for corruption to thrive in the state. As they nest and viciously compete to accumulate capital for themselves, leading to alienation, the workers/proletariats sold their labour power to survive. Capitalism becomes the springboard for all sources of evil, as it is a total negation of the ideals and virtues of Plato ideal city cum justice. It accounted for all the political misfortunes of the Nigerian state, because as a class-ridden society where the workers are directly standing in opposition to the property class for the socio-political and economic woes and impoverishment they had suffered in the state.

Our system of the democratic system which is characterized by anarchism was carefully and deliberately packaged and handed down to us by leaders whose souls have been corrupted by



metallic bronze, marked by a lawless spendthrift. Therefore, leaders travelled equidistant with Plato's concept of justice. Hence our system of democracy must be reformed to urgently reflect a system where everyone will be given the opportunity to participate in the state. In Plato's notion of justice, everyone should be given the privilege to put to use for which nature intended him. Justice, therefore, implies that everyone would perfectly do his own business without meddling or interference. These anticipated reforms are necessary because, the Nigerian state has made a mockery of democracy which is characterized by politics of exclusion and popular participation, instead of all-inclusive political engagement or participation. The Athenian democracy that Plato experienced was known for its exclusion of slaves, aliens, and the women fold from participating in the fickle assembly of free-born. The Nigerian democracy is an epitome of political intolerance as it also stands to exclude perceived oppositions by using the Economic And Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) as an instrument of oppression, intimidations and coerced opponent to join the ruling Oligopoly against their wish, that is the height of injustice in the Nigerian state. Those who eventually stood their ground to be part of the defective system become the sacrificial lamb that was slain on the political altar. In Athenian democracy, the philosopher and the great teacher Socrates suffers this fate and he was executed, which made Plato to be disgusted with the Athenian democracy, thereby reframing from politics. The Nigerian democracy is made worse than the very Athenian democracy Socrates and Plato condemned, where corruption, electoral malpractice, with an amorphous political class that compromised standard because of political gains.

The days are over when the founding fathers worked for the unification and benefit of all in the state. The 21<sup>st</sup>-century Nigerian state has lost the sense of everything that symbolized Plato's concept of justice, upon which every true system is built. The virtue of justice is now a mirage, as leadership is taken over by hooliganism, without the character of decency. Politics has become the surest way for quick money, therefore, the political space is n has become anarchical without respect to lives. As political theorists, we have not gotten a corresponding theory to interpret the brand of politics practised in Nigerian. A political system where an unpopular candidate who failed in an election, is declared a winner in the court. Thereby the court has become the ballot box in Nigeria. It has associated itself with conflicting judgments in recent elections. The emergence of an oligarchic leadership typify by the love of materialism, profiteers of a politically corrupt system that led the state in borrowing and sorrowing because of their spendthrift.

Unfortunately Nigerian leadership is governed by these urges. Plato jettisoned these immoral and evil political practices. He therefore strongly believed that justice will reign supremely in any state like Nigeria if there is a clear cut separation or departmentalization where everyone was given the appropriate training to function harmoniously in the area he or she is best suited. This is what informs or calls for the reforms in the Nigerian state. There should be a justice system that brings specialization, excellence and forbids politicians from interference and meddlesomeness in the state. Plato trusted those who are to ensure this justice in the state, are not these crops of leaders who came to the lever of political power through electoral fraud. Whose souls are supremely governed and ruled by a lawless appetite for public funds with a spendthrift. Leaders with unrestrained attitudes are inclined to be wasteful resources of the state. But leadership that conforms to his concept of justice, reason and pursues accordingly the state's collective good. But a Leader, who has distinguished himself through meticulous study of philosophy and contemplation of the good life, is one who has dedicated his/her entire life to the virtue of learning and knowledge. One who has rigorously pursued and obtained his intellectual ends Plato said is deed fit and competent to steer the political ship of the Nigerian state.

As the Nigerian state transits from one democratic government to another, it is expected that leaders will no doubt extrapolate answers to the outrageous violence, immoralities, corruption that has characterized the Nigerian state through various legislations. Aristotle (1976, p.92) “Legislators make their citizens good by habituation; this is the intention of every legislator, and those who do not carry it out failed of their object. This is what makes the difference between a good constitution and a bad one.” Not only do leaders set the pace or direction for those they lead, they are also responsible making these changes manifest in the state. The success or failure seen in the state is dependent on the crops of leaders that found themselves at the corridors of power due to a systemic failure in the state. Unfortunately, the mindsets of the average leader in Nigerian are tailored toward a set goal of personal aggrandizement, accumulation of capital. The leadership of them is a time to satisfy their greed and the quest for materialism that governed their urges. There is a divorcement between Plato concert of justice and the system of bad government that is practised in the Nigerian state. This is largely responsible for the societal ills, and Nigeria is fast becoming ethno- a centric and clannish state, where the centre could not hold water. Our electoral system cum institutions is the products of a defective systems that breed corruption and fraud. Hence the result of such a system is that it has led to citizens wallowing in hopelessness, hunger, oppression, violent crimes, banditry, a systemic/institutional failure that originated from inept leadership failure. These accounted for Plato’s theory of justice as a correctional measure to fix the Nigerian state. The souls of our leaders must be refined towards seeing the absolute good. They must be primarily committed to the improvement of knowledge. Their soul as a matter of fact must be ruled by reason. They must refrain from every appearance of evil or injustice, by exploiting and outsmarting one another to the detriment of the state. There must be habituation of justice in the soul of our leaders, a proper ordering of virtues within the soul which is the seat of reason. This will spur our leaders to act justly and hate to be engaged in immoral acts of embezzlement of public funds, corruption, ethnic rivalry, and forgery of certificates with the intent to remain in public office.

For the Nigerian state to be just, and leads other African states out of leadership malfeasance in the Sub-region, individual leaders must intrinsically be just. It is and until justice habituates in the souls of every leader, Nigerians will not be just. When justice becomes a dominant object in the state, it provides the condition for the peace and progress of the state, as it stabilized the unequal distribution of common resources even though Plato was not an exponent of distributive justice. This is very relevant to our co-existence as a heterogeneous society, where natural endowments are not equally given by nature. According to Plato (2007, p. 52),

If a city is too unequal in the distribution of wealth among its citizens, it will suffer internal division, becoming effectively two cities at war with one another, that of the poor and that of the rich when a state is divided in this way moreover, it can be more easily be attacked from outside, since the enemy can ally itself with one of the factions-mostly like the poor to overthrow the other.

The prevailing injustice in the Nigerian state has led to the strangulation of the state’s economy. Thereby it makes the property class be the Lord over the working class. That is why Plato’s concept of justice becomes very crucial at this moment of Nigeria’s democratization. It helps sanitize our society.

### Conclusions

The Nigerian state cannot afford to down Plato’s concept of justice, as it plays a very critical role. We believed that societal ills can be corrected through justice. He sees it as virtue and bond that stick together a shattered society, and order the course of our daily activities. As health is to our

physical body so is justice to a healthy society and the human soul. Nigerian society is sick because of a lack of justice, which is why evil thrived unrestrained especially from the military junta until now. It was an era marked for the Thrasymachian justice. But for Nigeria to be healthy, one must not ignore Plato's concepts of justice that justified the tripartite division of the state and training that allowed each to function in the area he/she is best suited for.

### Recommendations

The Nigerian state has a lot to gain from Plato's theory of justice, seeing the lopsided quasi-federal system of government, which has confiscated all that belongs to the federating units with obnoxious laws. The problems of Boko Haram, militancy, banditry, corruption are direct manifestations of injustice with the prevalence of inequitable distribution of wealth satisfactorily to all component states. This takes us to query the inept leadership failure in the state from Independence until date, the Nigerian state is made worse by leadership problem. A leadership that concerned themselves with self-aggrandizement only see political office as an avenue for the accumulation of capital. Recommending Plato's concept of justice may be repugnant to people, especially now when it is fashionable for leaders to translate political office for quick money. But for the Nigerian state to develop we cannot afford to delay in incorporating his justice as a state.

Plato place priority on the education of the statesman, therefore whoever must be the statesman in Nigeria, should be someone who has passed through a rigorous educational training. One, who is like Philosopher king, has seen the *good* whose soul is not corrupted with metallic bronze. His Auxiliary class (Military) was made up of spirited men and women. We must therefore give our military class the right military education that will make the spirited and the brave to be dangerous to the states' enemies.

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