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Leadership Whoism: An Examination of Udofia's Perspective in the Light of Nigerian Leadership Crisis

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Abstract: This paper is aimed at exposing the essential logical formula for leadership as posited by Christopher Udofia. Leadership is a very important subject of discourse in our societies. The reason for this is that there is a necessary and undeniable nexus between the quality of leadership and the developmental strides of a society.

Although the problem of leadership is a universal one, this problem is very common in Nigeria, especially with the kinds of political leadership she has had post-independence. The questions then are: who is a good leader? What makes one a leader? Are leaders born or are they made? These and many others are the topical questions that are viewed from the perspective of Udofia.

Udofia believes that a careful assessment of the 'Golden Triad on Leadership' can help in ramifying leadership challenges by positing the categorical fundamental criterion for becoming a leader. In this paper, we expose Udofia's leadership philosophy, analyze it, and examine his logic of virtue-leadership correspondence which he extrapolates from the philosophical posits of the golden age philosophers, where the possession of virtue is seen as a *conditio sine qua non* for leaders. Finally, we situate Udofia's leadership philosophy in the Nigerian space and examine its relevance to the leadership problems we have post-independence. The paper concludes that for Nigeria to prosper, her leaders need to be both morally and effectively competent.



Keywords: leadership, effectiveness, post-independence, ethical virtues

Introduction

Nigeria has particularly suffered from bad or poor leadership, which has led to several existential issues. This is because there is a necessary and undeniable nexus between the quality of leadership and the developmental strides of a society. Although this problem is very common in Nigeria, especially with the kinds of political leadership she has had post-independence, it is not a problem that is only peculiar to Nigeria. The problem of leadership is a universal one. Meanwhile, the concept of leadership should not only be limited to politicians or political leaders because, in one way or the other, we always find ourselves in positions of leadership, be it in our homes, churches, schools, social gatherings, and the like. The questions then are: who is a good leader? What makes one a leader? Are leaders born or are they made?

These and many others are the topical questions that Christopher Udofia intends to address, using what he calls the “Golden Triad on Leadership,” in his article “Leadership Whoism: An Insight into the Logic of Good Leadership.” He captured it in the questions “Who ought to be a leader?”, “Is leadership an all comers affairs?” (Udofia 2023, p 23). Udofia believes that a careful assessment of the “Golden Triad on Leadership” can help in ramifying leadership challenges by positing the categorical fundamental criterion for becoming a leader. In this paper, we intend to expose Udofia’s leadership philosophy and examine his logic of virtue-leadership correspondence, which he extrapolates from the philosophical posits of the golden age philosophers, where the possession of virtue is seen as a *conditio sine qua non* for leaders. Finally, we shall try to situate Udofia’s leadership philosophy in the Nigerian space and examine its relevance to the leadership problems we have in Nigeria, post-independence.

The Concept of Leadership

The concept of leadership is a very broad one, such that attaining unanimity in definition becomes a herculean task. What is common is that many people often believe that only when one is in position of power and authority can such a person be qualified to be called a leader. Demystifying this notion of leadership, John Maxwell in his book *The 360° Leader* writes:

If I had to identify the number one misconception people have about leadership, it would be the belief that leadership comes simply from having a position or title. But nothing could be further from the truth. You don’t need to possess a position at the top of your group,



department, division, or organization in order to lead. If you think you do, then you have bought into the position myth. A place at the top will not automatically make anyone a leader. The Law of Influence in *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* states it clearly: “The true measure of leadership is influence - nothing more, nothing less” (Maxwell 2011, p. 5).

Maxwell (2011, p. 1) argues that every leader must learn to “lead up, lead across, and lead down”. This means that one can be a leader without necessarily being on top or being the boss. What makes one a leader is your ability to command influence that will lead to followership. According to Maxwell (2011, p.1), there are five levels of leadership:

1. **Leadership by position:** People follow you because they have to; they are obligated to. Here, your influence will not extend beyond the lines of your job description.
2. **Leadership by permission:** People follow you because they want to. At this stage, your relationship is beyond stated authority.
3. **Leadership by production:** Here, people follow you because of what you have done for the organization. They like you because of your success.
4. **Leadership by people development:** People follow you because of what you have done for them.
5. **Leadership by personhood:** At this level, people follow you because of who you are and what you represent. This is the highest level or step. This step is reserved for leaders who have spent years growing people and organization.

Leadership has been defined as “the process of influencing the activities of an individual or a group in efforts towards the achievement of goals in a given situation” (Simmons 1996, p. 2). According to Nick Barney and Mary Pratt (Barney and Pratt, n.d.), the concept of leadership is tied to the “ability of an individual or group of people to influence and guide the followers or members of an organization, society, or team”. The source of influence may be formal or informal. Leaders can emerge from within a group as well as being formally appointed. Leadership is a developable skill.

Leadership is akin to a dynamic process in which people come together to pursue changes and, in doing so, collectively develop a shared vision of what the world, or some part of it, should be like making sense of their experience and shaping their decisions and actions. Thus, as Cole (2002, p. 54) posits:



Leadership is a dynamic process at work in a group whereby one individual over a particular period of time, and in a particular organizational context, influences the other group members to commit themselves freely to the achievement of group tasks or goals.

According to Eyo and Udofia (2016, p. 183-185), “leaders differ from non-leaders because of the unequalled drive for achievement, unparalleled level of ambition, unweathering energy, unrelenting tenacity and a level of initiative in decision making, action and proactiveness.” These are the characteristics that make a leader stand out. It is one thing for one to claim to be a leader; it is another thing for such a person to demonstrate the character of leadership. In other words, every leader has a motivating factor. That is why Udofia in his *Leadership and National Development* argues that “leaders are singularized by the traits of leadership and motivation which are palpable in their burning passion to lead, accept responsibilities, win, be in authority and possess power as a means to positive influence” (2023, p. 69). A leader is someone who has moral temerity. Morality and virtue should be the principal feature in a leader. This is because a moral and virtuous leader will always put the interest of the followers before him, he will be responsible and accountable. The presence of moral virtues will be his guide while exercising his leadership role.

Two Kinds of Leaders

James Burns makes a distinction between transforming and transactional leadership. His modal and end values offer a way to think about the question, “Who is a good leader?” in terms of their relationship to followers and the means and ends of actions. Burns brought ethics to the fore in leadership studies by claiming that leaders must choose ethics over effectiveness, and altruism over self-interest. In his seminal work, *Leadership*, Burns differentiated between transactional leaders, or managers, who lead by using rewards and punishments; and transformational leaders who lead by inspiring, cajoling, or convincing followers to become leaders themselves by setting their sights on altruistic goals and purposes.

Transactional leadership rests on the values found in the means of an act. These are called modal values which include responsibility, fairness, honesty, and promise-keeping. Transactional leadership helps leaders and followers reach their own goals by supplying lower level wants and needs so that they can move up to higher needs. Transforming leadership is concerned with end values, such as liberty, justice, and equality. Transforming leaders raise their followers up through various stages of morality and turn their followers into leaders (Rokeach 1973, p. 9). Ideally, “transforming leadership entails the withering away of the leader. Leadership beget leadership and



hardly recognized its offspring” (Burns 1978, p. 426). Transforming leadership aims at empowering followers and making them independent of their leaders.

Burns (1978) and his followers assumed that incompetent, immoral, and self-serving leaders are not “real leaders” at all. More recent theorists have described what philosopher Joanne Ciulla calls the “Hitler problem.” If Hitler was not a “real leader,” then what was he? Making sense of effective but immoral leadership, and moral but ineffective leadership, is the sort of conceptual work carried out by Christopher Udofia, Joanne Ciulla, and other leadership scholars.

Udofia’s Leadership Philosophy

Udofia in his work “Leadership Whoism: An Insight into the Logic of Good Leadership” starts by articulating the importance of virtue to leadership. He uses the trio of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle to encapsulate what should constitute to effecting leadership. For Udofia, the tenet and the foundational base of good leadership is **virtue**. He wrote, “leaders who fail to cultivate virtue, *ipso facto* are in deficit of good character” (Udofia 2023, p. 24). Therefore, for effective display of good leadership, there must be a “direct correspondence between possessing of virtues and display of good leadership” (Udofia 2023, p. 24).

According to Udofia, virtue may be defined as “a beautiful disposition which prompts one into excellence in action” (Udofia 2023, p. 24). Thus, every expression of good is the disposition of virtue. On the other hand, Hackett and Wang defines virtue as “the character trait that makes up good character and enables people to be good” (p. 886). Virtue has a close affinity with character, and this is why Aristotle defines it as “a state of character which is a means between vice, and one of defect, the other of excess” (Sterba 2009, p. 15). Manz et al. writes that “the concept of virtue captures the highest aspiration of human beings” (2009, p. 3). Similarly, the authors opine that virtues and virtuousness “have been associated with the best of the human condition, the most ennobling behaviors and outcomes, the excellence and essence of humankind, and the aspiration” (Manz et al. 2009, p. 17). This made Youssef and Luthan (2008 p. 142) articulate that “as with all concepts in the social science, the definition of virtuousness is far from being conceptual”. Virtue ethics is “that school of ethics that concerns itself with the predisposition of a person’s character which have developed overtime and resulted in exemplary action” (Udofia 2023, p. 24). Thus, the disposition of virtue is the cardinal point of effective leadership.

According to Udofia, the word “virtue” etymologically means “manliness” or “excellence in battle,” derived from the Latin word “vir.” Thus, it presupposes a sort of habitual disposition that is accompanied by excellent act. For Udofia therefore, every



leader must possess some sort of virtue ethics. Virtue ethics is contrary to the Kantian ethics of deontologism and that of utilitarianism. Whereas for virtue ethics, specificity is key; those of deontologism and utilitarianism tend to be universal. In other words, “unlike the universalism of Kantianism and Utilitarianism, virtue ethics is context-based, though the exercise of virtue is not situational. This is because what may function as an appropriate virtue, say humility, may not be appropriate in another context” (Udofia 2023, p. 24).

Udofia further observed that virtue ethics was of great importance to ancient Greece, particularly Athens. According to him, it was the circumstances which Athenians found themselves during the reign of Pericles that gave room for the philosophies of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle—the “Golden Triad”—to prosper. Leaders were required to undergo a tedious formative training and to obtain a level of education before being given political positions to man. This is where the “Golden Triad” gained its relevance.

The Golden Triad

The confluence between virtue and leadership in Socrates is what Udofia calls “ethical intellectualism,” which represents the leadership thought of Socrates (Udofia 2023, p. 25). For Socrates, acquired knowledge should lead to virtuous action. The essence of knowledge is to lead to moral action. Socrates maintained that “the end of knowledge is virtue, good, and right action; whereas its vice is ignorant of virtue.” Therefore, every situation needs a corresponding knowledge, in that “the fulfilment of goals is a function of knowledge one has of such end” (Udofia 2023, p. 25). Hence, he equated knowledge with virtue and only people who are knowledgeable enough should be given leadership roles. In other words, the level of your knowledge determines the role that you are to be given in order to have a good and effective leadership performance, which is “evident by the production of good moral content” (Udofia 2023, p. 25). This, Socrates argues, will remedy the leadership decadence in society.

Udofia observes that Plato’s thought on leadership was similar to that of his teacher Socrates. His leadership philosophy was traceable to his book *The Republic* and the *Statesman*. Like Socrates, Plato acknowledged the importance of virtue in leadership. He identified four kinds of virtues, namely: wisdom, courage, moderation, and justice (Udofia 2023, p. 25). Before going on to analyze these four, it is important to note here that, for Plato, virtue is the fulfilment of function, and the state is man writ-large.

Wisdom is the use of reason to balance desire. Courage is the virtue of the spirited part of the soul which is exercised when the soul is kept from engaging in unwarranted, unjustifiable, and impulsive defense action; when the appetitive part of the soul is subjected to limits and its desires and pleasures are moderated from excesses. The virtue



of justice is attained when each part of the soul is performing its assigned function. For Plato, it is the lack of wisdom that makes leaders commit wrong decisions. Hence, Plato recommends a high level of training for leaders. This is because knowledge leads to virtue, particularly the virtue of wisdom which every leader must have. Plato observed that achieving knowledge is possible through education which, according to Plato:

...was to last longer and culminated in the trainee philosopher king taking course in dialectics and moral philosophy at age thirty-five, after when s\he spends the next fifteen years on field experience of public service. At age fifty, the trainee leader should then be saddled with the responsibility of state leadership (Udofia 2023, p. 27).

This emanated from his idea and belief that only philosophers who are embedded with knowledge can achieve the expectation of good leadership in their society. But in actuality, less attention is paid to this area, which result in the various decadence experienced in the society.

Aristotle's leadership philosophy was established in his *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*. He taught leadership to many historical leaders, including Alexander the Great. Aristotle sees happiness to be the highest good which every person ought to pursue, hence his ethics is called "eudaimonism." However, the vehicle to achieving this happiness is virtue—an excellence—which one must possess as constituting the means of attaining the end (Udofia 2023, p. 28). Every good person must then possess virtue, "a character of doing a job well, the opposite of virtue is vice."

In his doctrine of the golden mean, Aristotle established virtue as "a mean with respect to two vices, one vice related to excess, the other to deficiency" (cited in Udofia 2023, p. 28). However, there is no mean or deficiency when it comes to virtue. Aristotle classified virtue into intellectual and moral virtues. Intellectual virtues act as a guide to moral virtues. Virtue for Aristotle has so much to do with the worth that an individual gives himself, as well as the value that the society places on the person, arising as a result of the possession and performance of all the virtues. In connecting Aristotle's virtue to his leadership philosophy, Udofia (2023, p. 30) alludes that "no person who has defaulted or is defective in virtues or does not possess virtues sublimely should be accorded the honor of being a leader in any form".

Udofia notes that Aristotle cited other areas of virtue to include prudence, temperance, courage, and justice. First, prudence as a virtue entails "choosing the right means toward worthy ends ... extending from how to choose the right people for the right duties, how to make the right decision in a perplexing situation" (Udofia 2023, p. 30). In fact, this is very distinctive as far as the characteristics of leadership are concerned. Leadership has a lot to do with decision-making, which entail choosing one or some



among many. Second, courage is the virtue that “encourages me to bear pains and other excruciating impediment on the part of achieving goals.” Certainly, leadership needs courage; because fear, threats, challenges, and intimidation abound in all aspects of leadership. Third, temperance is another important virtue that “is the virtue that regulates our indulgence thereby curbing excessiveness in appetite and sensual pleasure.” Fourth, justice as a virtue, according to Aristotle, connotes “doing the right thing required by principle of moral law” (Udofia 2023, p. 31).

Udofia places leadership face-to-face with virtue. For him, every leader must possess the character of virtue as observed and presented in the triad philosophies. He emphasizes the need to situate leadership virtue on concrete philosophical foundation in order to fully grasp and comprehend its entailments. Udofia (2023) identifies prudence and wisdom as necessary virtues of leadership without which there is a tendency for the vice of extremism. He further identified and analyzed how the virtue of courage, wisdom, prudence, justice, and fairness apply to the daily character of leaders. Leadership thus cannot be eschewed from the possession of virtue. However, he established another aspect of virtue which is effectiveness, stating that every good leader must be effective.

However, the possession of only effectiveness, or say technical effectiveness, is not enough to make one a good leader. And only possessing ethical virtues does not alone count for good leadership. A good leader must possess both technical effectiveness and ethical virtues. However, the problem with ethical virtues is that they are too numerous, but this does not discountenance its necessity. Hence, Udofia applies logic to his ideal leader. For him, a good leader is one who is both ethical and effective, and both must be true using the law of logical conjunction.

Juxtaposing Udofia’s Leadership Philosophy with Joanne Ciulla

Like Udofia, Joanne Ciulla has a great deal of interest in leadership ethics. She emphasizes the need for leaders to abide by them. Ciulla (2014) opines that in a world where everyone’s every wrinkle and wart is visible to the public; it is hard to have heroes. Paradoxically, our growing knowledge of leaders has led to a greater ambiguity regarding leadership ethics; the more flawed our leaders are, the more we yearn for exceptionally moral leaders. In addition to being discussed in public forums, the ethical dilemmas surrounding leadership are also submerged in the body of current leadership research. (Ciulla 2014, p. 4).

Furthermore, she makes a distinction between leadership ethics and philosophical ethics. In general, philosophical ethics concerns itself with the rightness or wrongness of human actions. It is a standard or principle that governs and regulates how man acts. It



prescribes how man ought to act in the society. On the other hand, leadership ethics is more specific. In defining leadership ethics, Ciulla et al. (2013, xxi) assert that:

Leadership ethics is the study of ethical problems and challenges that are distinctive to and inherent in the processes, practices, and outcomes of leading and following. In short, it examines the successes, failures, and struggles of the imperfect human beings who lead, aspire to lead, or follow.

Ciulla et al. (2013) note that although ethical values are necessary for leaders, these virtues manifest in leaders depending on the leadership style they are adopting. Status-quo leaders, who oversee comparatively stable communities, rely on moral principles, such as kindness and selflessness, to foster peaceful interpersonal interactions. Transactional leaders, whether in politics, education, or other domains, place a high importance on ethical principles since they are dependent on their partners, rivals, clients, and other parties to uphold their end of the bargain. This is a test of accountability and responsibility. Transforming leadership is based on moral principles and aims to bring about fundamental changes in society, including expanded fairness, equal opportunity, and individual liberty.

Ciulla et al. (2013) assert that being a leader is not about a person or a title. It is a procedure and a complicated moral relationship that should be founded on duty, devotion, emotion, and a common understanding of what is right. Finding a way to be both extremely effective and morally sound is the main difficulty of leadership. As was previously said, employers and slave owners can be highly successful at “gaining advantage” of their workforce; nevertheless, they sacrifice the moral treatment of their employees in order to maximize profits. There are leaders in every field who are highly efficient in their work but lack moral character, and there are leaders who are moral but lack effectiveness. Therefore, we must define excellent leadership as leadership that is both morally and practically sound.

Both Ciulla and Udofia identify ethical virtues as a necessary character which a leader must possess. This will help mold and guide leadership choices. They both assert in concordance that effectiveness is a *conditio sine qua non* for leaders. A leader may possess all moral or ethical virtues, but if he is not effective, he is not a good leader. However, unlike Udofia who did not seem to acknowledge the paradox of decision in favor of the view that leaders should be moral saints, Ciulla recognizes that sometimes, a leader may have to make “best decisions” which might be unethical or considered immoral by his followers. For instance, a manager may decide to lay off some workers or reduce their salaries in order to save the company from liquidation. While it would be immoral to lay off these workers as they depend on the job as their only source of livelihood, allowing them to continue will lead to the company’s bankruptcy. In this



dilemma, no matter what decision the leader takes, Ciulla argues that the leader should bear the responsibility. The job of a leader may not always be straight cut, but in as much as there are bound to be such scenarios, a leader must not let loose his ethical virtues.

Meanwhile, the Chinese has a different perspective in virtue in leadership. Chinese Confucianism considers concepts “closely associated with humanity, duties, wisdom, truthfulness, and properties are considered as core values” while Africans consider “truthfulness, courage, humility, [and] humanity” (Hendrick et al. 2020, pp. 953-4) as core virtues. This shows that there is a plethora of virtues that varies from place to place. Thus, there is no full consensus on the conceptualization of virtues leadership. The list of core leadership virtues as well as their interpretations, enactment, and relative levels of importance vary somewhat between major philosophical and spiritual traditions globally. Therefore, virtue in leadership varies from culture to culture, religion to religion, and spiritual wisdom to spiritual wisdom. According to Manz et al (2009, p. 121), “virtues are as old as recorded history. They may be practiced differently from culture to culture, but they remain universally valued and their unity is founded, even though there are disagreements on how they are integrated”.

Leadership Crisis in Nigeria

Sixty-three years after gaining independence, Nigerians are fed up with their leaders' inability to maintain effective administration; ensure the welfare of individuals based on the values of justice, equality, and freedom; and strengthen national unity (Emordi 2008, p. 5). A distorted leadership and a disoriented society, where decisions are made by the government against the wishes and interests of the electorate, are the foundations of a dysfunctional democracy, despite the claims of some that leadership incompetence is the fundamental issue impeding Nigeria's political and economic advancement. Violence and the rate of crime are certain to rise in such an environment where people start to think more about getting by on their own.

According to the social contract theory, the standard of state governance determines citizen patriotism, the rationale for patriotism, and the extent to which citizens are forced to be patriotic. There is a symbiotic link that holds the people and the leadership together. The “state assumes responsibility for the citizens by rendering their lives worthwhile, and the citizens owe the state allegiance” (Bako 1998, p. 117).

The liberal enlightenment of the 18th century provided philosophical and historical insight that gave rise to the tradition of human rights. Its modern incarnation has developed with a focus on legal structure connected to the expansion of social, economic, and cultural rights. According to reformist ideas, “the first generation of rights originated in the 17th and 18th centuries” (Onyekpere 2000, p. 1). These rights provide



citizens the foundation for legal and political claims and remedies against governments in the event that their use of power becomes improper or abnormal. With the ratification of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the United Nations granted these rights international legitimacy for the first time (UDHR 1948).

The standard of life among Nigerians began to decline in the early 1980s, with the country's increasing and spiraling costs of living. Certain necessities are becoming nearly unaffordable for those with modest incomes. The World Bank has emphasized the importance of social infrastructure services, but these infrastructures are breaking down piece by piece (Adejube 2002). The success or failure of a nation in terms of increasing commerce, diversifying its economy, eliminating poverty, enhancing environmental conditions, and managing population growth, is largely dependent on the quality of its social infrastructure. High-quality infrastructure services reduce manufacturing costs and increase productivity. The impoverished sectors and the society at large can both contribute to environmental sustainability with the aid of infrastructure services.

In 1983, Nigerian industrial sectors were unable to purchase machinery, plants, equipment, and replacement parts at competitive costs, and customers were also unable to purchase satisfactory products at competitive prices. As a result, real income levels could not be sustained or stabilized (Orewa 2002). Manufacturing operations were negatively impacted by inadequate infrastructure services. In order to guarantee their own private water supply, the majority of industrial and commercial organizations had to create their own electricity and washbasin bore holes. The consumers were forced to bear the additional production costs. Pollution, poor sanitation, and a lack of clean water were the norm in urban areas (Adejube 2002). As a result of rural-urban migration-induced population growth, there was a scarcity of housing in urban regions. Only a few families maintained waste disposal services, especially those in the outskirts of large cities.

During the Shagari regime, the availability of electric power began to fluctuate. The use of energy consumption as a developmental metric is common. In Nigeria, the National Electric Power Authority, a public corporation that produced around 99.5 percent of the total electricity consumed, had virtually complete control over the production and distribution of electricity. Transportation, crucial to the economic life of a nation and the general advancement of a state, was curtailed. In Nigeria, "the road, river, rail, and aviation modes of transportation were all badly maintained" (Ali 2013, p. 3).

Like the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights and other international human rights instruments, the 1979 Constitution, which outlines the "Fundamental Objectives of State Policy," is typically concerned with the welfare of the person within society. The various provisions highlight the importance of citizens' rights, which include the right to social security; the right to work; the freedom to choose an



employment and to receive just compensation; the right to a standard of living sufficient for his family's health and well-being; the right to housing, food, and clothing; the right to education; and the like. Nigeria should be able to achieve these rights because it has an abundance of natural and human resources (Emordi 2008). Nigeria is the fifth-ranked member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and produces some of the entire world's finest crude oil (Bako 1998).

However, despite these many resources that the nation has been blessed with, Nigerians continue to suffer economic hardship. Currently, the prices of goods and services are on its historic high and the naira currency has been highly devalued to 1600 *naira* per dollar. Petrol is sold at 1300 *naira* (₦1300) per liter. This has contributed to the high cost of living, such that even common food like *garri* is sold at 200 *naira* (₦200) per cup. Nigeria is one of the countries with the highest rates of unemployment. There are no jobs for graduates; and crimes such as insecurity, terrorism, and kidnapping, among others, are on the rise partly due to the unemployment status among the youth. What could be the cause of all these existential quagmires, despite the country being blessed with natural resources? The answer is not farfetched. It rests on the quality of leaders Nigeria has had post-independence.

Since independence, Nigeria has had many leaders who, unfortunately, could not match the wealth of the natural resources it has been given. Currently, we have one of the worst leaderships in Nigeria. Most of these leaders make bad economic policies that have ripple effects on the economy. For example, the issue of unnecessary borrowing started with the Shehu Shagari administration, where the debt was estimated to be around 16 billion dollars (Orewa, p. 115). Most of this money was not deployed to the service of Nigerians, but to the few who were in Shagari's cabinet. This dealt the first blow on the value of the *naira*. Nowadays, borrowing has become a norm in the Nigerian leadership political setting.

Once more, the national coffers were notoriously tampered with and plundered during Sani Abacha's administration. He and his family went on to become some of the wealthiest individuals in the planet. He also let his lieutenants serve themselves under their service to him. For example, following his demise, Chief Anthony Emeka Ani, his Minister of Finance, returned the \$45 million that Abacha supposedly awarded him for skillfully overseeing the collapsing economy. This "Ani Gift" was purported to be his portion of the \$1.5 billion that the Abacha administration overcharged for the debt buyback, which involved paying around \$500 million for a \$2.5 billion Russian loan on the massive Ajaokuta steel plant, which consumed about \$7 billion in all (Emordi 2008, p. 11-12). These are just few examples of the typical leaders that Nigerians have had post-independence.



It is worthy to note that borrowing itself is not bad, especially when the loan is used to develop the country. Many developed countries like the USA, Saudi Arabia, Luxemburg, and many more, have borrowed at some point in their quest for development. According to the data published by the International Monetary Fund, even countries like Egypt, Georgia, Argentina, South Africa, Kenya, are still in their debt. This points to the fact that it is difficult for a developing country to reach the peak of development without seeking foreign financial assistance. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, as of the third quarter of 2023, the foreign debt profile of Nigeria stands at 41.59 billion dollars. However, what is bothering is why Nigeria, despite this huge debt accrued, has little or nothing to show for it. The answer is obvious: corruption!

While some countries borrow to develop their countries, most countries in Africa, like Nigeria, borrow to embezzle. This is what makes the difference. Monies borrowed in the name of development are siphoned for personal use by those in power and their cronies, thereby defeating the initial purpose of the loan. In Nigeria, corruption has so much eaten into the system (Ignatius and Umotong, 2021). Ndiese notes that “corruption is the largest consumer of the (country’s) revenue. Unfortunately, its consumption benefits the accounts of a few individuals and corporate persons while the rest of the nation wallows in abject poverty, hunger, disease and debt” (p. 4). And it has affected the whole system of the country—health, education, social amenities, and others.

As observed by *ThisDay* newspaper (cited in Ali 2013, p. 6), the fact that the government has overlooked social infrastructure and has also refused to produce the basic needs of citizens are the main reasons behind the growing discontent and severe tension among citizens. In certain instances, these factors have also sparked violent youth, religious riots, and other types of societal unrest, such as the conflict between the Hausa and Birom communities in Jos, militant activities in the Niger-Delta region, and herders-farmers clashes, due to increasing agitation about the governmental disregard for their well-being (Ali 2013, p. 6).

Development strives on the shoulders of peace. Where there is no peace, there will be no development. Where there is no peace, what remains are constant conflict, chaos, anarchy, terrorism, insecurity, and other vices. In such a society, what is noticeable is absence of development and progress, be it economic or political. And we can only have such a society as a result of poor leadership. As noted by Udofia (2020, p. 75),

the deprecatory state of our country, Nigeria, or any other nation at all, is not an ineluctable metaphysical fate whose occurrence was inevitable; it only became inevitable because of the deliberate resolve of the leaders of that nation to lead the nation into a debacle. The quality of development engendered in any country is an invariable function of the quality of leadership operating the governance of the



country. The development failure experienced in Nigeria has an immitigable correlation with the failure of leadership in Nigeria.

Furthermore, Udofia identifies governance deficit, corruption, moral deficit, transvaluation of cultural values, crime, terrorism, poverty, and ethnic and religious chauvinism as the progenies of Nigeria's leadership crisis (Udofia 2020, 76-79). These and many more effects of poor and bad leadership are evidential in our everydayness as Nigerians.

It was Plato's idea and belief that only philosophers are embedded with knowledge and only they can achieve the expectation of good leadership in their society because of sustained education. But, in our today's society, less attention is paid to this area, which most likely caused these various dilemmas we experience. Udofia opined:

The abysmal leadership deficit global menace we experience is largely due to our making of leadership an all-comers affair where people who have little or no formal training in leadership are imposed as leaders. It amounts to gross misplacement of priority for different societies to develop and maintain different pedagogical frameworks for the training of the various expert functionaries in the society, yet a less than cavalier attention is paid to leadership training upon which the vitality and viability of the entire social system depends (Udofia 2023, p. 27).

This aspect of training is what leaders in Nigeria are bereft of. When, because of politics, an expert in one field is appointed to man a ministry of whom he has little or no knowledge of, how can we expect him or her to perform effectively? The more the society neglects this important primary move for leadership, the more it will witness leadership crisis. This is because the burden of leadership requires education, training, and committed preparation (Udofia 2023, p. 27).

Conclusion

As rightly noted by Ciulla (2004, p.16), the ultimate point of studying leadership is to be able to answer the question, "What is good leadership?" The use of the word "good" here has two senses, morally good and technically good or effective. In other words, for one to be a good leader, such a person must not only be an effective or ethical leader but must possess the two. A leader is one who exerts positive influence on his followers and possesses both ethical/moral virtue and technical effectiveness. These are leaders who will create the conditions necessary for building and sustaining strong institutions and followers for posterity. They will become good leaders who are going to be beneficial to



the people. Stated differently, “posterity is what it constantly turns out to be because of decisions and indecisions, actions and inactions of present thinking-interrogative human beings” (Dennis 2017, p. 217). And these decisions and actions are, as Heidegger would put it, products of the ontic-ontological nature of *Dasein* or the human (Ignatius & Dennis 2024, p. 104), aimed at promoting good leadership.

Sadly, this is where Nigerian leaders have failed. Nigerian leaders’ post-independence lack both of these features, but most especially ethical virtues. This has led to the many problems we have in the country today. While this is the current state of the country, it is not entirely impossible to change the narrative. What Nigeria needs are leaders with conscience—leaders who are both virtuous and technically effective. These leaders will apply wisdom in manning the affairs of the county because they will be properly trained in the art of leadership using the “leadership whoism” model of Christopher Udofia. These are leaders who will appoint ministers with the needed skillsets to man their various ministries; leaders who are open to criticism. It is this model of leadership that Nigeria needs in order to change the leadership turpitude so far experienced. Fortunately, Udofia has offered a guideline of what our leaders need in order for them to become good and beneficial leaders to the people. If the leaders acknowledge and follow the logical formula of Udofia herein, the country’s dreams of peace and economic development would not be that far ahead.

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