A Philosophical Interrogation of Partisan Politics and the Search for Socio-Political Stability in Nigeria

By

Morris K.O. Edogiawerie PhD
Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan College of Arts and Social Sciences, Igbinedion University Okada. Edo State Nigeria
08076665314 or 08023755027
edogiawerie.morris@iuokada.edu.ng, morrisedos@yahoo.com

Ekuase, Omobude Innocent
Department of Geography and Regional Planning, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan College of Arts and Social Sciences, Igbinedion University, Okada. Edo State.
08028921818
innocenti2907@gmail.com, ekuase.innocent@iuokada.edu.ng

Adekunle Sheed Ajisebiyawo PhD
Department of Political Science and public Administration, College of Arts and Social Sciences, Igbinedion University Okada.
ajisadey80@gmail.com, ajisebiyawo.adekunle@iuokada.edu.ng
08033635969

Abstract

Etymologically, partisan politics is not a misnomer on its own. To be a politician or to belong to a political party involves having a passion and sharing sentiments about an idea(s) or goal(s) which they pursue with vigor and infinite interest. Humans are naturally subjective beings who put themselves into and behind whatever they do to achieve best results. Politicians seem to have come full circle when their individual ideology align with political party ideology. Politicians and political parties engage in partisan politics with the view of helping the state attain socio-economic and political advancement. Partisan politics become problematic and faulty when the fundamental principles of political practice are sullied. If these political principles are abused (violated) the aftermath effects are far

reaching for the state and its people. The far reaching consequences of the excesses of partisan politics is obvious in the socio-economic and political crisis currently rocking and threatening to destroy the Nigerian nation. It is against this premise that this study is undertaken to, inter alia, examine the excesses of partisan politics in Nigeria and the damage it holds for political stability and development for the country and its people. The empirical interrogative philosophical kit will be used in stating and discussing the facts of this issue. It is also expected that policy makers in Nigeria would find the summations and recommendations hereunder useful as the nation aspire to advance socially, religiously, economically, politically and otherwise as far as national integration and development are concerned.

Keywords: Partisan Politics, Political Excesses, Political Stability, Nigeria.

Introduction

Nigeria's journey so far (after independence) have been quite turbulent economically, socially, politically and otherwise. This is against the back drop that the nation had clearly and stanchly expressed its desire to enthrone democracy which is conventionally judged to be the best form of government. This dream (of democratization) didn't materialize owing to frequent military interventions and direct involvement in politics. This began as early as 1965 and in July 1966 the first bloody military coup d'état which led to the loss of many lives took place. This was followed shortly by the 'Nigerian civil war' which lasted for almost 4 (four) years-1966-1970. Mabiebo remarks that it was an experience which the nation will not forget in a hurry. After this civil war, the military continued in office and on February 12th 1976 another bloody coup occurred and it claimed the life of the then military head of state, Major General Murtala Mohammed (Madeibo, 1980).

Although the head of state was killed the coup was, however, abortive. Upon the death of Murtala Mohammed, General Olusegun Matthew Aremu Okinkinola Obasanjo took over the helms of affairs as the military head of state and successfully organized a transition to civil programme, general elections were held and late Alhaji Shehu Musa Aliu Shagari emerged as the civilian head of state in 1979. (Awolowo, 1981) In fact, he was the first democratically elected civilian president and head of state in Nigeria. Among Shagari's cabinet includes Adamu

Ciroma, Maitama Bello, Yusuf, Mamman Ali Makele, etc. Shagari's administration lasted between 1979 and 1983. The Shagari and Alex Ekueweme led civilian administration came to an abrupt end when another military coup was successfully executed and Gen. Mohammadu Buhari became the military head-of-state. It has been one military take over and government after another since then. (Adeigbo, 2014).

Meanwhile, each of these military juntas always told Nigerians that they take over political power to "clean up the mess made by erring politicians" and that their stay in office would be brief. Events which eventually played out revealed that these "khaki boys", as they were fondly called by Nigerians, never had the intention of staying briefly in office. They stayed longer than necessary, for instance, the Gen. Buhari's regime stayed in office from 31th December 1983 to 27th August 1985 when Major Gen. Badamasi Babangida took over political power via a military coup in August 1985 until he was forced to retire in September 1993 after the annulment of the famous June 12th General elections in Nigeria. Gen. Sani Abacha took over political power from the interim government of Chief Ernest Shonekon in 1993 and held unto it until his sudden death on 8th of June, 1998. Abacha's military coup was the last in Nigeria's political history. (Aja, et al. 2012) The political turnaround occurred when Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar, who took over political power after death of Gen. Sani Abacha who died under some mysterious circumstances quickly organized a transition to civil rule programme within a short time frame, that is, between July, 1998 and May, 1999. General elections were held and subsequently a civilian democratic administration was sworn into office on May 29th, 1999 under the headship of Gen. Olusegun Matthew Aremu Okinkinola Obasanjo. (Rtd.) (Edogiawerie, 2006).

The events of May 29th 1999 heralded the birth of the present democratic dispensation in Nigeria which the nation had long longed to enthrone. Having suffered many years of military rule, Nigerians came to the conclusion that these years have been years of misrule and backwards, hence, they (Nigeria) have resolved to consolidate on democracy by all means necessary. As far as Nigerians are concerned "the worse democracy (civilian administration) is most preferred than the best military regime". (Odey, 1999)

However, Nigeria's resolve to consolidate on democracy is under serious threat owing to the manner in which Nigerian politicians practice partisan politics. The point is that if partisan politics in Nigeria were to continue in the direction it is presently going, the country will, within a short while, end up in disaster and this democracy might be lost for good and development will remain a utopia. This paper sets out to examine some of the front burner issues that negates the fundamental principles of partisan politics as advocated by the founders of the civil society with a view of professing ways and measures of correcting the misnomer. To appreciate the discursive herein, it is considered apt to attempt a conceptual examination of the phrase "partisan politics". Thereafter, some of the anti-partisan political practices and activities will be discussed. This will be followed by a critique and conclusion. A list of references will be furnished for further reading and research.

What is Partisan Politics

The phrase, 'partisan politics', will be better comprehended when each of the terms that make up the compound word is clarified individually. That is, "partisan" on the one hand and "politics" on the other. Literally, the word 'partisan' means to strongly support of a person or group of individuals, often a political party. It is a strong believe in or against something or someone. When one is partisan to a course or person it means that he is biased and will be willing to defend that course/person even in the face of death. When one is partisan against something (an idea) or someone (or people) such an individual will fight against the existence of such thing or group with all his might and resources.

Etymologically 'politics' is derived from a Greek word "polis" which has two perspectives and the first one means "City" while the second one means "Citizen". Both together means "Citizens and City" which has come to be interpreted as "citizens of a state". When citizens come together they form a community or state and they are often bound together by elements such as geographical location, language, religion, traditions, heritage, etc. Politics fundamentally has to do with the election or selection of an absolute authority who would be charged with the responsibility of administering the interest of all-state. (Agada, 2015)

Partisan Politics, therefore, is when an individual or group of people who have a strong 'blinded' believe and support for a political party show their support and defense for the ideologies of a particular political party. Political parties often have an underlying interest and it is to grab hold of political power with the view or motive of implementing its ideologies in impacting the state. Partisanship comes full circle when individual and party ideologies align and the ultimate desire is to sell these ideologies the people-the polis, the citizens or masses. (Odimegwu, 2014) It should be noted that the implicit intentions of the founding fathers of the civil society-the state, is that there be decorum, discipline and furtherance in the society, as the uncertainty and lawlessness which characterized the primitive society is undesirable. This fact is accentuated by the principles and doctrines of democracy where the people consist the bulk of the administrators and beneficiaries. As far as democracy is concerned, the polis is what matters most and there are guide lines to be followed to protect, preserve and defend the continued existence of the result of the tacit consent. (Odimegwu, 2016)

Recuurent Issues in Nigeria's Political Landscape

The multitude of socio-economic, religious and political challenges facing the Nigerian nation appears to be loudly saying that the country is not getting it right even though it is conventionally accepted that democracy is the most progressive kind of government. Issues such as inflation occasioning the high cost of living, massive corruption among government and public officers, insecurity; armed banditry, Boko Haram insurgency, kidnapping for ransom, ritual killings, killer herdsmen rampage, oil theft and sabotage, etc. stares Nigeria in the face. (Nwaodu, et al, 2017) These problems seem to devastate the nation as it continually slurps the foundations of the country's sovereignty deeper and deeper into irredeemable crevasse.

Osaghae (2012) simply and clearly refers to Nigeria as "a crippled giant" contending that although Nigeria has all the features of a giant but is she nevertheless helpless as far as being a giant is concerned.

Meanwhile, Obakhedo contends that there are a lot of political inadequacies perpetrated by Nigerian politicians, who clearly, from their actions, do not have the overall interests of the country at heart. As a political scientist, Obakhedo argue

that the foundations of partisan politics in Nigeria are seriously faulty and not until things are corrected the misnomer will persist and the country might never recover from her dying condition. (Obakhedo, 2023)

In light of the above advocate, it would be scholarly to identify and discuss some of the contending yet salient issues which amount to irregular political practices (partisan politics) tearing the Nigerian nation apart. Some of the problems include but not limited to the following:

- Absence of Political Ideology
- Absence of Standard Political Institutions
- Proliferation of Political Parties
- Existence of Political Rascality
- Lack of Patriotism
- Respect and Recognition of Money Bag Politics
- Deep Rooted Political Corruption and Selfish Personal Interest

Absence of Political Ideology

Any individual or political party without a sound political ideology would definitely end up abusing the normal practice of partisan politics. Political parties should be founded on philosophical ideologies which can reflect and impact positively on the people (state) otherwise the fundamental principles on which the civil society was built (on inception-during the social contract) would be defeated. Plato (Stumpf, 1994) was resolute when he insists that the Philosopher King should rule the state. He recommends the philosopher king because he has been well prepared for the job. He understands the business of rulership and has been taught and thoroughly groomed to *always* strictly adhere to principles and maxims set down by the founding founders of the civil society and so also are principles guiding the practice of politics in the state.

The philosopher king is made to undergo a period of critical training on the dire relevance of these sacred principles on the importance of the enterprise of governance. Plato is quoted as saying that "the guardians, the rulers, are to be philosophers. They undergo a long and rigorous educational programme until they are thirty-five (35) years old before taking up any official assignment. They

are to own no private property, and 'none shall have a wife of his own'', (Omoregbe, 1991:45) not even personal needs.

Nigerians should be well informed, as Plato recommends, of the importance of worthy ideologies on which every political party should be founded. Party ideologies must be such that begins and ends with the people (state). Politicians should be well schooled on what a political party is, its nexus with the state-people, and dynamism. Politicians who aspire to occupy public offices should understand what is at stake when it concerns holistic advancement. (Stumpf, 1994) It is popularly asserted that those who do not plan at all have automatically planned to fail. The meaning is that a person, group, organization or state that desires to succeed must have a plan of action on how he/they intend to achieve their goals except they don't have any plan. An ideology is the same as a plan, principle doctrine, etc. of what one sets out to do or achieve. Political party ideology tells the electorates how the party perceives the state (how the state is) and how the state should be (ought to be). (Cottingham, 1996)

The point is that a large percentage of the Nigerian electorates have no idea what party ideology mean. It is also possible that many of those who know what party ideology mean do not have knowledge of the ideologies of political parties in Nigeria. There are quite a number of reasons for this and illiteracy is one of these. It is seldom that Nigerian political parties dwell on the contents of their party's ideology. The possible explanation is that these political parties regard this issue as irrelevant and inconsequential. This happens often in situations where the electorates are taken for granted; Irrelevant Conclusion. (Warbuton, 2005) The illiteracy level in Nigeria is indeed high and a lot of things go wrong because of this.

Absence of Standard Political Institutions

One fundamental problem with Nigeria's politics is that there are no political institution charged with the responsibility of regulating and monitoring of all political activities in the country. Empirical evidences have variously shown that states that have 'worked', that is, societies that have advanced politically and otherwise are those who have founded well established proactive political institutions. These political institutions are often charged with the responsibility

of maintaining and consolidating the universal political principles guiding world best practices and conducts.

These institutions determine the manner and direction of how political activities, politicians and political parties should conduct themselves in the political arena rather than individuals calling the shots arbitrarily simply because they have the means to do so. If political institutions with deep rooted foundation are established, then it is only a question of time before they come off age and insist that the right things be done, if for nothing but for the sake of socio-political stability. Such political institutions would transcend the manipulations and imposition of individuals who feel they have what it takes to impose their personal wills on the state with the ultimate end of influencing the traditional principles of political practices to their selfish benefit.

All Political Institutions, directly and indirectly, represent the interests of the state and by implication the interest of the electorates and should always be conscious of the fact that they work for the state and state alone rather than bending to the will of a few selfish politicians or political parties. These political institutions should always know that any subversion of the peoples' will translates to an outright betrayal of the peoples' trust. A solid political institution should be one that regularly updates itself with the latest political world best practices with a view of adopting these new innovations to create socio-political stability in the state.

The Independent National Electoral Committee (INEC) should fundamentally be charged with the responsibility of conducting election under the watchful eyes of the political institution measuring the level or rate of success or failure of the entire process. INEC shouldn't be the ultimate body or organ cheeked by no other. If there were a political institution it wouldn't be easy for selfish and over ambitious politicians to manipulate elections results and their performances in office. The existence of a political institution is akin to the existence and presence of a jury in a law court where there is an exalted and qualified judge.

This is political institution is charged with many responsibilities and functions such as scrutiny of Parties ideologies, political parties, candidates etc.

For the benefit of the doubt a well-established political institution should statutorily perform the following fundamental functions: establishment of a Code of Conduct for political parties, formulation, interpretation and implementation of a current handbook for all political parties stating the ambits of their activities, monitoring of funds available to all political parties, ensuring the registration of all political parties, ensuring that candidates are qualified to contest for the offices they indicate interest in. by qualification it means that the body would be responsible for obtaining information on candidates to make sure that they all have clean slates, no criminal records, history of insanity, integrity, etc.

Reckless Political Rascality

One prevalent feature in the Nigerian political environment is "political promiscuity or prostitution" displayed by Nigerian politicians who jump and hop from one political party to another, at will. These politicians claim that there are not permanent friends or enemies but only permanent interests in politics, hence, they are justified. This is the justification behind which many politicians hid in jumping from one party or the other. The claim that there are no permanent friends or enemies but only permanent interest is a gigantic misnomer and fallacy. (Edogiawerie, 2013) If there is only permanent interest the question is, whose interest are these politicians trying to protect?

If the peoples' interest were paramount in their hearts as priority then they would find it difficult if not impossible to jump from one political party to another primarily because it would involve them contradicting their original ideology which made them pitch tents with their first party. Remember our definition of "partisan". Sadly, it is seldom to find politicians sacrificing or giving up their personal interest for the sake of national interest as far as Nigeria is concerned. It is quite safe for Nigerian politician to jump from party A to party C, B, D, etc. until they get a party that represents their interest.

Such political rascality is a clear indication that politicians like described above do not have anything to do in government and as such should not be given the chance to play with the peoples' lives. This takes us back to the first argument on the issue of political ideology and political institution.

If a well-established political institution were to be in place, it would not be so easy for politicians to migrate from one political party to another without having to answer to a regulating body who would want to know the reason for the recklessness. These migrants will have to answer to questions about the genuineness of their intentions in politics, ab initio. With the existence of this institution, these 'political whores' will be forced to tailor their individual or personal ideologies to align with the ideologies of a particular political party and remain there. Politicians will be careful to consider carefully before they pitch tents with any political party.

One simple question is a reference to the American model and that is how often do American politicians cross carpets, that is, having a Republican abandoning his party-the Republican party, and its ideology and moves to join the democrats, how will he adjust his ideology to become a democrat because he has to accept the ideology of the democrats otherwise he would have no place in the party-democrats. This is not to say that American politicians are restricted or forbidden from crossing over from one party to another. The conservative or diehard political attitude inherent in American politics is simply 'political discipline' which goes a long way to confirm the concreteness of individual and party ideology which tends to be passionate about the interests and welfare of the electorates. (Ukagba, 2013)

The unwarranted movement from one political party to another in Nigeria is an indication of the selfishness and desperation of Nigerian politicians and their inordinate ambitions. The highly craved development will continue to elude Nigeria if the intentions of majority of politicians is to enrich themselves to the detriment of the country and her people. Once again, it is clear that the need of a powerful political institution cannot be overemphasized.

Proliferation of Political Parties

The fact that Nigeria is a multiparty system is not the problem but the proliferation of political parties. Without missing words or figures there are over 85 (eighty-five) political parties in Nigeria out of which 18 (Eighteen) are formally registered with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Available records have it that after the 2019 general elections in Nigeria INEC deregistered a total

number of 74 (seventy-four) political parties that failed to satisfy the requirements for continued registration based on their poor performances during the elections. However, 23 (twenty-three) of these deregistered parties are in court contesting INEC's de-registration of their parties as at June, 2022. (INEC Portal, 2023)

It is considered ludicrous that there are more than 20 (twenty) political parties in a nation like Nigeria, even though she were the giant of Africa. The proliferation of political parties is one of the reason for corruption in the country. It does not matter whether or not the country practices multiparty system, anything above 10 (ten) or 15 (fifteen) Political parties does not portray the country as a serious one. The existence of so many political parties encourages corruption, confusion, hypocrisy and above all it is too expensive. One salient question is how feasible is it for all these parties to have ideologies that will not contradict each other, ideologies that will not be mere duplications in the strict sense of true and concrete ideology?

It becomes difficult to know which parties have noble and laudable intentions. At this point it is important that these political parties recognize, accept and consider the possibilities of coalition. If the intentions of these parties are actually noble, parties with similar or same ideologies can collapse their structures into one formidable and powerful superstructure and become one.

The current APC (All Peoples Congress) is one of the largest and strongest political parties in Nigeria today and it came into existence when some political parties entered into a coalition and merged to form the party with a view of having a party that can be powerful enough to challenge the largest and most powerful party in all of Africa, that is the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP)

For one, the proliferation of political parties will end up further heating up the polity which is already very volatile and the outcome will not go down well for the nation. It is indeed not the wisest way out of the many challenges threatening to tear the country apart. For all that it is worth, the country can continue to practice the multiparty system but should be mindful and modest in its approach, enough to put a limit to the number of political parties that there are. One negative

impact of having limitless number of political parties is the breeding and grooming of corruption besides some other damaging consequences. (Offor, 2014)

Lack of Patriotism

The desire to enjoy the many dividends of democracy will continue to be a utopia if and when the people to be charged with the responsibility of handling the affairs of the country are not true and committed patriots. A true patriot is one who considers and puts the interest of the nation first and paramount before and above everything else. A true patriot is a hard core nationalist who is not blinded by ethnicism and tribal sentiments. All Nigerian matter to a patriot and have equal rights and opportunities. (Falola, 2011)

Nigeria got to where she is today fundamentally because of the efforts and deep rootedness of her nationalists. The patriotism of the few Nigerian educated elites who rose up and stood despite all the odds to resist the colonial enterprises that subjugated Nigeria, in particular, and the African continent, in general was unparalleled. These Nigerian elites at the end of their struggles didn't end up to be materially better off than they were before their fight for liberation and freedom. Political development will continue to elude Nigeria if tribal and ethnic politics are not jettisoned? There is the dire need for the political class to key into Mbiti's orientation that one is important and all is equally important. Mbiti promptly captured the Africa's nationalist spirit when he asserted that "I am because we are and we are because I am" (Mbiti, 1969)

Nigerians are calling for a New Nigerian and this will never be reality until and unless Nigerian politicians see the teleology of national service as a clarion class for rescue and re-integration. All Nigerians must see the actualization of a new Nigeria as a collective and concerted responsibility to rescue the country from disintegration and collapse. (Umaru, 2012) Put succinctly and differently, Nigerian leaders (politicians and public servants alike) should begin to see Nigeria as a beloved baby that has been long expected to consolidate a childless marriage of over 15 (fifteen) years and is now being threatened by a terminal illness. This baby must not die.

Respect and Recognition of Money Bag Politics

Nigerian politicians have so impoverished Nigerians so much so that abject poverty pervades the land. A large number of Nigerians scavenge from dump sites to feed. Those who can afford 3 square meals daily are considered to be bourgeoisies. It is not surprising that Nigerians are prepared to put their lives on the line for any paltry amount to put food on their table. (Utomi, 2015) Politicians who are known to be wealthy and have enough to play around with receive maximum recognition and respect from the people and so long as there is money at the end of such support. The electorates scramble at whatever they can get off these political money bags and a lot depends on the politician who has the deepest pockets because the electorates sell their votes to the highest bidders over the years. (Ibaba, et al. 2021)

Deep Rooted Political Corruption and Selfish Personal Interest

Reports over time has revealed that there is no aspect of the Nigerian state that has not been compromised by corruption. Corruption has eaten deep into the fabrics of the major sectors of the Nigerian state, even the church is not spared as there is serious contention as to the sincerity of many men of God.

Politics and Morality: Ethical Considerations and Ramifications

Socrates, Aquinas, St. Augustine, etc. contends that when morality is bifurcated from politics what remains is so much like the primitive society. There is the expedient need to inculcate some basic and advanced moral qualities in Nigerians and this moral education should begin right from the cradle up to the university level. Moral education involves teaching Nigerians that there are certain conducts to be avoided while there are others that should be performed. They should be taught that there is a difference between good and bad, right and wrong, virtuous and vicious, moral and immoral actions. Morality actually involves the passing of value judgment on the rightness or wrongness of human actions. (Edogiawerie, 2013) The moral rectitude of citizens go a long way in determining how they perceive, how they engage and practice politics. (Oyeshile and Offor, 2016)

For Machiavelli, a successful Prince is one who is able to grab hold on to political power and consolidate it for as long as possible otherwise he will not go down in

history as a successful Prince. Machiavelli refers to the state as principalities or republics.

> All the state, all the dominions under whose authority men have lived in the past and live now have been and are either republics or principalities. Principalities are hereditary, with their Prince's family long established as rulers, or they are now. (Machiavelli, 1999: 7)

African leaders, in general, and Nigeria, in particular seem to have a craving for remaining in power for as long as possible. They grab hold on to political power by every means necessary (often via military take overs) and go on to consolidate it for as long as possible. This orientation appears to be synonymous with many Africa rulers so much so that they adopt unconventional and cruel means in achieving their goals. Some these rulers are Mobutu Seseseko of Zaire, Robert Mugabe of Benin Republic, Nyadema to Togo (News watch, 2020) and most recently the incumbent president of equatorial Guanine who had ruled the country for over 40 (forty) years and was declared winner, in an election, in November, 2022. (Naija News, 2022) By this victory, he is bound to rule for another 5 (five) years which will bring his reign to 45 (forty-five) or more in political power. (Ibaba, 2023)

These African rulers have a style which largely resemble Machiavellian dictum of a successful Prince. This dictum suggest the adoption of the double standard of morality where a characteristically immoral and cruel Prince pretends to be moral and compassionate when it is the best way to consolidate his hold on his principalities. The Prince should adopt a modus operandi that is cut between switching countenance from moral to immoral without much thoughts or consideration. The Prince must be as cunny as a fox and as cruel as the devil himself. Being consistently compassionate will mark the eventual down fall/doom of the Prince.

> So a Prince must not worry if he incurs reproach for his cruelty so long as he keeps his subjects united and loyal. By making an example or two he will prove more compassionate than those who, being

> too compassionate allow disorder which lead to murder and rapine. These nearly always harm the whole community, whereas executions ordered by a Prince only affects individuals. A new Prince, of all rulers, finds it impossible to avoid a reputation for cruelty, because of the abundant dangers inherent in a newly won state. (Machiavelli, Ibid: 53-54)

Meanwhile Aristotle insists that the law be supreme all the way as far as rulership is concerned. He is concerned about the position of the law in its letter and spirit. No single Rex can and should be above the law. The rule is that the law prevails all the time. This has come to be known and interpreted in contemporary times as "Aristotle's Rule of Law". (Stumpf. 1994)

Aristotle seem to contradict himself in his moral philosophy when he advocates that the mid-way is the moral standard. If his principle of the Rule of Law is to be taken seriously then he appears to be speaking from both sides of his mouth. By his mid-way principle he justifies the Prince to be permitted in his cunny abilities but should not do it to the extreme. The implication of his mid-way on moral consideration is that the Prince can be cunny and permitted to resort to foul means of maintaining his hold on his principalities provided he does not take it to the extreme. (Cottingham, 2000)

Bentham insist that before Nigerian politicians choose their parts they should consider those acts and decisions that would result in the happiness of the greatest number otherwise such acts or decisions should not be taken at all.

Bentham and other utilitarians subscribe to the Summon Bunum dictum-the greatest happiness of the greatest number. If any action or decision is calculated and most likely to bring about pain, regret and sadness to a large number of people in the state then such actions or decisions should be avoided. It invariably implies that if it would bring pain, regret and sadness to only a few people then the actions should be taken.

Sequel, Nigerian politicians should know that when they steal public funds meant for community (societal) development and divert same to personal or private accounts or use, leave the large amount of people in pain, misery and poverty, owing to the lack or absence of amenities the funds should have provided. Therefore, when Nigerian politicians learn to avoid stealing public funds they are directly and indirectly making a large number of Nigerians happy and comfortable.

According to Mill's principle of utilitarianism, any act or conduct that does not contribute meaningfully to the advancement of society are acts and conducts that should be avoided by all means possible. Conducts that are capable of advancing the course of society should be conducts that should be engaged in.

All the present challenges confronting Nigeria such as Boko Haram saga, armed banditry, kidnapping for ransom, killer herdsmen rampage, etc. indicates that the country is in serious trouble and the indications are that if these issues are not urgently resolved then doom is not far ahead. "The social nature of man is so essentially part of him that "except in some unusual circumstances, or by an effort of voluntary abstraction, he never conceives himself otherwise than as a member of a body." This social nature of man is, according to Mill, the basis of utilitarianism (Stumpf, 1999: 237)

Finally, we turn to Kant's Categorical Imperative-C.I. Kant's C.I. posits that any action that must be carried out must first be considered as a universal imperative and if the one who intends to engage on the conduct would accept the action if the reverse were to be the case then the conduct can be a virtuous conduct. What Kant means is that every action should be considered as a universal dictum such that will be applicable to all men.

Bentham, Mill, Kant and others have drawn the attention of Nigerian politicians to the fact that their actions and conduct are tantamount to immorality and wickedness especially when their actions do not meet the requirements recommended by them. This justifies Plato's recommendations that the Philosopher King is the only one qualified to rule the state. Plato insist that the business of governance is not one meant for every Tom, Dick and Harry. Plato says

that there are 3 categories of people in the state: the philosopher kings, whose sole business is to rule the state, the soldiers or spirited elements whose job it is to defend the state and the appetitive elements who are left with the duty of providing the basic necessities of everyone in the state.

Plato recommends that when the philosopher Kings rule, justice equity and furtherance prevails in the state and when the wrong people find themselves in rulership the state turns upside down. If Nigerian is experiencing these daunting social and political challenges then there is the need for a rethink and re-evaluation by and for its leaders. (Owolabi and Ekanola, 2013)

Conclusion

The above analysis has dwelt a lot on partisan politics in Nigeria and it is time to chart a way forward for a better country. Let it be stated here again that there is nothing wrong, technically, with partisan politics but with how it is practiced. Partisan politics is a bias based public activity with a teleological end. Partisan politics becomes problematic if and when the fundamental principles of politics are abused.

The orientation of Nigerian politicians is the problem because Nigerian politicians perceive politics as the easiest and fastest way of getting rich and amassing material wealth to themselves. They perceive politics as the only avenue of getting access to 'their share of the national cake'. The earlier this orientation change the earlier the country gets better. Nigerian politicians should be made to understand that there is no national cake and public office doesn't grant access or rights to the commonwealth-the nation's wealth.

Nigerian politicians should be made to understand that been partisan is targeted at the common good rather than at individual or selfish good. Political partisanship involves selfless, relentless, egalitarian and patriotic persuasions. Partisan politics has nothing to do with greedy, selfish and callous people but strictly for those who are determined to protect and defend public interests. It is meant for people with foresight, intelligence and humanity driven activists. Partisan politics should ideally for humanists, those who are committed to improving the condition of the human race. (Smoker, 2011)

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