

Aristotle's Notion of Prudence as Panacea to the Leadership Crisis in Nigeria

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Abstract : Contemporary ethicists and writers on leadership, in their quest to address the problem of leadership crisis in Nigeria, have identified the absence of practical prudence -which manifests in variables such as corruption, ethnicity and greed- as one of the major factors which breeds leadership crises. These variables are further fuelled by the lack of a consistent theory of leadership among scholars that could guide the pertinent actions of political leaders, hence the rising cases of leadership crises in the country. The theoretical framework that guides this study emanates from Aristotle's notion of prudence as contained in the Nicomachean Ethics, which states that prudence is a central moral resource for political leaders. The method of conceptual analysis shall be used to clarify the concepts of virtue, prudence and leadership. The traditional method of critical analysis and the reconstructive method of ideas in philosophy are used to conceptually and contextually analyze all relevant texts and archival materials in the subject areas of this study. The study identifies a high degree of ideological bias and logical inconsistencies inherent in the theories of leadership proposed by the realist and the moralist schools of thought. The conflicting ideologies regarding what political leadership should be among scholars of leadership is identified as one of the major factors militating against ascertaining a practicable theory of leadership, which has the capacity to guide the pertinent actions of political leaders all over the world. This paper therefore identifies the absence of practical prudence, 'wisdom', as the major factor associated with leadership crises in Nigeria. We therefore argue that only prudent leaders will have the capacity to identify salient aspects of political situations which leaders have obligations to consider before making political decisions. Seven frameworks were prescribed from Aristotle's Notion of prudence to strengthen this position, they include: Disciplined reason and openness to experience; Foresight and attention to the long term, among others. We submit that leadership devoid of crisis can be attained through the application of the virtue of prudence. Where this theory is adopted, it should eliminate further leadership crises in Nigeria.

Keywords : Aristotle, leadership crisis, political leadership, prudence

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