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ARISTOTLE'S CONCEPT OF THE GOOD LIFE AND THE RESOLUTION OF POLITICAL CRISIS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study focuses on the Aristotelian concept of the good life and the resolution of political crisis in Nigeria. It is a systematic examination of the major works of Aristotle especially the *Politics* and the *Nichomachean Ethics.* The problems tackled in this paper are that of the moral life of state actors and how this can impact on political leadership in society. In other words, can a morally bankrupt politicians fulfil their obligations to the citizenry? Or is there a connection between political performance and one's moral life? The concept of *eudaimonia* occupies a central position in Aristotle's ethical philosophy and provides the organizing principle for his account of the human good. In the *Nicomachean Ethics,* Aristotle begins with the claim that every art, inquiry, action, and decision aims at some good. To achieve the aim of this study, this work employs the philosophical method of critical analysis. It consideres Aristotle's concept of the good life and how it can be instrumental to the resolution of political crisis in Nigeria. The major finding of this study is that the health of the *polis* depends on harmonizing the distributive fairness, lawful governance, civic virtue, and the common good. Aristotle's enduring contribution lies in demonstrating that political stability and moral excellence are inseparable. This study therefore concludes that political order is not sustained by coercion or economic prosperity alone, but by shared commitment to virtue and the common good of all.

Keywords: Eudaimonia, Political Crises, Good Life, Justice, Virtue.

Introduction

Aristotle's political philosophy presents a unified ethical and political vision in which the stability of political institutions depends upon their orientation toward the highest human good. In both the Nicomachean Ethics and the Politics, Aristotle insisted that political association is not merely instrumental for survival but teleological in structure: it exists for the sake of living well (Politics 1252b27–30). Political crisis, therefore, must be understood not simply as institutional malfunction but as a deviation from the moral purpose of political community. The relationship between ethics and politics has long been a central concern in political philosophy. Scholars have debated whether political order should be grounded primarily in moral principles or pragmatic considerations. Aristotle occupied a distinctive position in this debate due to his systematic integration of ethical virtue and political organization. This paper focuses on this aspect of Aristotle's philosophy, drawing insights from major works of his such as *The Politics* and the *Nichomachean Ethics.*

In both *The Politics* and *Nichomachean Ethics* Aristotle had stated that the state is a natural institution that exists for the sake of the Good Life and not merely for survival. This study therefore argues that moral dignity is a veritable tool in the lives of political leaders in resolving crisis in the society. When political leaders prioritize private interest over the common good, when institutions fail to promote justice, and when citizens are alienated from civic virtue, crises become almost inevitable. Aristotle's philosophy provides a lens through which such failures can be diagnosed and addressed, emphasizing virtue, justice, moral education, and practical wisdom as indispensable to political stability. This study shows that the relevance of Aristotle's work is not restricted to Greek city-states. In spite of the vast difference between classical and modern political systems, the core challenges he identified – corruption, factionalism, injustice, and moral decay – persist in contemporary societies like Nigeria. By going back to Aristotle's ethico-political synthesis, this study seeks to demonstrate how his conception of the Good Life can inform modern strategies for managing political crises, particularly in pluralistic and crisis-prone states like Nigeria. The central thesis of the paper is that effective management of political crises requires more than institutional reform or coercive control; it demands a return to the ethical foundations of political life as articulated in Aristotle's concept of the Good Life. In order to defend this claim, this study analyses Aristotle's understanding of eudaimonia, virtue, citizenship, and justice, and then apply these concepts to contemporary political challenges in Nigeria.

Aristotle: Life and Works

Aristotle was a philosopher and polymath from Greece. His father Nicomachus was the personal physician to King Amyntas of Macedon. Aristotle moved to Plato's Academy when he was 18. Aristotle's teacher was Plato, and Aristotle was the teacher of Alexander the Great. Aristotle married Pythias and she bore him a daughter, whom they named Pythias. Aristotle was invited by Philip II of Macedon to become the tutor to his son Alexander in 343 BC. Aristotle was appointed as the head of the royal academy of Macedon. By 335 BC, he returned to Athens, establishing his own school there known as the Lyceum. Aristotle conducted courses at the school for the next twelve years. His wife Pythias died during this period and Aristotle got involved with Herpyllis of Stagira, who bore him a son whom he named after his father, Nicomachus. Towards the end of Aristotle's life, there was a break between him and Alexander. Following Alexander's death, anti-Macedonian sentiment in Athens was rekindled. In 322 BC, the political issues made Aristotle flee to his mother's family estate in Chalcis. He died in Euboea of natural causes. He had left a will later that same year, in which he asked to be buried next to his wife.

Aristotle composed most of his works between 335 and 323 BC, while he was in Athens. He had an amazing passion for learning and possessed marvelous knowledge on multi disciplines. As he learnt, he made significant contributions in the form of treatises to those disciplines. His most important treatises include Physics, Metaphysics, Nicomachean Ethics, Politics, De Anima (On the Soul) and Poetics. He studied anatomy, astronomy, embryology, geography, geology, meteorology, physics and zoology, education, foreign customs, literature and poetry. In philosophy, he wrote on aesthetics, ethics, government, metaphysics, politics, economics, psychology, rhetoric and theology. It is believed that his works, if compiled, can be considered as a virtual Encyclopedia of Greek knowledge. Aristotle is considered as the first genuine Scientist (Heath, 67).

Conceptual Clarifications

Political Crises: Political crises are often described in terms of visible disruptions – mass protest, governmental collapse, constitutional breakdown, or violent conflict. In any case, the above outward manifestations are usually symptoms of deeper structural and moral problems within political communities. Political crises often manifest as governance breakdowns, leadership failures, social unrest, and erosion of civic trust. They occur in both developing and advanced political systems. In modern times, one finds that contemporary approach to crisis management often emphasize technical, economic, or security-based solutions while neglecting the ethical foundations of political life. This paper argues that Aristotle's concept of the Good Life (Eudaimonia) offers a philosophically robust and ethically grounded framework for understanding and managing political crisis. Political crises are among the most destabilizing phenomena confronting societies across history. From constitutional breakdowns and leadership failures to civil unrest and declining public trust, political crisis disrupt social order and undermines the legitimacy of governance structures.

The Good Life (*Eudaimonia*): It is a matter of common knowledge that every serious inquiry into political life rests upon an underlying conception of the human good. In Aristotle's philosophy, ethics and politics are inseparable disciplines oriented towards the same ultimate end – the Good Life (*eudaimonia*). This section of the paper outlines the concepts of this study by examining Aristotle's understanding of the Good Life and its relevance to political organization. By clarifying the core elements of eudaimonia, virtue, reason, and the common good, this framework provides the conceptual tools necessary for analyzing political crisis and its management.

Aristotle begins the Nicomachean Ethics by arguing that every action and inquiry aims at some good. He introduces eudaimonia in the opening book of the Nichomachean Ethics as the highest human good -the ultimate end at which all actions aim. Unlike material wealth, honour, or pleasure, eudaimonia is self-sufficient and final. He defines it as an activity of the soul in accordance with virtue, and if there are several virtues, in accordance with the best and most complete. *Eudaimonia* is not a passive state but an ongoing activity shaped by moral character and rational deliberation. According to Aristotle, human beings are rational animals, and their fulfilment lies in the excellent exercise of reason. This insight has direct political implication: since human flourishing depends on virtue, and virtue is cultivated through education and habituation, the political community bears responsibility for creating conditions conducive to moral development. The highest good for human beings is eudaimonia—activity of the soul in accordance with virtue over a complete life. Eudaimonia is objective flourishing grounded in rational excellence. It integrates moral virtue (*ethike arete*) and intellectual virtue (dianoetike arete), uniting character and reason. The

concept of eudaimonia occupies the central position in Aristotle's ethical philosophy and provides the organizing principle for his account of the human good.

In the Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle begins with the claim that every art, inquiry, action, and decision aims at some good (Aristotle, 174). Among these goods, there must be a highest end that is pursued for its own sake and not for the sake of something further. This ultimate end he identifies as *Eudaimonia*. Though often translated as "happiness," the term more accurately signifies flourishing or living well over the course of a complete life. Aristotle's ethical inquiry is grounded in teleology. Everything in nature has a function (ergon), and the good for any being consists in fulfilling its function excellently (Aristotle, 180). To understand *eudaimonia,* one must therefore determine the distinctive function of the human being. Nutrition and growth belong to plants, perception to animals, but rational activity belongs uniquely to humans. The human good, accordingly, is activity of the soul in accordance with reason, or not without reason. *Eudaimonia* is thus defined as rational activity performed excellently across a complete life. This definition highlights the active nature of happiness in Aristotle's account. *Eudaimonia* is not a passive emotional state but an ongoing activity (*energeia*). It is something one does rather than something one merely feels. Because it is activity in accordance with virtue (arete), it requires the development of character and intellect. Aristotle distinguishes between moral virtues, such as courage and temperance, and intellectual virtues, such as wisdom (sophia) and practical wisdom (phronesis). Moral virtues regulate desires and emotions, aligning them with reason, while intellectual virtues perfect the rational element itself.

Eudaimonia is complete and self-sufficient. It is complete because it is always chosen for its own sake and never as a means to something else. Wealth, pleasure, and honour may be desirable, but they are sought because they contribute to happiness. Self-sufficiency does not imply isolation; rather, it means that happiness makes life choice worthy and lacking in nothing essential. A flourishing life includes relationships, civic participation, and moral integrity. Aristotle acknowledges that external goods play a supporting role in happiness. Moderate wealth, good birth, health, and friends contribute to one's ability to act virtuously (Aristotle, 84). Severe misfortune may impede flourishing, since persistent suffering can obstruct rational activity. Nevertheless, the virtuous person maintains nobility even in adversity. Thus, while external goods are necessary conditions, they are subordinate to virtuous activity, which remains the core of eudaimonia. A distinctive feature of Aristotle's account appears in Book X of the Nicomachean Ethics, where he argues that contemplation (theoria) represents the highest form of happiness (Aristotle, 77). Contemplative activity exercises the intellect, the highest part of the soul, and is pursued for its own sake. It is continuous, self-sufficient, and akin to divine activity. However, Aristotle does not dismiss practical virtue. Instead, he suggests a hierarchy within human goods, with contemplation as the most complete realization of our rational nature.

Eudaimonia also possesses an inherently political dimension. In the Politics, Aristotle declares that the polis exists not merely for life but for living well (Aristotle, 78). Because human beings are political animals, flourishing occurs within a community structured by laws and education. The cultivation of virtue depends upon institutions that promote moral development. Thus, ethics and politics are inseparable: the good life is achievable only within a just political order that fosters virtue among its citizens. Friendship is another essential component of happiness. Aristotle devotes two books of the Nicomachean Ethics to analyzing friendship, arguing that no one would choose to live without friends. The highest form of friendship is based on mutual virtue, where each friend loves the other for

who they are. Such relationships sustain and reinforce virtuous activity, contributing directly to flourishing. Aristotle's conception of eudaimonia differs significantly from modern subjective accounts of happiness. It is not reducible to pleasure or personal satisfaction. Pleasure accompanies virtuous activity but does not define it. Nor is happiness determined by individual preference; it is objective, grounded in the function of human nature. This objectivity gives Aristotle's theory normative force, suggesting that there is a correct account of human flourishing rooted in reason.

In contemporary philosophy, Aristotle's concept of eudaimonia has inspired the revival of virtue ethics. Modern theorists emphasize character, community, and moral education as essential to well-being. His account presents happiness as a holistic achievement requiring sustained commitment to excellence. Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia* provides a rich and enduring account of human flourishing. Defined as rational activity in accordance with virtue over a complete life, it unites moral character, intellectual excellence, external goods, friendship, and political participation into a single teleological framework. *Eudaimonia* is not fleeting pleasure but the fulfillment of human potential through reasoned and virtuous activity. Aristotle's vision continues to shape philosophical reflection on what it means to live well, offering a timeless account of the highest human good.

Virtue and Habituation

Moral virtue is acquired through habituation, that is, the repeated, consistent practice of virtuous actions, and are not innate. Laws shape citizens' characters by reinforcing just and moderate behaviour. Central to the formation of moral virtue is habituation. We become just by performing just actions, brave by performing brave actions (Aristotle, 175). Virtue is not innate but cultivated through practice and education. Aristotle's doctrine of the mean explains that moral virtue lies between extremes of excess and deficiency (Aristotle, 179). Courage, for example, is the mean between rashness and cowardice. Determining the mean requires practical wisdom, which enables one to deliberate rightly about what is good and beneficial for a human life as a whole. Without such formation, individuals become prone to excess and deficiency. Political crisis frequently emerges when citizens lack disciplined character and pursue factional interests. Human beings are political animals. The *polis* is the culmination of natural associations, achieving completion when it enables virtuous living. Political crisis signals a failure of the polis to realize its natural end. When people perform just or brave acts, they develop a stable character, eventually finding pleasure in virtue and acting rightly out of habit. It is this process that shapes emotions and enables acting according to the mean. Aristotle's main point is that virtue arises neither by nature nor against it, instead, we are born with the capacity for it, but it is developed through habituation. The process of habituation is similar to learning a skill, like playing a musical instrument. Moral virtue is acquired by doing, such as becoming temperate through abstaining from pleasures. At the onset, actions may be mechanical, but through habituation, the agent's intellectual part shapes their emotions (affective part), resulting in a stable character that makes virtuous action voluntary and pleasurable. While habit can mean a mechanical routine, Aristotelian habituation is an active, conscious development of a stable disposition or state of character. Habituation actually involves learning to feel the right emotions (example fear and confidence) at the right times and finding pleasure in appropriate behavior. For Aristotle, education is inevitable for the achievement of political goals. In any case, his educational theory is deficient both in content or curriculum and in

application, that is, to those who are beneficiaries. It is only the citizens, according to Aristotle, that could partake in the share of political power and education as well.

Justice and Constitutional Order

Justice occupies a central place in Aristotle's ethical-political synthesis. Distributive justice concerns proportional equality (Aristotle, 109). Perceived injustice leads to revolution. Political resolution requires restoring equitable distribution and reinforcing trust. In this context, Aristotle advocates a mixed constitution (polity) combining democratic and oligarchic elements. Stability would arise when no faction dominates. A strong middle class mitigates polarization. Meanwhile, Aristotle sees friendship as an essential factor of human life and happiness. According to him, friendship is the glue that binds nations and individuals together in an inextricable bond of mutuality. It is an inevitable phenomenon that one must experience in good times and bad times, in wealth and in poverty (Ishaya and Amuzie, 82). Friendship holds cities together more firmly than justice alone. Civic friendship requires shared commitment to common goods. Its erosion produces distrust and fragmentation characteristic of crisis. Practical wisdom enables sound political deliberation. Leaders must therefore embody virtue. MacIntyre (148) argues that Aristotelian politics integrates moral character and communal tradition. Education must align with constitutional principles. Nussbaum (352) highlights Aristotle's emphasis on cultivating emotional intelligence for civic life. The philosophical reflection on justice and constitutional order reaches one of its most systematic classical expressions in Aristotle's political thought. In the Nicomachean Ethics and the Politics, Aristotle develops an account of justice that is inseparable from his broader teleological understanding of human nature and the polis. Justice is not merely a legal arrangement or a contractual agreement among individuals, but the moral architecture of a political community ordered toward the good life. Constitutional order, in turn, is not simply procedural governance; it is the structured embodiment of a community's conception of justice. For Aristotle, every community aims at some good, and the political community aims at the highest good. The polis exists not merely for life but for the sake of living well. This foundational claim situates justice within an ethical framework. Justice becomes the virtue that ensures that the political community fulfills its natural end. In Book V of the Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle defines justice as the complete virtue in relation to others. It is "complete" because it encompasses the exercise of virtue toward fellow citizens within the framework of law.

Aristotle distinguishes between universal justice and particular justice. Universal justice refers to lawfulness: obedience to laws that aim at the common advantage. Particular justice, by contrast, concerns fairness in distributions and rectifications. Distributive justice allocates honours, wealth, and other goods according to merit or proportional equality. Corrective justice rectifies wrongs in voluntary and involuntary transactions by restoring equality. These distinctions are not abstract classifications but practical mechanisms through which constitutional order is sustained. The constitutional order, or politeia, is the arrangement of offices in a polis and the distribution of authority. Aristotle classifies constitutions according to who rules and whether they rule for the common good or private interest (Aristotle, 106). Kingship, aristocracy, and polity are correct forms, while tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy (in its deviant form) are corruptions. The criterion of correctness is justice—specifically, whether rule is oriented toward the common good. Justice thus becomes the normative standard by which constitutions are judged. A constitution is just if it structures power in accordance with virtue and the common good. It is unjust if it institutionalizes partial interests. Aristotle criticizes extreme democracy for equating justice

with numerical equality, and oligarchy for equating it with wealth. Both misunderstand distributive justice because they absolutize one criterion rather than recognizing proportional merit.

The relationship between justice and constitutional order is reciprocal. Just laws cultivate virtuous citizens, and virtuous citizens sustain just laws. Aristotle famously asserts that the law is reason free from passion. The supremacy of law over arbitrary rule ensures stability and rational order. Yet law itself must be framed by a constitution that reflects the ethical purpose of the polis. Without justice, constitutional structures deteriorate into factional conflict. Faction (stasis) arises when groups dispute the meaning of justice. The poor demand equality because they are equal in freedom; the rich demand superiority because they are unequal in wealth. Aristotle analyzes these conflicts not merely as power struggles but as competing conceptions of justice. Political stability depends on harmonizing these claims within a balanced constitution. The best practical constitution, Aristotle argues, is a mixed regime that integrates elements of democracy and oligarchy, creating a stable middle class (Aristotle, 112). The middle class plays a central role in Aristotle's theory because it embodies moderation. Citizens of moderate means are less prone to arrogance or resentment. A constitution grounded in a strong middle class approximates justice by avoiding extremes. Justice, therefore, is not only a principle of distribution but also a sociological condition for constitutional endurance. Education is equally central. Aristotle maintains that the character of the constitution shapes education, and education in turn preserves the constitution. Justice requires habituation. Citizens must be trained to desire the common good and to respect law. Constitutional order cannot be sustained by coercion alone; it depends on moral formation. "The 21st century has undeniably been beset by global issues including poverty, human rights violations, and environmental degradation which are the results of injustices" (Gbagir and Sodje, 169). In considering the best constitution, Aristotle distinguishes between the ideal and the feasible. The absolutely best regime would be one ruled by supremely virtuous individuals. However, given practical constraints, the best attainable constitution is one that secures stability and approximates justice under existing conditions. This pragmatic dimension demonstrates Aristotle's sensitivity to political realities while maintaining normative standards.

Aristotle's teleology undergirds his theory. Human beings are political animals whose flourishing depends on participation in a just community. Justice actualizes human rationality by structuring communal life according to reason. The constitution is thus not a mere framework but the institutional expression of human nature's fulfillment. Critically, Aristotle rejects the notion that justice is reducible to consent or force. Unlike later contract theorists, he does not ground political legitimacy in hypothetical agreement. Instead, legitimacy arises from conformity to the natural end of the polis. Justice is objective, rooted in the nature of human flourishing. Nevertheless, Aristotle acknowledges the variability of constitutional arrangements. Different poleis may require different structures depending on circumstances. What remains constant is the orientation toward the common good. This adaptability reinforces the idea that justice is a dynamic principle applied within concrete contexts. Aristotle's exclusion of women, slaves, and laborers from full citizenship reflects historical limitations. Yet the structural logic of his argument, that justice requires political arrangements oriented toward shared flourishing - continues to influence contemporary political theory. Aristotle's conception of justice and constitutional order presents a unified vision of ethical and political life. Justice is both virtue and institutional arrangement; constitutional order is both structure and moral purpose. The health of the polis depends on

harmonizing distributive fairness, lawful governance, civic virtue, and the common good. Aristotle's enduring contribution lies in demonstrating that political stability and moral excellence are inseparable. A constitution that embodies justice cultivates citizens capable of sustaining it, thereby securing the good life for the community as a whole.

Resolving Political Crises: A Function of the Good Life

Aristotle maintains that the moral character of leaders significantly shapes political outcomes. In times of political crisis, leadership becomes very decisive, as leaders' judgements, virtues, and actions can either restore stability or deepen disorder. For Aristotle, political leadership is not merely a technical or administrative role, it is a moral vocation. In the *Politics* he argues that leaders must possess virtue to govern justly and in the interest of the common good. Leaders who lack moral integrity are prone to corruption, favoritism, and abuse of power and these are the factors that precipitate political crisis. Lord (75) emphasizes Aristotle's teleological political science: "Modern neutrality toward conceptions of the good risks moral fragmentation. Modern political crises — polarization, inequality, corruption — reflect Aristotelian warnings about faction and injustice." Miller (322) notes Aristotle's pragmatic orientation toward institutional durability. He states that renewing civic virtue remains essential. Aristotle's framework integrates ethical anthropology, constitutional design, economic moderation, and moral psychology. Political crisis must therefore be addressed comprehensively: through distributive justice, civic education, institutional balance, and moral leadership. Aristotle's concept of the good life provides enduring philosophical resources for resolving political crisis. Political order flourishes when institutions cultivate virtue and orient citizens toward shared goods. Restoring teleological clarity, strengthening the middle class, promoting justice, and fostering civic friendship remain central to sustainable stability. Aristotle's political philosophy presents a unified ethical and political vision in which the stability of political institutions depends upon their orientation toward the highest human good.

In both the Nicomachean Ethics and the Politics, Aristotle insists that political association is not merely instrumental for survival but teleological in structure: it exists for the sake of living well. Political crisis, therefore, must be understood not simply as institutional malfunction but as a deviation from the moral purpose of political community. Aristotle's political philosophy remains one of the most enduring resources for thinking about the moral foundations of political order. In both the Nicomachean Ethics and the Politics, Aristotle presents a unified vision in which ethics and politics are inseparable, grounded in a shared concern for the highest human good. His concept of eudaimonia - often translated as flourishing or the good life - provides the normative framework within which political institutions must be evaluated. Political crisis, from an Aristotelian perspective, is not merely institutional dysfunction but a deeper failure of moral formation and civic purpose. When a polis loses sight of its telos, it becomes vulnerable to factionalism, injustice, and instability. For Aristotle, every art and inquiry aims at some good, and the highest good for human beings is that which is complete and self-sufficient. This highest good is eudaimonia, defined as activity of the soul in accordance with virtue. The good life is therefore not reducible to pleasure, wealth, or honor, though these may accompany it. Rather, it consists in rational activity shaped by moral excellence over a complete life. This ethical conception forms the basis of Aristotle's political thought, for the polis exists not merely for survival but for living well. Political crisis, in Aristotelian terms, emerges when the conditions necessary for virtuous activity are undermined. The stability of a regime depends on justice, shared purpose, and civic friendship. Aristotle observes that revolutions often

arise from perceptions of injustice or inequality (Aristotle, 154). Thus, resolving political crisis requires restoring distributive justice and reorienting the community toward its proper end.

Central to Aristotle's account is the idea that human beings are political animals. This claim underscores the naturalness of political association and the role of the polis in cultivating virtue. The good life cannot be achieved in isolation; it depends upon participation in a community governed by laws that promote moral development. As Richard Kraut (210) argues, Aristotle envisions the city as an ethical partnership ordered toward the flourishing of its citizens. The cultivation of virtue is inseparable from education. Aristotle insists that legislators must shape the character of citizens through habituation. Political crisis frequently reflects failures in moral education, where citizens lack the dispositions necessary for justice and moderation. A polity that neglects education invites disorder. Justice occupies a central place in Aristotle's political theory. In Book V of the Nicomachean Ethics, he distinguishes distributive and corrective justice, grounding both in proportional equality. Political instability often arises when citizens perceive violations of proportional justice. Thus, restoring balance in distributions of honor and resources is essential to resolving crisis. Aristotle's analysis of regimes further illuminates the roots of political crisis. He classifies constitutions according to whether rulers govern for the common good or private interest. Deviant forms - tyranny, oligarchy, and extreme democracy - emerge when rulers prioritize factional advantage. Stability is most likely under a mixed regime, particularly the polity, which blends elements of democracy and oligarchy. The middle class plays a stabilizing role in Aristotle's political vision. Where the middle class is large, factional conflict is minimized. Political crisis intensifies when wealth disparities polarize society into rich and poor. Thus, Aristotle anticipates modern concerns about economic inequality as a driver of instability. Fred Miller (322) notes that Aristotle's emphasis on the middle class reflects a practical strategy for constitutional endurance. Civic friendship (*philia politike*) is another pillar of stability. Aristotle argues that friendship holds cities together more effectively than justice alone. Civic friendship involves shared commitment to the common good and mutual recognition among citizens. Political crisis, therefore, signals the erosion of this shared moral bond.

Aristotle identifies courage as a key moral virtue, particularly relevant in moments of political danger. Political crises demand leaders who are willing to confront difficult truths, resist populist pressures, and make unpopular yet necessary decisions. Cowardly leadership – manifested as indecision, avoidance of responsibility or capitulation to factional interests – often exacerbates crises. Conversely, courageous leadership grounded in mora conviction can stabilize political communities by restoring confidence and direction. Again, temperance plays a crucial role in preventing the abuse of political power. Aristotle warns that unchecked desire for wealth, honour, or dominion corrupts rulers and destabilizes regimes. Temperate leaders exercise self-restraint, resisting the temptations that frequently lead to political scandal and crisis. In modern contexts, temperance is reflected in transparency, accountability, and respect for legal and ethical limits. By restraining personal ambition, leaders uphold the integrity of political institutions and reinforce public trust. Justice is, perhaps, the most politically consequential virtue in Aristotle's account of leadership. Just leaders aim to restore balance, address grievances, and reconcile divided communities. In times of crisis, this often requires restorative rather than punitive approaches. Aristotle's conception of justice supports dialogue, equitable reform, and fair distribution of burdens and benefits. Leaders who prioritize justice can mitigate factional conflict and foster reconciliation, thereby transforming crises into opportunities for moral and political renewal.

In establishing a link between Emmanuel Levinas' ethics and sustainable development in Nigeria, Mary Winifred Eche (95) remarks that sustainability is all about considering the ripple effects of human actions. It has to do with the need of factoring future generations in the performance of leadership responsibilities. It demands ongoing ethical reflection, acknowledging power dynamics, and the strive for collective well-being. Sustainability is a values-driven conversation since the kind of societies we build reflect our priorities and principles. Ethical principles such as justice, fairness, and equity guide sustainability efforts.

Omonide in Okpo (34) distinguishes six inter-related types of corruption that have pervaded the Nigerian polity. They include misappropriation of public funds and embezzlement; looted funds and wealth transported abroad, money laundering, gratification involving monetary, pecuniary, material or even physical factors like sexual relationships, and the abuse of office including the violation of the oath of office by the incumbent, debasement of official procedures for personal, financial, or non-material gains and obstructing due process or rule of law for political advantage, and nepotism, favouritism, and other forms of primordial considerations. There is no doubt that in a situation where true virtuous leaders reign, most of these anomalies will be easily eradicated because the goal will be to promote the common good rather than the desire to fulfil personal interest. It is for this reason that Nwankwor and Ihehiulor (145) note that Aristotle's determination of the goodness or badness of a government is based on the ethical qualities of the holder of power and not on the form of constitution. This, according to them, explains his preference for aristocracy (a rule of men of virtues) to oligarch (a rule of the rich) and this is based on the contention that virtue stands in the mean and so excessive wealth (like that of the Oligarchs) may not be virtuous. In a similar line of thought, Onyemachi (40) posits that one way through which political crisis is fueled is political persecution. It is a systematic oppression and suppression of individuals or groups with dissenting views or criticisms against the ruling political regime or administration often resulting in censorship restrictions on cultural products and punishment for those who oppose the established ideology. This political wave excludes any possibility of open criticism against the ideologies or policies of the leading party as well as engender discrimination that leads to the denial or infringement of fundamental rights, violent actions to include police brutality, surveillance abuse, and extrajudicial approaches.

Conclusion

The good life requires practical wisdom (phronesis), the intellectual virtue enabling right deliberation. Statesmen must possess phronesis to navigate crises prudently. Without wise leadership, even well-designed institutions falter. Alasdair MacIntyre (148) observes that Aristotle situates politics within a tradition of virtue that integrates moral character and rational deliberation. Contemporary political crises—characterized by polarization, corruption, and erosion of trust—mirror Aristotle's warnings about factionalism. His account suggests that institutional reform alone is insufficient; moral renewal is indispensable. Martha Nussbaum (352) emphasizes that Aristotelian politics requires cultivation of citizens capable of empathy and rational discourse. Moreover, Aristotle rejects purely procedural accounts of politics. Legitimacy derives not merely from consent but from orientation toward the common good. A regime that satisfies procedural criteria yet neglects virtue remains deficient.

Lord (75) argues that Aristotle's political science is fundamentally teleological, grounding constitutional evaluation in moral ends. Resolving political crisis thus entails restoring teleological orientation. Laws must aim at virtue, and citizens must internalize

habits conducive to justice. Education, equitable distribution, mixed constitutional structures, and cultivation of civic friendship together create conditions for resilience. Aristotle's analysis of political decline underscores how leadership failure often serves as a catalyst for crisis. When rulers pursue private interest over the common good, regimes degenerate into corrupt forms (Aristotle, 187) This degeneration erodes legitimacy and invites resistance. By contrast, virtuous leadership aligned with the Good Life strengthtens political authority and resilience. Crisis management, from an Aristotelian perspective, is therefore inseparable from the moral quality of leadership. In conclusion, Aristotle's concept of the good life provides a comprehensive framework for understanding and resolving political crisis. Political order is not sustained by coercion or economic prosperity alone but by shared commitment to virtue and the common good. The polis fulfills its purpose when it enables citizens to live flourishing lives characterized by rational activity in accordance with virtue. In times of crisis, returning to these foundational principles offers not nostalgia but enduring philosophical guidance.

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