

Politics: The Pulley for Integral Socio-human Development

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Abstract

Politics is connatural with human nature and the basilar pillar of every society. Even though it may be an ideology of any form, yet it is necessary that it has teleological and hermeneutical character peculiar to its nature. It is naturally characterized by a strong dynamic force capable of changing the masses into a solidified, constituted and lawful society directing it towards a more refined entity normally recognized as community. To arrive at this end, politics is never detached from ethics since the art of ordering the masses requires discipline, skill, principles, values and a directed will towards the common good. Being from the same stuck and origin, politics and ethics are inseparable in nature and action. Politics has a very strong bond with people, environment, economy, philosophy, spirituality and human development. For this reason politics acquires yet another energy that comes from experience through which it is capable of linking the past with the present and preparing the present for the future. Being in strong bond of harmony with ethics, politics is capable of guiding personal and societal acts and, therefore becoming a pulley of creativity, legality and integral socio-human development. This paper explores the significance of politics and analytically attempts to bring to the fore its intimate relationship with Ethics, Pólis and Development. Being so particular about this relationship, a specific conclusion which does not present any estrangement to politics is made.

Keywords: Politics-Ethics-Pólis, Socio-human Development

Introduction

It is a known fact that humans are essentially political and social. Being in the world, a human being needs to grow and cannot by himself be developed, educated, fulfilled or capable of realizing his highest aspirations without the existence and company of others. Therefore, from the beginning of human existence, the human being was always placed in company of others and in social groups. These groups were initially small (think of family, clan, tribe), but with time such groups became vast and big (think of city, State, nation, globe). As the cultural dimension of humanity grows, the essential characteristics (social and political) of the social man expand and become richer and come to the fore. Today the political and social characteristics of man have arrived at an immeasurable horizon. In fact, they have gone first from national to international horizon and then to intercontinental horizon and finally to what we understand today as globalization.

These characteristics, while they are important to human existence, make it impossible for any human being to restrict his personal life to the slippery slope of absolute individualism - an existence without “doors and windows” that lead to the outside world. Consequently, any human act, even the lightest act or any reality that concerns humans also affects the social and political spheres. In this way, social and political problems become and acquire a capital importance in human life. It is our experience today that the modern means of communication is capable of connecting us to all the happenings in every part of the world. Our life can be affected in all dimensions by the happenings in another part of the world even though we have never been physically present in the particular place (Marcel 1967: 143). The presence of

Corona Virus (Covid 19) has confirmed what Marcel foresaw more than half a century ago, that is, an undeniable and understandable interconnectivity between humans and their pleas in a global dimension. These facts are not necessarily important in themselves, rather for the special relationship which they have with human life and human development.

Socio-human development depends on the quality of political and social acts performed by human beings as the expression of their innermost beings. Therefore, if we are essentially social and political, the slightest human act involves and affects the realm which directs and penetrates every social reality. For this reason, a human being cannot perform a single commercial act, expects a minimum wage, regulates lowest or highest contract without being sustained by ethical law, social and legal solidarity that constitutes the foundation of his contract and his occupation independently on his intention (Chenu 1964: 89-90). Take for instance, unguarded pronouncement of a Minister for Finance can negatively affect the economy of his nation and may have a disastrous effect on the economy of a peasant farmer in the village. Our concern now is that of finding actions that may enhance human and social development without negative effects on human life. Such acts determine the quality of development of man and the society. Acts that are contrary to human life will also negatively affect human and societal development. Thus, the quality of acts is important since it is a determinant of development in all its ramifications.

At this juncture, we deem it necessary to clarify some terms used in the theme of this paper. When we say that politics is “pulley, we mean that as a pulley rotates parting from the pivot to set the object to the desired destination, so too politics parts from the fulcrum (man) and the society(polis) moves (by ethos) towards the fulfillment (human and societal). By doing so the development of the past generation can be improved in the present and the present equipped with suitable means to positively improve in the future. By development we mean a progressive state towards being more human and self-realization, that is, progressive advancement of man to a better state of being in various sectors of life.

In this paper, we shall first of all consider the meaning of politics. Secondly, it shall indicate its relationship with ethics and political actions in favour of human development. The third segment shall examine the consequences of actions that are a-political because they are not ethical and do not contribute to human development. Finally, a conclusion shall be drawn to highlight the proposals for further reflections.

2. The meaning of Politics

Etymologically, the term ‘politics’ comes from the conjunction of two Greek words *pólis*, that is *city* and *êthica*, which means simply “what concerns human conduct” (Finance 1991: 7) When these two words are joined it becomes *pólisêthica*, and the literal meaning of the word would then be *city of ethics*, which may also mean *an ordered city* or *ordering the city*. In this etymological understanding, there is, obviously, a relationship between *pólis* and *êthica*, between *city* and ethics, between human conduct and the city. Consequently, the word *politics* in English is not contrary in any way to its original meaning. Chiavacci defines politics “as a structure in a group that has the function of regulating and coordinating different actions and functions (both personal and social) of the members and the functionality of the same structure (Chiavacci 1990: 952). As the above definition implies, functions and actions cannot be regulated and coordinated without a certain criterion. Actions and functions cannot regulate themselves. They must be regulated by a more stable structure that is capable of shaping human and social acts without being shaped.

Politics, therefore, means an art of ordering the city and human conduct towards a more stable and human society. But human conduct does not mean any type of happenings or events around human beings. The components of human conduct are human acts. The word *human*

act is taken in the strict sense, because it is really from the human nature. It is an act that qualifies the agent, making him or her identify himself or herself through the same act. *Acting* is different from *making*. *Making* designates artistic work or technical activity. Technical activity, from “artistic and technical point of view, is successful completion of a particular work: that a statue should be beautiful, that a table should be evenly balanced. The agent and his act are of importance only in relation to the desired effect (Finance 1991: 8). Ordering the city does not merely mean *making* straight and beautiful roads and *making* a functional drainage system. In politics, ordering the city may also include artistic and technical activity especially as regards developments in technology and aesthetics, but this is not all that is needed, the city must be ordered in a way that is worthy of man. If the city is physically ordered and the human person is ignored, there would be a serious crack between city and ethics. From ethical point of view, regulating and coordinating functions and actions of humans and groups, the action is not only focused on the city, but primarily and most especially, on the quality of human acts themselves. In fact, it is through these acts that man reveals himself as being social and political in nature (Etokakpan 2014: 46).

3. The Relationship between Politics and Ethics

From the beginning of the modern age, it was normally held that politics did not possess criteria of judgment proper to its kind. But before the beginning of the modern age, the criteria for political judgment, obviously was supplied by ethics and religion. Morality and religion were never seen as antitheses to politics. This is not only the patrimony of the modern times, since “the involvement of religion in politics dates back to time immemorial. In fact, in primitive and traditional societies there was no distinction between religious leaders and political leaders (Okwueze 2003: 140). There was no dualistic concept in human act nor in the human person. Thus, there was no political act without any relationship with religious forms and religiosity. There was no religious man as opposed to political man. It could even be said that participants in politics were only religio-political persons. Therefore, when a political leader wanted to decide on matters that involved his community, his first responsibility was to consult religion and his conscience. If ethics and religion indicated to him that a certain action was morally illicit or contrary to the religion, he therefore considered it politically damaging to take such decision (Mondin 1976: 147). Politics was understood as having these two formidable anchors with stabilizing capacities and effects.

But along the history lane, the relationship between politics and ethics was subjected to doubt and questioning. First to question the memorial bond between politics and ethics was Nicolò Machiavelli. For the first time politics was seen without any relation to any other science and therefore, in possession of its *autonomy*. In this way, politics was seen in its own sphere without any preoccupation of moral and theological order. According to this new way of understanding, *politics* is neither morality nor negation of morality, but a positive force impossible to eliminate from the world because it contributes to the development of the world. It is a conscious and spiritual force that has its end peculiar to its nature. Therefore, a politician would be a person endowed with this positive force (strong will) for its own sake. Such force would include protection of his political position and life without which he would not be able to found, order or maintain the State (city) which is the aim of his action. And to achieve this aim he would have to consider the usefulness of the means at his disposition without moral and theological consideration of any kind (Attiani 1957, Mondin 1976: 147-148). Thus, politics was violently separated from ethics and religion. Considering this blind force (power) that would enable the politician to order and maintain the State, negative moral consequences of such force may not matter. With this conception of politics, tyrants were born and politics became the means for justifying any actions, violence included, performed to maintain the

power. Since power was seen as the ultimate good, politics became antagonist to ethics and religion.¹

Without wanting to examine the Machiavellian political philosophy, the separation of politics from ethics really goes against the original significance of politics as was already seen from the etymology of the word. The forceful separation of *pólis* from *êthica* fatally wounds politics. Considering the relationship between politics and religion with ethical connotation, Okwueze affirms that “one of the most fallacious arguments I have ever met is the one that seeks to show that religion belongs to one world and politics to another (Okwueze 2003: 148). The fallaciousness seems deeply rooted in accepted dualism of human existence and the concept of politics. Thus *homo politicus* becomes existentially opposed to *homo religious* and *homo practicus*. The fragmentariness of the modern man seems to be the origin of his lack of orientation.

4. Consequences on *Pólis* without *Êthica*

As had been mentioned above the main function of politics is that of ordering the *polis* through conscious directive of *êthica*. But what type of ethics is capable of regulating human and social conducts without causing problems for man? Rationalist ethics would readily want politics or government that is in inconsonant with the light of reason. Kant, for example, while accepting the rigorous distinction between morality and politics, maintains that while politics cannot escape from the universal jurisdiction of ethics, ethics cannot also do without politics. This means that the civil society is the means and the appropriate place in which ethics expresses itself in a mundane way (Mondin 1976: 148). In another arm of the same philosophical ethics, a total rejection of any distinction and eventual collaboration between politics and ethics is propounded because, according to the same thought, the State is the supreme source of any morality. Consequently, it would be the “way of life” of a given society or social class that becomes the norm for peoples conduct.

But a closer look at this argument reveals the law of dynamicity which suggests that “as social customs change, so does morality, because good and evil are determined by shifting public opinion or varying circumstances (Verga 1978: 4). Positivist ethics in which the State is the supreme source of good and evil does not seem to be an objective guiding principle both for individuals and the society. Not even Marxist ethics would help us establish an objective relation between ethics and politics. Marx reduces ethics and politics to simple superstructures of economic facts. This means that both politics and ethics develop and depend on the economic facts. It is through these superstructures that the projection of an ideal society would be realized and discrimination and classification of people overcome. Marx considers ethics as one of the fundamental values and politics as a necessary instrument for the realization of ethics. In fact, Marx believes in the sovereignty of the moral conscience that condemns the social injustice in the world and restores justice and freedom through creation of conditions that make their existence possible. In this sense, politics becomes a means for restoration, maintenance, defense and strengthening of the moral order (Attiani 1957). This moral order is identified with the State which, apart from creating equal conditions of material life, has also the capacity of producing a single collective will. In this manner, the State becomes the executor of the collective will while the *moral order consists in forcing the individual into the social will or order*. A close examination of this ethics reveals that, even though the moral order was being actually violated by the privatization and the use of material resources, history and experience

¹Think, for example, of Adolf Hitler, Idi Amin, many tyrants of eastern Europe, Abacha of Nigeria and other wolves across the whole continent of Africa.

have demonstrated that Marxist solution neither can give us an objective relationship between ethics and politics, nor can solve the emerging conflicts caused by the economic abuses.

Therefore, what type of ethics would be able to order the *pólis* without creating problems for man and the society? It is ethics which has its foundations in the natural law, ethics capable of directing human acts through its characteristic objectivity expressed by universal norms that are true specifications of the natural law and which are not in any way against human nature. Such ethics is capable of “creating” the *city of man*. The city of man is a society in which politics fulfills its primary function of ordering the life of the people and society towards the Common Good. It is a city in which the function of politics coincides with that of the State: the Common Good. It is a city in which man is educated to responsibility and consciousness of his duty towards the community. The *city of man* means a society worthy of man where Common Good is recognized as superior value with respect to simple sum total of the goods of each individuals. But in conformity to the social nature of man, human personal good is necessarily in relation, but subordinated to the common good. By Common Good we mean the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily (Vatican II Document, *Gaudium et Spes* No. 26). It is a *good* that is naturally directed, first of all, to the development of human individual life and then, to the total development of the society. Such good will not be only focusing on the economic equilibrium, but will be also directed to the development of spiritual values making it possible for humans to live in the world as free beings capable of enjoying human freedom and well-being.

Common Good has *three essential components* that are profoundly in relationship with each other. The first component of the Common Good is the *respect for the human person*. This means that both the authority and the individuals in the society are required to respect the fundamental and inalienable rights of the human person. The society has the responsibility towards each member by permitting and making it possible for him to realize his vocation. In a particular manner, the first component of the Common Good inhibits in the conditions for exercising natural freedom which are necessary for the development of the human vocation. According to *Gaudium et Spes*, such right includes “right to act according to a sound norm of conscience and to safeguard privacy and rightful freedom also in religious matters (Vatican II Document, *Gaudium et Spes* No. 26). This means that the respect accorded to the human person is neither an achievement by the same nor an award, but an endowment recognized by the society.

The second component of the Common Good demands the *social wellbeing and development of the society*. This, however, is the synthesis of the social duty. It is therefore the duty of the authority as a political organization to serve the Common Good by making it accessible to everyone in order to live truly as human. These immediately include shelter, food, clothing, health, occupation, education and culture, convenient information, right to family and living with dignit (Vatican II Document, *Gaudium et Spes* No. 26). Respect cannot be accorded the human person without enhancing a dignified life. Social wellbeing for the human person attracts access to healthcare delivery, technology and information on economic and social matters.

Lastly, the Common Good requires *peace*. This means that there must be political stability and security of a just order and that the authority ensures the security of the society and that of members with morally acceptable means. The acceptable means necessarily includes the principle that the good must not be sought through evil means. Peace and security are neither established through violence and destruction of other human lives, nor by enacting unjust laws that may favour a particular privileged group. The duty of the authority to ensure security and peace is not based on an arbitrary decisions of some groups, but on the basis of the natural right to legitimate personal and collective existence and defense. It is difficult to

separate one requirement or component of the common good from the others without creating an unavoidable distance between politics and ethics. The unity of these important elements creates a truly human and political community in which every member participates in its complete realization. In this manner, the political community becomes the city of man.

In the *city of man* everyone works in consonance with the Common Good and the integral development of the society and individuals. By saying this, we do not mean that human beings are lost in the quest for the Common Good. In fact, the Common Good is always oriented towards the progress of persons and “the order of things must be subordinate to the order of persons, and not the other way around (Vatican II Document, *Gaudium et Spes* No. 26; The Catechism of the Catholic Church No. 1912). It is also a city in which man considers himself as a steward of the universe and responsible for the quality of the environment that must be handed over to the new generations.

Who then is a politician? A politician is person who, conscious of the demands of the Common Good, decides to voluntarily and generously dedicate his life to its service and its fulfillment in a particular society. For this reason, he assumes personal responsibility in social and political affairs and conscientiously works for the fulfillment of the Common Good. When his aspirations, principles, and acts in personal life are morally objective and in conformity with the demands of the Common Good, such person is *honorable*. He is not *honorable* because he belongs to a social class or because he has a strong will over others; he is honorable because his acts are intrinsically worthy of a human person and are directed and subordinated to the fulfillment of the Common Good. The term is derived from the Latin word *honorabilis* which means *worthy of honour*. It is that which procures honour, respect and high regard. When then a person is qualified with such an adjective *honorable*, this means he is being attested to credible conduct and for being consisted with a reputation that is not tarnished or sullied. A honorable person, apart from being of great renown and illustriousness, he is characterized by integrity guided by a keen sense of duty and ethical conduct. Evidently, there is an affective affinity between *habitus* and *honorabilis*, it is the conduct that renders the agent honorable. In the same vein, when a politician has served the Common Good to the point that there exists an affective affinity between him and the components (which are good ethical acts) of the Common Good, the society recognizes him as *Excellency*. These titles, *Honorable and Excellency*, are indications that it is dutiful and possible to dedicate one's life to the service of the Common Good and humanity. The test for good politics is the well-being of all; the test for being a good politician is the possession of habitual love for the Common Good and humanity. The titles of *Honorable* and *Excellency* are not titles of or for privileges, but that of recognition for practically working to “create” the city of man through selfless service to others. Ethical obligation demands that participation and dedication of oneself to the service of the Common Good also calls for continuous rededication of self to honesty, truth, goodness, loyalty, love, justice and peace. These are the aspirations and preoccupations of a good politician and they qualify him for the titles of recognition. The absence of these aspirations and the core social values creates a *man of the city* and *dishonorable man* to run the affairs of the society.

a) *Man of the city*

The city of man, obviously, is not *the man of the city*. We have already highlighted above the meaning of the *city of man*, which is practically the political community in which the Common Good is sought for and realized. It is the *polis* in which politics focuses its attention on the Common Good and the well-being of all and maintains its essential relationship with ethics. Politicians, therefore, labour for the construction of the city worthy of man – *the city of man*. Whereas, when politics is considered as autonomous, its object cannot be the same as that which has relationship with ethics. While the object of *good politics* is the Common Good, that of *autonomous politics* is the *personal good*. Consequently, while the *city of man* is “created”

with the Common Good, the *man of the city* is “created” with the personal good. A politician who is identified with the *man of the city*, therefore, labours for his personal interest and the interest of the class or group. In the *city of man*, there are found *selfless* politicians, while in the *man of the city*, there are *selfish* politicians.

The first negative consequence of “political autonomy” (politics separated from ethics) is the creation of *Man of the city*. The *man of the city* is a person that negates any positive relationship between ethics and politics. This type of negation is not only theoretical, it is also and primarily practical. Where the universal principles meant for regulating and directing human acts are not recognized, the immediate consequence is chaos, double standard ethics and ethical relativism. In this case, the aim of politics becomes subjective to the detriment of the common good. If the aim of social affairs becomes subjective in nature, the society would also become the property of individuals and not a patrimony of everyone. For this reason, “fraud and other subterfuges, by which some people evade the constraints of the law and the prescriptions of societal obligation, must be firmly condemned because they are incompatible with the requirements of justice (Vatican II Document, *Gaudium et Spes* No. 30). The *man of the city* does not recognize responsibility, duty, service to the common good, justice, peace, integrity and honesty, because all these values are seen as relative and hurdles against private gain. Having removed the Common Good as the aim of every political action, what remains is the personal interest or at most parochial interest, interest of the family, clan or tribe. The concept of the State or Nation becomes relative and seen as one of the false notions of things in the worldview of the *man of the city*. The *man of the city* lives contrary to his primordial significance of social and political life. For the fact that he “uses” politics for his benefit, he does not have room for human and social development in favour of all. In fact, deep within the conduct of the *man of the city*, there is a steady relationship between egoism and egotism. A *man of the city* is not a politician because he is only interested in what he takes from the State and never in what he gives to the community. History teaches that a nation in which there are many *men of the city* and worst still, if these men occupy significant political offices, that nation is usually deprived of human and social development.² This peculiar conduct translates itself “into corruption in its varied forms: the misappropriation of public resources, the exploitation of individuals, the denial of rights, the flouting of community rules, dishonest gain, the justification of power by force or the arbitrary appeal to *raison d'état* and the refusal to relinquish power (Pope Francis 2019). All these vices obstruct development and create other social vices that are all the way against man in the actual generation and generations to come.

When ethics is ignored and separated from the social structure, the city cannot be ordered, and most especially man becomes a hindrance to the Common Good and the rule of law. Politics is a social structure that expresses itself in the political community (city, country). Many wars are fought because of autonomy of politics. The *man of the city* is he who tries to subordinate the Common Good to his personal good because the underlying principle of his actions is the principle of autonomy of politics. As Pope Francis writes, “politics is an essential means of building human community and institutions, but when political life is not seen as a form of service to society as a whole, it can become a means of oppression, marginalization and even destruction (Pope Francis 2019). When politics is attacked in its essence, it is obvious that its object of action must also be attacked. This means, since politics is not allowed to be the means of community building, it forcefully becomes the means of selfishness and community destruction.

b) The reason of force as against the force of reason

²The States in which dictators rule are never the same as those whose citizens freely elect people to political offices. In the former, development is always difficult if not at all impossible.

Another negative consequence of bad politics (*pòlis* without *êthica*), is the *reason of force*. As politics is directed to the Common Good, it does not dissolve the individual in the society and deprive him of exercise of human freedom. Instead, politics offers man the opportunity to express his freedom and work at the same time for the good of the society, the nation and all mankind (Pope Paul VI 1971). Politics is reasonable; it is teleological in character and for human and social development. The *force of reason* is the power of human intelligence that strategizes ways and utilizes the available resources for the realization of the common good. Instead, the *Reason of force* means violence and violent motivated acts. Here the reverse is done. Being a *man of the city*, he forces himself on the people and has to use force to maintain himself in power, hence, the *reason of force*. Here, since politics is not seen as service to the *pòlis*, the thirst for power at any price must indicate violence as the necessary means to usurp power. For this reason, politics becomes a means of oppression and destruction.³

It should, however, be noted that the primary function of ethics (in politics) is to regulate human conduct in such a way that the man whose conduct is regulated benefits as much as the people who would have been negatively affected by his behavior if left unregulated. By checking human conduct in the society, *pòlis-êthica* assures and prevents one from physically, spiritually, psychologically and morally hurting or injuring others in the society by way of exploitation, deprivation, subjugation or bullying.

c) Lack of Formation of Conscience and National Conscience

In autonomous politics, *formation of conscience* (education of people towards the discovery of truth of humanity, true human values and maturity through which good is sought with passion and actions performed with conviction for personal fulfillment and common good) is always substituted with *reciprocity of consciousness*. Reciprocity of consciousness is not *conscience*. Conscience is not abstract, it is inert and practical faculty imbedded in the nature of man. It is “the whole person’s commitment to value and the judgment one makes in the light of that commitment of who one ought to be and what one ought to do or not to do”. And such commitment is always directed by natural and ethical law, since conscience is not in itself autonomous. Conscience, being an endowed natural faculty, needs to be formed and informed. Politics, identified with authority, must in turn be directed by the truth of the human nature and expressed through responsible propositions and decisions always taken for the good of all. Instead, the *reciprocity of consciousness* is a mere mimesis, a pseudo-ignorant imitation of the wealthy and powerful by the poor and the weak. Håring, borrowing the idea from Girard indicates that reciprocity of consciousness is expressed “in the process of *mimesis*, the ‘aping’ of apes. The ape’s ‘intelligence’ and socialized ‘memory’ spring from its capacity for imitation. Mimesis compels the ape to try to have what another ape has and enjoys... Experience, for example, warns the ape that it would be dangerous to attempt to take something from another ape that has much greater power and capacity for violence (Haring 1989: 560-61; Girard 1953). Accordingly, human reciprocity of consciousness develops on this same mimetic level. Håring goes on to explain that if parents educate mainly or even exclusively, by means of pleasurable rewards, the child interiorizes this approach, and develops a corresponding super-ego. Since the child has learnt to act mainly, or even exclusively, for pleasurable reward or to avoid punishment, the child’s consciousness can become a fertile ground for manipulation. In the same vein, “in a repressive society in which the privileged cling to the status quo which supports their unjust privileges, many of them may be acting

³The exchange of *reason of force* with the *force of reason* is very familiar to nearly all Sub-Saharan African countries, especially as we witness anytime elections to political offices are effectuated. Nigerians, for example, do not need much to recall their memories of the deadly political strategies of certain individuals to hold on to power to the detriment of the common good.

simply on the basis of a consciousness which says ‘That is the way it is to be done. Aping the powerful and wealthy, many may easily confuse this kind of consciousness reinforcement (super-ego) with conscience (Haring 1989: 61). Where politics excludes regulation of human acts and formation of human conscience, people, especially the youth, are imprisoned in a superficial reciprocity of consciousness. The oppressed and the exploited are likely to fall into the trap of wishing to imitate the wealthy and the powerful, if given opportunity. Therefore, politicians in this sense, would substitute the conscience of the individuals and the national conscience (the communal commitment to the truth and values). On one hand, while they (individuals) accept the situation with apathy and helplessness, they also, on the other hand, interiorize the destructive range of values of the powerful. This is the real psycho-social destructive influence of the “survival of the fittest, the aping attitude of apes. Obviously, in the present state of things, those who want to survive must imitate the powerful and obey the dictates of the powerful for their personal reward. And by doing so, there is instituted the most dangerous structure of all human collaborations: the collaboration of the exploited with their exploiters. In this type of situation, politics which is the expression of “authority” becomes incapable of guiding and regulating individuals’ acts through which the national conscience may be formed. National conscience is the commitment to values by all members of the political community so as to enhance a stable service to the common good and its effective realization.

5. Politics as a means for integral socio-human development

Politics, primarily, aims at the Common Good as its object for the benefit of man. Man’s social nature and his natural inclination towards good can be reasonably expressed in the company of other human beings. For the fact that the society is an organization of relationships and services among persons and for persons, there must be a objective force that regulates such relationships and services. This regulating force is politics (pólis and êthica). In regulating human and social conducts, politics presents a humanism which is founded on ethics that directs man with his intelligence, conscience and reactions against any possible alienation and misinterpretation of realities. Not being detached from ethics and religion, politics is capable of directing and re-directing man to integral socio-human development. In order to achieve this type of development in the society, the documents of the Magisterium indicate that good politics does not only promote the Common Good, it also enhances both personal and social development (Pope Leo 1891; Pope Pius II 1931; Pope John XXIII 1963; Vatican II *Gaudium et Spes* 1965; Pope Paul VI 1971). Therefore, if man wants to arrive at self-fulfillment and integral development, he has to participate in the political life of the community. Participation is achieved more easily by taking charge of the areas for which one assumes personal responsibility, especially by conscientious work and honest engagement in social life, man participates in the good of others and of the society.

The authority, whose actions and policies are expressed through politics, is charged with the mission of understanding, interpreting and applying the moral truth found in the natural law and human nature to contemporary social issues. And by doing this, it helps man to develop himself and form his conscience in relation to the every social value. Politics, through its deep rooted relationship with ethics, is capable of examining the past and projecting the society towards future. In fact, the society and individuals rotate through it (politics) and return to it for personal and societal advancement. Through it, individuals become more conscious of the fact they are responsible for their actions and, therefore, be regulated to avoid internal and external exploitation of any kind. Corruption is an abasement of the moral tone in politics and, capable of launching a heavy attack on its essence, pollutes every political and social life and thwarts development. Take for example, if qualification for specialization in specific areas of technology is under the yoke of corruption, there would never be any

technological development in that specific society. If then corruption permeates every sector of life in the society, there would be established the most atrocious and devastating type of slavery. This type of slavery is always a vicious circle in which slaves become the masters of other slaves creating an atmosphere of war among the poor. Worth noting is the fact that, the root cause of such underdevelopment was already created in the abasement of morality in politics. When we talk of integral development, we mean a progressive human development in all sectors of life: morality, spirituality, health, education, economy, technology etc. This can only happen when politics is properly understood and applied to the life of the individual and the society.

Politics educates individuals towards great themes of the society, like peace, freedom, justice, respect for human beings, love, honesty, social justice, respect for national patrimony, patriotism and responsibility. The more politics engages in the education and formation of the individual and national conscience, the more individuals acquire moral and spiritual maturity. In a balanced state of development like this, decisions are taken based on conviction about the truth and moral responsibility towards all.

6. Conclusion

Looking at politics from its etymology, we can readily be given an orientation towards the understanding of its original significance. Different interpretations may be given to the term, but once its essential and necessary relationship with ethics is undermined, its teleological nature is also jeopardized. It is the function of politics to regulate human and social conducts for the benefit of the Common Good. For the mere fact that the object of politics is the Common Good, politics itself cannot be source of violence, conflict, discrimination, corruption and social injustices. Whenever these social aberrations are present, there must have been a wrong understanding of politics and authority. It may happen that regulation of human conduct is substituted with regulation of solely goods or economy; in this case, politics becomes communism or capitalism. However, we do not reject the fact that politics regulates goods and economy, yet the individual is neither an end to himself nor can he be dissolved in the society, while economy and material possessions cannot undermine the Common Good.

Politics has capacity of connecting man to the past while discerning the presence in order to intelligently project him to the future. It is a pulley through which the life of the society rotates, through which past mistakes against its object is corrected and through which the future is programmed for easier, steady and more effective achievement of the Common Good. Since politics is statico-dynamic in nature, it is necessary that while *polis* meets new situations, stable ethical principles regulate its dynamicity. Man being naturally *homo politicus* cannot exonerate himself from matters that concern the common good and the patrimony of all. Therefore, everyone is a politician and, more especially those who selflessly toil to educate and direct the conduct of others so that life may be more meaningful and profitable to mankind. Virtuous men and women are not only good citizens; they are also primarily politicians because their lives positively influence the lives of others thereby facilitating the realization of integral human development. A situation in which politicians are not conscious of this essential character, there is formed a society of reciprocity of consciousness in which the most violent uses any means to usurp power and become a *supremewill* and a *substitute* to the conscience of others. Today more than ever, there is necessity to go back to the original meaning of politics as was presented by Aristotle in his *Politica* in which ethical and political powers constituted a single regime that directed and are essentially guided every human act and the life of the society.

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