

Political Analysis © Edet Joshua Tom, David Akpabio Adams & Amadu Jackson Attai 2019.

ISBN: 978-978-972-772-8



Published by:
University of Calabar Press
Calabar – Nigeria.

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POLITICAL ANALYSIS

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Chapter 1

THE CONCEPT OF POLITICS AND POWER

By

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Introduction

The discourse on this subject matter would commence with the nature of man as chronicled in the 'Holy Book' on the nature of man. We are familiar with the Biblical narrative where the creator brought forth Adam to occupy the earth after its creation. He then provided Eve and both started a family through the processes of procreation. Adam failed the integrity and transparency test placed on him. His family however expanded exponentially into various nations and developed different languages. He then acquired characteristics attributes that was going to be anti-thetical to harmonious existence. The Holy Book further recorded that he sinned by disobeying the instruction that was given to him. The act

of disobedience caused him to acquire certain character traits which pervaded his descendants up till this day.

The descendants of Adam and Eve then manifested, greediness and selfishness on natural wealth that was provided for communal usage, their lives as a result became conflict oriented in all aspect, self-righteousness became the order, as everyone became a judge of his own actions. All these demonstrated a situation of 'survival of the fittest' in the absence of a sovereign authority to regulate human behavior in that society. It instructive to note that the spread of the Adamic family into different nations and language groups coupled with their conflict nature, which arose from the sin of their progenitor (Adam), set the them in the path of conflict. It is further informative to note that this is the state of societal development often referred to as the 'state of nature' by many scholars.

Lucius Seneca (4BC-56 AD) for instance acceded to the political idea of the 'state of nature' which he posited was a state in which man was in primitive level of life from where he progressed to the conventional level where institutions of state were developed. The primitive stage according to Seneca was that of 'innocence' because there was no one wise enough to command and direct the society according to norms of society. It was a state of happiness with negative virtue and goodness (Carlyle, 1932). Avarice acquired when the progenitor (Adam) disobeyed the creator meant that he; 'rent the first happy society asunder...the lust of authority seized upon them (Carlyle, 1932:24).

The above prepared people in the primitive society for the next stage of societal growth. The description of this primitive society was succinctly captured by one scholar as consisting of;

- (i) Since man is by nature greedy, one's greed clashed with another in the society where everyone was a judge to his/her actions;

- ii) The state of being was that of survival of the fittest;
- iii) It was therefore a state of conflict which Thomas Hobbes had described life in this society as being 'short, nasty, brutish and solitary'.
- iv) The inconveniences of this state, made men to reasoned and enter into social contract with one another to establish values and norms of co-existence with one another (Frank, 2013:20).

The above variables prepared the primitive society for the next stage of societal development. Seneca posited that the needs for the institutions of society were occasioned by the results of vice of the corruption of human nature. Man, he said is a rational animal (Carlyle, 1932:24). The conflict caused some people to emigrate and found other human settlements, thereby expanding the Adamic family into different nations.

The Problem

The problems generated by the progression in the development of human society were twofold;

- i) On the one-hand, there were internal crises caused by the absence of internal order within the society. The issue of keeping the human group cohesive and secure. This was principally because of the absence of superior authority to regulate human behavior and get standard of behavior to move the society away from conflicts arising from man being a judge to his own acts. Thus, this society was conflictual arising from different opinions. We would refer to this as internal conflict of social order. Different people would have different approaches to how to create order in the society.
- ii) The second arm of the conflict is one between one nation or society and another. As one nation or settlement grew in population, the land area and the food production capacity would become a challenge. The need to look elsewhere to

augment the means of livelihood would arise. It is instructive to note that no one locality can be self-sufficient in its needs. This may bring these two into conflict and it often does. The conflict in its extreme form would manifest as war between nations.

The narrative above indicates the dominance of two major forms of conflict which every nation gets ready to set up mechanism for its resolution, the problem of 'war and peace'. The extreme form of this is national or international war. These conflicts need to be prevented or resolved when either occur. This is to enable human society to make progress of development. It would be recalled that it was conflict that initially drove men into the company of other men. This is the gregarious instinct of men which made any society 'individual writ-large'.

These internal and external problems necessitated the development of the society to progress to the phase of Social contract.

The Approach of the Study

The approach of this study was a combination of descriptive and content analysis methods. The descriptive component was case-study where it described the original human society termed 'state of nature' and the processes in which it evolved into a political community. It then followed the growth in such society which gave room for the human activities called 'politics', essentially meant to reconcile conflicting views of groups and individuals of what the society ought to be. The perception of political power is then analyzed to identify its requirements for application in modern state.

This was complemented with 'content analysis' of the concept of 'Politics and power' where classical document and political ideas of these two terms were examined to identify the patterns of their application from in the Greek city state of Athens and thereafter. The critical element of this approach was the systematic reading of

its classical usage to understand the meaning of its contents and how it was applied in classical context (non-invasive nature). Content analysis in this context could be described as, identifying or 'tracing' the manner in which these two concepts had been applied from classical times and adopt it for the modern states. The combination of these two elements consisted of the approach of this study.

The Social Contract

In the stage of primitive innocence as Seneca would described 'man in the natural stage, living with enormous inconveniences- men reasoned and established rudimentary social order among themselves in what is theoretically referred to as 'the social contract stage of societal development. This was a contract between persons in a pre-political or pre-social condition specifying the terms upon which they are prepared to enter society or submit to political authority. Adherent of social contract theory need not suppose the historical reality of the agreement, for they are often interested in exploring the limits of political obligation by reference to what a rational actor would be prepared to agree to, given such gains and losses (McLean & McMillan 2003:493). Igwe (2005) on the other hand averred that it the hypothetical voluntary agreement revealed by Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and other classical thinkers between members of the state of nature to found a the state to which they can surrender some of the freedoms and liberties they naturally enjoyed, in order to enhance and secure the rest, and in effect elevating the vile state of nature to a state of civilization (Hobbes), or preventing an already ennobled state of nature from degenerating into a state of war.

Rousseau (1998), pierced through his idea of Social contract with the phrase 'man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains'. This meant that one can be subjected to the chains of the society yet sustain one's freedom. Social contract he contended gave birth to the 'General will' which must be pursue at all time by the state

which should be in the best interest of all. The observation of the 'general will' would serve as a control to the human instinct to act according to his preferences. The difficulty of getting the people to observe the 'general will' created the imperative of an agency of the people term 'Government'. Machiavelli, pointedly stated that government is the servant of the people to enact and execute the general will as the law. What this mean is that, all laws made by the representative of the people, should be typical of the people.

The important of this theoretical exposition is that it serve to;

- i) To illustrate the steady stages of the development of the state and the motives for the political duties of obedience to laws owe by all within the state to it.
- ii) It also explicate why it is the state which secure life, its liberty and property of its members more than any social phenomenon.
- iii) The state so formed was to generate the greatest good for the greatest number of people within the state system.
- iv) The individual was to keep their own side of the contract by obeying all laws emanating from the agent that was set up to execute the terms of the contract (Igwe, 2005).

Furthermore, Social contract provide defense of the society, and provide legitimacy for the institution of Government. It additionally provides the reason why people have to obey rules emanating from the government that are not in their interests.

SECTION TWO

Creating the Government: Politics

The narrative so far has laid the foundation for 'Politics' to take place. The account indicated the absence of 'Government' or a superior body to execute the terms of the 'social contract' even when 'man-in-society' had passed the state of nature. The need for a body to take decisions on behalf of all and implement it on the basis of the greatest good for the greatest number became a categorical imperative. This is where the mechanics of politics come into play to give direction which the society should go;

certainly there would be disagreements on where to go and how to get there. The processes of resolving the disagreements that would ensue, is the business of Politics. It requires leadership to show the way and how to get to the desired destination. This is then the realm of Politics.

Politics is the art or science of directing and administering states or other political units. The science of Government... politics occur when people disagree about the distribution of resources and have at least some procedures for the resolution of such disagreements. It was not present in the state of nature where people make 'war on each other' (McLean & McMillan, 2003). Igwe (2005) says Politics is a process dealing with the acquisition, use and retention of power, including the distribution to various individual classes and groups of whatever unequal benefits and burdens of membership of the political society. Eric Rowe on the other hand averred that 'politics is deplored by those who claim a monopoly of truth, for they see where to go' (Rowe: 1969).

The outcome of politics is, the Government, as the agency of the state, is vested with coercive power in order to compel obedience to its laws for the preservation of order and for the common good of the community. The purpose of force is to prevent individuals and associations of individuals from taking the law into their own hands and to insist on a peaceful settlement of their differences (Appadorai, 1968).

a) The processes of politics in this context first of all involve the fact there is disagreements on the way to lead the society. The myriads of views are then aggregated by 'political parties' and develop them into policies outlook, organize and persuade voters to elect their candidates to office. At this stage in the USA, the disagreements would be reduced into two camps; Democratic and Republic parties. In Nigeria, APC and PDP mostly. By this act the disagreements in the society had been managed into two broad groupings. An election decides which of the competing parties or

individuals may translate their programme into public policy. A debate in the legislature or in a legislative committee allows opponents to express their views and provides an opportunity to try to defeat unwelcome legislation (Ball, 1979: 24).

b) The second level of politics consists of 'campaigning or political education' to enable the aggregation of individual choices (election) to be conducted often on the basis of 'first- past- the-post' (simple majority). The party which obtain the majority of the people's preferences (votes) obtain the authority of the electorates, to form Government to operate on the basis of utilitarian principles (the greatest good for the greatest number of the people), because the government now care for everybody irrespective of whether they supported the party and personnel who emerged victorious from the exercise. It is the processes of politics as depicted above, which resulted into the inauguration of the Government. The personnel of the Government so constituted have been given authority through the ballot boxes.

The Political Power

In classical times political power had rested with the people-citizenry. The Roman Jurist stated this in the theory of '*corpus Juris*' (Body of Civil Law 529-534) compiled by the Justinian legalist. This document averred that since the power resides with the people, whoever must exercise it must obtain it from the people, the '*populus*'. The '*populus*' is identical with '*res-publica*'. The authority of the '*populus*' is supreme and the authority of the '*magistrate*' is representative of the (*populus*) citizens. All these mean that the Principle that the legislative authority of society is founded

Upon the natural relation between a society and its members,

And that if this authority is entrusted to any particular person

It is in virtue of some representative character in him

The above find simple exemplification in the fact that the power in the state rest with the people-the populus, not only because people were born with their rights, but also because the society is 'individual-writ-large, that is, the collectivity of individuals make-up the society and the rights therein. Anybody therefore claiming to have 'political power' over other's right, must obtain it from the process of conferment of rights (traditional, charismatic, rational-legal, elections and voting) approaches. What is conferred on the person is 'power' backed by the authorization (authority) of the people, hence power and authority.

In the early Roman empire where, political theory shifted to after the collapsed of Greek civilization, the Carlyle and Carlyle (1909) reporting on the 'Corpus Jurists' averred that;

*The authority to make laws belongs to the Romans people,
And to the Prince to who, the people have given this authority
For it is the duty of the people or the prince to care for the
Individuals, as those who are members and children of the state.
The Roman emperor exercises the legislative authority in virtue
that the Roman people have given him authority.*

Similarly, when the people became very numerous, it was difficult to summon them for the purpose of making laws, and so the people elected one hundred senators, that they might take counsel on behalf of the people (vice populi), and ordered that whatever they should decree should have the force of law(Carlyle, 1909:59).

Jean Jacques Rousseau (1913) was very right about political power when he observed: 'The strongest is never strong enough to be always master, unless he transforms strength into right, and obedience into duty. Put differently, it is the capacity to affect another's behavior by the seeming threat of some form of sanctions if the other person does not behave in an expected way at any time. It is exercise in relation to another person. The seeming capacity to

give command and cause the people to obey. It could be stolen as the military do, or as personal assistants to political office holders currently do in Nigeria. People behave according to their whims believing they are acting on behalf of their principals.

In a modern state, since the time of Aristotle, it has been generally agreed that political power is divisible into three broad categories. There is, first the legislative power. It enacts the general rules of the society. It lays down the principles by which the members of the society must set their course. The second, executive power, seeks to apply those rules (made by the legislature) to particular situations. The third, judicial power, determines the manner in which the work of the executive has been fulfilled (Laski, 1980:295).

It is important to state that anyone with political power wield 'Influence' which Robert Dahl had described as a relation among actors in which one actor induces other actors to act in some way they would not otherwise act. However, political power is considered legitimate and more founded when it is exercise with political authority.

Political Authority: Political authority in the words of Alan Ball (1979) is the recognition of the right to rule arising from securing the authority of the electorates through elective processes. The consent deposited on a possessor grant him the authority to issue threat of sanction. Political power plus authority would crate influence for its possessor. Political or administrative Influence would persist long after political power and authority would have withered away if they were use responsibly, especially in the utilitarian manner. It precautionary to state herein, that the possessors of power and authority at all times, have a duty to exercise it responsibility and transparently in the interest of the majority of the people. This is the only guarantee for them to continue to be relevant whether in or out of political offices.

The Practicum: Politics, Power and Authority

It is important to state succinctly that disagreement occur at all levels of life in human society. At the community, state and at international levels, both require 'politics' as a process for its resolution, thus, there is no one who can be insulated against politics. If you do not participate, you would live within its influence and impact. It is therefore appropriate to partake in deciding the course of event which would eventually shape your life. This explains why Aristotle said, that 'Politics is a master science' and that anyone who can live outside politics, must be a God or the beast'.

The focus of politics in Nigeria today is on 'restructuring the pattern of inter-governmental-relations in Nigeria. On this subject, there are considerable disagreement principally on 'how power should be devolved to the states, and what items should be expunged from the 68 items in the exclusive to the concurrent legislative list. The disagreement on this issue would only be resolved by Political Parties adopting them as their programmes or otherwise in 2019. The disagreement on this issue and position lead to party growth, in a multi-party-political system rather than in single party system. Those who have opinion on this issue then que behind the party to vote accordingly. The disagreement is then managed or reconciled in the public interests, that is, for the good of all as opposed to sectional interests.

This is because from the days of J.J. Rousseau -when he coined the term 'General Will', there indeed exist interests that cut across all the groups in the society. This is the essence of politics and not personal aggrandizement, for in serving the 'General Will' or 'public interest', is the interests of the statement get satisfied.

Politics and Election: Politics give rise to election which decided which of the competing parties or individuals may translate their programme into public policy (Ball, 1979:24). This is how the

disagreement on how best to resolve the myriads of opinions regarding 'restructuring' get resolved. All opinions which created the disagreements and conflicts are structured into political parties, who then contest the issues at election. A debate in the legislature at plenary and legislative committee allows opponents of the issue to express their views and provide an opportunity to try to defeat unwholesome legislation (Ball, 1979:24). In the USA, this was what happened between the Republican Party which presented Donald Trump and the Democratic Party what presented Hilary Clinton. In Nigeria, the PDP presented Jonathan in 2015 and the APC presented General Mohammed Buhari (Rtd). The resolution of the disagreement/conflict on the way to push the economy and enhanced the welfare of the people were rescheduled things the mechanism of the political party system which articulated the issues, presented them to the citizens through town hall meeting and campaigns Donald Trump and Mohammed Buhari won (Rtd). The framework for reconciling disagreement in this context includes; political parties, which aggregate and structure differential opinions and strategies of development into programmes. The parliamentary debates and the cabinet meeting of government on the strategies for the realization of the policy. All of these shape the opinions on the issue at various levels because as Alan Ball said, no political regime has ever succeeded in suppressing differences, none has established uniformity of behavior, nor has ended disagreement.

The Power: By mandating Donald Trump in America and Muhammadu Buhari (Rtd) in Nigeria respectively, they have been conferred with political Power. Political Power in both men hands would mean their ability to cause people in their respective countries to do what they would not want to do voluntarily, such as; the declaration of 'democracy day' as public holiday in Nigeria while in America, a day is set aside as the 'veterans' day to honor those who fought for the state. Their powers are instrumented in Nigeria by the police, army, Directorate of State Service, Civil

defense, Custom Service, Airforce etc. to compel obedience to their orders. This is referred to as political power.

Authority: the power they exercise is legitimate and legal because it was authorized the very day we consented to their ideas of the disagreement and voted them at election.

The vote we cast was an act of authorization for them as the basis of the power they are exercising and to cause us to be obedient to their order, manifested in the law they pass in the parliament and to turn the obedience into habit. This is when the civil defense, police, military etc. arrest anyone of us when we refuse to comply with lawful order of the elected leaders. This led to the 'role of the civil society in the Government.

It is useful to state that the concept of 'politics and power' as discussed herein get bastardize in the African continent and particularly in Nigeria. This corrupted form of these phenomena arises from the political culture that have developed over the years and sustained by the 'elites' conspiracy' to do so in their interests. This is to be corrected by intensive sensitization of the youth on the correct form of politics and use of power.

Civil Society: This refers to the rest of the citizens who have elected few persons into the Government but are not themselves in government. First of all, since we have elected them to perform services of behalf of the society, two major things are apparent; pay taxes to enable the government aggregate resources to perform their functions and obey the laws and lawful orders emanating from the government. Secondly, the citizens have a duty to vote at all elections which is the process of authorization of the representatives. It is the reverse process that is use to throw them away if they do not perform. The citizens should know their representatives so has to offer opinions on current issues and make inputs thereof into the parliament. Public education is the foundation of democracy, meant to educate children to be responsible and knowledgeable participants in the democratic

process. Education is an instrument to perpetuate the agility of the civil society.

Civil Society has to ensure that the government elected into office, keeps it books public for scrutiny to ensure transparency, accountability and justice, to reduce corruption and ensure that it is working in the public interests, in accordance with the principles of the 'General Will' rather than on sectional interests. It is in keeping with this objective, that the Nigeria Civil Society along with other public-spirited people initiated the 'Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). However, the content of the final output of the Act would not empower anyone to have access to information that should ordinarily be in the public domain. Thus, the civil society serves as a watch dog on the government along with the mass-media. The 'June 12' crisis in Nigeria demonstrated the importance of the civil society in influencing the direction of the government in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The discourse had established that man is conflict/disagreement personified. The society being individual writ-large, would mean greater collection of men together in a nation, would mean greater collection of problems which need to be resolve to obtain peace. These problems get managed through the processes of politics, where political parties are the machinery of politics. The disagreements which arise in the polity are managed by structuring it into the political parties as programmes. The political parties then market how they intend to deal with these problems. At election, the citizens authorize anyone political party which appeal to them through majority vote (acquisition of power) to form the government. The government because it is the most preferred by the citizens, then acquire political power to affect the lives of the citizens by providing facilities required (through the complex processes of governance) to add value to lives of the citizens. The

power so acquired is accompanied with authorization to exercise legitimate power, while observing the human rights of the citizens.

The citizen in turn owed those they have granted power and authority obedience to law and the payment of their taxes. This is to enable the government obtain revenue to provide services which caused the initial disagreement in the community. The rest of the citizens not in government constitute the civil society which must hold the government accountable and place it in check to ensure that the 'General will' the aspiration of all to live useful life complimented by the provision of services by the state, are provided same on the basis of Utilitarian principles. This creates peaceful atmosphere and development in such a society. This is the dynamics of the useful application of concept of Politics and Power in any human social system. It misused in any society create misery, poverty and such a state eventually become a failed state.

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