



Morality and Personalism- A Socio Functional Perspective on Conflict of Governance and Politics in Nigeria

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Abstract

There is extant literature that governance in Nigeria has been marked with moral decay, corruption and its consequences based on selfishness and greed. This paper argues that any incidence of failure of governance is indicative of dissolution of the moral person. Consequently it critically investigated the crises of governance and politics in Nigeria and showed that the phenomena of conflict, corruption and religious bigotry which put a halt to the realization of stable polity are indications of a culture of failure of socio-moral-functional personality in the evolution of a common good. This paper does not advance a particular theory of personalism. It only presents this phenomenon as a logical consequence of the social critique of Nigerian politics.

Introduction

In the introduction to the article “Ethics of Politics in Nigeria: The Christian perspective,” Ejizu gives a historical foundation for the prevalence of the attitude of separation of ethics from politics in Nigeria. However, this attitude according to him does not remove the natural rapport between morality and politics in reality. At least, the aspiration of the founding nationalists of Nigerian independence and their dreams for the “attainment of a just, peaceful and prosperous society where no one shall be oppressed”¹ clearly shows an indication of a moral requirement for politics.

This shows clearly that for politics to achieve the end proper to it as human phenomenon, It must be directed by appropriate moral principle, that is the right standard for political conduct, which alone forms the authentic rationale for the justification of political actions. An action could, therefore, be characterized as “good”, “right” or “bad”, “wrong” to the extent it tallies with or departs from the nature of man. Every moral or political visions as such therefore, presupposes an idea of human nature and society. “This is clearly the foundation of the inalienable rights of all members of the human family, otherwise known as universal human rights.”³

The differing propositions of some contrary theories like those of the “subjectivists or the Marxist school of thought, which maintain that there are no objective standards of moral or political theory”⁴ independent of the economic processes or personal feelings, are unacceptable and untenable. Against this background, it must be affirmed that certain ethical values form the basis on which human society is predicated. Such values are in themselves good and objective because they accord with the rational nature of man as such. According to J.D. Mabbott, “...without such values, no civilized society could survive and few values could be achieved.”⁵

From this basic analysis, it should not be too difficult to appreciate the fundamental relationship between ethics and politics. Human conduct, whether in the political or economic realm, usually proceeds from the nature of man as such, that is, from man's inherent freedom which proposes some end in view. It is on account of his freedom that the human agent “is generally presumed to be responsible, answerable and accountable for one's action, in other words, the action is imputable, chargeable and attributable to the agent”⁶ And precisely because of the objectivity of ethical values and judgements, such an action is considered as either right or wrong. Ethics or morality, therefore, underlines and informs the basis of politics. This is particularly true of the undergirding ideology, such as equality before the law, human dignity and basic rights of the individual. Ethics also underpins governance in terms of stewardships in such a manner that primary values of society such as justice, peace, individuals and communal well-being are achieved and maintained.

In the views of Aristotle Politics is not possible outside morality. For Aristotle according to Ejizu, “Politics is social ethics since it deals with the people in group activity ... in order to attain eudemonia”. In the position of W.D. Ross,

*Aristotle's ethics, no doubt are social, and his politics are ethical, he does not forget in ethics, that the individual is essentially a member of a society, nor in politics that the good life of the state exists only in the lives of its citizens*⁸

The Concept of Morality

According to Velasques. morality consists of the standards that an individual or a group has about what is right and wrong or good and evil”⁹ By moral standards are meant ideals that people try to live up to about what is right and wrong; good and evil. Within a definite context of our social life, there is a standard of behaviour for people, expectations, duties and obligations, which enable both the individual and collectivity to sustain the vision of the realization of their ends. This is the reason why Aquinas analyzes morality according to Ogugua¹⁰ as the result for the actions of a being of a rational nature, which is related to its ultimate end. It becomes therefore, a code of human conduct, which each one by inclination, sets up for himself. It is an inclination, which signifies that man is irresistibly

drawn to the idea of morality. Morality is an intrinsically ontological accompaniment of every human conduct tied to the ultimate end of human conduct as a social consequence.

Moral standards deal with matters to which we attach great importance as a society. This great importance is as the consequence of the implications of the vision of the realization of the ultimate collective end of society. Morality therefore enhances the orderliness, harmony and peace of society. Without some certain moral restraints on conducts of individuals, society will definitely become chaotic.

Many societies adhere to such moral standards against for instance, lying, enslavement, murder, child abuse, assault, fraud and law-breaking etc. These are matters people feel are serious, and detrimental to the good order of the society. A person's moral standard typically comes from many different sources and influences, like religion, association, education etc. it is on this basis of different sources of morality that Ogugua argues about the need to remove morality from the chains of individual and custom. For to define morality in this light is to relativize it.

This position according to Ogugua has some merits. Relativism in moral opinions with regard to objective political issues of resources allocation for instance on the basis of ethical egoism or custom are known to have created grave problems of injustice and human rights depredation. The appropriate political morality for a society like Nigeria should transcend these foundations and inquire into basis for objectivity as a gateway to the attainment of the ultimate goal of politics. Moral relativism is therefore at the basis of some sort of moral disperspectives, which negate the ultimate end of politics. But how can a society advance beyond the frontiers of moral relativism and pave way for a positive morality that guarantee the possibility of the ultimate end of politics? Morality can transcend the limitations of relativism when the moral views of individual and societies are raised to the ethical status.

*Ethics begins when a person reflects in his moral standards or moral standards of his society and asks whether these standards are reasonable or unreasonable, whether they are supported by good reasons or poor ones*¹¹

Ethics therefore, provides the possibility for an objective morality, a rationality for morality, which make objective morality possible. It is within this context of an objective morality that the ultimate end of politics can best be facilitated. Ethical inquiry offers one the critical disposition of the mind to question the rational basis of our political actions as to conform to a higher realm of good and right. To achieve this, man needs to subordinate his prejudices to the demands of a higher order morality. It is within this context that the cultivation of political values and moral virtues as justice, equity, fairness, transparency and accountability can be promoted.

At this juncture, we approach the threshold of the search for a more fundamental basis of morality. Ethics of realization offers us an explanative model for objective

morality, provides the epistemology proper to the understanding of the “good”, which best corresponds to the nature of man as such, that is his rational and free nature. Every political action must therefore seek rapport with this fundamental objectives, good of man. The good therefore to be always promoted through political action remains, the protection, promotion, of the realization of human freedom and attainment of human happiness whether in oneself or that of another. This approach does not permit of discrimination in political conduct.

Ethics of realization as expounded by Alan Donagan,¹² logically interprets the fundamental principle of “goodness” in its human political dimension. According to him, this understanding can be explored at three levels, viz, personal, interpersonal and social levels, relating to the material economic order and interpersonal social order. Adequate realization of these principles will definitely guarantee a true moral political perspective. According to Donagan a great apologist of ethics of realization, the traditional expression of the moral law contained in the axiom “Do good and avoid Evil”, can be expressed in another manner, “do always and only what can realize yourself”, “avoid what can impede the realization of self”¹³. According to him, this precept is so evident as to form the basis and foundation of every morally good action.

As stated earlier, this precept of moral according to Donagan has three applications, which have positive political consequences. The first application of this precept concerns the use of the world at the personal and social levels. “The guiding principle of this first explication becomes make use of the world always as a means and never as an end”¹⁴. In his opinion, every time, “a man, in one way or another, makes the world, wealth, or corporeal pleasures or fame the ultimate goal of his life, he becomes the world, he becomes a part of the world and for that reason less than the world”¹⁵. A morality that allows man to be enslaved by the world robs him of his personhood.

At the social level, the explication of the fundamental ethical principle according to Donagan states, “Treat other men as you treat yourself”¹⁶. This means treating other men always as an end and never as a means. The world has been given to man as a necessary instrument for his own personal development, and therefore, no one can exclude other men from the use of the world to achieve their own personal development. The moral law which commands us to make the world a means for our self realization also lays down the following norm, “Treat others always as an end and never as a means”¹⁷. They are two aspects of the same law. The world, which is necessary as an instrument for the development of human subjectivity, is no less indispensable for the development of intersubjectivity or better of consubjectivity.

From the perspective or “Respect of person”, Donagan states that, “any human being who thinks clearly must recognize that there are certain goods fundamental to human flourishing, to full human life as a rational being”¹⁸, with regard to human beings whether

oneself or another the principle that good is to be pursued and evil shunned first of all forbids any action whatever, directed against these fundamental good. So the moral law commands every human being, as far as he reasonable can to promote human goods generally. So Donagan conclude that

*... the disposition to act and abstain from action in accordance with these commands and prohibitions is what loving yourself and others consists ... act so that the fundamental human goods, whether in your own person or in that of another are promoted as may be possible and under no circumstances violated.*¹⁹

Meaning and Purpose of Politics

In this part of our discourse, I shall explore the meaning, essence and purpose of the word politics. This is to see if its analysis portends any moral consequence. It will, as well enable us in the future to locate the meeting point of morality and politics as necessary condition for a critical assessment of the moral issues in Nigerian politics and governance. The phrases often describing man as social, political and religious etc. are not deeply often reflected upon. This means that we have often used them without proper examinations and this has created the moral consequences of applying these concepts outside their proper moral dimensions. Ever since Aristotle²⁰ defined man as a “*Bio politilos*”, many philosophers have had their respective views about man and politics. Thomas Aquinas,²¹ had for instance, added to the Aristotle definition, “*Homo naturaliter animal politicum et sociale*”. This definition specifies the social nature of politics. This simply implies that man is political because he is social and political question does not arise except in the pursuit of the realization of the social exigencies of human nature. Man, therefore, is political because he is social. Being “social” simply means according to Velas,²² relationship among people in a society. This social relationship has obvious prospects and problematic for man, his destiny, his aspirations, his development and his eschatology.

Hannah Arendt in Akam. J.B,²³ supplies us with three realms in articulating the meaning of politics. These three realms with their distinctive associating features include, “the private, public and social realms”. Donald Dorr²⁴, In his work *Spirituality and Justice*, also makes a distinction of three realms of spirituality, “the personal, interpersonal and public” realms. Like Hannah Arendt, Dorr insists that the public realm of spirituality, which analytically corresponds to the public realm of politics in Arendt, makes the attainment of justice in the society possible. Invariably, politics has become the act of the attainment of justice, freedom, human rights, equality and general welfare for all in the society. By implication. It means that man can attain genuine realization through the harmonious harnessing of the public and social realms of politics and spirituality.

D.D. Rapheal²⁵ has on the basis of the foregone analysis, carefully distinguished the

political act from other forms of social acts or behaviours. According to him, the “political is whatever concerns the state.” In this regard, politics would mean “the behaviour of groups and individuals in matters that are likely to affect the course of governance”²⁶. The character of the state therefore, as a political society, implies a moral responsibility of ordering the centrifugal social components of it through an established authority called government. This is the reason why Hoffner²⁷ opines that the notion of the state implies the character of governmental regulation within the society. The idea of the state therefore, includes that of sovereignty and power which are exercised solely for the purpose of promoting the common good

The notion of politics as here stated above does not exhaust its meaning in practice. We have also the “negative sinister” sense of the word politics. “In the sinister sense, politics simply means scheming, craftiness, cunning, artful contriving”²⁸. This mentality of politics has remained the phenomenon of Nigerian politics from independence. However, at this juncture, we have limited our analysis of politics to its essential features. The end or the purpose of politics specifies its moral imperative. John Paul II²⁹, In the *Encyclical Laborem Exercens*, in stating the teleology of politics defines it as “... the prudent concern for the common good”³⁰. The common good becomes the only justification for political activities. The relationship between the common good and government enables us to see “that no government is entitled to exist if its realization is not that government priority concern”³¹. We can from this point of view see the uselessness of the purely negative or exclusively power conception of politics. This negative conception is in its fullest, antihuman, corruptive of the moral purpose for the existence of the political society.

*For this reason, the good of politics in the community could then be no other than the promotion of that very reason for which the community itself exists, namely the realization of the common good. And this from the onset indicates the limitation of political power within the community*³².

The Role of Governance in Politics

Governance refers to the political character of the society or the state in their attainment of the moral objective of human sociality. This moral end, which is generally articulated within the context of the common good of the society, plays an indispensable role in ascertaining the level of “the good life” of members of the society. This “common good” therefore, becomes the moral standard for ascertaining the level of “good governance” or “bad governance” in any society. On the basis of this principle, we shall endeavor to measure the level to which politics has promoted the ideal of “good governance” or governance as such in Nigeria. But this assessment should be preceded by an outline of the meaning and essence of good governance or governance as such.

Governance has to do with exercising legitimate political authority or power according to Hammawa,³³. This power is a representational power; it is given to someone by the others on their behalf and on trust. “Those who are given such power on representative basis, on trust and on contract are permitted to exercise it in the management of the affairs of the state, on such a way as to promote the enhancement of the welfare of the people on whose behalf the power is exercised”³⁴. Naturally, the exercise of such power will cover the different areas of human life and endeavor, political, economic and social developments.

According to the World Bank, good governance refers to “.. The manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development”³⁵. It goes further to state that the;

*Concept of governance is directly concerned with the management of the development process ... the functioning and capacity of the public sector, as well as the rules and institutions that create the frame work for the conduct of both public and private business...*³⁶

The EU and its ACP partners have stated in Article 9 of Cotonou agreement that “good governance refers to a government's oversight of public decision making, accountability and transparency. Countries achieve and deliver good government by maintaining high standard in parliamentary practice, local government, public bodies, corporate social responsibility and economic practice”³⁷.

But there has been the danger to the contrary in Nigeria that government in exercising political power in its role as the highest guardian, by making legislation, in the administration and dispensation of justice, abuse the power and thereby jeopardize the end of the state, which consist in the creation of the propositions for a prosperous development of the individual and society as a whole, in short the common good. This scenario is noted by Chowdlury to be the basis of the various forms of political conflicts in Nigerian deeply rooted in political parochialism and communalism. In summary, Hammawa observed that governance has been the source of political instability, economic degeneration, and human insecurity in Nigeria.

Corruptions and Crisis of Common Good: Roots of Political Immorality in Nigeria.

Our analysis so far, comes down to the conclusion that the “common good” of the political society forms the moral basis of its assessment, that is, the extent to which it fulfills the end for which it exists. In this regard, the summary verdict of scholars in respect of Nigeria is that of failure and disappointment. Professor C.B. Okolo in an interesting logic of the political crisis and underdevelopment of Nigeria, identifies the sources of political immorality in Nigeria to, “... the mistaken notion of the common good and its relationship to the private good, among others, prevalent among African.”³⁸. His contention is that

beyond alternative reasons that may have given for the political failure in Africa, the ignorance of the common good remains the metaphysical root of political immorality in Africa. The consequence is that the political question becomes a misplaced one, such as “why men live or should live in society ... the nature of the common good, its relationship to and distinction from the private good, the relationship between the common good and the end of the society etc..”³⁹

This basic ignorance amongst the leadership and followership continues to generate a world of moral confusion and the ill-ordered or disoriented lives which stem from them that are largely responsible for the great instability in Nigerian political history. The contention is that the corruption of the common good serves as the fundamental cause of other forms of political evils associated with the Nigerian politics. When we speak of the corruption of the political realm, we look beyond the individual instances that constitute that corruption to the metaphysical dimension of it.

*Metaphysically, corruption means a privation of being it is a derailment in the functioning of a Being, what tends to separate existence from the end rationally appropriate to being*⁴⁰

Corruption therefore means evil, dishonesty, pollution, vice, baseness, degradation, dissolution or immorality. Corruption constitutes an act of violence to a being, an alienation of a being from its essential destiny. Socio-political corruption therefore, creates a disrespect of the social order. So the totality of the nuances under which scholars have addressed corruption such as, militarism, embezzlement of public fund, tribalism, mediocrity, violence, prebendalism, ethnic conflagration, lawlessness etc, all fall under the label of political immorality that create the crisis of the common good in Nigeria politics.

At this juncture, we shall attempt the exposition of the nature and content of the common good, which forms the moral basis of the political society. This logic of the nature and content of the common good of the society is eloquently presented by C.B Okolo in his analysis of the “Crisis of the Common Good”⁴¹ in Africa. The common good is fundamentally a principle of social order. This principle tends to order every social action of members of the society in the correct perspective, to ensure the attainment of general peace. It is what binds society together. According to John Thornhill;

*To say that man is by nature social ... is to say that what man achieves, he achieves together with other men, that the goals which he sets himself are goals he pursues in common with other men, that any benefit which he seeks is a benefit held in common, a common good*⁴²

The common good links the individual reality to, and makes his realization possible within the context of the social order. It builds the individual identity within the context of the rational demand of collectivity. As an ethical phenomenon therefore, the common good is

antithetical to egoism. It is rather the foundation of moral altruism, which is the bane of Nigerian politics. It is the focus of social equality, human rights and dignity and freedom.

But the common good is not merely to be seen as sum of homogeneous individual welfare. The common good is not a sum, but a new value specifically different from the individual good and sum of individual goods. It is the good of the members of the society. As Martian says, it is “the good human life of the multitude, of a multitude of persons, it is their communion in good living”⁴³. Thornhill defines it as “a good or benefit which human persons can only attain through coordination of their several activities”⁴⁴. So, by the common good, a social relationship is thus constituted by the coordination of the personal activities of the members and the coordination itself is regulated by the specific purpose, which motivates and binds the group together. This is why it is the basis of social order. In concrete terms the common good according to the document of the Vatican II (*Gaudium et Spes* No 2b) refers to.

*The totality of institutions and conditions that render it possible for both the individual man or woman and smaller groups to strive in an orderly cooperation toward the fulfillment of divinely willed purpose, the development of personhood and the building of cultural domains*⁴⁵.

The common good is at the basis of the realization of individual and social freedoms and fulfillment. It is the precursor of meaning. In its political dimension, the common good as enumerated by Jacques Maritain translates into,

*The collection of public commodities and services, the roads ports, schools, etc ... a sound fiscal condition of the state and its military power, the body of just laws, good customs and wise institutions, which provide the nation with its structures ... its living traditions and cultural treasures ... it includes the sum of sociological integration of all civic conscience, political virtues and sense of right and liberty, of all the activity, material prosperity and spiritual riches, of unconsciously operative hereditary wisdom, of moral rectitude, justice ... in the individual lives of its members*⁴⁶

The consequence of the analysis of the above citation shows according to Okolo that the common good “is something ethically good, an end, good in itself”⁴⁷ “for only on condition that it is according to justice and moral goodness is the common good what it is, namely, the good of a people and city, rather than a mob of gangsters and murderers”⁴⁸.

Politics and Governance: The Nigerian Experience

Ejizu addresses the situation of the moral paradox of Nigerian politics and governance from the point of view of dichotomy between theory and practice in the National policies and ideology. According to him, “the Nigerian political scene is as interesting as it is

ambivalent”⁴⁹. Though some scholars attribute the moral crisis in politics to some extraneous factors of history such as;

*The multiplicity of distinct ethnic groups federated into one nation, the diversity of religious value scale and moral norms ... And the double standards of the conduct that marked the period of colonial experience ...*⁵⁰

Ejizu affirms as the fundamental cause of political immorality in Nigeria the “... endemic gap that prevails between goals and actual performance”⁵¹. Though this position itself is reducible to a more fundamental analysis, nevertheless there is a truism in that particular assessment with regard to the ignorance of the proper knowledge of the end of political actions and policies that necessitated the gap. To be able to address this issue of rapport of morality and politics we of the opinion that moral and political epistemology is bound up with an appropriate social anthropology, which addresses a consciencism. This position is given impetus by the position of “Olusegun Oladipo and H.F Chidamodzi” that those whose responsibility is to make government politics, do so to benefit themselves at the expense of the generality. So the problem should transcend the question of rapport of “goals and performance”, to the ultimate question of appropriate personalism.

Ejizu further observes that “in terms of theoretical vision, Nigerian post-independence politics compares favourably in many respects with that of many Western democracies”⁵². This according to him is because “both the traditional background of different groups and the legacies of the colonial administration ... favoured the formulation of political constitutions that are anchored in the belief in the existence of God, human equality, freedom”⁵³, sound ethical principles.

But beyond this observation, the search for the reason for the failure of translation into political reality of these sound moral principles like the western democracies, indicates not a question of failure of rapport of theory and practice, but rather, a pervasive moral weakness of political agency that continues to make ethical egoism the foundation of self-serving political action. we continue therefore, to insist that morality and politics can only realize their ultimate end within the context of only and only a personalism and consciencism.

Ejizu also discovers the elements of these sound moral principles in the evolving Nigerian constitutions and various other national policies and development programmes. He, therefore, concludes that “in the vital areas of ideology and policy formulation, therefore, one could safely conclude that the political insights of post-independent Nigeria are based on solid ethical principles deriving mainly from the nature of man and certain fundamental religious conviction”.⁵⁴ Then apart from this ideological forthrightness, what can be said to be the reason for the political failure of these moral ideals? If we cannot attribute this scenario to the influence of philosophical sophism, perhaps, we hold the African cultural milieu whose interpretation of human nature subjects man to

manipulation by the society, thereby, making man, a mere means and not end. The consequence is that in his understanding of the political society, the African views politics as a war for survival and a perpetual manifestation of the so called state of nature, which continues to make human lives miserable, brutish and short. Whatever reasons one may proffer as being responsible for the prevalence of political immorality, it is indubitable that the lack of political personalism and ignorance of the end of morality and politics as social phenomena count as the fundamental cause. Any attempt at redressing this scenario must of necessity address these deficiencies.

According to Ejizu the moral problem of politics in Nigeria is most glaring within the context of governance.

*This falls squarely within the specific areas of stewardship of resources, the external structuring of power and regulation of social relationships in such a way that individual and communal well-being are achieved and maintained*⁵⁵.

Ideally, the realization of the common good in governance forms the moral justification of political conducts, which predisposes both the individual and the state to the realization of their natural ends. Unfortunately, on the account of the dearth of morality, "... Nigerian political actors and civil functionaries excel in thwarting the best intentioned programme by interjecting all kinds of extraneous values and factors, as well as giving face rein to all sorts of primitive urges in practical politics"⁵⁶. The issue, which proposes itself, becomes the eminent discardment or misplacement of socio-moral ends of practical politics, "... flagrant disregard of acceptable norms and enunciated goals on the part of officials"⁵⁷.

This disregard of the ethical norms of politics continues to frustrate the realization of the common good of the Nigerian state. This state of affairs continue to spell doom both for individual and collective prosperity. As Duzurgba in his observation, catalogues the causes of the fall of the various Nigerian Republic as;

*The misuse of economic resources, corruption nepotism, recklessness, indiscipline, dishonesty, extravagance, misuse of political power, denial of human rights, mutual jealousies, thuggery, oppressions, rigging of elections, inflating of census figures and bloody riots.*⁵⁸

All these are moral vices that negate the ideal ends of politics and prove our conclusion that "... all these causes are more ethical than anything one can think of"⁵⁹. Professor Chinua Achebe in his fascinating booklet '*The Trouble with Nigeria*' observes the following as the causes of the woes of the second Republic. "... tribalism, false image of self, social injustice and cult of mediocrity, indiscipline and corruption"⁶⁰. The "Ethical Revolution" of President ShehuShagari and the "War Against Indiscipline (WAI) of the Buhari military administration" are all open confession of Nigeria's woeful failure to abide by widely accepted basic ethical norms, which undergird purposeful political behaviour and ensure

the successful achievement of stipulated goals. Politics as pervasive and indispensable as it is in the realization of human and social destiny is therefore impossible outside the realm of morality. This has been the bane of Nigeria politics. The havoc which immorality has unleashed on the Nigerian polity can best be unimaginable. Its consequence on the omnibus development aspiration of Nigerian is bewildering. It constantly questions the rationale of the continued existence of Nigeria as a political state. The observation of the 'shocking revelations of malpractices in the management of resources and public officers as well as horrifying records of electoral performances including brutal killings of opponents, rigging and arson'⁶¹, clearly are indications of moral pervasion of politics.

Political immorality: Imperative for a Political Personalism:

One conclusion emerges as a possible solution to the problem of political immorality in Nigeria. The ultimate basis of the inability of Nigeria to procure for the common man any hope for "the good life", is not to be located on the quest for an adequate political system, but rather, the person, the individual Nigerian as a political subject in his perverted knowledge of the end of political action and society, that is, the common good. It is this failure in the achievement of universal socio-functional political personality that has created the urgency for a pedagogy for a moral positive political personalism as the fundamental moral basis for rethinking the dangers of political immorality in the quest for achieving a just polity in Nigeria.

Professor C.B Okolo's summary verdict on the performance of African politics since independence evokes a deep feeling of disappointment and utter disgust. This has resulted in the failure of African politics, that is, "... the inability of black Africa to rule herself, indeed to procure for the common man what Aristotle calls "a good life"⁶², which is summary articulation of the end of every political society. According to him this political failure of Africa continues to manifest itself in many forms ranging from "... incessant coups, poor economy, mismanagement of natural resources, instability, wars, corruption, violence"⁶³ and total abuse of human rights and all social, moral and political values. The utter consequences of this failure is not farfetched as Nigeria has become an indisputable reality of a state of nature.

This worrisome situation of politics in Africa and Nigeria in particular has challenged African and Nigerian scholar to investigate the root causes of this phenomenon and proffer solutions. This recognition is at the backdrop that the survival of Nigeria and its development is tied to the political process. This desire prompted Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe to a "... deep thinking and experimentation on original ideas designed to insulate African politics from instability"⁶⁴. In Nigeria for instance, professor Chinua Achebe in his epochal insight in *The Trouble with Nigeria* believed that the cause "is a failure of leadership". Following his footsteps, many Nigerian scholars have also placed the metaphysical cause

of Nigerian political nothingness on one factor or the other. However,

*It is not the case to say that several causes such as bribery and corruption on the part of the leaders, inefficiency, tribalism or ethnicity, power abuse ... have not been put forward by political analysts and thinkers as responsible for chaos and instability which have remained the trade-marks of African politics*⁶⁵.

Some thinkers and statesmen here also presented their sincere paradigms of remedies to this political situation. For instance, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe⁶⁶ has presented his theory of diarchy. For general Olusegun Obasanjo,⁶⁷ It is one party system. Many other Nigerian thinkers are also known to have presented one option or the other, but;

*These alternatives to peace, order and progress in Nigeria politics advance by these thinkers may well have their good points but they are far from being the root of the problem. The real problem of Nigeria politics is not the system but the Nigeria people themselves, the leaders as well as the subjects...*⁶⁸

The question now remains to identify the fundamental cause and solution to the question of political immorality in Nigeria. "This will include a more basic malady of both Nigeria leaders and their subjects, namely, ignorance"⁶⁹. This is with reference according to Okolo to "such basics as the nature and end of society, why men live or should live in society rather than isolation, the nature of the common good, its relation to and distinction from the private good, the relationship between the common good and the end of the society, the nature and importance of laws"⁷⁰

We quite agree with Okolo with regard to these basic ingredients and ignorance as part of the political problem. However, he seems to lose sight of the phenomenon of "moral weakness" inherent in the materialistic morality of the Nigerian, which I we convinced to be the basis of the bastardization of the common good of the society. Like Plato, Okolo subscribes to the sufficiency of knowledge as a moral factor, which in the real sense is false. It is rather the egocentric materialistic morality of the average Nigerian, his quest for consumerism and cheapness that continues to sustain the prevalence of political wickedness in its ramifications. Our contention is rather, that knowledge of the basic should pave way to cultivation of political virtues of justice and accountability. The search for a political personalism should therefore, transcends the mere quest for a universal knowledge of the political order. It should serve as a means to achieving a political morality.

The further question should now be how do we achieve this universal moral personality of the knowledge of the political realm? This question presuppose addressing the mistake notion of the common good and its relationship to the private good among others prevalent among Nigerians and the ill-ordered or disoriented lives, which stem from

them that are largely responsible for the great instability in Nigerian politics. In the search for a political personalism for Nigerian, a rapport must be reached between political knowledge and political conduct. It is only within this context that we can appreciate the full strength of Okolo's position on the remedy for the social and political aberrations, the worst forms of corruption, oppression of the masses, suppression of democracy and the voice of dissent, personal ambition for naked power and morbid desire for self-perpetuation in office, physical elimination of political opponents etc, which have characterized Nigerian politics are symptoms of that deep seated immorality of materialistic egoism of the average Nigeria.

The first step in achieving this requisite political personalism starts as Okolo has observed with an adequate knowledge of the political realm, which will provide avenue for the cultivation of the necessary moral and political virtues and values, which will guarantee social justice and political stability needed to every form of individual and social development. These values will predispose the Nigeria to the development of a social conscience, of concern and care, the option for the respect and preservation of the common good and the human person as inviolable ends.

This political knowledge will bring to the consciousness of the Nigerian; the fact that – human beings operate political system. That their workability very much depends on the kinds of people they are “... their knowledge or state of mind, their values, life orientations which make their politics precarious and unstable”⁷¹ It is at this level of intimate connection between knowledge and conduct that any appropriate pedagogy for a political personalism must stress as a matter of prime necessity.

*For to act better, ... people have to know better and if we expect equitable and stable societies to emerge... people have to know and respect such basics as the nature of the common good, its distinction from private good, and such related themes as the nature of society. Such a knowledge certainly does not constitute a sufficient but a necessary condition.*⁷²

How can Nigerians develop this basic moral attitude to public matters? First there must be decision based on the conviction that “the state is not something inert or lifeless. It is a moral entity with rights as well as obligations to the citizens”⁷³. As a moral entity, the state lives on the devotion of human persons and their gifts of themselves. To achieve the purpose of the political society, for which the state exists and continues to exist, that is “the good life of the citizens” this act of immolation is highly desirable. It invokes a nationalistic sentiment of the citizens. This good life which is not given by nature is achieved through hard work, and conscious coordination of activities of the citizens “to commit their own existence, their possession and their honour for its sake”⁷⁴

The “common good”, the good life is therefore achievable by the will and coordinated ethically good activities of Nigerians. Consequently, immoral activities of Nigerians are

ultimately suicidal to society and the people themselves.

Another important aspect of the political education for Nigerians, which has great consequence for the political personalism is the realization by Nigerians of the reason why, man live in society. This reason is inescapably tied to man's life and existence and therefore, calls for great commitment to the society by Nigerians. Philosophers point out that the commonest reason people have for living in society is partly egoistic and partly utilitarian. Alan Gewirth opines that “men come to have social right and duties towards one another insofar as they can mutually help to fulfill one another's basic needs”⁷⁵. Consequently, Okolo observes as serious components of Nigerian political education that;

*People live in society to help, not to prey on the society and on one another, cooperate with, not exploit or ruin one another, and for the maximum good of all*⁷⁶

When Nigerians imbibe these principles of political action, Okolo observes, it will cause a “shift in their personal behaviour, in their practical lives, since cheating, exploitation and deceit ... have tremendous ruinous effects on society as a whole”⁷⁷.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is preposterous to uphold a position, which tends to separate morality from politics. The analysis, which we have given of the two phenomena of human existence, speaks of an inseparability. The separation of morality from politics has created tendencies for despotism and prehendalism, which not only creates obstacles in the achievement of the end of political society in Nigerian, but have become the hallmarks of political immorality. It is obvious that this state of affairs has created a situation of a failed state in Nigeria. The consequences are obvious in the life of our people. The absolute conditions of alienation and discontentment, atmosphere of economic nothingness, total insecurity and brutish existences, colossal poverty in material and human visions. All these are manifestations of the deep-seated immorality of the Nigerian political culture. All these observations make morality the foremost concern of politics. However, the hope for a better Nigeria, that is, a Nigeria that works towards the 'good life' of its citizens, depend on moral rethinking of Nigerian politics. In this moral rethinking, the achievement of a universal vision of a political personalism is sinequanonic. A political personalism refers to a social-functional personality whose moral commitment to politics and governance, transcen, the egoistic materialistic ethos of the present Nigeria.

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