

The emergence of a Socio-Political School of thought within the political context of Cameroon and Central Africa

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According to Le Nouveau Petit Robert dictionary (2010), the word “politics” comes from a Latin word *politicus*, which is related to “government,” “statesman” and *polis*, the Greek word that stands for “city-state.” Politics is thus, generally, regarded as the art of governing, the art of managing public affairs locally, and by extension nationally. Interestingly, this concept of politics has been distorted today by self-centred and partisan views attributable to a lack of political culture.

One of the fundamental problems that affect the proper practice of democracy in most African states today is the proliferation of political posturing. Politics, as practiced in developing and democratising countries are hampered by a distortion of political life by a particular breed of politician. However it should be noted that the cause this inappropriate approach by some politicians is ignorance of the basic principles of democracy. Do our present and future politicians have the appropriate training and political culture to be leaders and to deal properly with public affairs?

It must also be noted with great regret, that many politicians and leaders are more interested in advancing their personal agendas rather than political and social projects for the benefit of all. Political horse-trading, unrealistic promises, string-pulling and recourse to influence of all kinds have replaced vision and policy planning for too many politicians. In order to put a stop to this dreadful situation which is so detrimental to our society, we are proposing, in all humility, a framework within which to pursue civic and political education.

There can be no development of any kind outside the realm of culture and education. Hence Ebenezer Njoh Mouelle`s assertion that development is “a complete and total process that extends far beyond the framework of the economy to cover education and culture.¹” In other words politics in the modern African context requires a genuine cultural and political education for all those aspiring to take part in political life.

The Yaoundé School, like those in other places seems to be the right place for this kind of training. Parsons, who places great emphasis on education as an institution once said: “*In modern society, educational systems are expected to play a role of paramount importance for the transmission of general values, for fostering loyalty to the community in general, and for creating awareness of the scale and importance² of different social strata*”.

¹Ebénézer, NJOH MOUELLE, De la Médiocrité à l'excellence (essai sur la signification humaine du développement), Ed. Clé Yaoundé, 1972 (P.33)

²Talcott, PARSONS, Le système des sociétés modernes, Paris Dunod, 1973 (P.50)

Accordingly, there is a real need for Central African countries to establish a school to provide political education so that our elected representatives and leaders cease to act arbitrarily or opportunistically.

The key objective in creating a **School of Politics and Citizenship in Yaoundé** (SPCY) is to provide training for citizens and future leaders on democratic values through a political culture which fully respects the fundamental principles of democracy. The purpose is to identify and assess the contribution of politicians to the consolidation of democracy and hence the construction of our societies.”

The existence of such a school will certainly contribute to the prevention of conflicts that stem from breaches in social dialogue, the exclusion of some citizens from political life and the lack of democratic culture among politicians. The idea is not only to give politicians a sense of democratic values but also to foster a spirit of “fair play” in politics. As a result of this new education, a politician should be able to overcome adversity as recommended by Saint Paul “*when I am weak, then I am strong.*”³

Since the advent of the multiparty system in Cameroon, politics have been distorted giving the impression that the “dice are loaded” in the political and democratic process from the outset, despite the fact that the entire process seems transparent. Doubts and suspicion are due to the incapacity of politicians to maintain a positive attitude in politics.

The ECPY intends to work efficiently for the strengthening of political culture through its specialized training courses with the help and expertise of its reputed training staff, representatives of civil society and those of all shades of political opinion. In view of the importance of these present or future leaders, the ECPY considers that it is appropriate to offer quality training to leaders so that our states become breeding grounds for peace and prosperity.

The future of our states does not lie in the hands of one category of people or just a few individuals. All citizens are responsible and should be accountable for their contribution.

At this time when our democracies have to face up to forces beyond their control which threaten their security, their economy and the well-being of their citizens, we must all feel concerned by the challenges confronting us. It is therefore vital to promote and participate in the development of ECPY. It is only through political education that democracy, essential as it is for our societies, will actually meet our needs and contribute to solving the most pressing problems in a social and political environment which concerns all responsible citizens.

The theme “**Political Actors: roles, missions and challenges**” was chosen during the seminar that launched the activities of ECPY with the dual aim of carrying out an inventory of political actors in Cameroon and Central Africa respectively and contributing to the evolution of a political culture, as an absolute requirement in Kant’s sense of the term.

³ The Holy Bible, 2 Corinthians 12 ver.10 Ed. du Cerf/ Verbum Bible, Paris, 1988

Democracy, as a political reference point, is not limited to voting. Like Hegel's bird it must only take flight when citizens have made up their minds and are sure their choice of representatives is made consciously and freely. This will only be possible with real information and with a perfect knowledge of the rules or principles of participatory democracy. The role of the ECPY is therefore to create a framework with training sessions for exchanges and dialogue for those who are interested in the management of public affairs in order to equip them with multi-disciplinary and complementary competencies that are directly related to their spheres of action. Its role is also to be a focal point for theoretical knowledge and practical skills and to democratize access to edge-cutting knowledge acquired in a user friendly and interactive environment. The time has come for a form of politics planned and organised on a human scale. It is therefore up to us all to get fully involved by contributing to the achievement of the fine objectives of the ECPY which will work for the fundamental transformation of the political scene in Cameroon and other African countries, south of the Sahara.

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