

## **POLITICS FOR FRANCIS**

### **Abstract**

The first Latin American Pope chosen as Saint Peter's successor led up to an unprecedented event in the bimillenary history of the Church. His ideological and pragmatic points of view, as well as his personal and intrinsic virtues, were the distinctive features that catapulted him as an indisputable world leader and model actor in International Politics. As a consequence of this expertise demonstrated by the Bishop of Rome, different issues have been established in the media and in the global public opinion. This can be seen in the anthropological and social aspects of his discourse, which he has successfully instated, as if he were an experienced and successful politician. As a result of Francis's supremacy due to his leading position and the evident change of direction of some political, social and economic issues by the Church, his discursive production - especially the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel)- are essential to understand his conception of politics.

**Keywords:** Pope Francis, religion, politics, power, speech

### **Introduction**

The first Latin American chosen as Pedro's successor shaped an unprecedented event in the history of the bimillennial Church. This event is of such a great magnitude that it has profound implications for all the Catholic community and for the complete the world, christian or not.

Undoubtedly, 13th March 2013 was the beginning of a defining moment for the history of the world. The Argentinian pontiff has moved the gravity center from Europe to America, which impacts the vision that the millennial institution has of not only moral but also social, economic and political topics and contents.

According to Mario Calabresi<sup>2</sup>, director of the Italian newspaper *La Stampa*, in period in which there seems to be an hegemonic way of thinking, that conceals any discursive or real inequality with a lot of rules and number, there is a man who speaks obstinately about people and humanity.

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1 E-mail: martin.perez.millan@gmail.com

2 Calabresi M, "Papa Francisco, la única voz diferente en el mundo", *La Stampa*, Italy, <http://www.lastampa.it/2015/06/22/vaticaninsider/es/documentos/papa-francisco-la-nica-voz-diferente-en-el-mundo-1Mxk4eeZZBy0Vko3ZK32nl/pagina.html> (accessed 2015).

Unquestionably, Francis expresses his ecclesiastic, theological, spiritual, affective, cultural and political belonging to Latin America. This is a consequence of the melting pot fermenting in this part of the world.

This can be seen in his writings and homilies as Argentina's Primate and in his pontificate texts. "(...) he made a hermeneutic of our culture, as the ones who dared to think America from America and as Latin Americans".<sup>3</sup>

His ideological and pragmatic profile, as well as his personal and intrinsic features were the particularities that catapulted him as an unquestionable world leader. This expertise shown by the Bishop of Rome has led to the establishment of different topics both in the media's agenda and in the international public opinion. Such is the case of his anthropological and social aspects of his speeches, which he has been able to introduce as a proper politician.

Those ideas were expressed in the apostolic exhortation *EvangeliiGaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel) and have permeated genuinely political environments provoking a "Francis effect" due to its influence in the linguistic manifestations of some Latin American leaders and benchmarks.

The document, more precisely the parts that refer to political and economic matters, is a complaint against the dictatorship of a world economic system and a free market that perpetuate inequality and destroys everything that is fragile, including human beings and the environment.

Due to his position of unquestionable power, Francis questions the responsible for the world's economy and policy, imposing his sociopolitical message. His figure shows traces which are as likeable for the common people as they are alarming for the established system.

Owing to the preeminence that Francis holds because of his position of power, and the evident twist he has given to the treatment, given by the Church, of social, political and economic issues, his discursive productions, in this case the previously mentioned exhortation, are considered to be fundamental to understand his political belief.

## Objectives

This aim of this work is to address the following objectives:

1. To create a concise context for Bergoglio's arrival at the Vatican and the first period of his papacy
2. To make contributions to the social, political and economic ideas expressed in the exhortation.
3. Acknowledge the perspective or role - as argued in the *EvangeliiGaudi-*

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3 Carlos Galli, "Lectura teológica del texto *EvangeliiGaudium* en el contexto del ministerio pastoral del Papa Francisco", *Revista Medellín*, Colombia, <http://www.americalatina.va/content/dam/americalatina/enero2015/RevistaMedellin%20158-2007%20art%20Carlos%20Galli.pdf> (accessed 2014).

um - from which, according to Pope Francis, the policy should conduct society's socioeconomic relationships.

## Methods

The scientific work has been done within the qualitative methodology, and it possesses an exploratory, theoretical and descriptive character. Due to this, and starting from the documentary and doctrinaire analysis of the subject matter, it was aimed to reach to assumptions or hypothesis that would allow us to reconstruct the events from a more comprehensive and integrated perspective of the reality.

The scholars of political ideas, whose contributions are summarized by Juan Pablo Ramis<sup>4</sup> in his Introduction to the History of the Political Ideas, as regards the methodology used in these cases, the centre of the debate is the relationship between text and context. The diversity of positions in connection to this can be summarized in two:

- Textualist or traditional approach: The focus is on the interpretation of the text as an isolated piece. This approach proposes a philosophical interpretation of the political belief. "It focuses on the study of the classic authors, (...) in those who transcend their time in history (...) [and] provide a proven answer to the perennial issues of politics".<sup>5</sup> In this way, the contributions of the great thinkers are valid both in remote and current times

- Contextualist approach: This perspective states that a political idea is posed or spread in a determined spatiotemporal circumstance in response to a concrete problem. In the foundation of the modern political thought, Skinner points out that it is necessary to unravel the social and intellectual matrix from and within which political texts appear. In this way, the effort is on explaining the importance that a political notion had in a determined period of time.

To continue, it is pertinent to define what context is. Very frequently, (...) "it has been related to all the circumstances that frame the appearance of a text, (...) those aspects of the situation that surround the text. Those aspects that influence the text in a decisive way and that contribute to its understanding".<sup>6</sup>

To study and interpret the *Evangelii Gaudium*, a contextualist approach will be followed. To carry out a prudent and sensible hermeneutic the reconstruction of the context or the contingencies of the time when it was produced is considered a priority. The political ideas expressed in the exhortation depend on social factors of a determined moment. The text is not autonomous, in it. underlying historical forces and mediations of social restrains subsist.

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4 Juan Pablo Ramis, *Introducción a la Historia de las Ideas Políticas*, Mendoza, <http://s4e8ea9b71b2a83a7.jimcontent.com/download/version/1414423561/module/9756442983/name/textos.docx>. (accessed 2014).

5 Ibidem.

6 Ibidem.

Pope Francis aims, consciously or unconsciously, to give an answer to those factors (epoch context) that influence- with different degrees of incidence- his intellectual productions.

## **Evangelii Gaudium**

Evangelii Gaudium -The Joy of the Gospel- was released in November 2013 after the closure of the Year of Faith. The text consists of 142 pages (Spanish version) and 5 chapters with a concrete, simple, serene, warm and direct style. In chapters 2 and 3, Francis describes and analyses aspects of the social, political and economic dimensions of the evangelization, demonstrating -according to the British newspaper The Guardian<sup>7</sup>, the American one The Wall Street Journal<sup>8</sup> and the Spanish one El País- its revolutionary character.

As regards the essence and genesis of this papal missive, theologians, priests and specialists on faith and religion do not agree. (...) "a document difficult to classify in the context of the precedent pontifical teaching, since it represents an important novelty both because of its content and its form and style. Francis, with great originality, writes a text which is eminently pastoral".<sup>9</sup>

Francis himself accepts that the Evangelii Gaudium has a strong pragmatic sense, meaning that it drafts - from the ideas- the path of his papacy. "Francis presented his own programme. It is a programme of a high level, in which the differences with the previous pontiff become clear. These differences are not to do with the truths of the faith, but with the style, the methodological approach and the accents".<sup>10</sup>

Its content is notoriously relevant, innovative and revolutionary -in the inside of a sociopolitical global postmodern context - what makes its classification or grouping according to the standards of the Church not relevant.

## **Results**

To tackle Pope Francis's ideas correctly and to create a framework to understand his concepts fully, it is appropriate to recapitulate the bases of the ideas or political and social thinking study. It is through such study that it is possible to go beyond the purely factual situations and to get into the universe of the sociopolitical reflection.

That is why Carlos Egües's work, "Object and Method in the History of Politi-

7 Andrew Brown, "Pope Francis knows his Vatican revolution must outlast him", The Guardian, New York, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2014/mar/12/pope-francis-vatican-revolution-outlast-successor> (accessed 12.03.2014).

8 George Weigel, "Pope Francis the Revolutionary", Wall Street Journal, <http://online.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702304017204579224030204080004> (accessed 12.03.2014).

9 Rodrigo López Guerra, *Cambiar el mundo, Conferencia Episcopal Latinoamericana*, Colombia, 2015, p. 1.

10 Kasper Walter, *El Papa Francisco, revolución de la ternura y el amor*, Sal Terrae, Cantabria, 2015, p.24.

cal Ideas"<sup>11</sup>, is resorted. The author characterizes different levels of political reflection, being such distinction an inexorable consideration to seriously exhaust the several edges that a counter-hegemonic thinking like Bergoglio's one.

On the one hand, there are ways of political thinking that have a high level of mental elaboration and that are presented in a systematic way (Political Theories). On the other hand, there are political ideas which are not overly concerned about cognitive aspects and their emphasis is on pragmatics (Political Doctrines). We can also recognize ideas completely involved with the agonal face of politics. In other words, those ideas which main aim is to arouse immediate support and stir passions (Political Ideologies). And, finally, there are political representations which demonstrate a minimal intellectual commitment that constitutes a fundamental statement to explain a political idea (Myths, Symbols and Images).<sup>12</sup>

Carrying on with the distinction made by Egües, it is explained that the Bergoglian thinking is halfway between doctrine and ideology. According to the writer of this work, the Bergoglian ideas establish a political blend, that is to say, a hybrid.

It can not be denied that Francis' ideas are set up as a doctrine to the extent that the Pope expresses an opinion about different facts, he suggests reform projects and he incites people to take action. "Thinking must be considered as an element of the reality, but less as a past reality explained by theories and more as a future reality created by doctrines".<sup>13</sup> In effect, it is a pragmatic discourse.

However, the eminent presence of an ideological component cannot be avoided in the former Bishop's way of thinking since, according to what is analyzed below, the *Evangelii Gaudium* is ideologically clear, that is to say/i.e., it is an ideological discourse.

In this way, it is essential to define the analytical category of ideology. Following Van Dijk's work<sup>14</sup>, it can be understood as a type of ideas, thus underlying fundamental beliefs systems in the shared representations of social groups. As such, ideologies do not include the structures - e.g. the Church- based on them.

"These representations are the basis of the discourses (...). It has also been assumed that ideologies are largely expressed and acquired by discourse, that is, by spoken or written communicative interaction".<sup>15</sup> When Francis explains, motivates, exhorts, reflects or legitimates his actions, he typically does so in terms of ideological discourse.<sup>16</sup> The speeches delivered to the popular movements in Bolivia in July, 2015 and to the United States Congress are clear examples of it. Both

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11 Carlos Egües, *Objeto y Método en Historia de las Ideas Políticas*, Investigaciones y Ensayos, N° 49, Academia Nacional de la Historia, Buenos Aires, 1999.

12 Ibidem.

13 Marcel Prélot, *La ciencia política*, Eudeba, Buenos Aires, 1987, p.8.

14 Teun Van Dijk, *Ideología y análisis del discurso*, Utopía y Praxis Latinoamericana N° 29, 2005.

15 Ibidem, p.3.

16 Ibidem.

interventions are just the written word -*EvangeliiGaudium*- restructured orally.

In this case, the speech enables to easily infer what the ideological beliefs of the Catholic leader are.

A reformed political theory supply, and applied to in this paper, according to the Bergoglio-Franciscan experience, is the difference between political aspects and politics, suggested by Chantal Mouffe in "On the Political".<sup>17</sup> Politics is related to the practical field, and political matters is related to the political theory field. The last one is the one in which Francis is interested in since it is thought that he understands political matters as Mouffe did: (...) "the antagonistic dimension [the we/they distinction, considered as group ways of identity] is constitutive of societies" (...).<sup>18</sup> Those relationships are possible and they lead, in democratic terms, to a respect and legitimacy framework of those differences.

This pluralism and this way of analyzing the political are evident in the *EvangeliiGaudium*. The creation of an identity implies the creation of a difference. Francis engages the dialogue and the encounter of those identities and differences, of the different social groups and cultures in pursuit of the common good realization, with special emphasis on choosing the poor people. In coming sections of this paper, these theoretical imbrications are deepened.

## **Pope Francis's thinking in relation to the politics role in leading the socio-economic relations**

### ***A non-linear, plural and agonistic conception***

Pope Francis's ideas show a dynamic conception of the politics. Far from suggesting a functionalist conception of society and politics, the Holy Father understands the political and societal space as a space that is in constant movement and changing, that is to say, lacking linearity. Politics paces the social and national life, it is considered the field where diverse ideas are confronted and that is where the inner richness lies.<sup>19</sup>

Pope Francis recognises that in those spaces a regular and systematic repetition of the phenomena is not experienced; he appreciates the stance disparities, the antagonistic ideas and the growth opportunity that arise from the differences. "While the functionalist theory is essentially concerned about the social conservation matter, the Marxist theory is fundamentally concerned about social change".<sup>20</sup> These ideas belong to this latter sociological theory, with the appropriate adaptation and hermeneutics. Simplifying, the advances and progress in the core of society are the result of confrontations and disputes inside the politics

17 ChantalMouffe, *En torno a lo político*, Fondo de Cultura Económica, Buenos Aires, 2007.

18 Ibidem, p.16.

19 Francisco, *EvangeliiGaudium o La Alegría del Evangelio, Palabra*, Buenos Aires, 2014.

20 NorbertoBobbio, *Estado, gobierno y sociedad*, Fondo de Cultura Económica, Buenos Aires, 2015, p.77.

field, according to the Argentinian Pope's perspective.

"According to the commonplace of the sociological thinking, the great division between systems favors the moment of cohesion and those which favor the moment of conflict".<sup>21</sup> Francis shows a political view where the convergence of the antagonisms is perceived, not understood as irreconcilable positions, but as diverse positions, opposed ideologies, ideas that dispute greater power and visibility in a context of respect and mutual appreciation. Below, we will cite and work on Chantal Mouffe's work to delve into these lines.

Chantal Mouffe makes a distinction between 'politics' and 'the political'. The first one deals with the empirical field of 'politics'; 'the political' belongs to the political theory field at an ontological level.<sup>22</sup> This is the one that interests us in relation to the research aim. "I understand 'the political' as the dimension of antagonism which I take to be constitutive of human societies" (...).<sup>23</sup> By taking an encompassing view to the *EvangeliiGaudium*, it is possible to claim that Francis suggests understanding 'the political' as the Belgian political scientist does it: [ensures] (...) to envisage the problems facing our societies in a political way.<sup>24</sup> Clearly, Francis's ideas are following a different path from the current liberal thinking characterised by a rationalist and individualist perspective which does not take (...) "the nature of collective identities" into account.<sup>25</sup> "This kind of liberalism is unable to adequately grasp the pluralistic nature of the social world, [it denies the political in its antagonistic dimension]".<sup>26</sup> Most certainly, this is opposed to the Christ Vicar's expressions in relation to his interpretation of the social reality which he describes as unlike and heterogeneous in the same way that the socio-cultural groups of such social reality are: unlike and heterogeneous.<sup>27</sup>

Schmitt considers that<sup>28</sup> "the criteria of the political (...) deals with the formation of a 'we' opposed to a 'they', and it is always concerned with collective forms of identification". Mouffe reformulates this criterion and transforms the relation between we/they in a possible and conducive one, in democratic terms, a special way of plausible relation in the context of respect and mutual legitimacy. This pluralism and this way of observing the political becomes evident in *EvangeliiGaudium*. The creation of an identity implies the establishment of a difference. Francis urges this identities and differences of the diverse social and cultural groups upon dialogue and meeting in pursuit of the common benefit objectification, with emphasis -it bears repeating- on choosing the poor.

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21 Ibidem.

22 ChantalMouffe, *En torno a lo político*. . .

23 Ibidem, p.16.

24 Ibidem, p.17.

25 Ibidem.

26 Ibidem.

27 Francisco, *EvangeliiGaudium o La Alegría del Evangelio, Palabra*, Buenos Aires, 2014.

28 ChantalMouffe, *En torno a lo político*. . .

The belief in a different way of the we/they relation - an agonism, a kind of relation where the parties share a common ground (a common symbolic space within the conflict takes place) and recognise the legitimacy of each other - it is the specificity of the democratic politics.<sup>29</sup> Applying this specificity to the pontifical thinking, it can be pointed out that the religious leader -when recognising our societies' diversity and the inner of each of them- is spirited about the modern democracy.

What is at stake in the agonistic relation is the configuration of power relations which a local, national and global community is structured around. It is the struggle between opposing hegemonic projects which can never be reconciled rationally.<sup>30</sup>

To choose one means to exclude the other one. Nowadays, Francis favours and exhorts a change of structures and systems, a project that certainly gives priority to the poor, those who are least, those whom society discards.<sup>31</sup> An inclusive project based on those who prodigally were neglected.

### **Understanding politics from charity, dialogue and inclusion terms**

Chapter 4 of the exhortation under investigation draws up the path that the Supreme Pontiff ensures in social, economic and political matters. At the same time, his belief regarding the politics role in the management of the social and economic relations is summarised in a paragraph -core of his conception- and in peripheral characteristics dispersed along the mentioned section. The ideology's heart is expressed as follows:

I ask God to give us more politicians capable of sincere and effective dialogue aimed at healing the deepest roots – and not simply the appearances – of the evils in our world! Politics, though often denigrated, remains a lofty vocation and one of the highest forms of charity, inasmuch as it seeks the common good. We need to be convinced that charity “is the principle not only of micro-relationships (with friends, with family members or within small groups) but also of macro-relationships (social, economic and political ones)”. I beg the Lord to grant us more politicians who are genuinely disturbed by the state of society, the people, the lives of the poor! It is vital that government leaders and financial leaders take heed and broaden their horizons, working to ensure that all citizens have dignified work, education and healthcare. Why not turn to God and ask him to inspire their plans? I am firmly convinced that openness to the transcendent can bring about a new political and economic mindset which would help to break down the wall of separation between the economy and the common good of society.<sup>32</sup>

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29 Ibidem.

30 Ibidem.

31 Francisco, *Evangelii Gaudium o La Alegria del Evangelio*. . .

32 Ibidem, p.205.

From the above paragraph, it is fathomed that the politics role understood by the Universal Pastor is connected to and immersed in the following three special features, which will be specified and itemised below: charity, inclusion and dialogue - encounter.

### ***Political charity role or the politics as charity***

The former cardinal expounds that the politics is “one of the highest forms of charity, since it seeks the common good”.<sup>33</sup> Next, he holds that charity is applicable to the relationship between peers (micro-relationships). However, he clarifies that it is also the beginning of the social, economic and political relationships (macro-relationships).

Charity is the third and greatest of the Divine virtues enumerated by St. Paul in his letter to the Corinthians, and it is defined as: “a divinely infused habit, inclining the human will to cherish God for his own sake above all things, and man for the sake of God”.<sup>34</sup>

The word charity etymologically comes from the Latin *caritas* or *charitas* and *caritatis*, which means benevolence, favor, care, love. Charity derives from reasoning; its dwelling is the human will. Even though it is sometimes intensely emotional and it frequently reacts to our sensorial abilities, and it exactly resides in the rational will.<sup>35</sup>

With all that, the politics -with a charity tone and Francis’s style- may be understood as a voluntary and rational way out or exodus towards the “periphery” - constant, deliberate and logical state of “political” mission in search of the common good. In sum, the politics role is effectively immersed in charity: “At the very heart of the Gospel is life in community and engagement with others”.<sup>36</sup> “I beg the Lord to grant us more politicians who are genuinely disturbed by the state of society, the people, the lives of the poor”.<sup>37</sup> Politicians that in charity, for charity and with charity guide their people -especially those located at the urban peripheries and at the indifference of the countryside- to the common good.

In light of the above, Bergoglio provides a great contribution to the way in which the Social Doctrine of the Church communicates to the world. In a global context, disturbed by copious injustices and arbitrariness, he plays his masterstroke seconded and harmonized by his acts and gestures: his sayings and his acts are always in harmony.

Without making an explicit reference, Francis picks up the thread of political charity - or political love - and fertilizes it with the new Latin American ideas,

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33 Ibidem.

34 Enciclopedia Católica Online, [http://ec.aciprensa.com/wiki/P%C3%A1gina\\_principal](http://ec.aciprensa.com/wiki/P%C3%A1gina_principal) (accessed 2014).

35 Ibidem.

36 Francisco, *Evangelii Gaudium* o *La Alegría del Evangelio*. . .

37 Ibidem, p.205.

another evidence of the centre of gravity shift from Europe to Latin America.

Pius XI was the first Pope who literally used the expression “political charity” when Mussolini accused him to exceed the proselytism limits as he was influencing politics. “The political field takes on the interests of the entire society; and in this sense, it is the field of the highest charity, of the political charity, the charity of society”.<sup>38</sup>

### **The role of politics in engaging dialogue or the politics as dialogue and encounter**

Peace and social dialogue must be favoured and supported by the politics. Then, this should be a period of a true and noble agreement, shaping the basis and broad conditions, and finding risk and sectarian interests in order to provide a non-banal and substantial encounter: the culture of encounter. “I ask God to give us more politicians capable of sincere and effective dialogue aimed at healing the deepest roots – and not simply the appearances – of the evils in our world”.<sup>39</sup>

Under the name “culture of encounter”, a profuse theological and pastoral view typical of Pope Francis is hidden, now transformed into his great and original political proposal, considered by analysts and Vatican experts as a Third Way - or the middle way - to the dominant and ideological systems. This notion will be later developed.

Manuel Bru, journalist<sup>40</sup> clearly paraphrases what the Vicar of Christ says “[culture of encounter is that] culture that embraces each and every culture, culture that is in service of all humans and that fosters the encounter among all their traditions and cultural and social movements.

The politics, in its role of engaging dialogue, is the greatest promoter of the culture of encounter. Agreeing with, it consists in establishing concentric circles that go from the communion to the interior of the Church, to the universal fraternity, to the social gear. The culture of encounter is Pope Francis’s great proposal to recover and to place each person’s dignity in their corresponding dimension that is the basis of life in society and the development of the entire people.

The wealth of different cultures meets in a mutual encounter, alliance, when the dialogue derived from this interrelationship is constructive: popular, university, youthful culture, artistic and technological culture, as well as the economic, family and media culture.<sup>41</sup>

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38 Pio XI, “Discurso a los dirigentes de la Federación Universitaria Católica Italiana en 1927”, Italia, <http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/es/speeches.index.html> (accessed 2014).

39 Francisco, *Evangelii Gaudium o La Alegría del Evangelio, Palabra...* p.205.

40 Manuel Bru, ¿Qué significa la cultura del encuentro?, *Aleteia*, <http://es.aleteia.org/2014/11/26/que-significa-la-cultura-del-encuentro/> (accessed 2015).

41 *Ibidem*.

An elite, separatist, individualist and self-important culture is not brought up. It is a culture where everyone has something good to contribute to it and everyone can receive something good in exchange. It is the culture of the we. "The only way a person, a family and a society can grow; the only way that people's lives may progress is by living in the culture of encounter".<sup>42</sup> It is a culture of alliance.

The encounter of cultures brings, as corollary, respect for all religious practices. Dialogue and encounter are not just social, they are also religious. It's just that, in a way, the religious is a social edge. "Only in this way, a good understanding between cultures and religions can prosper, the respect among different religions without senseless opinion and respecting each other's rights".<sup>43</sup> The religious or spiritual dimension of the person cannot be split; a person is integrity, totality and plenitude.

In conclusion, the politics may guarantee religious freedom and the religious factor of society in the communities. The pacific coexistence among different religions benefits from the State laicism that without assuming as its own any confessional position, respects and appreciates the religious factor of society, favouring its specific expressions.<sup>44</sup>

### **The inclusive role of politics or the politics as inclusion and the guardian of the common home**

Francis contrasts the humanism which analyzes the social phenomena, giving priority to the economic factors - culture of exclusion or of the marginalization - to the culture of encounter. His option makes reference to the politics function of embracing and defending social justice. It is the inclusion role of politics, it is the politics considered the common home guard that regulates the social and economic relationships.

In the *EvangeliiGaudium*, the former archbishop from Buenos Aires remembers the teaching of Paul VI: "All men and every man". What can be applied to the issue in question: it reveals the communitarian dimension - thus social and inclusive - of politics. "Our redemption has a social dimension because God, in Christ, redeems not only the individual person, but also the social relations existing between men (...) we cannot achieve fulfillment or salvation purely by our own efforts".<sup>45</sup> There is the magisterial justification of the human promotion, which does not have to be understood as one's self-realization but as a group realization, of the community, of the human family. "Accepting God brings forth in our lives and actions a primary and fundamental response: to desire, seek and

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42 Ibidem.

43 Ibidem.

44 Francisco, *EvangeliiGaudium o La Alegría del Evangelio, Palabra...*

45 Ibidem, p.178.

protect the good of others".<sup>46</sup>

Pope Francis, quoting his predecessor, states that "the just ordering of society and of the state is a central responsibility of politics".<sup>47</sup> Francis reinforces the citation adding a moral wish by focusing interest on fraternity and justice: "How dangerous and harmful is this mechanical repetition, for it makes us lose our amazement, our excitement and our zeal for living the Gospel of fraternity and justice".<sup>48</sup>

Justice, inclusion and the distribution of the fruits of the earth are not just tasks of some people. It is a work for "the we", for "the whole people", what implies a series of challenges assumed by a mature and sensitive community: (...) "cooperative working to eliminate the structural causes of poverty and to promote the integral development of the poor, as well as small daily acts of solidarity in meeting the real needs which we encounter".<sup>49</sup>

Inequity and obstacles for human promotion - that tend to polarise the issues between rich or wealthy people on one side, and poor or discarded people on the other side - cause scandals and riots - in the best-case scenario - and civil wars and fratricides - in the worst-case scenario. "We are scandalized because we know that there is enough food for everyone and that hunger is the result of a poor distribution of goods and income".<sup>50</sup> Clarity and precision at this point is incontestable: "There is one sign which we should never lack: the option for those who are least, those whom society discards".<sup>51</sup> Far from any vulgarity, the Pope onwards declares that "we desire even more than this; our dream soars higher". "[Straightaway he mentions that] a "dignified sustenance" [is not enough and otherwise he asks] general, temporal, welfare and prosperity".<sup>52</sup>

As a proposal for the described circumstances, the Holy Father takes a stand for and asks to be solidary. "[It] presumes the creation of a new mindset which thinks in terms of community and the priority of the life of all over the appropriation of goods by a few".<sup>53</sup> Next, the Holy Father delves into the meaning of the term, and at the same time describes with admirable simplicity the heart of the Social Doctrine of the Church:

Solidarity is a spontaneous reaction by those who recognize that the social function of property and the universal destination of goods are realities which come before private property. The private ownership of goods is justified by the need to protect and increase them, so that they can better serve the common

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46 Ibidem.

47 Ibidem.

48 Ibidem, p.179.

49 Ibidem, p.188.

50 Ibidem, p.191.

51 Ibidem, p.195.

52 Ibidem, p.192.

53 Ibidem, p.188.

good. For this reason, solidarity must be lived as the decision to restore to the poor what belongs to them. These convictions and habits of solidarity, when they are put into practice, open the way to other structural transformations and make them possible. Changing structures without generating new convictions and attitudes will only ensure that those same structures will become, sooner or later, corrupt, oppressive and ineffectual.<sup>54</sup>

It is necessary to grow in solidarity, which would allow all peoples – and of course each human – to become the artisans of their destiny.<sup>55</sup>

As previously stated, the politics plays the role of the common home guard. “[Politics, making use of the economy,] should be the art of achieving a fitting management of our common home, which is the world as a whole”.<sup>56</sup> It is sentinel and regulator of the dialectics social and economic relations. In this way, it provides a framework which censors and revises its excess and abuse on those inter-relationships. “We can no longer trust in the unseen forces and the invisible hand of the market”.<sup>57</sup> Likewise, “[it is unsustainable to appeal to inviable solutions,] as attempting to increase profits by reducing the workforce and thereby adding to the ranks of the excluded”.<sup>58</sup>

Finally, to ensure the economic well-being of all countries, not just of a few – i.e. to achieve a fitting management of our common home, which is the world as a whole<sup>59</sup> – the Catholic Church Leader maintains that “each meaningful economic decision made in one part of the world has repercussions everywhere else (...) [reason why] it is becoming increasingly difficult to find local solutions for enormous global problems”.<sup>60</sup> To that end, then, “what is needed at this juncture of history is a more efficient way of interacting [a new type of politics] to keep the sovereignty of each nation safe, [lead and redirect the political, social, and economic relations towards the common good]”.<sup>61</sup>

## Conclusion

After a deep analysis and the hermeneutics of the apostolic exhortation *EvangeliiGaudium*, we arrive at the following detailed conclusions, which considering the exploratory characteristic of this research, make up starting points for future papers.

First, it is concluded that Francis, due to his intellectual richness and strength,

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54 *Ibidem*, p.189.

55 Francisco, *EvangeliiGaudium o La Alegría del Evangelio, Palabra...*

56 *Ibidem*, p.206.

57 *Ibidem*, p.204.

58 *Ibidem*.

59 Francisco, *EvangeliiGaudium o La Alegría del Evangelio, Palabra...*

60 *Ibidem*, p.206.

61 *Ibidem*.

can clearly read the signs of the times. In doing so, he questions with a novel sociopolitical and cultural message going deep into a context of changes or a change of era.

In this way, the political, economic and social ideas expressed by the Pontiff are a challenge for humanity posterity and they are, indubitably, part of the Social Doctrine of the Church.

The Holy Father's conception about the role of politics in the socio-economic relations management is a non-linear, plural and agonistic one.

It is a non-linear conception because his ideas show a dynamic notion about politics. The former cardinal considers the political and social space as a space in constant change and movement, in other words, with no linearity. Politics paces the social and national life and it is considered the field where diverse ideas are confronted, being there where the richness lies.

It is plural because Pope Francis recognises that in those spaces there is not a regular and systematic repetition of phenomena; he appreciates the stance disparities, the antagonistic ideas and the growth opportunity that arise from the differences.

It is agonistic based on the analytic proposal of Chantal Mouffe. Francis shows a political view where the convergence of the antagonisms is perceived, not understood as irreconcilable positions, but as diverse positions, opposed ideologies, ideas that dispute greater power and visibility in a context of respect and mutual appreciation. The Pope recognises the conflict nature of political and social matters, but this is not an obstacle to consider those contradictions in a multifaceted unity.

Regarding politics' origin or *raison d'être*, Francis talks about restoring it. He is worried about the politics' weakening and devaluation we are witnessing. As a consequence, he makes a call: the right way is to reassert the politics' authentic goal: look for common good.

Next, the politics' analysis according to Francis's ideas shows three roles of politics depending on where the focus is: charity, dialogue or inclusion.

First, the charity role of politics is discussed. It should be interpreted as a rational and voluntary exodus towards the periphery; it is a state of constant, deliberate and logic political mission of searching the common good.

Then, politics is understood in terms of dialogue and encounter. According to the Pontiff's understanding this should be an instance of a true and noble agreement, shaping the basis and broad conditions, and finding risk and sectarian interests in order to provide a non banal and substantial encounter: the culture of encounter. The politics, in its role of engaging dialogue, is the greatest promoter of the culture of the misunderstandings' encounter.

The last role considers politics as inclusion and common house guard. This makes reference to the politics function of embracing and defending social justice. It is sentinel and regulator of the dialectics social and economic relations. In

this way, it provides a framework which censors and revises the excess and abuse on those interrelationships.

Thirdly, it is deduced that the most complete expression of Francis' conception of politics encompasses a coherently and widely analyzed sociopolitical proposal known as "The Culture of Encounter". The Argentinian leader originally contributes to what is called the Third Way. He builds a new type of politics that gathers the personal, distinctive, Latin American and reforming contribution of a great statesman. It is a culture of alliance, in which the antagonisms (we/they) work together looking for prosperity for everybody, giving emphasis to the preferential option for the poor.

In short, Francis - the end of the world and peripheries' Pope - means the irruption of Latin America in the core of the religious institution, and in the centre of the world. This sets up a pastoral, political and geopolitical revolution which organises the south hemisphere hierarchically and places the Church of the poor in the cynosure.

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**Мартин Перес Милан**

## **ПОЛИТИКА ЗА ФРАЊУ**

### **Сажетак**

Избор првог латиноамеричког папе изабраног на место наследника Светог Петра је довео до једног догађаја без преседана у историји Цркве. Његови идеолошки и прагматички погледи на свет, заједно са његовим личним и унутрашњим врлинама, су га катапултирали на место светског лидера и актера у међународној политици. Као последица његове експертизе коју је показао као примас Рима, различита питања су се обликовала од стране медија у глобалном јавном мњењу. Ово се може видети у антрополошком и друштвеном аспекту његовог дискурса, коју је он успешно наметнуо, у маниру искусног и успешног политичара. Као резултат његовог деловања дошло је до евидентних промена у Цркви поводом неких политичких, социјалних и економских питања, а његов дискурс постаје централан за разумевање његове концепције политике – нарочито апостолска експортација *Evangelii Gaudium* (Радост јеванђеља).

**Кључне речи:** папа Фрања, религија, политика, моћ, говор

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