

A CRITIQUE OF WILLIAM OF OCKHAM'S POLITICAL THOUGHT

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ABSTRACT

The fundamental problem of human nature and the idea of the common good in human democratic society has always been a source of concern to various scholars throughout the historical trajectory of political philosophy. The idea of the common good has eluded contemporary democratic States. Ockham's political thought is actually aimed at addressing the conception of democratic liberalism, democratic citizenship and the comprehensive conception of the common good in the State. The State is saddled with the sole responsibility of this common good of the people. Ockham's political thought was actually influenced by the philosophical traditions of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas. This paper adopts the method of hermeneutics in explaining the conceptual framework of Ockham's notion of the separation between the spiritual (the Church) and the temporal (the State) powers, and property right. He has a staunch support for monarchical government as the best form of government, natural law, the common good, human nature, right reason, ethics, politics, and the canonization of poverty within the Catholic Church. This paper, therefore, concludes, that Ockham's political thought has great contemporary significance by setting the pace for democratic citizenship, civil disobedience, human rights, freedom of speech, freedom of expression; and that there should be separation of powers between the Church and the State. Ockham posited that there should be no unnecessary interference between the Church and the State; but there should be checks and balances especially whenever there is any iota of despotic tendencies between the Church and the State and that the primacy of the individual over the State and the common good of the people should be prioritized.

Keywords: The Church, The State, Common Good, Private Property, Democratic Citizenship

INTRODUCTION

It is worthy of note that every man's philosophy is the guiding principle for his personal life and general worldview. Ockham lived an eventful life as a medieval philosopher. His personal life was basically characterized by a life full of controversies due to his perceived heretical tendencies by the Catholic Church. His life has always been "a life on the run". William of Ockham (1270-1347) was a theological voluntarist. He was an English Franciscan Friar, Catholic philosopher and theologian of the medieval period along with St Thomas Aquinas, John Don Scotus and Averroes. Ockham entered the Franciscan Order whose members lived a very simple life of no material attachment. During this time, he condemned the materialism of the Papacy stating that the lives they lived is a derivation from what Jesus and the Apostles lived. Due to the intensity of events, under the cover of darkness Ockham and a few other Franciscans fled Avignon where they went into exile and this led to their excommunication on their return. He remains one of the major figures of late medieval scholastic thought and was at the centre stage of the major intellectual and political controversies of the medieval era. He was among the most prominent figures in the history of philosophy. He is very popular for his metaphysical nominalism and for his methodological principle known as "Ockham's Razor". He is sometimes called the father of nominalism, strongly believing that universals are merely mental concepts and abstractions which do not really exist, except in the mind (Stumpf 181-182). The principle of simplicity remains the central theme in Ockham's theoretical approach. He stresses on logic, ethics, physics, religions, metaphysics, epistemology, natural law, political philosophy and theology. His name was said to be derived from the place called "Oak Hamlet" which is an area in Surrey England, and over time "Oak Hamlet" becomes Ockham for him, His philosophical approach was radical in his days and he continues to provide the theoretical insight for current philosophical debates such as property rights, individualism, freedom of speech, separation between spiritual and secular powers, divine right theory, democratic governance, despotism, sovereignty of the people, rule of law, civil disobedience, theory of the State, ideal of poverty within the Catholic Church and monarchical government. He develops an Aristotelian ontology, adopting on individual substances and qualities. He was influenced by Aristotle and Aquinas. Ockham always clearly asserts the priority of the authority of the Church over the pronouncements of reason and experience. Philosophy and theology nevertheless tend to be much less intertwined in his thought than they were in the thought of Aquinas or Don Scotus, for example (Panaccio 742-743). His theoretical reconstruction of political thought was a clear reference or demonstration to contemporary problems and debates on the ethical evaluation of democratic society. In Ockham's philosophy, becoming ethical was an active process of self-formation based on right reason and the ethical valuation of the democratic State (Hofmeyr 74).

MAJOR THEMES IN OCKHAM'S POLITICAL THOUGHT

Ockham's political thought is based on various themes such as divine command theory, separation of powers between the Church and the State, monarchical government, democratic government, natural law, property right, human rights, freedom of speech, civil disobedience, legal issues, and poverty within the Catholic Church.

DIVINE COMMAND THEORY

Ockham's divine command theory is the principle of moral ethics. Ethics is especially interesting in this regard insofar as it simultaneously displays both the intimate interconnection and the relative independence of the philosophical and the theological outlooks (Panaccio 743). Ockham posits that one can be influenced to do anything only by God's command and whatever God says is good should be gauged as good and whatever God says is bad should be seen as bad. Ockham's divine command theory was a derivative of his political theory. He explains why rights are specific and direct to an individual and the State. Ockham argues that the divine rights are the necessary condition for moral knowledge, moral value, moral goodness, moral evaluation or moral consciousness. He posits that the only criterion of right and wrong is based on the will of God and divine laws of God. His theoretical insight contains human and divine laws that obligate one to pursue or to avoid what is either good or evil. Ockham and Aquinas have so many things in common in their theoretical frameworks. Thomas Aquinas holds that in creating human beings, God necessarily regulates our deliberate human actions in a way that harmonizes with right reason. God's promulgation of natural laws for human beings are necessarily based on right reason; natural law normally obligates us to pursue genuine human flourishing according to the dictates of right reason. Divine command theory presupposes the normative possibility of right reason. Right reason defines the whole essence of man's deliberate action. Man is left to the governance of his own reason (Foster 252). Natural law is a dictate of practical reason of a certain kind (Foster 250). Accordingly, Foster posits that man acts towards an end by reason and will. Every operation of reason and will is derived from our human nature (Foster 248-249).

Nonetheless, natural laws pave the way for our natural rights. Natural rights or rights of man or human rights are moral rights attributed to every human being and corresponding to natural or moral obligations which everyone has (Raphael 104). The theory of natural rights has been criticized on the ground that no rights are absolute and that natural rights are a myth. Moral rights and political obligations must depend on moral reasons (Raphael 104-105). Ockham's idea of natural law doctrine toed the path of the Thomistic tradition. Practically,

all exponents of the natural law doctrine, especially Thomists, maintain that the law of nature is the law of reason, that is, a law that accords with the rule of reason, and is discoverable by reason alone. Its fundamental (primary) principles are self-evident to reason (Omoregbe xviii). The natural law theorists argued that we often commend certain things as good because they are natural and condemn certain things as bad because they are unnatural (Omoregbe xv). However, Ockham's political theory resonates an authentic expression of African political culture and human emancipation (Ramose 109). Ockham's political theory is a reflection of what the product of a good society should be (Aristotle xxi). His theoretical reconstruction reflects the fact that the good of man must be the end of the science of politics and every practical pursuit or undertaking in society seems to aim at some good (Aristotle 3-4). Politics reflects the pursuance of the common good in human democratic society.

Furthermore, Ockham's divine right theory is based on virtue and happiness or moral goodness. His work is entirely based on political obligation and moral responsibility. Ockham holds that the ultimate ground of moral judgment is based on truth and action. Ockham's divine command theory plays an important role in natural law or what we may refer to as nature-based-ethics and it anticipates contemporary problems concerning truth and deliberate human actions in meta-ethics. Ockham who has a serious attention to the freewill of God and his absolute powers believe that the normative source of moral value or moral goodness is based on the commandments of God and he gives us the ontological exposition of this divine command ethics. Ockham holds that God's laws are indeed necessarily a natural law. So there are some general dictates of right reason that God cannot counter its command. Ockham's philosophical speculation leads us to consider the role of religion in our contemporary society as well as the nature of moral deliberation and moral goodness. Right reason brings about the idea of moral goodness.

Moreover, moral obligation derives, strictly speaking, from divine commands theory; it is metaphysically impossible that God should command us to steal, murder, commit adultery or anything else directly opposed to what is good by nature for human beings. According to Ockham, it is true, but only true that God has promulgated for human beings is a natural law, to be sure of this, right reason dictates that we obey the commands of our creator. But even if God commanded us to be thieves, or murderers or adulterers, right reason would still dictate in addition that we should avoid theft, murder and adultery (Ockham 10-11). However, apart from the divine command theory, the second theme that resonates in Ockham's political thought is the separation of powers between the Church and the State.

SEPARATION OF POWERS BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND THE STATE

The State is a voluntary association (Raphael 102). The State, with its system of enforceable law, is a necessary device for securing essential rights and interests, and this fact, together with our acknowledged moral obligation to promote justice and the common good, obliges us to give the State our support: The State has been given a right to issue orders and to have them obeyed. The idea of social contract does have some place in the institutions of a democratic State. The State acts as the agent of the citizen body (Raphael 109-110). Ockham's political thought is anchored on the theory of social justice and the common good. Both the theory of justice and the common good ground political obligation on the functions of the State in pursuing a moral end (Raphael 107). The State is described as a necessary means to fulfilling some of our general moral obligations, and it is this necessity which guarantees the normative possibility of the common good. We ought therefore to obey the State, and if we do so, we are following our real will; a will that is general or common to all the members of the State (Raphael 109-100). Since the State aims at securing the common good, the State or the law is the concrete expression of the common will of the people. The State is designed to guarantee justice, i.e. established rights plus fairness. The State is built on the normative foundation of political obligation. Political obligation depends on our moral obligation to pursue justice (Raphael 103).

Nevertheless, the theory of contract of democratic citizenship accounts for the political obligation of naturalized citizens, who accept it voluntarily by means of a promise, but not for the obligation of natural born citizens, who have not accepted it voluntarily. The State is established for the sake of the common good of all individuals in society. The common good is what we morally ought to aim at, but that this is what we 'really' want. The common good, or general interest, is what we ought to pursue; it is the object of a rational, real, or common will of the people and so is the real good of each individual a democratic society (Raphael 94-95). However, the State, Aquinas said, is a natural institution. It is derived from human nature. For Aquinas, the State is subordinate to the Church. To say this did not mean that Aquinas considered the Church a super-state. Aquinas saw no contradiction in saying that the state has a sphere in which it has a legitimate function and that at the same time it must subordinate itself to the Church. The Church is a building where people worship (Hornby 201). Within its own sphere the State is autonomous (Stumpf 180). For Panaccio (744), Ockham's basic political idea connotes that the spiritual and the temporal powers should normally be kept apart and not be allowed to overlap, except in special cases of crisis such as papal heresy or tyrannical abuse. The Church, he thought, should as a general rule disentangle itself from worldly politics. The State must recognize its aspect of human affairs in providing for the common good of the citizens, the sovereign must pursue the community's end with a consciousness of our spiritual end (Stumpf 181). Ockham just like Aquinas claimed that the State sovereign has its

authority from God, and the purpose of this authority is to provide for the common good of the people. Ockham and Aquinas both articulated that:

The political sovereign has this authority from God, and the purpose of this authority is to provide for the common good. Authority is never to be used as an end in itself or for selfish ends. Nor must the common good be interpreted in such a way that we lose sight of the individual within the collective whole. The common good must be the good of concrete people. The only “true ground” of the lawgiver is the intention to secure “the common good” regulated according to divine justice” and thus it follows that “the effect of the law is to make people good”. Thus, the phrase common good has no meaning for Aquinas except insofar as it results in the good of individuals (Stumpf 181).

Furthermore, in consonance with Stumpf (445), Asouzu (*The Method* 481) sees the common good as the legitimizing foundation for our mutual dependence. Our mutual dependence is a necessary consequence of our historicity. The State is, however, aimed at providing the common good for the people; the State is an institution that claims monopoly of legitimate force for a particular territory. This claim makes it contradictory and paradoxical (Hoffman and Graham 501). A State so governed needs very few laws; and, as it becomes necessary to issue new ones, the necessity is universally seen (Gewirth 76). The State is the supreme ethical order which is an end in itself and the condition of the individual’s reality and freedom. The State is absolutely rational in as much as it is the actuality of the substantial will which it possesses in the particular self-consciousness once that consciousness has been raised to consciousness of its universality (Gewirth 82). The security of the State is everything that depends on the unity of universal and particular end. The provision of internal and external security is one of the basic functions of the State. Security means the protection of life and property against internal and external aggression. The conjunction of duty and right has a twofold aspect: what the State demands from us as a duty is ipso facto our right as individuals, since the State is nothing but the articulation of the concept of freedom (Gewirth 84). The determination of the individual wills is given an objective embodiment through the State and thereby they attain their truth and their actualization for the first time. The State is the one and only prerequisite of their attainment of particular ends and welfare. The constitution is rational in so far as the State inwardly differentiates and determines its activity in accordance with the nature of the concept (Gewirth 84-85). However, the formal subjective freedom of the individuals consists in their having and expressing their own private judgments, opinions, and recommendations on affairs of the State (Gewirth 87). The State is considered as an organized political community

controlled by one government; it is an organized political community forming part of a country. The effective organization of the State as an organized political community requires skill. This skill is called statecraft. Statecraft means the skill in managing State and political affairs (HornbY 1457). Oakeshott (19), cited by Mackenzie (52) argues that:

The defining features of the State are that it is authorized to rule over the people; that it has the power to do so vested in the apparatus of governing and that the people who are ruled are obligated to each other as citizens- that is, we are obligated as members of a political community rather than, for example, as followers of the same religion, or members of the same tribe or family. We should add that one of the defining features of a state is that it uses its authority and power within a territory as a basis upon which to found external, or what we usually call international relations with other States.

Broadly speaking, the idea of the common good indicates a genuine reciprocal relationships and critical understanding of individuals in their democratic community. Our existence and survival depends on our ability to maintain a qualitatively high reciprocal relationship (Asouzu, *Effective Leadership* 80). Ockham's political thought rests on a single comprehensive conception of the good and a normative ideal and context of democratic citizenship (Thomas 273). Ockham aims at a politics guided by natural law and justice in detail not only at the level of general principle. To acquire skill in natural laws and secular affairs, the emperor should have many advisers. He should administer justice, law, and order. Sometimes, he should temper justice with mercy, with mildness but sometimes he has strict obligation to be rigorous with respect to inflicting punishment or penalties for crimes, if the emperor knows that a criminal is perfectly reformed, prerogatives of mercy is permissible or acceptable. The emperor should not be externally oriented. It is therefore, Finally, there arises the question of wealth and power. A Pope does not need to be rich or unnecessarily wealthy so that he could concentrate in the teachings of Christ.

However, Ockham apparently argues that imperial office cannot be well-administered without riches. For Ockham, power is more strengthened by riches. Ockham's political theory reflects in or stipulates the virtue of liberality: The habit of leading people with intrinsically good acts by prosperous individuals. In Aristotle's ethics, ethics becomes an instrumental virtue of secular statecraft. Politics is all about statecraft-ship (Murkherjee and Ramaswamy 79). The distinction between the spiritual and temporal powers in Ockham's political thought is sharp, interesting, illuminating and brilliant enough to allow for the normative possibility of a non- Christian world emperor but it is by no means

consigns secular politics to a realm of a morality and mere force. Ockham claims that positive divine law is a warrant for a secular politics which pursues to do what is good by nature for human beings. Natural law, for Ockham, has to do with divine law. Divine law originates from God; the creator of the universe. According to Ockham, the right of the democratic community to choose its leaders is not inalienable. The people have the right to resist an unjust government (Panaccio 745). Ockham was first and foremost a theologian. However, he did not regard divine will as hostile to human dependence on right reason. For secular political purpose, there is a great or perfect harmony between politics and religion, or reason and the biblical exegesis or revelation of the will of God. Ockham's conceptualization of secular power is based on the normative outcomes of human flourishing. So we find ourselves in the desperate position of being morally obligated to perform acts which are contrary to right reason and can thwart genuine human flourishing. An adequate conception of human flourishing should emerge from bottom up; so to speak; it should arise from the actual struggle of life rather than from the airy realm of conceptual coherence (Carden 136). Ockham's political radicalism is deeply rooted within the conception of the good life with a rational content and the aim of democratic activity within the human community reflected in social relations of moral life and the common good (Carden 136-137). Ockham's political theory reflects in the normative possibility of the social nature of man and social order. The social nature of man as understood has an integral dimension and expression of his rationality and freedom is fundamental and indispensable to the realization of his essence in the many forms of its manifestations (Aghamelu 35). Ockham's political thought is an ethical outlook and society is usually shaped not only by economics and politics but ethics. Ethics is deeply rooted in political affairs. However, the shape of society is determined less by economics than by ethics; less by technology than by psychology (Cohen 4). Every society requires the normative framework of ethical principle. Society is a large complex of human relationships; a system of interaction (Ferrante 545). Society reflects a group of people who relate to one another for specific purposes. Societies exist at all levels (Hoffman and Graham 501). To Ockham, there should be separation of powers between the State and the Church which is between the papacy and monarch. Ockham posited that spiritual matters should be handled by the Pope/Church and while secular matters should be handled by the State/Monarch. Ockham argued that political power and authority comes from God through the people. For him, sovereignty or the source of political legitimacy resides with the people. Thus, he argued that the best form of government is monarchical rule.

Nevertheless, the State is the reality of the concrete freedom. Freedom is the greatest perfection of man (Mondin 110-113). Ockham's political philosophy anticipates the philosophical basis of classical and contemporary liberalism. Liberalism enjoys a philosophical base that is divided into classical and

contemporary eras. Although classical liberals tended to focus on the individual and on property rights, whereas, contemporary liberals view people in collective terms and emphasize human rights, both share a belief in the equality, intelligence and competence of people (Baradat 12). Moreover, it is germane to notice that apart from, divine command theory, separation of powers between the State and the Church, ownership of private property is another known theme in Ockham's political thought.

THE NOTION OF PROPERTY RIGHTS

The institution of property rights began in the garden of Eden. These property "rights" are not "natural rights", but they are established by a kind of positive law by God who gave everything in the garden of Eden to Adam and Eve. This notion was given by Pope John XXII but it was refuted by Ockham. For Ockham, there was no property in the garden of Eden, instead Adam and Eve had a natural right to use anything they so desire. According to Ockham, the notion of property right started after the "fall of man" in the garden of Eden into the real world. However, as time passed by after the fall of man, people began to enter into legal contracts on the usage of material things by their owners. So this metamorphosed to the situation where the owners of property can give out their property to certain individuals on the basis of permission which could be either temporary or permanent basis. It is worthy of note, that this permission according to Ockham still can be taken back or revoked at any given time. In other words, there was a form of legitimacy of ownership.

THE IDEAL OF POVERTY

The ideal of poverty had been and still is a common one in religious circles. The idea is that the individual members of the Franciscan Order owns no property at all, in other words, Ockham posits that a life exhibited by Jesus Christ and his Apostles, and if everyone lived according to this ideal of the Christian ethics, then basically there would be no property at all. Ockham's theoretical position was in consonance with Jean Jacques Rousseau's theoretical position who posits that it was this apportioning of property or things "this is mine" that actually led to these issues of inequality in civilized society. Although, Ockham's aim was to reach out to the excesses of the papacy, we can deduce the notion of the principle of collectivity from this ideal.

THE LEGAL ISSUES, HUMAN RIGHTS AND VOLUNTARISM

It is worthy of note that Ockham was a voluntarist. A voluntarist is a person who endorses voluntarism and voluntarism is the political theory that a community is best organized by the voluntary cooperative affairs of individuals rather than by a government which is being coerced or forceful by nature. Politics

is based on a voluntary cooperative affair of a people. The authority of the monarch is derived from God through the people; hence the State authority should take the rights of the people and common interests of the people at heart. Ockham argued that the Catholic Church should not engage in the passion of private property but every donation given to the Catholic Church should be owned in common. The Franciscan order should be pious when it comes to the earthly issues of private ownership of property. He argues that the teachings of Jesus Christ advocate the common ownership of property. For in government, the laws regulate the right of property, and the possession of land is determined by positive constitution (Gewirth 50). The sovereignty of the State includes its constitutional role in the regulation of private property. Sovereignty means the will either of the body of the people or only part of it. Our will is always for our own good, but we do not always see what that is; the people is never corrupted, but it is often deceived and, on such occasions, only does it seem to will what is bad (Gewirth 69). The State in its constitutional role of the regulation of private property is being referred to as a moral person. If the state is a moral person whose life is in the union of its members, and if the most important of its cares is the care of its own preservation, it must have a universal and compelling force, in order to move and dispose each part as may be most advantageous to the whole (Gewirth 70-71).

MONARCHICAL GOVERNMENT AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Ockham has a very strong support for monarchical government as the best form of government. Monarch puts the power of government into the hands of an individual. Monarchical government in the State entrusts its faith to a monarch, usually selected on the basis of heredity (Warburton 118). Government's role either in a monarchical or democratic process is more or less based on an executive function. Government's role is purely executive (Warburton 115). Government in any democratic State or monarchical government requires sovereignty of the people. Sovereignty means supremacy (Raphael 55). Ockham's political thought is democratic liberalism of some sort; because of his unalloyed support for freedom of speech and freedom of expression of the individuals whenever they are dissatisfied with the democratic government of the day. He posits that the people have the right to revolt against an unjust government. His work demonstrates the normative possibility of civil society. Ockham's conception of democratic governance in the State reflects the need for the normative outcomes of social order; social order is described as the manner in which a society is organized and the rules and standards required in maintaining that organization, including the need to have relevance in a democratic community (Ebiringa 501). However, in any democratic governance, the State pursues the general interest or common good of all individual members (Raphael 85). Ockham's conception of democratic justice presupposes the

normative context of human society. Justice reflects the normative foundation of social morality, and without it the rest would collapse; but it is certainly not the whole of social morality (Raphael 115-166). For Ockham, democracy is a matter of liberty as well as equality, and liberty includes the freedom to express one's opinions and one's criticisms of those who have whip-hand (Raphael 164). Liberty and equality are what distinguish the democratic ideal from other political ideals. A notion of equality of some sort must figure in any concept of justice, but it figures most prominently in the democratic concept of justice. Liberty and equality are the distinctive aims of democracy (Raphael 143). The essential idea of democratic government is government by the people; government by all the people should mean unanimous decision. Democracy in practice has to mean following the views of the majority. Pure democracy means a system in which all democratic citizens may join in taking governmental decisions, is rare (Raphael 147). Democracy means a State ruled by the people (Warburton 17). Furthermore, the idea, therefore, is that without society men cannot survive, society alone makes possible the division of labour and exchange of commodities which are necessary for the satisfaction of men's material needs. Ockham's political philosophy is aimed at answering basic fundamental questions of political morality and natural rights (Gewirth 8-9). Democracy is of value because it produces liberty and equality. In democracy everyone is equal. Everyone has the same (political) power. So democracy is egalitarian as compared with other forms of government or decision making (Harrison 868).

RELEVANCE OF OCKHAM'S POLITICAL THOUGHT TO CONTEMPORARY NIGERIAN SOCIETY

Ockham's intellectual ingenuity as seen in his political thoughts were not only radical but multidimensional. His theoretical insight was brilliant and illuminating. He tries to proffer fundamental solutions to the separation between the spiritual (Church) and temporal the (State) powers. For him, the Church and the State are independent and interdependent. The Church can play an advisory role to the secular State. The contemporary relevance of Ockham's political thought is plethora. His political thought paves the way for contemporary political theories. His theoretical insight can be used for separation of powers in today's political space in order to guarantee checks and balances between the Church and the State. Ockham's political activism sets the paradigm or theoretical template for modern political thinkers and political activists. Ockham also left his footprint in the sand of time by indirectly left an indelible impact on the contemporary pursuit for freedom of speech, or freedom of expression and civil disobedience. However, the end Special Anti-Robbery Squad saga in contemporary Nigerian society was a prototype example. Ockham's political theories if well natured and nurtured or critically studied could lead to harmonious living in our contemporary Nigerian society. In most democratic

States, however, democracy has meant representative government. The original idea of a representative was of a person elected to express or reflect (to re-present) the views of his constituents (Raphael 147-148). But in the case of contemporary Nigerian society the elected Nigerian representatives only deemed it fit to represent their egocentric interests at the detriment of the common good of the Nigerian masses. There are so much abject or extreme poverty among the Nigerian populace.

EVALUATION

From all its ramification or entirety in Ockham's political philosophy, we can deduce some salient points that are evident in our current dispensation or contemporary times. On the issue of poverty, there are present day clergymen whose eyes are no longer on the set goal as Jesus Christ exemplifies during his days. Though there are some full-time ministers of God who have devoted their lives to the gospel of Christ and the life of service to the Church who have certainly have nothing attached to their Church ministry. These kinds of Church ministers certainly have no problem being provided for by their Churches and Church members. On the other hand, there are some ministers who entirely have deviated from the apostolic exemplary life of Jesus Christ and have sought to acquire all the wealth and riches through their Church position. This does not portray the Christian examples that Jesus Christ lived for and died for, and this is what Ockham drew to our attention. On the legal issues, human rights and voluntarism, it is worthy of note and very necessary that we the Nigerian citizens must exercise our fundamental human rights in every area of our daily lives. We have rights not only to vote but to resist every forms of unjust government. It is expedient that those Nigerian leaders at the helm of affairs should not use their power and influence to override on the Nigerian masses, because just for the fact that political position does not remain permanent. Political power, leadership and position should be based on posterity. On the issue of property rights an individual has to give out a property on their permission but sometimes this too can override another person who is less privileged. Some Nigerians use their excessive wealth, riches and property to oppress the poor Nigerian masses. No form of oppression should be allowed in contemporary Nigerian society. Ockham's doctrine of the separation of powers between the Church and the State is very valid in our contemporary times. His political theory is anchored on checks and balances. He is considered as a constitutional libertarian and constructive thinker. He attacked himself on the subject of property ownership by identifying both conventional and theological exegesis of human material existence. His political theory is based on biblical exegesis. His divine command theory could be faulty assuming that God could approve what is evil to still be right to us as human beings. Ockham was logically inconsistent in his political theorizing. Ockham contradicted himself by asserting that the people have the right to resist

every unjust government and at the same time supported monarchical rule as the best form of government. In a nutshell, Ockham's was a great logician and a critical thinker who questions many doctrines held by other philosophers such as Aristotle, Aquinas, and even the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Pope. He challenges scholasticism and the papacy of the Church. He was also a nominalist who strongly argued that individuals exist rather than supra-individual or the supra-sensible. Ockham's conception of democratic participation of the individuals is anchored on moral worth of the individuals in the political community. Moral worth is located in particular situation found in all walks of life (Carden 140). Ockham's political theory represents the normative possibility of democratic society. Society is an integrated system of social structures and functions (Ritzer and Stepnisky 2). Ockham's conception of democratic society indicates the normative possibility of the common good. The common good is deeply rooted in the reciprocal relations of human behaviour (Ritzer and Stepnisky 46). Ockham in his liberal canon argues against the State sovereignty which is claimed by supporters of the State that the State has ultimate and final legitimate force over a particular society (Hoffman and Graham 29). Ockham moved into more extreme political positions and wrote tracts opposing the Pope's claim to temporal power. His writings developed a political theory that pointed in the direction of the secularization of politics (Lawhead 189). Ockham's political thought is radical, functional and it represents popular consent. For Panaccio (745):

Popular consent, according to Ockham, is the normal original source of legitimacy; but beyond this, the rightness of a certain political regime ultimately depends on how well it fulfils its functions. Government is instituted for the good of a community of individual subjects, and if a regime adequately performs this task, it is not legitimate, for the Pope or even for the majority of subjects, to try to overthrow it by force. Ockham's approach to politics is basically functional. A political regime is a man-made institution to be judged by its expediency in achieving the goal for which it should ideally be designed: and common welfare or public security can in principle be enhanced by different regimes in different circumstances.

Moreover, having critically examined Ockham's political thought, we, therefore, articulated that Ockham did not have an elaborate political writing as a contribution to political philosophy, but his theological background and his attempts to attack the excesses of the Catholic Church (Pope) was quite apparent. However, his theoretical reconstruction is very helpful and has influenced many contemporary issues such as the separation between the Church and the State;

individual rights and freedom of speech; for Ockham, the Monarch (the emperor) has no business in the consecration or the ordination of the pope. For him, it is a spiritual matter and it should remain at that. He was strongly committed to the Aristotelian ideas and influenced by St Thomas Aquinas. Ockham's approach to politics and natural rights is in direct continuation with his philosophical ethics of right reason. Ockham's thought harmoniously fall in line with each other in consistently stressing the primacy of individuals over the democratic State (Panaccio 743). This notion of right reason is central to Ockham's philosophical ethics. Ockham's ethics reveals the foundation of moral knowledge (Panaccio 744). Even though religious faith leads him beyond philosophical ethics into what has often been called a 'divine command ethics', which ultimately plays a foundational role in his overall system; Ockham in the last analysis does not blur the distinction he had drawn between the two sorts of moral knowledge, and he never expresses serious doubts about the soundness of secular moral reasoning in the actual world (Panaccio 744-745). Ockham's theoretical framework is metaphysical ethics and metaphysical libertarianism. Our human freedom is both based on reason and freewill regulated by God's notion of natural law. God is the originator of natural laws and moral laws. Natural law gives birth to natural rights. Ockham was a strong critic of St. Thomas Aquinas. The bases and influences of Ockham's political thought rests on the Aristotelian and the Thomistic tradition of the theory of the State. Aristotle, for instance, argues that the theory of the formation of the State rests on natural causes. Human beings are naturally inclined to associate with one another in order to meet up with some certain social, economic, political and psychological needs. Ockham in consonance with Aristotle, posits that the formation of the State is naturally caused by God.

CONCLUDING REFLECTION

Having critically examined Ockham's political thought, we, however, articulated in this theoretical discourse that Ockham's political thought has great contemporary significance by setting the pace for democratic citizenship, civil disobedience, human rights, freedom of speech, and freedom of expression. He posited that there should be separation of powers between the Church and the State; and that there should be no unnecessary interference between the Church and the State. He argued that there should be checks and balances between the Church and the State, especially, whenever there is any iota of despotic tendencies between the Church and the State and that the primacy of the individual over the State and the common good of the people should be guaranteed or prioritized by the political State. Ockham's conception of freedom of speech and freedom of expression presupposes the philosophy of right. His philosophy of right is radical liberalism. It demonstrates the spirit of democratic citizenship and civic republicanism. His work also demonstrates the normative principle of social

order. Ockham's theoretical approach was radical in his days and he has continued to provide the theoretical insight into current philosophical debates such as the common good as the basis of the State, property right, separation of powers between the Church and the State, State sovereignty, sovereignty of the people, human rights, civil disobedience and rule of law. His work illustrates the normative dimension of the utilitarian principle of the greatest happiness of the greatest number in the democratic State. Moreover, utilitarianism is a moral thought that affects the goodness of outcomes and therefore the rightness of actions (Goodin 3-4). Ockham's divine command theory plays an important role in natural law or what we may refer to as nature-based-ethics and it anticipates contemporary debates concerning truth and action in meta-ethics. Pure politics is based on truth and action. Ockham's political philosophy anticipates the philosophical basis of classical and contemporary eras.

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