

THE NOTIONS OF STATE, JUSTICE AND ORDER IN MEDIEVAL POLITICAL THOUGHT: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF AUGUSTINE AND AQUINAS

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Abstract

This paper examines the political thought and ideas which flourished in Western Europe during the medieval era, otherwise known as the European Middle Ages. The major objective of the paper is to compare and contrast the thought-contents of Augustine and Aquinas, whose contributions to the world of philosophical thought – especially in an era of mounting religious zeal marked by massive strife and tension and mutual distrust in the understanding of what really constituted the doctrines of faith and the role of the state – form a major canon in the development and understanding of Western philosophical tradition of the time. The focus here is to reveal areas of agreement and possible nuances as regards the notions of state, justice and order in the political thought of the two great thinkers, and to identify the early and later impulses which gave rise to their respective bodies of thought. The theory of justice is the choice of theoretical framework for the paper. Data gathering was from secondary sources and data analysis largely historical and based on coherent and logical reasoning and textual analysis of works on the subject of study. The paper arrived at the conclusion that although Augustine and Aquinas hold different notions with respect to state, justice and order, they both agree that the state exists to provide some form of justice and order.

Keywords: State, Justice, Order, Augustine, Aquinas, Medieval Political Thought.

Introduction

The medieval era, otherwise known as the Middle Ages was a period in European history marked by massive strife and tension mainly as a result of the chaos unleashed on the continent with the fall of Rome in 410 AD. Notwithstanding, some scholars try to trace the era to a much earlier time which began with the reign of Emperor Constantine (312–337 AD), whose conversion to the Christian faith and decisive victory over other claimants to imperial power secured the place of Christianity as the one indisputable religion of the

empire, displacing the paganism of the previous era. This difficulty in placing the exact beginning of the medieval period lies in the fact that we can hardly speak of it without reference to Christianity (Ndu, 1998). The Christian faith, doctrinal beliefs and theological expositions were mostly at the core of what made up the medieval outlook. They were the issues of the day which engaged the minds of men—philosophers, priests, secular rulers and the laypeople. And the heated arguments they engendered were not so much about whether the religion was right or wrong as they were about the right theological view with respect to issues such as; the place of the Church in spiritual and temporal affairs; the role of the state in Christian society; the nature and purpose of human life and its implication for citizenship; and the extent of a ruler's claim to power and the justification for the exercise of such powers (Sabine and Thorson, 1973). It has also been argued in some sources – even though disputed in others – that the medieval era never produced any notable work of philosophy when compared with previous eras because of the strong association between philosophy and religion in the period (Kilcullen and Robinson, 2017), for which it has been dubbed 'the Dark Ages'.

This background does not only provide us with insight into the general character of medieval life but also into the nature, significance and outcome of philosophical undertakings at the time by such great minds as Augustine (353–430 AD), Boethius (477–524), Aquinas (1224–1274), Ockham (1280–1347), Marsilius (1270–1340), etc., whose works and writings provided a link with Classical Thought and kept the flickering lamp of knowledge in the Dark Ages aglow. While Augustine and Boethius wrote at a much earlier time when the Catholic Church was emerging as a stabilizing force in the waning days of the Roman Empire, which is partly why their views were readily marshalled in defence of the tradition and doctrines of the church, later writers as Ockham and Marsilius were ruthless in their attack of the claim that papal authority transcended the temporal powers of the state and its secular rulers. This shift in emphasis on the superiority of the church over the state which began with the rise of universities and intellectual inquiry in the eleventh and twelfth centuries was also reflected in the works of Aquinas who wrote about a generation or two before Ockham and Marsilius. Drawing extensively from the works of Aristotle, Aquinas was able to show the relevance of the state to man as a social being, while upholding the deeply entrenched belief of early medievalism that the church was superior to the state since it was to the church and not the state that the ultimate goal of man's earthly existence – i.e., eternal salvation – had been committed (Muki, 2012). Therefore, on the pre-eminence of the church over the state, Aquinas was in complete agreement with the early church fathers such as Augustine, but there were other areas in which they clearly differed.

In the course of this paper, we shall attempt to examine those areas of similarities and disagreement in the political thought of Augustine and Aquinas, and in order to grapple effectively with it, we will limit our inquiry to their notions of state, justice and order.

Research Problem

The notions of state, justice and order have long been a central theme of discourse in political and social thought. From the earliest times, political philosophers have engaged their minds to grapple with what form of state can best promote justice (i.e., fairness) and achieve order (i.e., balance, harmony, stability or peace) which are essential ingredients for the survival of any human association or, better still, for the citizens of a state to enjoy what the Greek philosophers referred to as the 'the good life'. Among the ancient Egyptians, these notions were embedded in a single but complex term called 'Ma'at,' which loosely translates to harmony, right order and justice (Christensen, 2005, Ruiz, 2001, and Bunson, 2002). They believed that it was only through the preservation of Ma'at that citizens would come to know success in the activities of everyday life—business, politics, religious matters, etc. Ma'at was therefore "the guiding principle of Egyptian society" (Christensen, 2005). These notions of justice and right order within the state system would make another entrance into the world of philosophical thought in the classical Greek era through the works and ideas of Plato and Aristotle whose debt to ancient Egyptian systems is widely attested to in archaeological and historical documents (Biereenu-Nnabugwu, 2013, and Chang'ach, 2015). From the Greeks, these ideas would subsequently be transmitted to the Romans and then to the medieval thinkers.

In medieval times, the issues of inquiry were basically the same, i.e., how to ensure justice and order in the state. The only challenge however was how to reconcile them with the prevailing ideology at the time – Christianity. Beginning with the ideas of the early church fathers such as Augustine, who stoutly defended the church and its doctrines and insisted that "no earthly state can claim to possess true justice, but only some relative justice by which one state is more just than another" (Mattox, 2018), two main schools of thought would later arise during the scholastic era in the eleventh and twelfth centuries in response to this challenge; the papalists on the one hand (represented by the views of Aquinas), who believed in the supremacy of the church and propounded ideas similar to those of the early church fathers; and the secularists on the other (such as Ockham and Marsilius), who believed that the state was superior to the church, which was merely one of the many social institutions within the state and should be subordinated to it. Given that a distinctive method of scholarship arose in the eleventh and twelfth centuries which questioned the norm of the early periods and gave rise to a unique theology of the Middle Ages (Shelley, 2008), this paper is designed to examine the thought-contents of Augustine and Aquinas – both of whom are acclaimed Doctors of the Church – on the notions of state, justice and order, and how they tried to put forward a theory for a working relationship between the church and the state at different but challenging times in medieval history.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to compare and contrast the thought-contents of Augustine and Aquinas on the notions of state, justice and order. The specific objectives are to: (a) Examine

the thought–contents of Augustine and Aquinas in relation to the notions of state, justice and order. (b) Explore the influences which gave rise to the political thought of Augustine and Aquinas as they relate to the notions of state, justice and order. (c) Find out the relationship between Augustine and Aquinas in their thought approaches to the notions of state, justice and order. (d) Reveal the possible nuances between Augustine and Aquinas in relation to the notions of state, justice and order.

Research Questions and Research Assumptions

The study is guided by four research questions. (a) What are the thought–contents of Augustine and Aquinas in relation to the notions of state, justice and order? (b) What were the influences that gave rise to the political thought of Augustine and Aquinas as they relate to the notions of state, justice and order? (c) Is there any relationship between Augustine and Aquinas in relation to the notions of state, justice and order? (d) What are the possible nuances in the thought–contents of Augustine and Aquinas as they relate to the notions of state, justice and order?

In line with the forgoing, the study is four basic and related research assumptions or hypothesis. (a) Both Augustine and Aquinas hold different notions on state, justice and order but they agree that the state has a divine origin and exists to provide some form of justice and order. (b) The political thought of Augustine and Aquinas as regards their notions of state, justice and order was influenced in part by the ideas of Plato and Aristotle, and by the peculiar circumstances faced by the two thinkers at the respective times of their postulations. (c) There is a relationship between Augustine and Aquinas in relation to the notions of state, justice and order. (d) The possible nuances in the thought–contents of Augustine and Aquinas as they relate to the notions of state, justice and order can be found in their conception of the ideas.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

The theory of justice provides the theoretical framework for this study. The starting point of this theory is the idea that fairness and equal treatment should form the basis of social or political life. Scholars who employ the theory of justice in trying to understand and solve the problems of group life would normally ask questions such as: Where is the place of justice in social or political life? What actions of leaders or the led can be considered just acts and why? When can we say justice is truly served: when it upholds group interest at the expense of the individual or vice versa? How can we best organise society or government to ensure and promote justice? Although the idea of justice remains central in political and social research, there is still no agreement among scholars as to what it really means and how it is achieved in society.

The ancient Egyptians were among the earliest peoples to evolve a theory of justice as far back as about 3000 BC (Bunson, 2002). Their idea of justice was embedded in a rather complex term–Ma'at. It was both a guiding principle for every Egyptian and the very basis

of their entire institutional processes and philosophical worldview. It was the moral and spiritual ideal to be followed not only in daily life but also in understanding the natural order of things. As Christensen (2005) observed;

In nature, ma'at was the rising and setting of the sun, the orderly progression of the seasons, and the annual inundation. In daily life and business, ma'at was fairness and justice. In government affairs, ma'at meant the status quo: following traditions and precedents and not rocking the boat. In religious matters, ma'at meant living a good life, honoring the gods and goddesses, and being tolerant. Everyone, even the king, was expected to live by ma'at (Christensen, 2005:64).

Influenced by ancient Egyptian systems, Greek philosophers also considered justice the most important element in achieving harmony or balance within the state. However, while Plato interpreted it in terms of functional specialization, for Aristotle it "consists in what is lawful and fair, with fairness involving equitable distributions and the correction of what is inequitable" (Pomerleau, 2018). For modern thinkers such as Hobbes (1588 – 1679), Locke (1632 – 1704) and Rousseau (1712 – 1778), justice results from a social contract between individuals formerly in a crude state of nature and a civil state in order to minimize strife through the institution of law and order (Muki, 2012). Other notable figures in modern philosophy such as Bentham (1748–1832), Hume (1711– 1776), Kant (1724 – 1804), Mill (1806 – 1873) Marx (1818–1883), etc., also made contributions to the notion of justice. Hume argued from a teleological standpoint that the idea of justice only makes sense when considered in terms of its intended consequences. Nevertheless, he also noted that the rules of justice are important and are justified in so far as they remain essential to maintaining social order and prosperity.

For Kant, it is wrong to base the actions of individuals on intended consequences rather than on deeper ethical principles (Seitz, 2016). Relying on his principle of the Categorical Imperative which is based on a universal moral code, Kant singles justice out as foremost among all the virtues because unlike other virtues which depend on the virtuous motives of the individual for their fulfilment, justice remains the only virtue whose rules should be enforced under the law because they do not depend on individual motives but exclusively on other-directed human actions (Seitz, 2016). Utilitarians, such as Bentham and Mill like Hume, take a consequentialist view of justice. For them, an action is considered just so long as it seeks to maximize the overall good. Therefore, any course of action that fails the utility test of yielding the greatest happiness to the greatest number of individuals in society should never be followed as it also fails the 'justice test'. The impression we are left with here is that individual and minority interests do not matter so long as the society is structured to promote the welfare of the majority.

For Marx, it is not possible to speak of justice as long as the inner logic of the prevailing mode of production in society is geared towards capital accumulation by one

class at the expense of another. But true justice can be achieved only when society is structured in a way that allows each individual to contribute to the commonwealth according to his ability and take away from same according to his needs. In so doing, inequality in society is completely eliminated, together with the strife and antagonism it breeds, and the state will no longer be necessary because society would have been reconstituted along the lines of true economic justice.

In contemporary thought, the idea of justice is conceived along several lines, such as the procedural (which includes the ideas of Rawls and Nozick) and the distributive theories. In procedural thinking, justice is based on a fair system of rules deemed to be universally applicable, which govern individuals as they relate with one another in society. Distributive justice theories are the direct opposite of the procedural ones. According to this mode of thinking, "justice is seen as a feature of society, so evaluation is done in terms of not what an individual gets or does not get, but in terms of how just or unjust a society or state of affairs is according to some agreed upon criterion" (Menon, 2008). The theory of justice therefore adequately fits this study in that it shows the binding relationship between the notions of state and order which can only be realized when there is justice, the research problem being to examine the views of Augustine and Aquinas on state, justice and order, and how they tried to put forward a theory for a working relationship between the church and the state at different but challenging times in medieval history.

This study relied mainly on secondary data such as historical and archival records, internet materials, and books. Textual analysis and logical explanation of the data gathered provided the method of data analysis. It is therefore essentially a qualitative study.

Data Presentation and Discussion

This study seeks to examine the thought-contents of Augustine and Aquinas in relation to the notions of state, justice and order. It also seeks to reveal areas of agreement and possible nuances as regards these notions in the political thought of the two great thinkers, and to identify the early and later impulses which gave rise to their respective bodies of thought. It is the paper's argument that both Augustine and Aquinas hold different views on the state, justice and order, but they agree that the state exists to provide some form of justice and order. The paper follows the textual method of data presentation which involves a narrative description of the data gathered in written, paragraph form, and the main ideas for discussion are treated in different sections under different sub-headings in order to achieve thoroughness and enhance clarity.

St Augustine of Hippo: Life and Influences. Augustine of Hippo (later Bishop and Saint of the Roman Catholic Church) has been described as the greatest theological mind since the time of the Apostle Paul. Born in 354 AD to a Christian mother and a pagan father in Thagaste, a fledgling North African community in the Roman province of Numidia, present day Algeria, Augustine grew up in licentiousness, having no regard for religion or the scriptures. But following his conversion to Christianity in his early thirties, "it became

his aim to show how reason could prove the tenets of faith" (Stokes, 2011: 16). Through his education in Carthage, Rome and Milan, he became immersed in the intellectual world of his time with its rich blend of ideas from classical antiquity. He studied Latin literature and rhetoric and also became familiar with the ideas of Cicero from whom he borrowed "the idea of a commonwealth of the world in which all were united by a common bond" (Mukhi, 2012:262). Augustine was also influenced by the ideas of Plato and Plotinus whose "reworking and development of the philosophy of Plato would give rise to what later became known as Neo-Platonism" (Stokes, 2011:177). Other influences on Augustine include the Stoic philosophy of Graeco-Roman thought, his interaction with Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, and the fall of Rome in 410 AD which inspired his most important work: *De Civitate Dei* or the City of God (413-427 AD) in defence of Christianity against those who blamed it for the fate that befell Rome. He continued to defend Christianity and the church until his demise in 430 AD. His other great work, the *Confessions of Saint Augustine* (397-398 AD), is an autobiographical account of his life.

Augustine's Notion of State. According to Loetscher (1935:17), St. Augustine wrote no treatise dealing specifically with the state "nor did he ever set forth his views concerning the state in a systematic fashion." However, much of what constitutes his political thought and views can be distilled from his Letters and Sermons written in response to the heretical views of his time and from his most important work on Christian philosophy, the City of God. Augustine's conception of the state was built on the prevailing Christian doctrine of his time which saw the state as a consequence of man's fallen nature. In this, he shared the views of Seneca (c. 4BC–65AD), a Roman Stoic philosopher, who also held that the state came into being as a remedy for man's sinful nature which he acquired from his fall (Mukhi, 2012). A good representation of this view is found in the bible where the Apostle Paul in his epistle to the Romans admonishes:

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore, whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore, you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience's sake (Romans 13:1-5, the Holy Bible, New King James Version [NKJV]).

For Augustine, however, the state's origin as a divine institution for correcting the evils of human society is only punctuated by its inferior status to the City of God which is an abstract construct depicting an ideal state of affairs that hardly corresponds to any human

institution including the Christian church itself (Mukhi, 2012). Citing Rome's fall as an example of the kind of fate which awaits every earthly kingdom or state, Augustine moves further to build his argument in favour of the eternal city whose membership should be the aspiration of all men. He disagrees with Greek philosophy that the state exists to execute justice as no earthly state, ruled by wild passions and greed and based on love of self, can claim to possess true justice. True justice, according to him, only exists in the heavenly city which is founded on the love of God and inhabited by those who live according to God (Barr, 1962).

However, it is important to note that Augustine does not hold out a gloomy picture of the state all the way. In another respect, he admits that the state is not entirely evil. "It desires earthly peace for the sake of enjoying earthly goods, and it makes war in order to attain peace" (Horn, 2017:103). Although the ideal remains undoubtedly the heavenly city, civil states, "imperfect as they are, serve a divine purpose," which is to maintain law and order (Mattox, 2018). In this respect, Mattox (2018) argues that the state must therefore be seen as "a divine gift and an expression of divine mercy – especially if the state is righteously ruled."

On the relationship between the church and the state, Augustine believes that the cause of the former is higher and nobler in that it is directed towards "the building of the City of God" and because the state is based on the power of sin, it must submit to the laws of the Christian church (Shelley, 2008:131). The church on its own part depends on the state to suppress crimes and preserve the peace in order to carry on with its mission on earth (Shelley, 2008:131). Augustine would have preferred to have a state founded on Christian principles just like Rome because in that way the goal of the church and the state would become aligned, with the former depending on the latter's might to champion the cause of the faith and compel those who have fallen away to return to the fold). Though cherished as this union might be it still does not correspond to the City of God which can only be accessed at the individual and not the institutional level (Mattox, 2018).

On the idea of citizenship, Augustine believes that every Christian is a citizen of two cities: the earthly city whose visible representation is the state and the eternal city whose visible representation is the church (i.e., the body of Christ as a whole). While the state exists to take care of the temporal needs of the Christian, the church is there to provide spiritual guidance. Christians are therefore advised to follow the secular laws of the state and remain law-abiding as long as these laws do not clash with the tenets of faith and put them in danger of violating the universal laws of God which supersede those of the state. Otherwise they are not to engage in active resistance but are to willingly surrender to persecution and accept martyrdom if need be, realizing that all earthly rulers are accountable to God for their actions. Having considered Augustine's conception on the state, we shall now turn to his view on justice and order.

Augustine's View on Justice and Order. In Augustine's City of God, we are also introduced to his notion of justice and order. He does not believe that true justice is

attainable in any earthly state or city for the same reasons as earlier cited– that the state corresponds to the kingdom of the Devil which came into being as a result of man’s fallen nature and therefore lacks the prerequisite to dispense true justice (Mukhi, 2012). Although the classical notion of justice, i.e., to render to each person according to his due, was by Augustine’s time already well-known and accepted, Augustine grounds his application of this principle “in distinctively Christian philosophical commitments”, arguing that “justice” must in this wise begin with the duty we owe to God first which is to love him wholeheartedly and by extension, our neighbour (Wilken, 2005, and Mattox, 2018). For Augustine, therefore, “justice begins and ends with religious devotion, the love and adoration of God,” for “where God does not receive his due,” how can we then speak of justice? (Wilken, 2005). This is the background which informs Augustine’s view that no earthly state or city can claim to possess true justice, rather true justice can only be found in that ideal state of affairs, i.e., the City of God where God’s universal laws are followed (Mukhi, 2012).

However, Augustine is quick to note that civil states are not entirely lacking in justice. What we find in them instead is justice in its relative form. Hence, we find that one state is more just than another only in so far as it tries to conform to the universal order or standard set by God himself (St. Augustine Views on Church and State, n.d.). In Book 19 of his famous work, the City of God, Augustine refers to a universal order, in which all things in the universe have been appointed a place, as *Tranquillitas Ordinis*, meaning ‘the peace of all things’ or ‘well-ordered concord’ (Novak, 1987). According to Augustine, “the peace of all things lies in the tranquility of order; and order is the disposition of equal and unequal things in such a way as to give to each its proper place” (The City of God XIX.13, as cited in Espen, 2009). In this way, he connects not just his notion of peace but also that of justice with his meaning of order. For Augustine, therefore, order refers to a state of peace, harmony, stability or balance which is only possible in the presence of justice. It is achieved as individuals try to live in accordance with the created order by aligning their personal wills with the divine will. But he also argues that it is impossible to speak of genuine peace or order in an earthly state or city. Real order or peace is a “fundamental virtue of a good state and can be attained only in the City of God” (St. Augustine Views on State and Church, n.d.). As with his concept of justice, Augustine also casts his concept of order or peace in purely Christian terms. He does not see it as the “absence of war or social strife” as states might view it but as “positive relation of love” which comprises all human beings (St. Augustine Views on State and Church, n.d.). The kind of order provided by the state through its “system of legal relations” is only “temporary calmness” and relative, but real order which is spiritual and universal can only be achieved if all acted in line with the ideal and in common love to God (St. Augustine Views on State and Church, n.d.).

The impression we are left with here is that since states possess only relative justice and order and do not uniformly conform to the ideal, we should therefore not expect them to have the same kind of stability as some will definitely be more stable than others. This,

according to Augustine, explains why Rome fell when it did in 410 AD. For Rome being an earthly state enjoyed only relative justice and order which allowed it to exist as long as it did.

At this juncture, we may consider doing a quick recap of Augustine's views on state, justice and order before going over to Aquinas. Firstly, the state is a product of sin, of man's fallen nature, divinely instituted by God as a temporary remedy for human wickedness—a consequence of the fall. Secondly, no earthly state can claim to possess true justice which is defined in terms of religious devotion to God, rather states can only speak of justice in a relative sense by which one state is more just than another. And, thirdly, it is impossible for any state to attain real order which is also an attribute of the eternal city. States can try to establish order only temporarily, but real order which is spiritual and universal can only be achieved if all acted in line with God's established standards.

St. Thomas Aquinas: Life and Influences. Thomas Aquinas (Saint and Doctor of the Church) was born in 1225 in Aquino near Naples, a city in modern day Italy. Unlike Augustine, Aquinas was steeped in Roman Catholic traditions from an early age in accordance with his father's wish to set him up for the priesthood. So at the age of five he was placed in the Benedictine Abbey from where he enrolled at the University of Naples nine years after and then the University of Paris when he turned eighteen (Biereenu-Nnabugwu, 2013). In his time in Paris, he taught for a while under the auspices of the papal court and also tried to engage the ideas of Averroes, the Muslim philosopher, and his Jewish counterpart, Maimonides, whose works had become notorious for spreading anti-Christian beliefs (Biereenu-Nnabugwu, 2013 and Shelly, 2008). Other influences on Aquinas include the struggle for domination between the church and the state which began in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and his association with Albert the Great (1193-1280), the German Dominican Catholic bishop, whose extensive exposition on the works of Aristotle, must have provided the platform which helped Aquinas connect with the ideas of the Greek philosopher. However, "Aquinas is principally remembered for reconciling the philosophy of Aristotle with Christian doctrine" (Stokes, 2011: 8), for which he has been ranked alongside Augustine "as one of the great pillars of medieval political thought" (Biereenu-Nnabugwu, 2013) and the most influential of the scholastic period. His major works include: *Summa contra Gentiles* (1259-64), *Summa Theologica* (1266-73), and *De-Regimine Principum* (Rule of Princes).

Aquinas's Notion of State. As earlier noted, Aquinas borrowed extensively from Aristotle in many of his writings and expositions. Like Augustine and the early church fathers, he supports the notion that the existence of the state is sanctioned by God only not as a remedy for sin as the former view it. Rather, the state is natural to man just as the family is (Biereenu-Nnabugwu, 2013). In other words, God created man a social being, "or as Aristotle would say, a political animal intended for life in a community of his fellow men" (Ndu, 1998). It is therefore man's social nature that gave rise to the state without which man could not have existed at all (Mukhi, 2012). Man needs the state to survive, just

as he naturally depends on physiological needs – water, air, food and sleep; the state is also to him an absolute necessity.

As an important part of man's life, the ultimate goal of the state is to help man attain the best life (a view Augustine rejects since the best life, for him, can never be attained in any earthly state). To fulfill this goal, the state does not only try to furnish man with all the needs of human life but also undertakes some educative functions aimed at making people moral and virtuous in order to induce them to lead a happy life (Mukhi, 2012). Aquinas also sees the state as complete in itself, or, in his own words, a *communitas perfecta* (a perfect society) in that "unlike the family, which is dependent on a larger community for survival as well as material and cultural development, the state is not dependent on higher society" (Biereenu-Nnabugwu, 2013:193).

Furthermore, just as the state is natural to man, so also is the government, as every state appears with its own form of government and system of rules for making binding decisions in order to prevent anarchy (Ndu, 1998). Like Aristotle, Aquinas also attempts to classify governments either as good or bad depending on their capacity to promote stability within the state. And in this, he shows his preference for limited monarchy for while monarchy as a form of government helps to unify the sovereignty of a state, stability is enhanced if the right of the ruler to rule is derived from the people (Biereenu-Nnabugwu, 2013 and Mukhi, 2012).

On the relationship between the church and the state, Aquinas toes the path of the early church fathers by subordinating the latter to the former albeit mildly. He recognizes that they both have separate ends and roles (i.e., the church works towards the salvation of men while the state seeks to promote a virtuous life), but the end or goal of the church is loftier since it is to the church and not the state that the ultimate goal of man's earthly existence – i.e., eternal salvation – has been committed (Biereenu-Nnabugwu, 2013 and Mukhi, 2012). For this reason, a secular state should always work under the guidance of the church so that both the goal of the church and the state can be achieved (Mukhi, 2012). However, Aquinas also tries to create the limits of ecclesiastical authority in secular affairs by identifying privileges (such as owning a feudal vassal) which, he argues, are the kings' alone (Mukhi, 2012). He compares the relationship between the church and the state to the one between the soul and the body with the church as the soul mindful of the spiritual things, while the state as the body mindful of the material things. Hence, even though the spiritual is higher than the material, they both work together for the ultimate good of the individual. In the same way, the church and state must stay in close co-operation with each other for the good of all (Biereenu-Nnabugwu, 2013 and Mukhi, 2012).

With respect to the citizen and the state, Aquinas believes that the former should be subordinate to the latter "as the part is to the whole" (Biereenu-Nnabugwu, 2013: 193). Subordination here does not however mean that the state can do whatever it likes at the expense of citizens. Aquinas believes that a citizen can reject as invalid any law made by the state which is not in accordance with the natural law. On this, he is in agreement with

Augustine who also calls for some form of civil disobedience when laws are made outside the tenets of faith. The only difference between the two thinkers is seen in the extent they are willing to allow citizens a say in the matter: while Augustine does not advocate resistance but surrender to martyrdom if need be, Aquinas argues for stronger citizens' involvement in making government accountable to them. For though sovereignty or political power may be divinely sanctioned, he argues, the exercise of it is right only when it is done with the consent of the governed (Biereenu-Nnabugwu, 2013). We shall now examine his view on justice and order.

Aquinas' View on Justice and Order. Both Augustine and Aquinas relied on the classical notion of justice (i.e., to render to each one according to his due) in developing their respective views on the subject. However, Aquinas, following the Aristotelian tradition, is more detailed and practical in dealing with the subject. Unlike Augustine who rests his application of the concept on his purely Christian philosophical undertaking, which informs why he does not find any earthly state as possessing true justice, Aquinas is ready to grant the state this virtue, arguing in line with Aristotle, that "Justice lies in the laws of the state" or "is expressed only through it" (Mukhi, 2012:297-307). For Aquinas, therefore, the purpose of state laws or human law, as he would call it, is to enforce justice. He further reveals the connection between state laws and justice by noting that "if laws are not sound, justice naturally cannot be sound" (Mukhi, 2012:307). He avers that to realize sound laws and justice, the state must subordinate its laws to the natural law which is a body of unchanging ethical principles "written in the heart of people" and a "reflection of divine reason in human beings" (Mukhi, 2012:307). The laws of a state are therefore just in so far as they try to conform to the natural law. Here, Aquinas digresses from Aristotle for whom "there is no subordination of human law to any superior law" (Mukhi, 2012:297). Going further, Aquinas distinguishes between different forms of justice still based on the principles laid down by Aristotle. He identifies legal justice by which he means "an inner disposition of the human will" to "direct all its actions to the common good" (Koritansky, 2018). For Aquinas, therefore, legal justice "embraces any act of virtue whatsoever, so long as the agent refers his action to legal justice's proper object" which is the common good of all (Koritansky, 2018). This is justice, for Aquinas, when considered generally.

However, there is a "particular" sense in which justice can also be considered. In this, he identifies two other forms: the commutative and distributive. Both forms are based on fairness and lie at the heart of the law. In the commutative sense, justice seeks to restore balance or equality between one individual and another by correcting a particular wrong done by one to the other (Koritansky, 2018). Distributive justice, on the other hand, refers to those principles that guide a state as it sets about allocating privileges or material resources to its citizens. Distributive justice is also seen in the manner in which the state metes out punishment for crimes committed against it (Koritansky, 2018). In both forms, Aquinas maintains that a certain kind of proportionality is required in order to achieve justice; an "arithmetic proportion," in matters of commutative justice, which means that

an individual must get back only that which is lost or its equivalent, and a “geometrical proportion,” in matters of distributive justice, which implies that “more should be given to those who deserve more and less to those who deserve less” (Koritansky, 2018). Taken on the whole, Aquinas rates legal justice higher than other forms because its objective is always directed towards the common good.

On the question of order, Aquinas also follows Augustine’s argument of the existence of a universal order put in place by God which human legislation must try to adapt to in order to ensure order within the state. The purpose of state or human laws is therefore not only to enforce justice but also to maintain social order which is described as a state “in which citizens are free from the aggression of wrongdoers and other preventable threats to safety or livelihood” (Koritansky, 2018). However, while for Augustine ‘order’ can only be categorized into two: i.e. the temporal, which is earthly and, the universal, which is spiritual or heavenly, for Aquinas “human beings exhibit a threefold ‘order’”. Hence,

The soul and body should be properly ordered, as happens when the intellect directs the will and the intellect and the will direct the sense appetites; the person should be rightly ordered to other created persons by the bond of love; and the person should be rightly ordered to God by loving God above all things. ‘Order’ signifies the just relationship of one thing to another (Levering, 2005).

From the foregoing, we can observe that as with justice, order arises from the fulfillment of duty to oneself, neighbour and God. But since state laws cannot compel people to fulfill the duty they owe to themselves as individuals and to God, justice demands that the law should compel people to fulfill the duty they owe to one another so as to preserve order within the state for the common good.

Conclusions

In conclusion, thirteen basis or points of comparing Augustine’s political thought with that of Aquinas are identified. The first four are (a) Augustine’s political views were greatly influenced by the ideas of Plato and by the fall of Rome in 410 AD, while Aquinas’ were greatly influenced by the ideas of Aristotle and by the emerging church-state debate of the 11th and 12th centuries. (b) While Augustine sees the state as an establishment that emerged with the fall of man and divinely instituted as a remedy for man’s sinful nature, at least temporarily, Aquinas sees it as a product of man’s social nature without which man could not have existed at all. (c) For Augustine, the state only exists as an imperfect institution to correct social ills pending when the ideal (i.e. the City of God) is revealed to replace all earthly institutions. But for Aquinas, the state is a perfect society in that unlike the family, it does not depend on any other higher society for its survival. The state, for Aquinas, does not only exist to correct social ills, but also to infuse into citizens the requirements for a moral and virtuous life. (d) For Augustine, the state as an imperfect

institution must submit to the laws of the Christian church since it is based on the power of sin. But for Aquinas the state and church are both perfect communities because they are both self-sufficient and independent and therefore must work within certain limits and in co-operation with each other even though the goal of the church is loftier which is the salvation of souls.

In line with the foregoing, the next four are (e) Augustine does not see any great role citizens ought to play in the state apart from being submissive to the rulers who are only accountable to God for their actions. But for Aquinas, the people are the real custodians of political power and government should be by consent. (f) Notwithstanding the differences between Augustine and Aquinas on the notion of state, they still both agree that the state exists to ensure some form of justice and order. (g) Augustine understood justice as a purely Christian concept because it is first directed to the duty we owe God and our neighbour in loving service, which is why it can never be truly attained in any earthly state where lustful passions, greed and self-love rule. But to Aquinas justice lies in the heart of the law and is the reason why the laws of the state exist. (h) Augustine does not write extensively on justice apart from pointing out how it does not exist in any earthly state. But Aquinas, following Aristotle, identifies justice in different forms with the best of them being legal justice.

Furthermore, (i) both Augustine and Aquinas developed their concept of justice from their understanding of the notion from classical antiquity which defines it as 'rendering to each one his due'. (j) Both Augustine and Aquinas see order as a state of peace or harmony or a time devoid of strife and war in society which Augustine calls temporal order. (k) The two thinkers believe in the existence of a universal order which should guide the actions of individuals and states. (l) Augustine and Aquinas believe it is the role of the state to maintain order even though they also agree that complete or perfect order is not possible in this world. (m) From Augustine's view, we can only infer two types of order; the temporal and the universal, but for Aquinas, order is three-fold, beginning internally with the individual, then between the individual and other created persons and, finally, between the individual and God.

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