AUTHORITY IN IGALA POLITICAL THOUGHT:
A PHILOSOPHICAL APPRAISAL

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

One of the most complicated problems in the history of social and political philosophy is how to bring into harmony the elements of authority, human right and freedom. The concept of authority, in particular, has been a matter of constant perplexity. Who has the authority to tell another person what he may or may not do in the society? Where lies the source and legitimacy of authority? What is the limit of the sovereign authority as it relates to the individual liberty and freedom of action in the state?

The Political setup of the Igala people is a monarchical one with a strong centralized authority. The Atta of Igala is the traditional paramount authority of the Igala kingdom. He is the living intermediary between the living ancestors and the living Igala indigenes of the land and he is believed to be divinely appointed.

In Igala political thought, as in other Africans, power and authority belong to all. But by virtue of seniority, and ontological status, knowledge, moral and spiritual qualities, some individuals namely, the Atta of Igala, the Onus (chiefs) and elders exercise greater power, authority and influence that the other of an Igala political community.

The influence exercised by Atta of Igala and other authorities over the people is one supported by the rules and norms underlined in solid order that is ontological and customary. The Atta is at the head of a traditional system, whose legitimacy rests on an established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and on the need to obey leaders who exercise their authority according to traditions.

The authority of these individuals, like the Atta of Igala is not absolute but constitutional. The Atta of Igala has to consult with his council of chiefs before major decisions are taken which much also be in line with the customs and traditions of the land. This can be summed up in their political thought and believe that "Onu n'ọja k'ọja n'ọnu" - which means "the sovereign authority owns the subjects as the subjects own the sovereign authority".
Statement of the Problem(s)

The Igala community had been called kingdom. That is a community or political unit that is ruled by a king or monarch.

But one cannot call a political system a monarchy without further identifying it within more detailed classified type. It is therefore insufficient to say that Igala political community is a kingdom, a further question is necessary; what type of kingdom and why do they have that type of kingdom. Secondly, it follows that the configuration of power in one type of monarchy may not necessarily be identified with that in another.

Hence this study examine; what type of monarchy is present in Igala political unit and why that type? How is power and authority exercised in this monarchical community?

Purpose of the Study

The study of the concept of authority in the traditional political system of Igala people is a contribution to an attempt to show the true nature of traditional Nigerian political system, and therefore deduce lessons for contemporary Nigeria.

The study also helps us gain a better understanding of authority in Igala political thought.

Significance of the Study

This study enables us gain a more profound understanding of the concept of authority in Igala political thought. This enables us to understand the concept of sovereign authority, its limit and how it relates to individual liberty in the Igala state.

Scope of the Study

The study is limited to a critical analysis of the source, residence and exercise of authority within the Igala traditional political system, to ascertain the extent to which authority can be exercised.

This study is also concerned with the philosophical exposition of the meaning, nature and problems of authority in Igala political kingdom and how these problems were resolved.
Methodology

Analytical and expository methods were used in this study. This helps us to critically appraise the concept of authority in Igala traditional political system.

Recourse has been made to all the relevant available literature for the purpose of clarification and the building of this work. Oral interviews were conducted in order to get the authentic conception of authority in Igala political thought. Some traditional chiefs, priest and elderly men and were consulted and interviewed.

Definition of Concept

Atta: The 'Atta' is the traditional paramount king of the Igala kingdom. 'Atta' as the name implies is the father or custodian of the Igala people's culture.

Idah: Is the cultural center or head quarter of the Igala kingdom. This is where Atta resides and from there he cares for the entire kingdom.

Ojo k'dojale: Is God in heaven for the Igala, the supreme deity or God.

Okwute: Is the staff of ancestral cult symbol. It is a symbol of authority.

Ayegba Om'ldoko: It is strongly believed that Ayegba was the one that actually won a 'political' independence for the Igala kingdom. He is said to have fought and defeated the Jukun in the war, which ensued in the late seventeenth century. He could therefore be rightly referred to as the first sovereign Atta-Igala. The contemporary ruling lineages begin their family tree from Ayegba Oma-Idoko the founder of Ayegba dynasty.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of authority has raised perennial questions among political philosophers. The basic questions, which the concept raises are: who should exercise the authority of the state? Under what conditions should the authority be exercised and within what limits.

These questions had been asked with persistence and answered by serious political philosophers over the years in so many diverse, strange and even paradoxical ways. In order to make a philosophical appraisal of the concept: "authority" in Igala political thought, one must acquaint oneself with the literature on political authority and related ideas of philosophers on how society should be organized and governed with respect to the authority of the state and the liberty of the citizens.

Review of Relevant Literature

Plato in his work, The Republic, believes in the ideal state in which supreme authority resides in the wisdom and virtue of the philosopher-king. He therefore formulated a conception of political leadership in which authority and knowledge are appropriately combined. Plato had concluded that as in the case of a ship where the pilot's authority rests upon his knowledge of navigation, so also the ship of the state should be piloted by one who has adequate knowledge of the state. For Plato, competence should be the qualification for authority. The ruler of the state should be the one who has the peculiar abilities to fulfill the functions of a leader.

The ruler, according to Plato, should be one who has been fully educated. One who understands the difference between the visible world and the intelligible world, between the realm of opinion and the realm of knowledge, between appearance and reality. He has to be one he called "the philosopher-king".

The philosopher-king is one whose education has led him up step by step through the ascending degrees of knowledge of the divided line until at last he has known of the Good. In order words, the philosopher king is not occupied by mundane values, instead he pursues such lofty values as honour and integrity, having subdued his passion and desire for material goods through discipline and education.
Plato recommended a philosopher-king because he believed that "correct philosophy affords a vantage point from which we can discern in all cases what is just for communities and for individuals." He also asserted that the human race will not be free of evils until either the stock of those who rightly follow philosophy acquire political authority, or the class who have authority in the cities be led by some dispensation of providence to become real philosophers. Rulership of the state, for him, should be in the hands of those with the special talent and training for it.

Until philosophers are kings, or kings and princesses of the world have the spirit and power of philosophy, and political greatness and wisdom meet in one, and those commoners natures who pursue either to the exclusion of the other are compelled to stand aside, cities will never have rest from evil, -no, nor, the human race, as I believe,- and then only will this our state have a possibility of life and behold the light of the day.

But in his other work, The Law, Plato talks about the second best state. Here he shares Aristotle's view that supreme authority of the state resides in the law or constitution and not in any person whatsoever.

Aristotle's contribution in his work, Politics, to the question of who should have the authority of the state is contemporarily relevant. He viewed the state as the agency for enabling men to achieve their ultimate goals as human beings. For him, the highest good for man is perfect development and activity of all the power that are in him through the association of his fellow within the state.

Whether a state produces the good life depends upon how its rulers behave: the good authority governs for the common good of all the people, to produce good life for all its citizens. Aristotle opined that supreme authority of a state resides in the law or constitution; and not in any particular person whatsoever, as advocated by Plato in The Republic. He believes that both the state and individuals are subject to the same law and morality. Hence rulers should govern the state in accordance with the law. He vested the sovereignty in the law.

Thomas Aquinas in his book, Summa Theologica, holds that the state rules the behaviour of its citizens through the agency of the laws but the state is itself limited by the requirements of just laws. The state is the source of human law and each government is faced with the task of fashioning specific statutes to regulate the
behaviours of its citizens under the particular circumstances of its own time and place. Lawmaking, however must be an arbitrary act but must be done under the influence of the natural law, which according to Aquinas is man's participation in God's eternal law.

For Aquinas, any positive human law that violates the natural law loses its character as law; it is a "perversion of law" and it therefore loses its binding force in the consciences of men. The lawmaker has his authority to legislate from God, the source of all authority, and to God he is responsible. If the sovereign decrees an unjust law by violating God's divine law, such a law, says Aquinas, must not be observed.

The political sovereign has his authority from God, and the purpose of his 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 the individual is lost sight of in the collective whole. That is, the common good must be good of concrete persons. Thus law is to lead its subjects to their virtue ... to make those to whom it is given good.3

The only "true ground" of the lawgiver is his intention to secure the common good, regulated according to divine justice, and thus it follows that the effect of the law is to make men good. This is to say that the phrase "common good" has no meaning for Aquinas except insofar as it results in the good of individuals. At the same time, Aquinas says that "the goodness of any part is considered in comparism with the whole...since then every man is a part of the state, it is impossible that a man be good unless he be well proportionate to the common good."4

The entire scheme of society and its laws is characterized by the rational element in it. Law itself, says, Aquinas, is "an ordinance of reason for the common good, made by him who has care of the community; and promulgated".5 Thus, although the sovereign has authority and power, the law it makes must not reflect the power in naked sense but as domesticated by reason and aimed at the common good.

Aquinas and other Christian theorists argued that the authority of rulers comes both from God and from the people: from God primarily and from people secondarily, in the sense that God grants authority.
Niccolo Machiavelli, in his book, *The Prince*, holds that Princes should retain absolute authority or control of their territories and they should use any means of expediency to accomplish this end, including deceit. According to him, "a prince, therefore, need not necessarily have all the good qualities...but he should certainly appear to have them." Machiavelli believes that leader should use means available to achieve his goal because the end justifies the means.

Machiavelli wanted a strong state capable of imposing its authority and unifying the entire Italian city-state. It was in the quest to achieve this that he advocated for a state with powerful absolute authority, in which dissension is disallowed. He is of the opinion that strong indigenous governments are important, even if they are absolutists.

For the leader to hold the society together and perpetuate himself in power, Machiavelli says that he (the leader) should not only be shrewd but also cruel. In Machiavelli's political structure, the subjects have no say, as the authority of the state is expected to be all-powerful and absolute. Machiavelli discounted citizen's liberty or freedom as this, for him, is likely to weaken the strength of the state. Hence, the liberties of the citizens are minimally reduced in the Machiavellian totalitarian system of government, that vested unlimited power in the hands of the ruler-The Prince.

Baruch Spinoza in his work, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, is in agreement with Hobbes that the political orders emerged out of the pre-political "state of nature". There man had natural right to all things. Spinoza also believed that man transferred their rights to the sovereign authority when men instituted the political societies. The aim of political life is peace and security.

Differing from Hobbes, he manifests preference for democracy as Hobbes does for absolute monarchy which Spinoza vehemently criticized. In a democracy, Spinoza opined that men transferred their natural rights or power to all members of the society collectively. Therefore, Spinoza holds that "the collective right of the society to demand obedience from the individual has the same overriding superiority over his right to disobey as its collective power has over his power to disobey". At the same time, he holds that, the holders of sovereignty are not only the protectors and interpreters of civil rights, but also of sacred rights. They have the right to decide what is just, what is unjust, pious and impious.
But immediately after completing his discussion of the solution to the problems of political authority, Spinoza proceeds to raise serious doubts regarding its adequacy. He observed that even with all the instruments of coercion at their disposal, there is a limit to what rulers can demand of their subjects without provoking a rebellion. The subjects continue to enjoy a latent power to rebel, which cannot be taken from them. Hence, he averred that every dominion depends on the faithfulness, virtue and steadfastness of its subjects. He argued that sovereign power misused is self-destructive. The enlightened sovereign authority will try to promote the interest of all his subjects so as to unite them solemnly and wholeheartedly behind him. For Spinoza, this is the task and toil of the leader, and the prize is a great one—the absolute authority of which Hobbes spoke. But it can be gained and kept only by the sovereign’s constant and obvious devotion to the common welfare; and no formal contract on the part of the subjects can possibly bestow it.

It follows that in the mind of Spinoza, the only satisfactory solution to the problem of political authority is a commonwealth that is formed by a free people and that continues to depend on its support.

Jean Bodin in his famous work, The Republic, stressed that the authority of the sovereign is absolute, and perpetual. He holds that sovereign authority is the “highest power over citizens and subjects, unrestricted by law”. His authority is perpetual because whoever has it does not lose it, that is because it is inalienable. It is absolute because whoever has it holds it after God and accountable only to God.

The sovereign authority makes the law, which is his mere command, and himself is not subject to the law which he makes. Law is constructed by Bodin as the command of the sovereign touching all his subjects generally on general matters. The sovereign authority is, also according to Bodin indivisible, for he denied that there could be a mixed state, one which the supreme law-making power belongs to more than one persons or an assembly.

Though Bodin called sovereign authority absolute, he also said that it is limited in three ways: by divine and natural law; by the law of succession (the law in virtue of which sovereignty is acquired by whoever rightly possesses it); and by the right to private property. Bodin thought of these as somehow limiting the sovereign authority, even though no one could justify use them as an excuse for actively resisting him.
Bodin did not believe that subjects are bound to assume that every command of the sovereign is in keeping with the laws of nature, he forbade only active resistance to the sovereign authority, and allowed the subjects to disobey only if he were convinced in conscience that what the sovereign commanded was contrary to God's law.

From the above, we can assert that Bodin wanted the sovereign authority to be responsibly criticized. He holds that the king's will must prevail in the end; but the king when making up his mind, should take account of the opinion of those who are have the right to advise him. His authority is legally absolute but not arbitrary, it should be exercised after proper deliberation.

Bodin wanted the sovereign legally absolute but in practice limited in traditional ways. For him no authority is absolute in fact as well as in law. Hence, what is required for good governance is on the one hand, that no one should be in a position to place his veto on whoever has the highest authority in the state, and on the other hand, that the obstacles to that authority, should serve to direct it to the common good.

For Thomas Hobbes in his masterpiece, *The Leviathan*, when a commonwealth is instituted by the common consent of the people, certain fundamental rules becomes obvious from the way it is instituted. The principle of authority and authorization is derived from this common consent and actions.

Authority, for Hobbes, "is right of doing of action through the commission of another". It means a type of delegation of power which hitherto was exercised by the author himself. The receiver of the authority is a representative of the authorizer. He acts as such. Whatever he does with the authority is the responsibility of the author. The authority is the responsibility of the authors. The authority is established through a speech-act and is impossible without it.

Hobbes holds that the authority of the sovereign must be an absolute authority. His choice of absolute sovereign authority strictly follows from his notion of human nature, his theory of state of nature, the social contract and the political turbulence of his time. He opined that the only form of government that can best sustain the social contract and create the necessary condition for rational obedience of the laws of nature is an absolute sovereign authority. For him, an absolute authority, one with unlimited, indivisible, irrevocable power and authority is best suited to give permanent peace and security.
The absolute authority is a product of a social contract—a contract of every man with every man and the renouncing of all their previous rights, wills, and judgement and the transferring of the same to a sovereign. Such a sovereign bears, in his person, the unity of their persons. The covenant is thus a union of their wills. This done, the multitude so united in one person, is called a commonwealth. This is the "generation of the great Leviathan...to which we owe our peace and defence."10

Hobbes does not encourage civil disobedience against the sovereign authority on whatever ground. He, however, ironically, maintains that one is justified to disobey a sovereign authority, if its laws threaten one's existence because self-preservation is the basis of all laws of nature. Hobbes maintains that the sovereign must be inviolate even when tyrannical or iniquitous, because justice means whatever the sovereign's law prescribes and they are not laws properly so called until there is a sovereign to enforce them. He has the duty of maintaining peace and security and is answerable only to God.

In his book, Two Treatises of Government, Locke gave us a different picture of authority in society from the one we find in Hobbes. Hobbes's sovereign authority was absolute, Locke agrees there must be a "supreme power" but he carefully placed this in the hands of the legislative, for all intents the majority of the people.

Locke stressed the importance of the division of powers chiefly to ensure that those who execute or administer the law do not also make them, for "they may exempt themselves from obedience to the laws they make, and suit the law, both its making and execution, to their own private advantages".11 The executive, that is the sovereign authority is therefore under the law. Even the legislative is not absolute, although it is supreme, for legislative power is held as a trust and is therefore only a fiduciary power. Consequently "there remains in the people a supreme power to remove or alter the legislative act contrary to the trust reposed in them."12

Locke would never agree that men had irrevocably transferred their right to the sovereign. But that man by reason of his nature has rights, which can be made good only if he is governed with his own consent.

The right to rebellion is retained, though rebellion is justified only when the government is dissolved. For Locke government is dissolved not only when an external enemy overthrows it, but also when internally there has been an alteration.
of the legislature. The legislative branch can be altered, for example, if the executive substitutes his law for the legislatures or if he neglects the executive of the official laws, in these cases rebellion against authority is justified.

Whereas, Hobbes placed the sovereign under God's judgements, Locke stated that "the people shall judge".

Robert Filmer in his work, Patriarcha, gave an unlimited power to the Monarch of his time. The Patriarcha was published after the death of Robert Filmer by people who wanted to show that parliament had no right to object to a king, even if he belonged to the "wrong" religion.

Filmer the Royalist writer was an absolutist like Hobbes. His arguments, however, supported the absolute power of the king. He holds that the world was established by God, so that legitimate rulers were already in place, and it was our duty to obey them. Just as it is in the family, so it is in political society. A child born into a family has no say over who its parents are. The child is duty-bound to obey them. According to Filmer, the authority of kings is like the authority of the father, and can be traced back through history to the original father, Adam. Filmer is a patriarchal theorist because his theories are based on the rule of the father.

He argued against the state of nature theorists that there was no historic evidence that a state of nature had ever existed. The state of nature theorists, for him, built their arguments on an historic fantasy. Filmer holds that it was more true to nature to consider authority as just given to us. We are born into families, which have a hierarchical structure, and our relation to the state is similar. Just as it is inconceivable that a child should choose its father, so there is no historic evidence that any people originally choose their rulers.

He argued that nature and the Bible show us that social contract theories of political authority are nothing but figments of imaginations. He argued that all governments are absolute, that there is no natural freedom and that no one is born free. But there is no foundation for the view that God has placed some men above others and that men are therefore not naturally free as claimed by Filmer.

A law, for Filmer, is not something that limits or controls a king. It is something that a king adopts for convenience. For him therefore, "kings are above the law". According to Filmer, kingly power is by the law of God. No human law
can limit it. Filmer argued for the divine right of kings on the basis that God had made Adam general lord of all things, and that this patriarchal model is intended for all time. He says

God gave to Adam not only the dominion over the woman and the children that should issue from them, but also over the whole earth to subdue it... so that as long as Adam lived, no man could claim or enjoy anything but by donation, assignation, or permission from him. All kings either are, or are to be reputed, the next heirs. \(^\text{14}\)

Filmer built all authority on the family. His Biblical basis for this, is the commandment:— "Honour thy father and thy mother". All authority being based on the family means that his theory applies to the relationships of parents to children, men to women, kings to subjects, lecturer to students, etc. But the comparison between the family and the state is particularly strong, and to modern ears quite shocking. For example, holds that "a father's power is supreme power, and like that of absolute monarchs over their slaves, absolute power of life and death".

He gave little or no freedom to the subjects, and did not support democracy and civil disobedience against the sovereign authority. He holds that there must be a final judge of what the law is, and the final judge is the only true maker of the law, the sovereign whose precepts, in the words of Hobbes "contains in it the reason of obedience". Government affords security only because it provides those subject to it, with a common judge. If then, subjects challenge the decisions of the common judge, they destroy or threaten this security.

Filmer and Hobbes are both absolutists, believing the sovereign's power is and should be unlimited. But Filmer develops patriarchal theory while Hobbes is a state of nature theorist. Both can be regarded as conservatives.

Rousseau in his book, The Social Contract, limited the authority of government as he places sovereignty in the hands of the people. For him it is the exercise of the general will;

I say, that sovereignty, being nothing but the exercise of the general will, can never be alienated and that the sovereign power, which is only a collective being, can be represented by itself alone. \(^\text{15}\)
He further maintained that the sovereignty, which is the general will cannot be divided. To divide it is to reduce it to particular wills and thus no sovereignty.

The essence of the social contract, says, Rousseau, is that "each of us puts his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of the general will, and in our corporate capacity, we receive each members as an individual part of a whole." This contract tacitly assumes that whoever refuse to obey the general will shall be compelled to do so by the whole body; in short, this means that he will be "forced to be free".

The law is the product of the "general will". In turn, the general will is says Rousseau, the will of the sovereign. For him, the sovereign consists of the total number of citizens of a given society. The general will of the sovereign is therefore the single will reflects the sum of the wills of the individual citizens.

It follows, therefore, that the authority of the sovereign is the servant of the people in accordance with the laws establishing it. It serves the common interest or the people's common good. Rousseau's view is in contrast to Hobbes' view, who put the supreme authority in the sovereign of the commonwealth.

John Stuart Mill in his work, On Liberty, thinks that state authority should be markedly limited so as to leave as much room as possible for individual liberty. He believes that there should be certainly some restrictions on individuals to ensure a viable society. However, he conceives that such restrictions must be properly limited to enable the individuals attain their ultimate end. He argued that:

"The sole end for which mankind are warranted individually or collectively in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number is self protection. That the only purpose for which power can be rightly exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will is to prevent harm to others."

There is, of course, a legitimate role for government, but according to Mill, no government should interfere with its subjects, when the action can be done better by private persons; also when, although the government could possibly do the action better than individuals, it is desirable for the individual to do it for their development and education; and when there is danger that too much power will unnecessarily accrue to the government.
Mill's argument for liberty was therefore an argument for individualism. Let each individual pursue his happiness in his own way. Even in the realm of ideas, men must be free to express their thoughts and beliefs, because for Mill, truth is most quickly discovered when opportunity is given to refute falsehoods.

Mill had a deep dislike for totalitarians. When he sets forth the limits beyond which the government must not go; Mill argued forcefully that a man must not, except to prevent harm, be subject to the power and authority of government, and especially his own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant.

Hegel in his work, *Philosophy of Right*, deals with the problem of authority and freedom. For Hegel freedom is not restricted state interference as in Mill, but total state control of the affairs of the individual and social group. For him, it is by adhering strictly to the control of the state, by immersing oneself in one's role as a citizen, and by fulfilling one's role within the overall purpose of the state that the individual realizes his true freedom, happiness and rationality. He averred that "the state is the embodiment of rational freedom".

He holds that freedom is possible only by state interference with the actions of individuals, through political institutions. It is only when one accepts his moral and political obligation within the state that one is regarded as a free and rational citizen. The state therefore, is an end in itself and individuals are mere instruments of it.

Hegel holds that laws made by the authority must be rational and directed at rational persons. The reason for laws in civil society is to control conflicts of interest among individuals. That is to say law brings rationality into behaviour and only a person who acts rationally can be free. The function of the state is not to issue arbitrary and irrational commands, but to increase, through its laws, the aggregate of rational behaviour. Hegel believed that the laws of the state are rational rules of behaviour that the individual himself would choose if he were acting rationally. The sovereign authority acts in the name of the universal will and reason and not arbitrarily.

From the above, we observed that Hegel advocated state absolutism. He gave too much power to the sovereign authority thereby limiting the freedom of the subjects whom he described as mere instruments in the hands of the state authority.
Karl Marx’s concept of authority can be understood from his analysis of his theory of communism. In his work, *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx holds that the history of the world has been characterized by the history of class struggle, which is of course, due to the interplay of social and economic forces. All human activities, socio-political, religious, economic, intellectual etc. have their basis in the economic structure of society. For him, economic forces are the real forces influencing the world and directing the course of history.

Marx’s objective in his political philosophy is to liberate man from exploitation, alienation and oppression which capitalist system has condemned him. Marx argued that power and authority in the capitalist society lies with the bourgeoisie. They are the group that dominate and control power. Even the government is there to serve and protect their interests. He construed the state as “a manifestation of alienation and a device for perpetuation of alienation by the capitalist.” The state is essentially an instrument of class rule; the rule of the most powerful, which economically dominant class, politically used in holding down and exploiting the oppressed class—the proletariats.

He, therefore, opined that since the proletariats under capitalism were exploited and alienated by the bourgeoisie, the only solution is to destroy capitalism through revolution to usher in socialism and then communism. In place of the old bourgeoisie society, we shall have an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.

Notably, Marx’s theory emphasized the interest of the working class. He argues that power has to be transferred from the capitalists to the proletariats and private ownership of means of production be abolished. Karl Marx advanced the claim of the working class by arguing that only the proletariats or its spokesmen can rule and be in authority because only them can really understand the true nature of modern and industrial society. He argued that freedom is not realizable within a capitalist society. Power and authority should lie in the hands of the proletariats.

Benito Mussolini in his work, *The Doctrine of Fascism*, holds that fascism is the best form of government. This is “the type of government where the authority of the state is absolute.” It does not surrender any portion of its field to other moral or religious principles which may interfere with the individual consciousness. For Mussolini, the state becomes a reality only in the consciousness of individuals. The state was an idea made actual.
The type of liberty fascism grants is the liberty of a whole people freely accepting the rule of a state, which they had internalized and made the guiding principle of all their conduct. Mussolini holds that "action is more important than thought". By action he meant violence. So fascism was a movement, which not only accepted violence but also rejoiced in violence. It had no patience with parliamentary or democratic methods of changing society.

In the quest for a strong state, Mussolini advocated fascism, which is a government of state absolutism. And in this strong, vibrant state, where the sovereign authority is in the hands of one man, the freedom of individuals is seriously minimized.

H. L. A. Hart's in, The Concept of Law, construed a leader or an authority as "one appointed and certified according to the rule of recognition." An authority commands obedience from others simply because the rules say so. Such obedience owed to the leader is reasoned on the bases of the fact that the rules recognized and regarded him as having authority.

He has a legal authority and this may be quite independent of the fact whether or not he is a good person. His utterances present themselves as authoritative legal reasons for action. So far as he rules according to the rules of the system, he remains legally correct.

Certainly part of the expectation of citizens is that the leader appointed under the conditions set by the rules directs accordingly. But who becomes the ruler where there is no provision for saying who is the leader? Or who becomes the ruler where rules are silent? This is the problem, which is not clarified by Hart's model of rules. Whoever the law certifies, through the appropriate means as legitimate leader, is the leader whether or not he is a good person. Thus is the absence of stipulated rules by the system, the members of Hart's society will be in a lot of confusion.

Hannah Arendt, a United States historian and political philosopher shared the same view as Hart when she says that governmental authority is very often authority under rules, to issue instruction to others. She distinguished this from power and particularly from despotic or tyrannical power. The latter, she says, is subject to no limits, whereas true authority, because it is always derived from rules, must therefore, be limited and restrained by rules.
This is dubious because the rules may confer as in the case of a sovereign legislature, an unlimited power on the sovereign authority, even to change the rules at will.

From the above review of the ideas of some political philosophers, we can say that, although philosophers who have addressed the questions raised by the concept "authority" approached the problems from various background, and perspective, most political thinkers recognized that individual liberty conflicts with the state authority and that a balance has to be struck between them and the value they represent.
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CHAPTER THREE
AUTHORITY IN IGALA POLITICAL THOUGHT

The Igala People and their Worldview

Igala is the language group located at the confluence of the Rivers Niger and Benue. Igalaland and people are located east of the confluence of these two rivers. In other words, Igalaland and people is situated on the eastern region of Kogi state. Igalaland is bordered on the north by Benue state, on the west by River, Niger, on the east by Enugu state and on the south by Anambra state. With its central geographical position, it attracts the 'culture area' of the Yoruba, the Idoma, the Igbo, the Edo, the Jukun and the Nupe.

Igala share the same worldview with many of their African counterparts like the Igbo, the Bantu etc. The cosmology of the Igala people is made up of God-ojo, the spirits, the ancestors (Ibeagwu) and the living blood indigenes led by the Atta of Igala and other chiefs and elders. Like the Igbo cosmology, as observed by Egbeke Aja, the igala posits the existence of two worlds, "the visible world occupied by man, animals, plants and animals, and the invisible world which is the world of spirits ranging from the ancestors," to the supreme being who they call ojo ki d'ojale. Between the ancestors and the living indigenes of the community is the Atta of Igala whose position is merited as a result of the ontological position he occupies in the hierarchy of forces.

Chieftaincy Institution in Igala Land

The Igala operates a monarchial form of government. The kingdom has a paramount ruler known as the Atta (father) of Igala. He has a semi-independent chief in the position of prime minister (Achadu) who presides over the selection of a candidate for the throne of the Atta. These apart, there are other chiefs (Am'ajofe) who are of the different grades and ranks, with their different functions in their chieftdoms accordingly.
The traditional hierarchy of chiefs in Igala political system is pyramidal with the Atta at the Apex, then the Achadu with the royal councilors. Next are the ancient district heads, then the village heads, and last in the line were the clan or hamlet heads.

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Atta Igala
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Achadu and the royal councillors
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Ancient district heads
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Village heads
-
Clan and hamlet heads
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The hierarchy of chiefs in Igala Kingdom

The traditional Igala political structure is built on lineage descent and patrilineal kinship. The units recognized for political purposes are the family, the extended family, the village, the town or village group. Ultimately, all trace their origin to a common ancestor, but by a process of continuous fission and expansion, the Igala people have spread into semi-autonomous units which maintain links of history and interests as their strongest bonds. Solidarity is preserved at the center.

The component units are not kept together by force of arms or physical coercion, but by a rather mythical and forceful pull of shared beliefs, customs and socio-political functions. The isolated individual is an anomaly in the community, because individual life has a meaning if it is lived in society segmented in kinship units. Fortes and Evans Pritchard rightly commented on the important and pervading role of kinship when they said:

There is no political structure as distinct from the kinship structure; that is, there exists no system of institutions, that serve explicitly and exclusively the purpose of maintaining the unit as a whole.

At the nuclear family level, the father of the family is perceived as a patriarch who is in control of his family and to whom the members channel their conflicts for resolution. He has the authority backed by power to coerce his wives and
children to compliance. He represents the family before the ancestral spirits on the one hand and the extended family on the other hand.

The "king-father" figure is identified again on the extended family level. The head of the family (Ogijo Anuku) assumes the role of a representative before the extended family deities to whom he performs priestly duties, and other lineages in the wider community. He is perceived as visibly in-charge of the affairs of the group and members go to him to have their conflicts resolved. It is accepted that his outstanding qualities should be "honesty, wisdom and fairness." He is overtly the political head of the extended family.

At the clan level, the Igala have the office of the clan head (Ogijo olopu) that was often the most senior member of the uppermost age group in the clan. He exercises authority over the entire clan. His authority could be moral in nature, political and even religious. The Ogijo olopu keeps the "Okwute" (staff of ancestral cult symbol). It is only in the event of death that such is transferred to the next most senior elder.

At the village level, the administrative leader is the village head (Onu efewo). He does not operate alone, he works with the village deliberative body. Government at the village level is by direct democracy which requires the participation of all the male adults. Here the general assembly forms the decision making body but this is after due deliberations and consultations by the village deliberative body.

At the centre then, the need arises for a coordinator, a figure who, in line with the social and political structure and organization, would become the father of the Igala society, the embodiment of its value, the chief priest to represent the community before the deity. A protector of the community, one to preside over the resolution of conflicts, one who by status is sacred and placed above others in the community. He has the power and authority to control the unit and protect it from external liquidation. He is the king, the Atta of Igala who is in charge of the central administration in Igala society.
The Central and supreme Authority in the Igala Kingdom

Igala kingdom comprises of all the Igala families, extended families, clans and villages in the land. This Igala traditional society had a strong central political organization based on kinship system. The system is as old as the kingdom itself. The Igala evolve a single state, that is, an all-embracing government with the Atta of Igala as the supreme authority.

The Igala state has a systematic and hierarchical government. It has three divisions of government: the village, the district and the central government. The Atta of Igala is in charge of the central administration. The village heads relay situation reports in their villages to the district heads, who in turn relay the reports in their districts to the Atta who has the supreme authority in the land. The Atta is the supreme authority because of his ontological status in the Igala society. He is nearest to the ancestors (Ibegwu) from here he derives his authority and legitimacy.

Any dispute that cannot be settled by the village and district heads is referred to Atta's court, in his palace, which is the supreme court of injustice in the kingdom. Serious cases like murder, dispute over succession of thrones, land dispute and disputes over an integral part of the traditional practices of the society are settled in Atta's court.

The Atta has advisory council with whose help he is able to govern the kingdom. According to Okwoli, among the duties of the royal councilors in the central government of the Igala kingdom is that "they held daily audience with the King (Atta) to discuss important matters of the kingdom." Members of the advisory council are the "Achadu" and the 'Igalamela'. The Igalamela chiefs are the kingmakers while the head of the king makers is the 'Achadu'. They are very powerful chiefs, though not more powerful than the Atta himself.

Attaship: Sources and Legitimacy of Authority

The Igala monarchy is centred around the person and office of the Atta-Igala, who is regarded and treated as the father of all Igala people. The Atta is not merely exalted to his enviable position by virtue of old age. He is the supreme authority because of his ontological status in the Igala society. He is nearest to the ancestors, from where he derives his authority and legitimacy. Hence, he is the living intermediary between the ancestors and the living Igala indigenes.
The circumstance in which the Atta emerges in the community is also very important in talking about his legitimacy. He comes to the throne in a clearly defined manner. He rules his people according to sacred traditions, customs and conventions. His person is equally sacred and his death is an event which marks the end of an epoch and the beginning of another. The unity and solidarity of his kingdom depend heavily on the type of popular consensus with which his installation, coronation, inception of office and exercise of power are accepted.

In Igala land, the Atta is recruited by means of succession through rotation among the quadrilinear dynasty. Every dynasty has a senior who represents it in the Atta cabinet and oversees its welfare. Since there cannot be more than one such figure in any lineage, rotation does not create many problems.

As soon as the ruling Atta dies or joins the ancestors, the eldest male of the next royal family succeeds him. He must be of age, that is, he must come to a mature age. Personal responsibility comprises honesty, integrity, a correct sense of values, patience, basic knowledge of tradition and customs, gravity in bearing and general probity of characters.

Conclusively, we can say that, the source of legitimacy of the authority of Atta lies in the ancestors and also in the consent of the governed because in Igala kingdom the person enthroned by the ancestors, and gods may be dethroned by the people.

The Atta and the Exercise of Authority

The installation of an Atta goes with some elaborate and complex procedures. In the event of the departure of an Atta to the ancestors, or to the great beyond, the Alebo (chief priest of the royal ancestral shrine) would offer some sacrifice to the gods. He then duly intimates the Achadu and other kingmakers of the death.

Tradition holds that the Achadu and the Igalamela chiefs choose the candidate for Attaship from a particular ruling house. This is so because they give the final approval after the next succeeding ruling house had decided on who succeeds. After the "Ojuju" (secret meeting) of the ruling houses, they would then produce the candidate, usually; the most elderly male of the next ruling house is the one, not the younger ones, except in cases where he is insane. In a situation where
such a person does not meet the minimum moral, social, mental or physical requirements, the kingmakers with the Achadu would opt for a substitute by means of the ifa oracle.

After the naming of the candidate, the Achadu and the Igalamela chief would then summon him to Idah to spend nine days in the Achadu's court. During this period, the king-elect is taught the basic functions performed by the Atta, like the daily 'Okwute' and the things he was forbidden to do.

After the burial of the former Atta, the Atta-elect leaves the Achadu's court for Ojaina (the royal cemetery). He will be there with Eguola for nine days and he is shown the burial ground of his predecessors. There at Ojaina, he communes with the ancestral spirits. On the ninth day he is presented with wrist beads (Oka) of office and a large gown.

The stage is then set for giving birth to the Atta. As the king-elect leaves Ojaina, he moves to Ofukolo where he is "reborn" by Onede, an Igalamela chief with the Onubiogbo acting as the Father. At this stage the crowd shouts ogayo-olo while dane guns boom into the air to announce that an Atta has been born. Then 'Okabachi' and "odechi" would be played to welcome him to the throne. The ceremonial rebirth gives him a new identity. Henceforth, he takes the title "Atta" and he is from then greeted "Agabaidu".

As he assumes Atta-ship he will be ready to be vested with the royal regalia and attire. The royal investiture includes: sandals, aprons, waist clothes, bronze-anklets, girdles and loin-clothes. It is also at this stage that he is given the royal scepter (oka-Atta) the crown (ikebe), and the brass pectoral mask (ejubejualo).

After the investiture with insignia of office he takes a ride towards the palace on a beautifully caparisoned horse. While on his way to the Igalamela centre (opu-Atta) he offers certain sacrifices to Erane-shrine (Earth goodness). On leaving the Igalamela quarters, he intimates the ancestors on his arrival by riding round the Egwu huts three times. The chief priest continues to offer certain sacrifice on his behalf to the ancestral spirits. Afterwards, he is enthroned on the sacred stool (ojede-Ayegba) where all his subjects beginning with their chiefs, play him homage. He announces his official power names to guide the subjects on what to expect.
he invokes his blessings on the entire land and the celebration continues with pomp and pageantry, and great merriment and jubilation.

The brief description of the enthronement of the Atta shows that the locations of power are contained in the ceremonies. One note that the representative of the people perform the actions that formally declare the Atta as a king. There are also the religious rituals, which are the core elements of the coronation and installation ceremonies. Sacrifices and prayers are offered. He is, at it were consecrated for his new office. The Atta is made to declare under oath that he would rule the people in the interest of the deity, the ancestors and the people. This rule out tyranny or autocracy as an ideal. Further more, the Atta declares solemnly that he would work through his council and work with his cabinet. This again draws him nearer to sharing power with representatives of the people.

Finally, the big celebrations, which follow the enthronement, are designed to present the Atta to his royal colleagues from other kingdoms, to the community leaders and to the people at large. The enthusiasm shown in the celebration goes far in showing how acceptable the Atta is to the people. This is popular legitimating as far as it can go.
NOTES


5. According to the Traditional Mind, the Atta does not die. He is Regarded as a 'god' soon after the Coronation. Rather than dying, he "Joins the Ancestors" or goes "to Farm" - a Euphemistic way of Expressing the Demise of the King.


7. The Beads are Symbols of Authority. The Atta wears Nine Lines of Beads, Achadu uses Nine lines and the Onus uses Four.


9. For instance, the present Atta bears, ugba k‘ ojo gwe (the bowl washed by God).
CHAPTER FOUR
CRITICAL APPRAISAL

The A?ta remains in office for as long as he lives. Neither age nor relative imbecility can by themselves strip him of his office or the power that accrue to that office. This is a corollary of the concept of the A?ta and his mode of accession to the throne. The sacredness of his throne, and his accepted superiority over all, place him above the jurisdiction of his subjects. He has the type of authority in consonance with what Bertrand Russell define as one that "does not have to justify itself at any moment, nor to prove continually that no opposition is strong enough to over throw".

The A?ta is, however, conscious of certain constraints. The A?ta is seen more as a ruler of a people rather than a monarch over a territory. His territory derives its meaning ultimately from those who inhabit it. He personifies those values, which the community holds so dear and essential to its meaningful existence. If those values were fatally compromised or trampled upon, the A?ta would lose his grip over his subjects.

The A?ta is a ruler but he is by no means an absolute ruler, uninhibited or insensitive to the feeling of those around him. The A?ta is then not a despot. He is a constitutional ruler who operates with an unwritten but established constitution founded on traditions and customs, which are older than him and will outlive him. He is bound under oath to adhere to the stipulations of that constitution. In the exercise of his authority, the A?ta is far from thundering decisions arbitrarily, he is a co-ordinator and chairman at meeting where decisions were taken.

At times, the A?ta have to defend himself before his council for permitting some actions to be undertaken in the community. At times like this, he has to be persuasive rather than commanding his people to co-operate. He tries to persuade and convince his people. The point here is that the A?ta has control over a population that is politically alert and participatory.

Also, the A?ta is not above the law but he presides over the legislature and the court. In other words, the A?ta is no above the land or the ancestors. There are time-honoured customs and traditions of the land which he must keep, and which at
any rate he has sworn to uphold at his installation. He is expected also to maintain some probity of character worthy of his sacred office. He becomes irregular if he desecrates the institution of kingship or the throne. He is bound to make reparation at once so as to remain regular.

The Atta of Igala is also in the center of a web of relationships. For legitimacy he hangs on established institutions whom he represents namely: the deity, ancestor approval and the approval of the people. He is also flanked or aided by his chiefs and he is further rooted in kingship.

Conclusion

The Igala operates a constitutional monarchical government. The Atta has to consult with his council before decisions are taken, which must be in line with customs and traditions of the land. And above all it must be accepted by the governed.
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