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2015-08-19
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THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE STATE:BETWEEN LIBERTAR - IANISM AND EGALITARIAN LIBERALISM

By

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A Research Report submitted to the

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

at

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

JOHANNESBURG

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts by Coursework and Research

in

PHILOSOPHY

SUPERVISOR: DR. EDWIN ETIEYBO

16 February 2015

DECLARATION

I declare that this Research Report is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the Degree of Master of Arts by Coursework and Research in Philosophy at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University.

_____

(Signature of candidate)

_____day of _____20_____in_____

ABSTRACT: This thesis examines conceptions of power as a way to determine whether an egalitarian liberal state or a libertarian state can best realize individual liberties. The traditional debate, although addressing a different question (What is justice and the conditions for a just society?), has embedded within it the issue of promoting liberties. The egalitarian liberal view defended by its most prominent contemporary advocate, John Rawls attempts to reconcile the values of equality and liberty, and argues that the promotion and realization of liberties require more involvement from the state in terms of law-making and redistribution of resources. In contrast, the libertarian view, for which Robert Nozick is its most prominent proponent defends a minimal state and argues that inequalities are permitted as long as liberties and property rights are respected.

I attempt to show that underlying the debate in respect of which state better realizes liberties is a particular conception of power. Particularly, I show that although power underlies the debate, a more robust conceptualization of power and the discourse on power is missing from it. By analyzing the debate from the perspective of power relations (between the individual and the state), drawing on Michel Foucault, and by reconfiguring the ways in which power is conceptualized, interesting interpretations and conclusions can be drawn.

For my family

for their continuous support

and prayer.